

Stranger 731

Chapter 731: You're Not Dumb, You Have Shit For Brains

Ye Qing's unique blood was basically the panacea to all vigor-related martial arts. That was why Blood Rakshasa's "Blood Soul Divine Light" was never a threat to him. The reason he pretended to be bound was because he was hoping to surprise Blood Rakshasa and kill her, but no plan survives first contact with the enemy, and Six Yins Boy somehow became his victim instead.

However, just as not all hazards were disasters, not all twists were necessarily bad. At his current strength, even with the advantage of surprise, Ye Qing knew there was no chance he could destroy Six Yins Boy's body and his Yang God at the same time. That was why he had slandered Blood Rakshasa. Best case scenario, Six Yins Boy would believe his lies and attack Blood Rakshasa. Even if the Grandmaster turned out to be smarter than anticipated, all it would have cost him was his spit and his breath, so why not?

Luckily for him, things went in the best way possible. Six Yins Boy actually believed his bullshit and cut off Blood Rakshasa's right arm as a result.

"Do you think I'm stupid? Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me!"

Blood Rakshasa's plea only poured fuel on the fire. Six Yins Boy roared and swung his massive demonic saber even faster than before.

Blood Rakshasa was frustrated to say the least. She wanted to explain herself, but she couldn't even begin to form the words. It was because she knew just how powerless they were.

She was a Grandmaster on the Earth Champions Ranking, and there was no one who didn't know about her "Blood Soul Divine Light". From a third person's perspective, there was zero reason her signature art would ever fail to restrain a newly ascended Grandmaster who hadn't even stabilized his power or vigor yet. Anyone with a functioning brain would agree with this assessment.

There was just one problem. She really wasn't the problem. It was Ye Qing.

Blood Rakshasa summoned a sea of blood to block the gargantuan saber.

BOOOOOOMMMMM!!!

The gargantuan saber easily cut through the sea of blood and left a giant scar spanning hundreds of meters on the ground.

The gargantuan saber failed to score a hit on Blood Rakshasa. It was because she had ridden the waves and dodged far out of the way. However, her complexion was pallid, and her presence was weaker than ever before.

Although she managed to avoid Six Yins Boy's deadly attack, it was still a powerful technique that cost his yang god to execute. Not only could it cut the body, it could sever the mind as well. The "Demonic Blade of Six Yins" might have failed to hit Blood Rakshasa, but it had dealt a grievous blow to her yang god.

Of course, Six Yins Boy wasn't doing pretty hot himself. Although his yang god managed to escape harm earlier, he still lost his physical body. Just now, he even pushed his yang god to execute his signature technique repeatedly. He had long since scraped the bottom of his barrel.

“You’re not dumb, you just have shit for brains!”

Blood Rakshasa shouted at Six Yins Boy at the top of her lungs, “You deserve to be played like a fiddle! I hope you die in a ditch and rot under the sun, you fucking idiot!”

After Blood Rakshasa was done swearing, she abruptly disappeared in a flash of blood.

“I will chase you to the ends of the earth if it’s the last thing I do, Blood Rakshasa!”

Six Yins Boy was so angry he nearly passed onto the afterlife there and then. In fact, he regretted his actions and realized that something was off as soon as he unleashed his “Demonic Blade of Six Yins”. Blood Rakshasa’s outburst also proved that she had been wronged.

However, he couldn’t take back what he had already done. Besides, even if he was in the wrong, who gave her the right to shame him right in front of so many people?

Right now, he hated her even more than he hated Ye Qing.

Suddenly, Six Yins Boy sensed something and dissolved in a cloud of demonic qi. When the cloud disappeared, so did him.

“Sigh... a shame...”

Ye Qing sighed and relaxed the fingers inside his sleeves with a regretful expression.

For obvious reasons, he was hoping to strike Six Yins Boy while he was weakened and kill him once and for all. Unfortunately, the Grandmaster turned out to be more perceptive than he thought. He had sensed his intentions the second the thought passed through his mind and escaped.

Someone might ask why he hadn’t attacked Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa sooner and killed them before either of them could escape. The answer was simple. One, he simply wasn’t strong enough to pull off such a feat. He *had* just ascended after all. Two, neither Six Yins Boy nor Blood Rakshasa were paper tigers like the likes of Mrs. Basket or Mountain Tunneling King. They were named warriors on the Earth Champions Ranking with numerous techniques and trump cards. Even in their current state, there was no chance he would be able to kill them easily. Worst case scenario, he might even fuck it up and pay the ultimate price.

Assuming that everything went as planned, and he somehow managed to kill the two Grandmasters. It would surely cost him greatly to pull off such a feat. Could he fend off the tigers and vultures still surrounding him from all sides when the time came? No, he probably couldn’t. The two Grandmasters would be dead, and his corpse would be splayed right next to theirs. What was the point?

That was why he did not pursue them. He needed to preserve his strength for what was to come.

As for whether the two Grandmasters would return in the future to seek revenge, he wasn’t too worried about it. Both of them were gravely wounded, and it would take them a long, long time to recover. In the short term, they would be crazy to show their faces in front of him. In the long term, they were even less of an issue. He already didn’t fear them when he was newly ascended and unstable, so why would he fear them when he had fully acclimatized to his power?

He had barely refined the wisp of Profound Yellow Mother Qi inside his body before he rushed to save Pedant Earth and Shangguan Hongjin. When it was fully refined and subsumed into his flesh and blood, he fully expected to gain another power boost.

Long story short, Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa should be lucky if he chose not to hunt them down in the future. If they knew wisdom, they would steer clear of him like their life depended on it.

A sigh later, Ye Qing looked up and scanned his surroundings for a moment. Finally, he affixed his gaze at a certain spot and barked out a laugh. “Thank you all for bearing witness to my tribulation. Now that the curtains are drawn, I think you should all be on your way... unless you want me to send you on your way, of course!”

The large majority of the warriors spying on Ye Qing from the shadows got the hint and withdrew in silence. However, a small portion of them did not heed his warning. It was clear that they still hadn’t given up on the Profound Yellow Mother Qi and were hoping to get lucky.

Ye Qing took in their defiance, hesitation, greed, and more emotions for a moment before letting out a cold chuckle. Then, he stomped the ground so hard it was as if a thunderclap had erupted next to everyone’s ears. Many people instinctively covered their ears and fought against a sudden wave of dizziness.

Ye Qing suddenly disappeared from view, and flocks of birds took to the sky as if they were startled. A few breaths later, Ye Qing slowly stepped out of a nearby forest. He was holding two heads in his right hand[1].

The heads looked freshly ripped from their necks. Blood poured profusely from their wounds, and there was neither pain nor suffering on the victims’ faces, only shock and fear. That was how fast their lives had been stolen from them.

Ye Qing took his time to return to his original spot. He did not care to staunch the blood flowing out of the stumps either. Every time he took a step, copious amounts of blood would dripped off the wound and dye the ground red. Everyone’s breath were caught in their throat as if he was stepping on their hearts, not the ground.

No one dared to move a muscle, however. No one wanted to follow in the two dead bastards’ footsteps.

“I told you I don’t mind sending you on your way if you want me to.”

Smiling, Ye Qing dropped the heads on the ground before snarling, “Now *get lost!*”

When the words escaped his lips, a terrific blast of wind washed out of him as well. The shout kicked up a massive dust cloud almost as if he just unleashed an attack.

This time, the lurkers did not dare to linger any longer. They fled in every direction with their tails firmly wedged between their legs.

“Yoho! The arrogance! The audacity!”

Zhang Lingyang quipped while slow-clapping Ye Qing.

"If you think you can fight off this many Grandmasters and send even Six Yins Boy and Blood Rakshasa packing singlehandedly, you can be as arrogant and audacious as him as well," Mo Beiqiu said coldly.

"Of course I can! I promise you I'll be stronger than him when I become a Trueman!"

Zhang Lingyang harrumphed and looked at Yun Qingxiao. "Young Yun, that arrogant boy just yelled at us like we're naughty children. Don't you want to get down there and teach him a lesson? I wouldn't be able to take it if I were you!"

"I can't defeat him, so I won't!" Yun Qingxiao replied indifferently.

"Sigh! You're fated to be single alright. You have one chance to show off in front of two beautiful women, and yet you couldn't grasp it!" Zhang Lingyang booed Yun Qingxiao rambunctiously. "Boo! You're a shame to our gender! Boo!"

"Why don't you fight him then?" Yun Qingxiao lifted an eyebrow. *If you're going to talk a big talk, then you better back it up with some actual substance.*

"You think I can't?" Zhang Lingyang rolled his eyes at Yun Qingxiao. "If I wasn't in charge of protecting these two lovely ladies, I would've gone down there and taught that arrogant boy a lesson a long time ago."

"I don't need your protection," Mo Beiqiu said immediately. *Get down there and kill yourself!*

Greenlake Bai echoed in agreement as well. As always, she was happy to sprinkle chaos whatever the situation.

Chapter 732: Did I Say You Could Leave?

"Hehe, women never say what they mean. If they say yes, they usually mean no. If they say don't, they usually mean please do!"

Zhang Lingyang chuckled. "You said you don't need me, but you really want me around, don't you? Well, I'm a feminist. I especially support beautiful women. I'll happily give up my chance to teach that boy a lesson if that is your wish!"

Yun Qingxiao: "... *I should've known better than to underestimate the depths of his shamelessness.*

"I'm a hot-tempered man. If I'm forced to repeat myself, then someone is going to pay for it."

It was at this moment Ye Qing spoke up again. At the same time, a terrible pressure locked on to them from afar.

Clearly, the threat was directly at them.

"Haha... it looks like I'm not welcomed here, so I'm going to take my leave. Let us meet again in the future, everyone!" Greenlake Bai said.

“Wait, what? Don’t leave yet! At least tell me your name!” Zhang Lingyang cried out in a hurry. Unfortunately for him, Greenlake Bai was already nowhere to be found.

“Well, the man has issued the threat. I shall be taking my leave as well.”

Yun Qingxiao also saluted them and said, “Take care, Miss Mo, Brother Zhang.”

With that, Yun Qingxiao took his leave no matter what Zhang Lingyang said. He too disappeared in just the blink of an eye.

“So rude!”

Zhang Lingyang complained before turning around to grin at Mo Beiqiu. “It’s just the two of us now, Beiqiu. What do you want to do?”

“There are no two of us. Whatever I do is none of your business,” Mo Beiqiu said coldly and turned to leave.

“No need to be shy, Beiqiu! I’ll always be there for you!”

Shameless, Zhang Lingyang caught up to her in a flash. “So, where are you going, Beiqiu? I’ll join you!”

“Don’t, unless you want me to beat you to death.”

“Harsh words are affection, beating is love. You can beat me up all you want, Beiqiu!”

“Get lost!”

.....

“Why are you still here?”

After the lurkers surrounding the basin were completely gone, Ye Qing turned back around to look at Defeated, the Holy Son of Maitreya, Mrs. Basket and Mountain Tunneling King.

“We’ll leave right now!”

Mountain Tunneling King—he had been lying on the ground and pretending to be dead this whole time—immediately executed his escape art when he heard this. However, he had only half-sunk into the earth when Ye Qing stomped the ground and pushed him back out into the open.

Mountain Tunneling King was seriously injured to begin with, and this unexpected attack caused him to spit out another mouthful of fresh blood. Despite being a Grandmaster, it looked like it was taking him all his energy just to stand.

What scared him even more was Ye Qing’s next words, “Did I say you can leave?”

Defeated, the Holy Son of Maitreya and Mrs. Basket immediately withdrew their foot. They were either wearing pale, defeated, or solemn expressions on their faces.

“I thought you wanted us to leave, senior?” Defeated asked. There wasn’t a hint of fear on his wooden face.

“That was before.” Ye Qing smirked. “Now, it’s too late!”

“Are you going to kill us, senior?” Defeated raised his eyebrows with a dangerous glint in his eyes.

“What do you think?” Ye Qing chuckled before disappearing all of a sudden.

Realizing that he was in trouble, Defeated made a hugging motion with one hand clenched into a fist, and another stretched into a palm. His fist drew a square, and his palm drew a circle. Together, they formed a pocket world.

“True Martial Mountain: Square Circle Lock”

Everything around Defeated instantly dissolved into chaos. The energies were frozen, and nothing could move without massive resistance.

A True Martial Mountain martial art, the “Square Circle Lock” was the Heaven Sealing Peak’s ultimate technique. The fist represented the earth, and the palm represented the sky. Everything between the two was a pocket world where the practitioner might control as they pleased. The technique was used to lock down a certain area or defend against a powerful opponent.

Defeated was at the front row when Ye Qing had gone on a rampage earlier, so he knew just how powerful he was. He never thought that the “Square Circle Lock” would be enough to restrict Ye Qing’s movements, though he hoped it would be good enough to defend against his charge.

The next moment, Defeated felt the surrounding chaos shaking violently, and an unimaginable amount of force invading into his pocket world. Even with the Square Circle Lock, he was unable to neutralize it.

The next moment, he was sent flying like a rag doll. His momentum was such that he sank at least ten meters into the ground.

Seeing this, the Holy Son of Maitreya took one step forward and made a simha mudra, whispering, “Suppress.”

As soon as he said the word “Suppress”, a golden lion manifested in the sky and roared like an actual lion. The rolling sound waves transformed into a Maitreya seal that suppressed both heaven and earth.

“The Vow of Silence...”

In response, Ye Qing smiled and threw a punch at the descending seal. His fist was strong enough to cut open the sky, much less smash apart a Buddhist seal. The Holy Son of Maitreya turned as pale as a ghost and threw up a mouthful of light gold blood when his seal was destroyed.

Ye Qing did not press the attack despite his success. He thought back to the time he first met the Holy Son of Maitreya at the Demon's Tomb. At the time, the monk’s ability to conjure great power just by talking had both astounded and impressed him. But now, the monk was unable to withstand a single punch from him. If he wanted to, he could snuff out his life with a single thought.

Life was unfair like that.

Despite his thoughts, Ye Qing did not allow any of it to appear on his face. While staring at Defeated in his pit—the stoic man was currently clutching his chest and glaring at Ye Qing with uncharacteristic ferocity—he said indifferently, “You know, I really resent the fact that you’re acting

like you're the victims here. Have you forgotten that *you're* the ones who tried to take advantage of me first? If I wasn't as lucky as I was, I might not be alive to speak to you right now."

"If I choose to kill you, then you are simply reaping what you've sown."

Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya kept quiet, hearts sinking with every word Ye Qing spoke. Just when they thought they would die, Ye Qing furrowed his brow and said, "However, I'm a merciful, blood-fearing man. I especially dislike killing others. So what should I do with you?"

You're a merciful, blood-fearing man? Did you feed your brains or your eyes to the dogs or something? How can you say that when the pools of blood and gore on the ground are still steaming, you bald-faced liar!

Mrs. Basket and Mountain Tunneling King exchanged a glance with each other while recalling how Ye Qing had killed the Herald of Fortuity, the Harbinger of Doom, the blind Taoist, the sword-eating man and more. If this guy was merciful, then they were the kindest souls in the entire fucking world!

"What do you want, senior? Please give it to us straight," Defeated said.

Defeated was obsessed with martial arts, but that didn't mean he was stupid. He immediately figured out what Ye Qing was trying to say.

"Good man."

Ye Qing's smile widened. As expected, no one who was called a genius could actually be an idiot. They might look stupid, but they could never truly be stupid.

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. You guys tried to kill me, so it would've been perfectly within my right to kill you. That said, the heavens decree it a virtue to avoid taking lives whenever possible, so I shall obey the will of the heavens. You just have to pay the price."

"The price?" Neither Defeated nor the Holy Son of Maitreya were foolish. They understood that Ye Qing was telling them to cough up if they wished to live.

"You are right, senior."

Defeated said before producing two items from his Nature's Shell and handing it to Ye Qing respectfully.

The items were a book and a curved saber. The book felt like it was made from some sort of leather instead of silk or wood. It was also chilly and brimming with yin qi. The title of the book was, "Book of Lu Ban".

The curved saber was delicate and exquisitely crafted. Its blade reminded him of autumn water, pure and clean.

It didn't take a keen eye to know that they were extraordinary items.

“The book is the second volume of the ‘Book of Lu Ban’, and the saber is a Phenomenon-class Strange Artifact named ‘To Slay Autumn Water’.”

Defeated said while holding the two items, “I hope that these gifts are good enough to earn your forgiveness, senior.”

“The second volume of the ‘Book of Lu Ban’?!”

“‘To Slay Autumn Water’?!”

Behind Ye Qing, Pedant Earth and Shangguan Hongjin exclaimed in shock. They clearly knew what the items were.

The “Book of Lu Ban” was a book written by the ancestor of carpentry, the ancient carpenter known as Lu Ban. It was a record of his life’s works and craft. The “Book of Lu Ban” was split into two volumes. The first volume recorded the carpentry skills necessary to inspect and build houses for the living, whereas the second volume taught one how to inspect houses for the dead, build tombs, fortify buildings, repel evils and more. All the spells, incantations and more necessary to perform the tasks were included as well.

If the first volume of the “Book of Lu Ban” was a book of skill, then the second volume was a book of spells.

On the other hand, very few people knew that the “Book of Lu Ban” had a second volume. It was because it recorded knowledge that was considered intolerable and unusable to the common people. After all, how many people actually needed the spells and incantation to inspect a house of the dead, build a tomb, fortify a building, repel evil and more?

On top of that, those who studied the second volume of the “Book of Lu Ban” were, without exception, widowed, lacking, lonely, or broken in some ways. These qualities also meant that it was much harder for the second volume to be passed down to future generations compared to the first volume. Over time, it became lost to the ordinary folk.

“Lacking One” was a sect that specialized in inspecting houses for the dead, building tombs, fortifying buildings and repelling evils. It was said that even imperial relatives, dukes, ministers, aristocratic clans and more sought out their services when they needed to build a tomb or a house for the dead.

Unlike most sects, “Lacking One” was quite lacking in head-on fights or direct combat in general. However, no one dared to offend them because they knew ways to make you wish that you never lived. For example, they could tamper with one’s house for the living, ancestral home, ancestor’s tomb and more to produce disastrous consequences. In the best case scenario, the household would be beset by constant misfortune and turmoil. At the worst, the entire lineage could be wiped from the surface from the earth.

Unfortunately, the disciples of “Lacking One” usually kept to themselves and avoided interaction unless at all necessary. Naturally, this added to the mysticism behind the second volume of the “Book of Lu Ban”.

Despite this, Defeated somehow came across a copy of the second volume. In fact, judging from its color and appearance, it did not look like a copy. Assuming that it was the original, heavens only know how the hell Defeated managed to obtain it.

One thing for certain, it was an exceedingly valuable item.

Before Bei Lingxiao became a Grandmaster, he called himself Bei Qiushui (Autumn Water) and wielded the saber known as “To Slay Autumn Water”. He had wandered everywhere, made many martial friends, and challenged all kinds of heroes and geniuses. He was never defeated. At the time, there was no one who hadn’t heard of the name Bei Qiushui.

A mountain was famous not because it was tall, but because a celestial lived in it. A body of water was spiritual not because it was deep, but because a dragon lived in it. “To Slay Autumn Water” might just be a saber, but it was still famous because of its master.

Not only that, Bei Lingxiao carried the saber with him all year long until he outgrew it, meaning that “To Slay Autumn Water” was nurtured by his saber intent until it grew into something extraordinary. If its new owner could glean something from the saber intent imbued within the saber, who was to say that they wouldn’t become another legend? At the very least, they would become much stronger than before.

It was rumored that one man once issued a challenge to the warriors of Ling Xiao City, and Bei Lingxiao had awarded that challenger “To Slay Autumn Water” after taking note of his extraordinary talent. The mysterious man’s identity was kept a secret, but now, it would seem that it was none other than Defeated.

Both of Defeated’s gifts were incredibly valuable. Ye Qing also knew exactly why he chose these two particular items.

Defeated must have chosen them after taking note of his good relationship with Pedant Earth and Shangguan Hongjin. After all, neither of these items was a good fit with him, but they were a perfect fit for the duo.

As a fengshui master, Pedant Earth was a dabbler of many fields of knowledge. He was well-versed in the arts of divination, math, crafting and more. The dream book of any fengshui master, diviner, or craftsman, the second volume of the “Book of Lu Ban” was exactly what he needed to broaden his knowledge and horizon further.

If he was Pedant Earth, he would’ve accepted the offering without a second thought. He knew this for a fact because he could feel the sheer greed bubbling inside Pedant Earth’s heart.

As for the saber “To Slay Autumn Water”, it was obviously meant for Shangguan Hongjin. Shangguan Hongjin was a saber wielder, and she had a taste for famous, high quality sabers. She had just recently lost one of her two sabers, and without it, it would be as if she had lost an arm. It wasn’t like she could pick up a random saber either. Any sabersman worth their salt would know how critical a good saber was to their strength.

Besides, “To Slay Autumn Water” was not your conventional good saber. It contained Bei Lingxiao’s saber intent as well. If she could understand it, she would become much, much stronger than she was before. It might even be the push she needed to become a Grandmaster. To say it was an invaluable fortune would be an understatement.

Naturally, Shangguan Hongjin would like to have it if at all possible.

Ye Qing did not accept the items, however. He simply smiled and said, “Heh. You’re quite the cunning one, aren’t you?”

Defeated’s heart skipped a beat. He did not think Ye Qing would figure out his scheme so quickly.

“Let me ask you a question. Do you think your life is worth only two items?” Ye Qing asked with a smile that didn’t reach the eye. “Take your time. For your own sake, don’t answer me until you’re sure about your answer!”

“... No. My life is priceless!” Defeated answered after a moment of silence. He then grabbed his Nature’s Shell and handed it to Ye Qing.

“Well said! Sometimes, a life is worth more than all the treasures in the world combined. And sometimes, it’s worth less than the dirt beneath your feet.”

Ye Qing left Defeated to stew for a bit before he finally accepted the Nature’s Shell, the “Book of Lu Ban” and “To Slay Autumn Water”. He then added, “I accept your compensation. You may leave. If you cherish your life, then don’t ever make such a mistake again.”

He knew that this could not be the extent of Defeated's possessions. He must have other good valuables such as the hoard of martial arts he was famous for. But since he already made up his mind to release Defeated, he did not demand the warrior to give up everything he had.

If you were going to do something, make sure that you don't leave behind loose ends. But if you weren't going to make the extreme option, then you should take care not to take things too far.

"Thank you, senior!"

Defeated gave Ye Qing a bow before stepping backward. He didn't leave though. He was clearly waiting for the Holy Son of Maitreya. It looked like they were good friends.

Ye Qing paid Defeated no attention. He turned to look straight at the Holy Son of Maitreya.

The monk wordlessly removed the prayer beads he wore on his wrist. When Ye Qing accepted it, he discovered that it was a storage-type Strange Artifact similar to his Nine Heavens. Its internal space was massive, and it contained all kinds of treasures such as Strange Artifacts, pills, martial arts manuals, rare items, and even money such as gold and silver. Long story short, he was rich as fuck.

He could imagine how wealthy the Maitreya Sect was just looking at their Holy Son's hoard. Not only that, the monk was honest enough to give him everything without any deceit.

"Very good. You may leave as well."

Ye Qing put away the prayer bead and nodded at the Holy Son of Maitreya. Frankly, he did not harbor any ill will toward the monk. Although he was the Saint of the Maitreya Sect, one of the Nine Demonic Ways, he had not heard anything of ill repute regarding the man. Besides, it was clear from this gesture that he was a pretty honest and down-to-earth man.

The Holy Son of Maitreya clasped his hands together and silently chanted the Buddha's name. Then, he left together with Defeated.

Chapter 734: In What World Do You Stand Equal To Those Two?

"Senior... I'm willing to compensate you for your troubles as well!"

Seeing that Ye Qing upheld his promise and allowed Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya to walk away, Mountain Tunneling King hurriedly offered up his own Nature's Shell.

Another person might find it difficult to address someone who was decades younger than him as senior, but Mountain Tunneling King had no such qualms. If Ye Qing was willing to release him, forget addressing him as senior, he would happily call him dad, granddad or even ancestor. No humiliation was too much when his life was on the line.

"Same here." Mrs. Basket also emulated his example and produced her Nature's Shell.

"Thank you very much," Ye Qing accepted their Nature's Shells without hesitation.

Again, Mrs. Basket emulated his example.

Thinking that their woes were over, the Grandmasters turned around and got ready to leave. However, they had just taken two steps when Ye Qing spoke up, “Just one thing. Did I say you can leave?”

“Huh?” The two Grandmasters stiffened and slowly turned around, an obsequious and confused smile etched on their faces. “I... don’t understand, senior? I thought you were going to set us free?”

A devilish smile spread across Ye Qing’s face. “In fact, I did not. All I said was ‘thank you very much’. Where on earth did you get such a foolish idea?”

“I... I don’t understand, senior. You let them go, didn’t you? Why not us?” Mountain Tunneling King asked with barely restrained panic.

“Those two are geniuses. Are you?” Ye Qing asked smilingly.

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket exchanged a confused glance with each other.

“They both have powerful backgrounds and patrons. Do you?” Ye Qing asked another question.

Now Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket were starting to get his meaning. Neither of them said a word in response.

“They’re geniuses with powerful backgrounds and patrons. That is why I didn’t dare to kill them!” Ye Qing’s smile sent chills down both Grandmasters’ spine. “But what about you two? Are you geniuses? Do you have a powerful background or patron as well?”

“If your answer is yes, then I’ll release you immediately! So? What is your answer?”

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket opened their mouths, but neither of them could say anything.

Their talent was average, and they had grinded their whole life without a powerful background or patron. Although they were lucky enough to enter the Grandmaster stage, they had long since hit their ceiling. They would never be stronger than they were now.

Mountain Tunneling King might have the word “king” in his name, but he was really just a bandit who occupied a mountain and called himself king. Mrs. Basket seemed pretty infamous, but that was only within her tiny corner of the world. Beyond that, no one even knew that she existed.

They might be Grandmasters, but they were nothing in the eyes of the true bigshots. They could not compare to geniuses with great backing such as Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya.

“In what world do you stand equal to those two? If there isn’t one, then what on earth made you think you would receive the same treatment as them?” Ye Qing sneered.

That’s right. Part of the reason he did not kill Defeated or the Holy Son of Maitreya was because they had never attacked Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth. The other reason was that they both possessed extraordinary backgrounds.

The Holy Son of Maitreya was the Saint of the Maitreya Sect, one of the Nine Demonic Ways, and he knew for a fact that Laughing Buddha, one of the Six Venerable Ones, was present as well. That was a Grandmaster who was far, far stronger than the likes of Blood Rakshasa or Six Yins Boy.

Yes, he could have killed them where they stood, but the consequences he would face could only be described as disastrous and far-reaching. Alternatively, he could take out every witness and make it so that no one could tie him to their murder, but that was unrealistic for obvious reasons.

That was why he had no choice but to let those two go—after he bled them a little, of course. There was no reason not to, and it wasn't a serious enough offense to anger the forces behind them. For one, those two were geniuses. Their pride and honor would not allow them to complain to their elders like children. And two, they were in the wrong, and they had lost to someone superior to them. It was perfectly normal for the strong to bleed the weak a little.

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket were a different story though. As he said, they had no talent, no background, and no powerful patron to cover for them. Killing them would cost him nothing except a bit of time and energy.

A moment of oppressive silence later, Mountain Tunneling King suddenly dropped to his knees and begged fearfully, "Mercy, senior! Mercy!"

Mountain Tunneling King was a Grandmaster. Did he not have a backbone? Of course he did. Did he not have any pride? Of course he did. However, what was a backbone and a pride before the threat of death?

After all, he would lose everything if he died.

"Calm down. He's not going to kill us."

Surprisingly, Mrs. Basket was much more composed than Mountain Tunneling King. She looked as pale as a ghost, but at least she wasn't begging for her life on her knees.

"Oh?" The corner of Ye Qing's lips turned up.

Mrs. Basket forced herself to stay calm and met Ye Qing's eyes directly. She said, "If senior really wants to kill us, he would've done so already. He wouldn't have wasted his breath on us."

That was what she said, and she was fairly sure that she was right. However, she would be lying to say if she was one hundred percent confident since she couldn't grasp Ye Qing's character or thoughts at all.

“Hehe... interesting. Why am I keeping you two alive then? You’ve already given me your Nature’s Shells. What else do you have that might possibly interest me?” Ye Qing asked curiously while scratching his nose.

Mrs. Basket gulped as Ye Qing’s image grew even more enigmatic in her eyes. “If I have to venture a guess... you have a use for our lives.”

“After all, the living is more useful than the dead, right?”

“Y-yes! If you spare me, then we will serve you as your faithful servant! I will do anything you ask of me without question!” Mountain Tunneling King hurriedly echoed in agreement.

Ye Qing did not give them a reply immediately. He just kept smiling at them until their anxiety climbed to unbearable levels, and their backs were completely covered in cold sweat. Finally, he started, “Well said.” He looked at Mrs. Basket. “What about you?”

“I am of the same mind, of course!” Mrs. Basket hurriedly replied.

“That is a tempting offer, but how can I believe that you are being truthful? Words are free after all. What if you lowered my guard with honeyed words and stabbed me when I least expected it?”

Ye Qing smiled a smile that didn’t reach the eye. “I have no intention of carrying two schemers with me.”

“We would never dare! Our loyalty is absolute, senior!” Mountain Tunneling King said in a hurry.

“Oh? You wouldn’t dare, but when the time calls for it, you will do it. Is that what you’re trying to say?” Ye Qing chuckled and patted Mountain Tunneling King lightly on the shoulder.

Mountain Tunneling King nearly jumped out of his skin at the contact. He was so terrified that he couldn’t even speak normally anymore, “I wouldn’t dare—No! I-I mean, I would never—”

“We can swear on our heart demons.” Again, Mrs. Basket was the calmer between the two of them.

“Yes! Yes! I’ll do it!” Mountain Tunneling King nodded repeatedly, though he didn’t dare to move his body even a little.

“Oh? A heart demon oath?”

Ye Qing patted Mrs. Basket’s shoulder as well and said, “I can see the two of you really want to become my followers. Fine. I guess you don’t need to swear an oath then.”

“Thank you, senior!”

“Thank you, senior!”

Both Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket exclaimed in pleasant surprise and relief.

“Don’t thank me yet!” Ye Qing said indifferently, “The only reason I’m exempting you from an oath is because I find it too troublesome. I know an easier way to guarantee your loyalty!”

Chapter 735: Demon Seed

“Huh?”

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket stiffened when they heard this. Alarm bells were blaring loudly inside their heads.

“What’s wrong? You don’t believe me? Or do you disagree with my method?” Ye Qing noticed their mood shift, of course.

The two Grandmasters gulped before replying in a hurry, “O-Of course not. We will submit to your judgment, senior.”

Strangely, Ye Qing shook his head disappointedly. “You will? Ah. That’s a shame.”

Ye Qing noticed their confusion and explained in a kind voice, “I was going to treat you to an experience that is worse than death itself if you defied me.”

The two were shocked and afraid, of course. Ye Qing was saying that he had done something to them, and yet they hadn’t noticed anything amiss from the start until the end. They also suspected that he was bluffing them. After all, even with his incredible power, there was no way the young man could’ve done something to them without them noticing, right?

“Oh? It looks like you don’t believe me after all!”

Ye Qing’s mouth split into a wide, chilling grin, and he snapped his fingers before they could react. The next moment, both Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket noticed a seed appearing inside their headspace; their yang god to be exact.

The mysterious-looking seed was covered in demonic runes. When it germinated, they immediately felt as if their yang god was being chewed on by a million insects. At the same time, an indescribable itchiness washed out from the depths of their soul, and no matter what they tried, they were unable to suppress it even a little.

Ye Qing had not been kidding when he told them he was going to treat them to an experience that was worse than death.

The torture lasted only a breath, and yet the two Grandmasters felt as if they had endured it for a lifetime. Then, the demonic seed began to sprout. The itchiness transformed into horrific pain, and they felt as if someone was flaying their yang god alive. Agonized screams burst through their lips as cold sweat poured out of every pore.

“Mercy... mercy, senior! We believe you, so please...!”

“We believe you!”

The two Grandmasters begged for mercy as they rolled on the ground, dignity be damned. When Ye Qing snapped his fingers again, the demonic seeds inside their yang gods regressed back to its original form and disappeared like they were never there.

“Hah... hah... hah...”

Despite this, it took Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket at least a good few seconds before their panting finally slowed, and they grew conscious of their surroundings once more. The torture had only lasted a few breaths, but they felt as if they had just paid the hells of Fengdu a visit. The indescribable itchiness and pain truly was an experience that was worse than death itself.

“Hahaha... you see, I left a little something in your yang god called a demon seed. When activated, it will go through the five stages of growth, namely germination, sprouting, growing, flowering and fruiting. Each stage comes with its own unique set of sensations such as numbness, pain, yada yada... one thing for certain, it will make you feel like digging out your own soul.”

Ye Qing was closing his eyes a little and explaining with a look of slight intoxication on his face, but his listeners only felt colder with every word he spoke. They had just experienced germination and sprouting, and they already felt like killing themselves to end the suffering. To learn that there was still growth, flowering and fruiting at the back... who in the world could possibly withstand such torture?

“Of course, if you managed to endure all five stages, then congratulations!”

Ye Qing opened his eyes and met the duo’s expectant gazes. “Your soul will disintegrate into nothing, and you will never have to suffer ever again.”

Mountain Tunneling King: “...”

Mrs. Basket: “...”

And here they thought they would be free if they managed to endure the five stages. In a sense that was true, it just wasn’t the type of freedom they wanted, and it sure as hell did not deserve to be congratulated!

Ye Qing had figured out this technique while he was feeling bored. Founded on “Heavenly Demon Captures The Soul”, it was specifically created to deal with disobedient people he didn’t want to kill for one reason or another. This was the first time he used it in a real scenario, and it had proven to be most effective.

As gray despair rose in both Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket’s eyes, he added, “But don’t worry. I won’t rake you over the coals so long as you don’t give me a reason to. Also, you only need to serve me for three years. When your service period is up, I will remove the demon seed planted inside your yang gods and release you.”

“Really?”

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket exclaimed in pleasant surprise. Neither of them could quite believe that Ye Qing was telling them the truth. After all, with the demon seed planted inside

their yang god, Ye Qing could have enslaved them for the rest of their lives. They never expected him to promise to free them just three years later.

Sure, they were still going to be Ye Qing's slave for the next three years to come, but compared to a lifetime of servitude? It was nothing at all.

"What would be the point of lying to you? I can literally kill you both with a thought if I want to," Ye Qing said indifferently.

"Thank you, senior!"

"You are most merciful, senior!"

Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket actually felt grateful when they heard this.

"Save it. Just serve me faithfully, and I promise I won't treat you unfairly."

Yet again, the carrot and the stick had done the impossible. In the end, all humans could be mastered so long as you mastered their hearts.

Having said that, Ye Qing returned the two Grandmasters' Nature's Shells back to them.

"Senior... you..." They spluttered while receiving their Nature's Shells.

"I told you. I won't mistreat you so long as you serve me faithfully," Ye Qing said indifferently, "One more thing. Don't address me as senior ever again. I am much younger than you two, and the two of you calling me senior makes me feel way older than I actually am."

"My name is Joyless Ye. In the future, simply address me as young master."

"As you command, young master. And thank you. We promise we won't betray your expectations," Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket responded. Despite what Ye Qing had done to them, their resentment of him was much lower than expected. In fact, their respect for him had grown by leaps and bounds.

"Good. I have other things to attend to, so go catch some rest and recover your strength in the meantime."

Ye Qing gave them a pat on the shoulder before walking toward Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth.

"As you wish, young master." Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket stared at Ye Qing's back for a moment. After exchanging a glance with each other, they sat down on the ground and did as Ye Qing ordered.

"What's wrong? The two of you are staring at me like I'm a stranger or something."

The two Half-Step Grandmasters were currently staring at him dazedly. They looked like they could not believe everything that just happened.

“Warrior Ye...” Pedant Earth snapped back to reality and tried to do something, but Shangguan Hongjin got the better of him.

Shangguan Hongjin’s eyes shone brightly as she looked him up and down like she was seeing him for the first time.

“Hahaha... you’re not too bad yourself, Miss Shangguan. Did you forget how you pushed back multiple Half-Step Grandmasters and Spirit Masters on your own and threatened multiple Grandmasters to their faces?” Ye Qing returned a compliment.

“Sure, but it was all bark and no bite. I was just about to piss my pants even when I said those things. There is no way I can compare to you!” Shangguan guffawed, though she was clearly pleased by Ye Qing’s compliment.

“Of course you can. You knew you were headed toward your death, but you still went ahead without hesitation, both of you. Few people are as courageous as you both.” Ye Qing saluted them and gave them a deep bow. “I did not think I could have survived this crisis without your aid, so thank you. I will never forget this.”

“Y-You’re welcome, warrior Ye,” Pedant Earth stuttered a little, surprised by the depths of his sincerity.

“You flatter us. You saved our lives before, so it’s only right that we save yours!” Shangguan Hongjin huffed. “Besides, we didn’t really help all that much, now that I think about it.”

“You must be joking, Miss Shangguan. If the two of you haven’t bought me enough time, there is no way I could have refined the Profound Yellow Mother Qi and regained enough strength to put up a proper fight.” Ye Qing shook his head. He was speaking from the bottom of his heart. He still had some Nature’s Water with him, so he could have instantly recovered his wounds if he wanted to. However, he would not have the time to refine the Profound Yellow Mother Qi and improve his power, and he definitely wouldn’t be able to go head to head against the Grandmasters.

That was why he really was grateful toward the duo.

“Oh right, please don’t call me Warrior Ye any longer. Instead, call me Joyless.”

Chapter 736: Demonbearer Abode

“That’s not very... proper, is it?” Pedant Earth hesitated not because he didn’t want to, but because he didn’t dare.

“We are friends, aren’t we? What’s there to worry about?” Ye Qing laughed before countering, “Unless you think that I don’t deserve to become friends with you two?”

“Of course not!” Pedant Earth replied in a hurry.

“Then it doesn’t matter if you address me as Joyless now, does it?” Ye Qing looked at Shangguan Hongjin. “What do you say, Miss Shangguan?”

As expected, Shangguan Hongjin declared with the wave of the hand, “You said we’re friends, but why are you still calling me miss? Just call me Shangguan, Hongjin, or even big sis if you feel like it!”

“Hahaha! As you wish, Shangguan.” Ye Qing smiled. “What about you, Pedant—no, Earth?”

“If you insist, then this old fool shall pull himself up high.” Pedant Earth broke into a bright smile as well.

“Good!” Ye Qing laughed before handing over two items to Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth. “Here. Take these.”

“This is...!” Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth were shocked. It was because Ye Qing had given them Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya’s Nature’s Shells. The two items they were coveting—“To Slay Autumn Water” and the second volume of the “Book of Lu Ban”—were also stored inside the Nature’s Shells.

“This is too much. We can’t accept it!” Shangguan Hongjin shook her head with a frown.

Pedant Earth was shaking his head profusely as well. Although he was extremely interested in the “Book of Lu Ban” and the treasures within the Nature’s Shell, he ultimately chose to reject the gift.

“So what? You saved my life. This is the least I could do to repay the favor.”

Ye Qing smiled. “Now that I’m a Grandmaster, none of these items are really useful to me anymore. They would only gather dust inside their Nature’s Shells if I keep them.”

“Also, you haven’t forgotten where we are, have you? I’m sure that these treasures would prove useful for your survival.”

Again, he was telling the truth. There were plenty of good stuff in Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya’s Nature’s Shells, but they also weren’t useful to him anymore.

It was a different story for Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth though. The treasures would drastically improve their chances of surviving this place.

Not wanting to drag this out, Ye Qing pushed the Nature’s Shells into their hands and said, “It’s settled then. Go catch some rest while I speak with Giggles.”

He disappeared in a blur of speed after saying that, giving them no chance to respond.

After Ye Qing was gone, Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth exchanged a bitter smile with each other. Then, they put away the Nature's Shells and began recuperating as Ye Qing had told them to.

.....

At the top of a peak not far away from the edge of the basin, Ye Qing met up with Giggle and the headless Sage once more.

The headless Sage was sitting crosslegged on the ground and seemingly admiring the blood moon in the sky. As for Giggle, the little Stranger was sitting quietly on his shoulder. From a distance, they looked like a beautiful, tranquil painting.

When Ye Qing got close, he realized that the headless Sae was rotting. The resentment and obsession that kept him alive were almost completely gone as well.

It was clear that the headless Sage was minutes, maybe even seconds away from death.

Giggle was wearing a bright smile on its face, but its sad, lonely eyes revealed what it was really thinking.

Giggle noticed Ye Qing, of course. It looked up at him and shot him a pure, bright smile that resembled the blue sky.

The headless Sage rose to his feet and faced toward Ye Qing. Giggle leaped onto his palm when he raised it to his shoulder. After caressing the little guy's head for a bit, he slowly handed it to Ye Qing.

Ye Qing took Giggle and promised solemnly, "Do not worry, senior. I will take good care of him."

For the last time, the headless Sage caressed Giggle's head lovingly before turning his back on them. Then, he arced backward as if he was looking at the blood moon.

The headless sage's body began rotting at an accelerated rate. A few breaths later, when a gentle breeze blew past him, he abruptly scattered into dust and disappeared into the wind.

The wind came, and the wind left.

He was gone.

"Oooooo..."

Giggle finally couldn't hold back its sorrow any longer and wept. Its voice was full of mourning and sorrow.

"Don't be sad. You were able to accompany senior in his last moments, I am sure he no longer has any regrets left in this world. You should be happy for him."

Ye Qing petted its head gently before recalling something. "Ah, shit, senior's head is still out there somewhere, isn't it? Don't worry. I'll find it and give him the peace he deserves."

"Oooooo..."

Giggle bowed its head and bumped against Ye Qing's palm, whining mournfully.

"Senior may be gone, but you still have me. From now on, I will walk with you."

Ye Qing kept Giggie company and spoke to it for a very, very long time. It wasn't until the blood moon had disappeared into distant mountains that he finally descended the hill.

By the time Ye Qing returned to the basin, it was already broad daylight. Mountain Tunneling King, Mrs. Basket, Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth had already awakened.

"Young master."

"Young master."

"Joyless!"

All four warriors greeted him when they saw him.

"Are you all okay now?" Ye Qing asked.

"Thank you for your concern, young master. We are fine now," Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket replied with a salute.

"Same here. We're more or less recovered," Shangguan Hongjin also replied, Pedant Earth nodding his agreement at the side.

It turned out that Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya stored a ton of valuable medicine inside the Nature's Shell, and their injuries weren't that serious to begin with. After a little over half a night of rest and recuperation, they weren't just back to full strength. They were quite a bit stronger than they were before.

"Alright! Let us be off!" Ye Qing declared.

"To where, exactly?" Shangguan Hongjin voiced her puzzlement. They had never planned where to go after reaching the basin after all.

"To the Dark Overlord's inheritance, of course!" Ye Qing replied.

"The Dark Overlord? Is this place really where he left behind his inheritance?" Shangguan Hongjin exclaimed in shock.

Pedant Earth, Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket were staring at him with wide eyes as well.

"Yes and no. The Dark Overlord was here, but this is not where he stored his inheritance."

Ye Qing began walking in a certain direction while providing an explanation, "To be more accurate, this is a pocket world the Dark Overlord Li Hentian had created back in the day. It is called the Demonbearer Abode."

"'Bearer' refers to the Oathbearer we encountered prior to entering this place, and 'Demon' refers to Li Hentian himself. The Demonbearer Abode was where he secluded himself to during his later years."

And how did he know about this? It was because the headless Sage had also imparted to him some of the knowledge and memories regarding this place when he gave him his energy and martial intent earlier.

However, that wasn't to say he wasn't affected. After thirty years of total dominance, he grew tired of the eternal pursuit for fame and glory and believed that he had seen everything the world had to offer. So, he created a pocket world on top of the Oathbearer he had raised since it was a baby and set off to the world beyond with his beloved companion.

That was how the Demonbearer Abode came to be.

A few breaths of silence later, Pedant Earth voiced his question, "If what you say is true, then what happened? How did the Dark Overlord's abode turn out like this?"

Chapter 737: The War

"There were many reasons. Grudges, love, hatred, fame, fortune. Take your pick. They're all true."

Ye Qing recalled the headless Sage's memories as he continued, "His whole life, the Dark Overlord obeyed no laws but his own and lived as he pleased. As a result, he made many friends and even more enemies."

"Although the Dark Overlord stopped interfering with *jianghu* matters after secluding himself to the Demonbearer Abode, his personality did not change one bit. He built twelve pavilions and palaces in the abode, collected all sorts of priceless treasures, welcomed countless beauties to his luxurious abode, and befriended people and factions of all shapes and sizes. All day everyday, he indulged himself in senseless pleasure."

"The Dark Overlord had no interest in the *jianghu*, but his so-called 'friends' and 'allies' were a different story. They abused their connection to him and ripped into the *jianghu* with wanton abandon. His own disciples and subordinates did everything under the sun to garner the Dark Overlord's favor. They stole treasures, kidnapped beauties, and slaughtered entire families down to their last animal. Their cruelty and propensity for cruelty knew no bounds."

"Although the Dark Overlord had never partaken in these acts, they were intricately tied to his person. After all, these villains could only do what they did because of their connection to him. Some people loathed the Dark Overlord for what he did—or rather, what he did not do—some people coveted his many treasures and women, some people wanted to kill him for justice, and some wanted to borrow his head for fame and glory..."

"Eight hundred years ago, the mountain lord of Deer Herding Mountain[1] summoned countless warriors to his side and invaded the Demonbearer Abode to

slay the Dark Overlord when it emerged in the real world. A great war broke out, and the Demonbearer Abode was destroyed as a result.”

“They actually thought they could slay the Dark Overlord? Hah! What fools.” Mountain Tunneling King snorted. The rest of the group looked skeptical as well. In their opinion, the Dark Overlord Li Hentian was the undisputed champion of the world eight hundred years ago. There was just no way a ragtag bunch of misfits could hope to slay him.

“You would think so, but you would be wrong!” Ye Qing said slowly. “The Dark Overlord was strong, but he was also getting old. Not only that, the invading force Zhuang Juyun gathered were anything but small fries. A total of three Sages, five Half Sages, and countless Grandmasters and Spirit Masters had assaulted the Demonbearer Abode.”

“*Three Sages?*” Everyone gasped when they heard this.

“It was a terrible war that incurred horrific losses. The Dark Overlord’s disciples and subordinates all perished in the war, and even his beloved Oathbearer was slain in battle. Of course, Zhuang Juyun’s forces suffered massive casualties—actually, let me correct that. They were totally annihilated. The three Sages sacrificed themselves to kill the Dark Overlord, and the Demonbearer Abode fell into ruins. In short, there was no victor.”

Ye Qing’s tone grew heavy. “Sages died, Grandmasters perished, and an entire world was destroyed. This war was so terrible that the victims’ yin qi, resentment, death qi, blood and more coagulated into the Death Sea we know today.”

“What in the...”

For a time, his four companions could only stare at him with their mouths agape. They were shocked to find that the Dark Overlord was dead. They were also shocked to learn that the Dark Overlord was strong enough that it took *three Sages* to drag him to the grave with them. And that was considering that he was past his prime too. Most of all, they were shocked to learn that the war was behind the creation of the Death Sea.

Even so, their shock was incomparable to Ye Qing’s own. After all, he inherited the headless Sage’s memories. That war had been so epic, so terrible, so tragic, that no single metaphor could describe it in its entirety. Sea of blood, mountain of corpses, the sky falling, the earth crumbling. It truly was the end of a world.

The headless Sage had perished while fighting against the Dark Overlord. To be specific, the three Sages who fought Li Hentian at the time were the mountain lord of the Hill Herding Mountain Zhuang Juyun, the “Half Buddha” Chen Miaozen, and the “Profound Finger” Ning Xiliu.

Ning Xiliu was the headless Sage. He was close friends with Zhuang Juyun, and he had attended this heroic undertaking under the mountain lord’s invitation.

The battle between the trio and Li Hentian had lasted over a day. First, the “Half Buddha” Chen Miaozeng had burned his entire soul to summon the Buddha's Golden Body—one that spanned over three thousand meters tall—and score a serious blow against the Dark Overlord. He died immediately after executing his final attack.

Next, Ning Xiliu executed “Profound Theory In Ten Fingers” to open the sky, pierce the Dark Overlord’s nigh invincible demonic body, and ripped out his heart.

Zhuang Juyun seized the opportunity to cut off one of the Dark Overlord’s arms, though it was not without taking an equally severe wound in return.

In response, the Dark Overlord barked out a laugh before punching Ning Xiliu hundreds of kilometers into the sky and slamming him into the underground with one palm, forming the basin they had seen before. Then, the Dark Overlord ripped off his head and killed him.

Finally, Zhuang Juyun and Dark Overlord fought a terrible battle that warped the very world around them. Despite his grievous injuries, the Dark Overlord was ultimately able to shatter Zhuang Juyun’s body and annihilate his soul.

Having used up everything he had, the Dark Overlord stood at the peak of his mountain and laughed three times. With that, he finally passed into the afterlife.

Despite the memories he was granted, Ye Qing was unable to comprehend the trio’s battle completely. He would even go as far as to say that he had only understood the tiniest glimpse of the Sages’ war.

Even so, he saw Chen Miaozeng’s Golden Body reaching higher than the heavens themselves, Ning Xiliu holding the sun and moon between his fingers, Zhuang Juyun gathering heaven and earth for the ultimate slash, and of course, the Dark Overlord Li Hentian somehow killing all of them despite the severe disadvantage he was in. His palm had blotted out the sky, and his fist shattered the earth. It was easily the greatest battle he had ever seen to date.

If his ascension to Trueman put him on a pedestal where the entire world under the heavens was within his grasp, then the battle between the Dark Overlord and the Sages showed him the stars, the moon, and the sun that hung high, high up in the infinite skies.

The world under the heavens was great, but the celestial bodies in the sky were undoubtedly more alluring.

Very, very few people ever became one of the stars though. Most of them could only look up with envy.

Still, he now knew what lay beyond the peak that was Grandmaster. He now knew what he should strive for.

At the age of twenty, he was already a master of humanity. In the future, who was to say he couldn’t join the stars above?

“I see. So this is why the Dark Overlord vanished!”

A long, long time later, Mrs. Basket finally broke the silence.

The Dark Overlord hadn’t attained immortality and disappeared into unknown worlds after all.

He had died like so many others before and after him.

“Yeah. Who would’ve thought that the invincible Dark Overlord from eight hundred years ago was killed in battle?” Pedant Earth sighed.

“He might have perished, but he still fought three Sages on his own... and won. How incredible was that? If only I was alive to witness his final battle!” Shangguan Hongjin sighed ruefully.

“Yeah. He truly deserved his name as the greatest warrior of the Spring and Autumn eight hundred years ago!” Mountain Tunneling King echoed in agreement. “I hate that I wasn’t alive to see him with my own two eyes, and I only wish that I could measure up to him one day!”

“Indeed!” Ye Qing agreed with them completely. All warriors desired to climb higher, and he was no exception.

“Come! Let us witness the greatest warrior on earth eight hundred Springs and Autumns ago!”

Like a ray of light piercing through an endless fog, Ye Qing’s group surged toward the east.

.....

“I thought we’re looking for the Dark Overlord? Where is this place?”

One of them asked while Shangguan Hongjin, Pedant Earth, Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket observed the strange, anomalous land before them.

The land in front of them was a puddle of chaos where most, if not all natural laws seemed to have malfunctioned or disappeared outright. They saw forests floating in the air as if gravity did not exist, they saw rivers rising from the ground and into the sky, they saw clouds spread across the ground like snow, they saw mountain ranges standing upside down, they saw stars twinkling in ponds and lakes, they saw the ground rippling and lapping against objects like the sea; the sunlight felt as cold as ice, the ice felt as cold as molten metal, some flowers looked as big as a century-old tree, some trees looked as small as insects...

On top of that, the air was filled with a sense of chaos and horror.

“What is this place? It’s so strange!” Pedant Earth murmured.

“The Dark Overlord is up ahead!” Ye Qing pointed toward the front. “This is where he and the three Sages had fought!”

“You’re saying that this... chaos... is caused by their battle?” Mrs. Basket asked.

“That’s right,” Ye Qing explained, “The Dark Overlord and the three Sages were so strong that they shattered the natural laws that governed all things, not to mention that their martial intent still lingers in this land. As a result, this land transformed into a chaotic, lawless place that is completely different from the one we’re used to.”

“No wonder they say that the power of a Sage cannot be comprehended by mere mortals!” Mountain Tunneling King sighed wistfully.

Chapter 738: Smart and Foolish

“Let’s go. I’ll take the lead. Shangguan and Earth, stay behind me. Mountain and Basket, protect our rear,” Ye Qing instructed. “Everything here is chaotic and out of order, so be on your guard.”

“Yes, young master!” Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket responded. Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth humbly accepted the advice as well.

Despite their readiness, the group felt an oppressive amount of pressure and fear as soon as they set foot inside the unusual land. Their blood threatened to rebel inside their body, their true qi was getting pulled in different directions, and their spirit was under assault as well.

Ye Qing was protected by the Profound Yellow Mother Qi, so he was the only person in the group who didn’t feel anything. Mountain Tunneling King and Mrs. Basket were Grandmasters, so they could stomach the distortions with some discomfort.

The same couldn’t be said for Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth though. Their complexions were red, and their heads pounded like someone was hitting them with a hammer. Just a few steps later, they couldn’t withstand the distortions any longer and threw up a small amount of blood.

“Are you alright? How are you feeling now?”

Ye Qing immediately caught their arms and quelled the disturbances in their vigor and true qi.

“We’re fine!”

Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth shook their heads with bitter expressions. “But it would seem that we aren’t fated to witness the man who dominated the Spring and Autumn eight hundred years ago!”

“You’re... not going?” Ye Qing lifted his eyebrows.

Shangguan Hongjin replied after a moment of thought, “Yeah, I think we’re going to stop here. If we can’t even handle this place, then I doubt we’ll be able to survive what comes next.”

“Very well,” Ye Qing replied after due consideration, “I cannot deny that we may face grave dangers. Even with my strength, I may not be able to safeguard you two. It is best if you stay at the perimeter.”

“Your words are wise, young master.” Mountain Tunneling King said smilingly, “By the way, young master. Miss Shangguan and Pedant Earth have just recovered and so are not yet at their full strength. Besides that, this land is clearly rife with dangers. Should I stay behind and protect them?”

"You're right. I didn't think it through." Ye Qing glanced meaningfully at Mountain Tunneling King before turning to Mrs. Basket. "Basket, I want you to stay behind and protect them."

"Me?" Mrs. Basket exclaimed in surprise. Mountain Tunneling King was caught off guard as well.

"There's no need. We can take care of ourselves." Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth tried to turn him down. "You're the one who's going to face the greatest dangers. We can protect ourselves, so don't worry about it."

"It will be fine. It's not like Mrs. Basket is fully recovered anyway, so she won't be as helpful as you think. I'd rather that she focus on her own recovery and take care of you." Ye Qing did not give them the opportunity to say no. "It's settled then. Basket, keep them safe no matter what."

"Do not worry, young master. This one shall give her all." Mrs. Basket saluted him. "Take care, young master."

"Take care, Joyless."

Seeing that Ye Qing wasn't going to change his mind, Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth saluted him as well.

"Don't worry. At my current strength, I'm pretty sure I can keep myself safe no matter what." Ye Qing smiled at the trio and watched them as they withdrew out of the perimeter. Then, he turned around and ordered, "Let's go."

They left. After the trio were out of earshot, Ye Qing suddenly broke the silence with a question, "Do you know why I left Mrs. Basket behind and not you?"

"This foolish one does not know, young master. Please enlighten me," Mountain Tunneling King answered as a hidden glint flashed in his eyes.

"Foolish one?" Ye Qing smirked. "You really are a foolish one. If you weren't, you wouldn't have tried something this stupid!"

"Young master...?" Mountain Tunneling King asked with a shiver.

"Am I wrong?" Ye Qing's tone turned cold. "If you weren't foolish, then why would you try to pull a trick on me? If you weren't stupid, then why would you risk your life to change nothing?"

"This... this one truly does not understand what you're trying to say, young master," Mountain Tunneling King tried to feign confusion.

"You don't understand?" Ye Qing stopped in his tracks and uttered, "You might as well die ignorant then!"

As soon as he said this, Mountain Tunneling King abruptly started trembling like a leaf. Large beads of sweat began pouring down his forehead as if he was enduring some sort of unimaginable pain.

“Young master... at least tell me... what I did wrong... before you kill me...” Mountain Tunneling King uttered through gritted teeth.

“You really want to know? Okay.” Ye Qing patted Mountain Tunneling King on the shoulder while answering, “You suggested staying behind earlier not because you wish to protect Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth, but because you want to take them as hostages and threaten me to release you, am I right?”

“You.... misunderstand me, young master... I really was just... worried about their safety... and I wish to... alleviate some of your burden... I am loyal... please trust me...” Mountain Tunneling King replied intermittently. His face was deathly pale, and it was impossible to say if it was because of the pain, because Ye Qing saw through his lies, or both.

“What did I say? You’re dumb as fuck. Even now, you’re trying to trick me. Do you really think I’m as stupid as you?”

Ye Qing’s smile grew increasingly gentle. “From the beginning, you have never truly submitted to me. You lick my boots and flatter me like I’m your king, when really you’ve been plotting how to break free from my control and kill me. However, you couldn’t see an ounce of opportunity from me, so you set your eyes on Shangguan Hongjin and Pedant Earth because of our relationship. You were plotting to use them as your mouthpiece, take them hostage, or even manipulate them into getting me in trouble, weren’t you?”

“Young master, please... this one... is definitely loyal to—”

By now, Mountain Tunneling King looked like he had just climbed out of a river. His entire body was drenched in sweat.

“So, you’re saying that I wronged you?” Ye Qing smiled and snapped his finger. “So what if I am? If your master wants you dead, then you should just die like the loyal servant you are, right?”

“Argh!”

Mountain Tunneling King abruptly let out a painful scream and fell to the ground. While hugging his head, he rolled back and forth and screamed, “Mercy, young master! Mercy!”

Ye Qing ignored his cries for mercy and painful screams and just waited.

A short while later, Mountain Tunneling King finally couldn’t stand the pain of the demonic seed growing inside his yang god and grabbed Ye Qing’s ankle, begging, “Mercy, young master! This one is wrong! This one is wrong! This one will never do it again, so please...!”

“Are you?” Ye Qing crouched down and looked down on Mountain Tunneling King from above. “Tell me. What did you do wrong?”

“I shouldn’t have schemed against you. I shouldn’t have lied to you. I shouldn’t have tried to harm you! Please, young master! I won’t do it again, so please!” Mountain Tunneling King begged.

“Finally, he admits his mistake!” Ye Qing slapped Mountain Tunneling King in the face again, and again, and again. “But don’t you think it’s a little too late?”

“I said this before: if you treat me right, then I’ll treat you right as well. But considering how stupid you are, I suppose you might have missed the subtext: if you treat me wrong, then I’ll pay you back twofold. In any case, it’s clear that you did not take my words to heart.”

“This one is wrong! I’ll never do it again! Just please give me another chance, young master! Please!” Mountain Tunneling King forced through the pain and kowtowed to Ye Qing, begging.

Ye Qing simply smiled and said nothing at all.

Chapter 739: The Magia Tree, The Magia Fruit

Time passed quickly. For a teatime, Mountain Tunneling King had kowtowed, begged, and screamed until his voice was hoarse. During this time, Ye Qing simply watched with a smile on his face.

It wasn’t until Mountain Tunneling King was curled up like a worm, and his heart was full of despair that Ye Qing finally tapped his forehead with a finger.

The pain immediately receded like a tidal wave. Before he knew it, he had left hell behind and returned to humanity.

At that moment, Mountain Tunneling King grew limp as if every ounce of strength had been sucked out of his body. Besides panting, he was so exhausted he couldn’t even lift a finger.

“Just this once, I’ll forgive you,” Ye Qing said indifferently while rising to his feet.

“Thank you, young master! You are most merciful, young master!”

Despite his exhaustion, Mountain Tunneling King climbed to his feet and pressed his forehead against the ground. If he wasn’t terrified of Ye Qing before, he is now.

“There won’t be a second chance.” Ye Qing planted his foot on Mountain Tunneling King’s head and said, “Do understand that my benevolence and patience are limited.”

“I understand! I understand! If my loyalty toward you ever waver again, may my soul face true death and scatter into nothing!”

Although Ye Qing was stepping on his head, Mountain Tunneling King did not dare to feel resentful or angry, much less swear bloody vengeance. He did not even dare to think poorly of the man in front of him. That was how much he feared Ye Qing right now.

“Remember what you said.” Ye Qing finally removed his right foot from Mountain Tunneling King’s head and said, “Rise.”

“Thank you, young master. Thank you!”

As Mountain Tunneling King climbed to his feet, he realized that his fatigue and weakness had suddenly disappeared as soon as Ye Qing removed his foot from his head. It was almost as if everything he experienced earlier was but a dream. This discovery only caused him to grow more fearful and respectful of Ye Qing, of course.

The duo finally resumed their journey after the little interlude, but they didn’t go far before Mountain Tunneling King suddenly called out, “Young master, look.”

A middle-aged man dressed like a Taoist and surrounded by white feathers was rushing toward a floating island. He was wearing a feather hat as well.

“That’s White Crane Taoist, young master. He’s a Grandmaster and more or less on the same level as me.”

Just like him, White Crane Taoist was a Grandmaster who wasn’t strong enough to appear on the Earth Champions Ranking. An independent warrior who roamed the northern lands, Mountain Tunneling King had become acquainted with him during a chance encounter.

White Crane Taoist had noticed them as well, but he paid them no attention whatsoever. He simply sped up and flew even faster toward the floating island.

A massive tree was growing on that island. It was translucent and shiny as if it was carved out of crystal, and there were books hanging off its branches.

The books looked more or less the same, but the aura they gave off were drastically different. Some books felt like it had survived countless centuries, some felt mysterious and full of Dao, some were majestic and awe-inspiring, some were singing Brahma mantras as if they were in a classroom, some were overflowing with demonic qi and more.

The book at the top of the tree was what really caught everyone’s attention. It was colorful and overflowing with radiance. It was clearly extraordinary.

Mountain Tunneling King stared at the tree for a moment when suddenly, his eyes widened with dawning realization. “Is... Is that the Magia Tree?”

“It is!”

Ye Qing was just as stunned. He wasn’t expecting to encounter the legendary Magia Tree in this place.

The Magia Tree was a Disaster-class Stranger that was born in accordance with the Heavenly Way. It took three hundred years for it to grow into a tree, three hundred years to flower, and three hundred years to fruit. Shaped like books, each fruit contained the Heavenly Way’s Magia. Those who consumed it would gain its Magia[1].

For obvious reasons, the Magia Tree was exceedingly rare. Generally speaking, it only appeared in places blessed with natural beauty and favored by heaven and earth. During the first half of its incredibly long life cycle, it was incredibly fragile and easily damaged. But once it fruited, it would do a one-eighty and become incredibly powerful. Its value was immeasurable.

Of course, obtaining a Magia Fruit wasn't as simple as plucking it from its branches. First, all challengers must withstand the Magia Tree's trials. Second, not all Magia Fruits were made equal. Some were potent, some were weak, some were great, and some were actively detrimental to its user. For example, a potent Magia Fruit could summon the wind, call the rain, split skies and rip the ground apart, whereas a weak one might not even be able to leave a scratch on a stone. A great Magia Fruit could extend one's lifespan and evolve one's martial way, whereas a bad one could cause a deviation and even kill them.

Worse, it was impossible to determine the effects of a Magia Fruit based on their appearance or their aura. A Magia Fruit with a gorgeous exterior and a potent aura might not necessarily be potent or beneficial, just as one with a poor exterior and a weak aura might not necessarily be weak or detrimental. In short, it was a gamble. If you were lucky, then you might gain some of the most powerful Magias in the world. If not, then you might not live to see tomorrow's sun.

Legend has it that a man named Dragon Elephant Monk once consumed a Magia Fruit that gave him a Dragon Elephant Prajna Magia. Said to be the greatest power beneath a Sage, it gave him enormous strength and allowed him to move mountains like nothing. He was ranked fifteen on the Earth Champions Ranking because of this.

There was also a legend of the opposite flavor. Three hundred years ago, there was a demonic heretic called Sunken Sword. He was a Half-Sage who was one step away from becoming a Sage, and at the time, there were few people strong enough to stop him from doing whatever the hell he wanted. Somehow, he managed to obtain a Magia Fruit, and he consumed it in hopes of breaching the last wall that was blocking his path to sagehood.

What happened next was probably worse than death itself. His powers began fading rapidly, and cultivation receding like a tidal wave. In just a single day, he had declined from a Half-Sage all the way to a Vessel Augmentor. Naturally, his ending wasn't a kind one. He was tortured to death by his enemies.

Long story short, a Magia Fruit was magical, and it was completely up to the heavens whether you would get something good or bad out of it.

Finally, a warrior could only consume one Magia Fruit their whole life. Eating more than one was pointless because it wouldn't grant them anymore boons. Besides that, a Magia Fruit must be consumed within nine breaths after they were plucked, or its air of Dao would dissipate, and the Magia it contained would disappear. It would be no different from an ordinary fruit.

This was also why White Crane Taoist did not feel any hostility toward Ye Qing or Mountain Tunneling King. After all, each person could only consume one Magia Fruit once in their life, and the Magia Fruits only retained its magic nine breaths after they were plucked. Therefore, it was completely pointless to try and monopolize them.

As Ye Qing and Mountain Tunneling King were communicating with each other, White Crane Taoist was getting closer and closer to the floating island. He was also growing increasingly cautious.

When he arrived at the floating island, the Magia Tree shivered despite the fact that there was no wind in the area, and the magia Fruits began shining much brighter than usual. For a time, the middle-aged man felt like he had stepped into dreamland.

The next moment, one Magia Fruit slowly unfurled itself as if a wind had spread its pages. Then, a rain appeared out of nowhere and fell straight toward White Crane Taoist.

The rain was no ordinary rain, however. Each droplet was a deadly sword qi that could turn even a Grandmaster like White Crane Taoist into a pincushion if he wasn't careful. For a time, sword qi filled the sky with wrathful power.

White Crane Taoist stopped in his tracks and brought his full power to bear. His feathers transformed into two fishes, and they slowly chased each other's tail and swam in a circle, forming a tai chi symbol.

The rain of sword qi was deadly, but they barely made an inch into the tai chi circle before they were neutralized or bounced away. Several breaths later, the Magia Fruit closed itself, and the rain of sword qi vanished like it never happened.

This was the Magia Tree's trial. Each Magia Fruit contained a Magia of sorts, and only those who successfully weather its trials all the way to the Magia Tree would be allowed to pluck them.

Some people thought to discern the potency and effects of a Magia Fruit through its trial, but unfortunately, it turned out to be a dud. What they saw wasn't necessarily the truth. A Magia Fruit could launch a hail of swords at a challenger, but it did not mean that its Magia was related to swords at all.

White Crane Taoist did not dispel his tai chi circle after blocking the rain of sword qi. He simply sped up and got closer to the Magia Tree.

Just ten meters later, another Magia Fruit unfolded its pages and caused thirty six soybeans to fall from the sky. The moment they hit the ground, they immediately transformed into thirty six warriors who were clad in golden armor.

Chapter 740: Reciprocation Is Important. Eat Spear!

“‘Cast Beans Into Soldiers’? A Taoist Magia...”

White Crane Taoist chuckled and shook his sleeves a little. Seventy two little strawmen immediately flew out of his sleeves and rapidly grew to the size of a human. Each strawman was covered in yellow talismans and wielding a large saber. They also carried banners on their back and looked mighty impressive.

Mountain Tunneling King explained when he saw this, “That is White Crane Taoist's trump card, the Seventy Two Grasshead Gods. Derived from Mount Maoshan's Seventy Two Earth Fiend Gods, they are created using Evil Repelling Straws and talismans. They are impervious to most weapons and natural elements and are as strong as Spirit Masters.”

As he spoke, the thirty six golden-armored soldiers clashed against the seventy two Grasshead Gods. Strong they might be, the golden-armored soldiers were both outmatched and outnumbered. It wasn't long before the seventy two Grasshead Gods slew the soldiers and turned them back into soybeans.

It wasn't without a considerable cost, however. A good number of the seventy two Grasshead Gods were damaged beyond repair in the fight, and White Crane Taoist's heart positively ached at the loss.

White Crane Taoist wasted no time in resuming his flight, and this time, he met no opposition whatsoever. He quickly reached the Magia Tree.

"It looks like White Crane Taoist is about to succeed," Mountain Tunneling King said enviously. Once White Crane Taoist reached the tree trunk, the Magia Tree would attack him no longer and allow him to pluck any one Magia Fruit.

However, Ye Qing said something unexpected, "No, he's about to die."

"What? What do you mean?" Mountain Tunneling King was confused as a matter of course. Before Ye Qing could answer him, he noticed White Crane Taoist suddenly freezing when he was just one step away from the tree trunk. Then, his complexion rapidly turned bluish black, and the cackling face of a ghost overlapped with his own face.

"What in the..." Mountain Tunneling King murmured in shock and horror. Even from this distance, he felt chilled from the bottom of his heart.

"It's probably a curse!"

Mountain Tunneling King couldn't see it, but Ye Qing's senses were way sharper. When White Crane Taoist was making his way toward the Magia Tree, he had seen a ghastly Magia Fruit on the tree slowly unfolding itself and writing the word "Death" with blood. Then, it landed on top of White Crane Taoist's forehead.

Unfortunately for White Crane Taoist, he never noticed anything amiss from the start until the end. By the time the ghastly face appeared, it was already too late. His body began shriveling and rotting at a supernatural pace. Just a few breaths later, he had turned into a pile of bones.

"Mother of heavens..."

Mountain Tunneling King gulped. Where he felt envy before, now there was only deep, terrible fear.

"Do you want to give it a try?" Ye Qing joked. "This is the opportunity of a lifetime, you know?"

"You jest, young master," replied Mountain Tunneling King while shaking his head firmly. Yes, he was tempted to give it a try earlier, but that desire had disappeared like smoke after witnessing White Crane Taoist's downfall.

As he mentioned earlier, he was more or less on the same level as White Crane Taoist. In fact, he was probably the weaker between the two of them. If even White Crane Taoist could not overcome the Magia Tree's trials, what was the chance that he would succeed? It would be like lighting a candle inside a toilet—suicide.

A Magia Fruit was valuable, but nothing was more valuable than his own life.

“If you’re not going, then I will,” Ye Qing said while staring at the Magia Tree.

“You will definitely succeed, young master,” Mountain Tunneling King took it as a cue and paid Ye Qing a compliment.

“Your well wishes are appreciated.” Ye Qing chuckled and dashed forward. He ran straight toward the Magia Tree.

As soon as he got within a certain range of the Magia Tree, a Magia Fruit that was chanting Buddhist mantras unfurled its pages.

The next moment, red lotuses and hellfire descended from the sky.

“The Hellfire Red Lotus? Interesting!”

Ye Qing barely held back his laughter when he saw the sky of hellfire and red lotuses. If he was anyone else, then this would’ve been quite the problem. But him? He was the man who mastered “Hellfire Red Lotus Saber Art”! If there was one person in the world who was familiar with the Hellfire Red Lotus, it was him!

Ye Qing straightened his palm and slashed upward like he was wielding a saber.

Red lotuses immediately bloomed on the ground and floated into the air.

In the sky, red lotuses fell like the rain. On the ground, red lotuses floated like sky lanterns.

For a time, red lotuses clashed against red lotuses, and hellfire clashed against hellfire. The entire world seemed to have turned into a sea of fire and red lotuses.

Ye Qing swung his palm downward, and the sea of fire and red lotuses split apart to reveal a path.

Ye Qing strode along the path. Neither the red lotuses nor the hellfire could so much as harm a hair on his person.

After he passed through the sea of flames and walked about ten meters or so, a series of draconic roars erupted from the sky. When he looked up, he saw three thunder dragons bursting out of the clouds with a chariot behind their backs.

A divine being clad in golden armor was riding the chariot. A spear in his hand, he cast his gaze down onto the world.

There was another roar, and the chariot rapidly descended toward the earth. Long before the divine being got close, his pressure already enveloped both heaven and earth in its suffocating embrace.

By the time he was halfway toward the ground, the divine being raised his spear and threw it straight at Ye Qing.

Rumble!

An outrageous amount of lightning immediately spilled down the heavens like someone had tipped over a thunder pool.

“Gulp...”

Mountain Tunneling King gulped audibly. Although he wasn't the divine being's target, he still turned as white as a ghost. He could not imagine how he could even begin to resist such power.

Ye Qing remained calm and collected, however. A black fish and a white fish began swimming around him in a profound manner. Their movement encompassed both soft and hard forces, inaction and action, yin and yang. It looked like a scar of the Great Way itself.

White Crane Taoist's tai chi circle only had the shape and none of the essence. On the other hand, Ye Qing's tai chi possessed both appearance and essence.

The waterfall of lightning engulfed Ye Qing the next moment, but once again, not one speck of it managed to harm a hair on Ye Qing's person. He strode ever forward like he was taking a stroll in his backyard.

Of course, the waterfall of lightning was just the appetizer. The real threat was the divine being's spear.

Suddenly, the spear disappeared and reappeared just ten meters away from Ye Qing's head. A thousand lightning howled at the same time and aligned themselves next to the spear like armed escorts. Every time the spear descended three meters, the lightning surrounding would condense around the spear.

Ten meters later, the spear looked positively purple, and lightning runes surrounded it from head to toe. Somehow, the spear had taken in the waterfall of lightning unto itself.

Thunder could not be seen, but right here and now, there was no denying that the spear was a symbol of divine retribution.

At first glance, the purple spear did not look nearly as intimidating as before. After all, the waterfall of lightning that accompanied it before was nowhere to be found. However, there was no denying that both its power and its aura were many, many times stronger than before.

Ye Qing did not try to block the spear. He didn't even try to dodge out of the way. It was as if the spear that could split mountains and rip the earth in half was no more but a harmless breeze. He allowed it to hit him squarely in the head.

The world grew silent for a moment, and two fishes swimming around Ye Qing came to a stop as well. At the same time, invisible waves rippled to the surroundings.

The next moment, the two fishes began swimming again, and a noise started from underneath his feet.

At first, it was as weak as a cicada's chirp. Then, it grew louder until it resembled a running stream. Next, it evolved into a thunderstorm that seemed like it would never end, and finally, it roared as if an earthquake was about to happen.

In fact, the earth was shaking violently, and the ground directly beneath Ye Qing's feet began crumbling inch by inch after the noise began.

"Reciprocation is important. Eat spear!"

Ye Qing smirked, lifted his foot, and brought it down strongly. Half of the floating island that supported the Magic Tree instantly shattered into pieces and fell from the sky. It was a stunning sight to say the least.

At the same time, the two fishes swimming around grew increasingly profound. They generated action from inaction, changed soft to hard, transformed slowness to swiftness, and converted yin to yang.

The spear standing on his head immediately shot back toward the divine being even faster and stronger than before.

Buzz!

Space itself ripped apart like cheap fabric. The three thunder dragons and golden-armored divine being never stood a chance. Not only did the spear rip them to shreds, it punched through the clouds and disappeared into the sky in just the blink of an eye. It would be a long time before the thunderous rumblings in the sky ceased.

“Nine Impetus of Tai Chi. When the nine impetuses are as one, heaven and earth itself may be overturned. Not bad.”

Satisfaction welled in Ye Qing’s heart as he glanced at the divine being’s remains.