

Stranger 741

Chapter 741: Impetus of Tai Chi

The technique he used just now was called the “Impetus of Tai Chi”, and it combined all nine impetuses into one. The “Impetus of Tai Chi” was the ultimate technique of the “Nine Impetus of Tai Chi”, and it could only be performed after the practitioner had mastered all other impetuses—fast or slow, action or inaction, hard or soft, yin and yang—and combined them all into the ultimate impetus, a.k.a the “Impetus of Tai Chi”. Not only could it neutralize forces and block certain attacks, it could even reflect an opponent’s attack right back at them.

The “Impetus of Tai Chi” was incredibly powerful, but it was equally difficult to cultivate. The keys to mastering the “Impetus of Tai Chi” was a vast reservoir of true qi and an unbreakable body. After all, if you couldn’t even withstand the enemy’s force, then how could you possibly reflect it back at the enemy?

In fact, Ye Qing had grasped the “Impetus of Tai Chi” before he entered the Death Sea thanks to Nanke. However, his body wasn’t strong enough to unveil its full power. Things were different now. His body had entered the Grandmaster stage, and it was tempered by the Profound Yellow Mother Qi no less. Now that his body was at least ten times stronger than before, it was more than capable of unleashing the full might of the “Impetus of Tai Chi”.

Even better, Ye Qing felt that he was still far away from reaching the absolute ceiling of the “Impetus of Tai Chi”. If he could merge the power of the Profound Yellow Mother Qi into the technique, he was sure that it would become even more powerful.

After annihilating his opponent with his own technique, Ye Qing abruptly sped up and dashed toward the Magic Tree at high speed. Seemingly angered by Ye Qing’s total annihilation of its trial, every Magic Tree began wobbling and shining unnaturally. For a time, Taoist sounds, Buddhist radiance, and demonic qi merged together to create a sight no words could sufficiently describe.

Then, countless Magic Fruits flipped open and unleashed their Magic. The Yellow River descended from the sky, avalanches both rock and snow collapsed on top of Ye Qing from multiple directions, walls of sword qi surged toward him with deadly intent, a sea of qi moving mountains and rivers to squish him like a bug, purple rising from the east to blot out the celestial bodies, the sun and moon shining so bright that the stars might as well be invisible...

Ye Qing never stopped running, however. He didn’t even slow down. He smashed apart the waters of the Yellow River with his shoulder, redirected the avalanches away from him using the “Impetus of Tai Chi”, blew apart the sea of qi threatening him from multiple sides with a shout, swallowed the purple qi from the east, and even shattered the sun, moon and stars that attempted to block his way with one punch.

So much power and so many Magic, and yet not a single thing could Ye Qing’s march! None!

On the ground, Mountain Tunneling King was positively dazzled by Ye Qing’s performance. Any one of the Magic currently assaulting Ye Qing could have pressured him into revealing a trump card or two to survive. All of them at once? Even the merest brush would be enough to kill him. And yet, Ye Qing looked so casual, confident, and untouchable he was like a living god whose powers were strong enough to overwhelm anything and everything.

This was the moment Mountain Tunneling King's opinion of Ye Qing truly changed completely. For the first time, he looked up to the young man like he was seeing his own god.

Ye Qing was too busy to pry into Mountain Tunnel King's thoughts right now. Even if he knew, it wouldn't bother him one bit.

When he finally reached the trunk of the Magia Tree, the Magia Fruits abruptly closed themselves, and the storm of Magia ravaging the area abruptly vanished like it never happened.

He had overcome the Magia Tree's trials. It was time to pluck the fruits of victory.

From a distance, the Magia Tree didn't seem so imposing. But now that he was standing underneath it, Ye Qing was starting to realize just how massive it was even compared to your millennia-old trees.

The Magia Tree was over a hundred meters tall. It would take at least a dozen people to hug its tree trunk completely. Its leaves and branches were so thick that the shadow it cast almost felt like nighttime, and he felt positively like an ant in terms of size.

Ye Qing did not rush to pluck a Magia Tree. Instead, he circled around it once and examined it carefully before producing three Incenses of Fortune from his Nine Heavens. He lit them one by one.

After the incense sticks were ignited, he prayed to the Magia Tree and said, "I'm counting on you, brother Incense..."

As soon as he said this, the three Incense of Fortune began burning at an accelerated rate. Puffs of blue smoke floated into the sky, pierced through the thick leaves and branches, and began checking out each and every Magia Fruit as if they were sentient.

The closer they got to the Magia Fruits, the faster the incense sticks burned. At this rate, they were going to burn out in just a dozen or so breaths.

The blue smoke didn't stop, however. Sometimes, they would linger near a Magia Fruit as if they had made their decision. Then, they would move away and float higher up the tree.

"Ahem... I don't need perfection, brother Incense. I'm fine with just an excellent Magia that won't kill me or something."

Ye Qing hurriedly said when he saw this. It would be terrible if they ran out of steam before they could decide on the perfect Magia Fruit for him.

Seemingly understanding Ye Qing's meaning, the blue smoke paused in front of a Magia Fruit right before the three Incenses of Fortune would burn out.

Ye Qing's eyes lit up, and he leaped into the air to pluck the Magia Fruit.

It was at this moment he suddenly blanked out for an instant. It was less than a fraction of a second, but it was enough time for a hand to appear out of nowhere and grab the Magia Fruit.

It was literally just a hand; a hand that looked like it had been severed by a sharp blade. There was no denying that it had plucked the Magia Fruit, however.

The palm of the severed hand split open, and the fruit disappeared into the gap as if swallowed. Then, an annoying cackle came from the same gap, “Hahaha... Thank you so much for your trouble, brother. I will gladly accept this gift of yours.”

“You may not have the stomach to claim my spoil!”

The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind. This time though, he was the praying mantis. Absolutely furious, Ye Qing threw out a punch in an attempt to crush the hand like a bug.

“Calm down, brother. Haven’t you heard that impulse is the devil?”

The severed hand jeered and did a strange twirl. Ye Qing recognized it as a profound palm technique though. After all, it somehow managed to redirect his deadly punch elsewhere.

“Shit!”

It was after the punch that Ye Qing realized that he had fucked up. Unfortunately, it was too late. The severed hand had redirected his fist force against the Magia Tree!

Boom!

The Magia Tree wobbled, and countless cracks spread across its jade-like bark. An unbelievable amount of tree leaves fell from above like the rain.

The ploy was scummy, but it worked. The Magia Tree believed that it was Ye Qing who attacked it and lashed out with its numerous tree branches.

Ye Qing kicked off the tree trunk and shot toward the periphery like an arrow. However, the Magia Fruits flipped open and unleashed their Magia at him. His figure instantly vanished beneath a storm of power.

“I told you that impulse is the devil, didn’t I? You only have yourself to blame for this outcome.”

Meanwhile, the severed hand had reappeared not far away to jeer at Ye Qing. However, it barely finished before the storm of Magia suddenly parted like a flood against a solid rock, and a figure jumped toward it while moving his fingers like he was playing the pipa. He was, of course, Ye Qing.

Twang twang twang!

Invisible ripples appeared in the sky, and the severed hand exclaimed in surprise, “You’re quite strong, brother! I guess I won’t be playing with you any longer!”

The severed hand was just about to leave when suddenly, thunderclaps erupted from the surrounding space. The severed hand let out a strange cry before exploding into bits as if it had been crushed by a boulder.

“Argh!”

As soon as the hand exploded, a bloodcurdling scream erupted from the ground about one hundred meters from the floating island. The next second, a middle-aged man appeared out of seemingly nowhere.

The man looked to be in his forties. He was dressed in rags and wearing strange, comedic make-up. It was almost as if he was a circus clown.

The man's left wrist was ripped apart and bleeding profusely. The wound was so deep that one could see the bones inside. Strangely, the man was smiling happily.

"How ruthless of you, brother. I won't forget this..."

The man's mouth split into a wide, exaggerated grin. Then, he turned around and ran away.

"Stay right there!"

Mountain Tunneling King hurriedly gave chase when he saw this.

On the floating island, Ye Qing attempted to chase after the strange man as well. However, he quickly realized that he was stuck on the island almost as if the space around him was locked. Not only that, he was getting closer and closer to the Magia Tree.

The next moment, the Magia Fruits flipped open and engulfed him in a storm of Magia once more.

Chapter 742: The Oriole Behind

Although the Magia Tree allowed anyone and everyone to pluck its Magia Fruits, they were deathly afraid of getting hurt. Anyone who attacked it or hurt it would earn its eternal ire, and it would not stop until it had slain its attacker.

That was what the strange man had done. He had redirected his attack onto the Magia Tree so that the Stranger would do his dirty work for him.

If the Magia Tree's trials were just a breeze, then the assault Ye Qing was currently weathering was a storm.

Ye Qing was defending himself using the "Impetus of Tai Chi", and for several times, he was able to charge out of the Magia Tree's attack range. However, every time he was moments away from departing the floating island, he would encounter all sorts of obstacles. One time, the air became as sticky as a swamp, and his steps became painfully slow. Another time, he began reversing back to the Magia Tree as if his momentum was somehow being reversed. He was also beset by more mundane obstacles such as a thick fog that was difficult to navigate through or a spatial lockdown that pinned him in place.

"You piece of—! Do I look like a saint to you?"

He was annoyed enough that his prize was snatched away by an oriole, and now the damn tree wouldn't let him go no matter what! A dark flame began to burn inside his heart.

A steely glint flashed in Ye Qing's eyes as the tai chi circle around him neutralized or redirected the storm of Magia elsewhere. Then, he charged toward the Magia Tree instead.

Seemingly noticing the threat he posed, the Magia Tree grew even more violent than before. The wind howled, the rain poured, the purple qi boiled, the mountains and rivers shook, the stars and moon fell, the nine suns aligned in the sky... It unleashed even deadlier Magia at Ye Qing all at once.

Ye Qing just kept running. His response toward the terrifying storm of Magia was to raise his fist, muster his fist intent, and charge ever forward.

Who could stop the lone cavalry when even death had lost its sway on him?

The fist force punched right through the storm of Magia like it was made of paper. It continued to fly toward the Magia Tree without slowing in the slightest.

The Magia Fruits flipped its pages like crazy and shot beams of light toward the Magia Tree. When they landed, countless runes and Buddhist patterns appeared on its crystalline trunk, and its color turned into lapis lazuli.

A golden Buddha appeared at the bottom of the tree, holding a prithvi mudra and wearing a kind smile. When his palm moved an inch forward, a hundred and eight Arhats appeared in front of him and assumed a formation. When it moved two inches forward, eighteen Bodhisattvas manifested and sat cross-legged on the ground. When it moved three inches forward, the Buddhas of three times—Dipamkara (the Buddha of the past), Shakyamuni (present) and Maitreya (future)—showed themselves while chanting a Buddhist sutra.

There existed a Kingdom of Buddha within three inches of space.

Meanwhile, Ye Qing's fist force was still traveling toward the Magia Tree. Not only was his fist intent unending, it kept growing stronger and stronger until it was level with the heavens themselves.

When a warrior's fist intent was like the will of the heavens, it could reach even the gods and the demons.

Rumble!

There was a terrible outburst of power. Like Sun Wukong causing havoc in Heaven's Palace, Ye Qing's fist had shattered the one hundred and eight Arhats, the eighteen Bodhisattvas, and the three Buddhas. Then, it finally landed on the Magia Tree's tree trunk.

Thunk!

It sounded like someone was hitting a giant bell with a hammer. Sound waves so dense they were almost visible rippled out of the Magia Tree, shattering the ground and shaking the floating island.

"Hmm! You're quite tough, aren't you?"

Ye Qing was surprised. His "Break Through" had left only a small imprint on the tree's bark. He could also tell it was dozens of times tougher than it was before. With his current strength, it would probably take him a dozen punches before he could crack its trunk, much less destroy it.

"But so what? Let's see how tough you really are!"

When someone had lost their temper, there was nothing they wouldn't do. Ye Qing sneered and transformed into the Chaos Demon Ape.

Unlike before, his fur wasn't as black as tar anymore. It was dark yellow probably because he absorbed the Profound Yellow Mother Qi. While he wasn't nearly as terrifying-looking as before, he was now strong, beautiful, and seemingly as unshakeable as the earth itself.

As soon as his transformation was complete, Ye Qing immediately grabbed the Magia Tree's trunk, roared, and pulled with all his might. He was attempting to rip the Magia Tree out of the earth!

Sensing danger, the Magia Tree attempted to push him back with a flurry of powerful Magia. Its trunk was also shining brightly and emanating enough heat to melt steel and jade like nothing.

Ye Qing could not seem to feel it, however. The dark yellow energies circulating around his body was protecting him from the worst of it. Letting out a deafening roar, he kept pulling until his arms were bulging, and his legs were sinking into the ground. Moments later, the Magia Tree was ripped right out of the ground.

Mountain Tunneling King had returned from his pursuit just in time to see Ye Qing ripping out the Magia Tree in his Chaos Demon Ape form. His mouth fell open dumbly as he stopped in his tracks.

He had heard of powerful warriors taking no damage whatsoever during the Magia Tree's trials. He had also heard of people stealing a Magia Fruit from right under its nose before booking it like the wind. He had even heard of warriors who were so powerful that the Magia Tree outright gave them a Magia Fruit without bothering to test them.

But not once had he heard of anyone being strong enough to destroy the Magia Tree. Not only was he witnessing it, Ye Qing was doing it in a manner that he did not think was possible. He was pulling it out by the roots almost as if it was just an ordinary plant!

Rumble...

After the Magia Tree was ripped out of the ground, invisible thunderclaps immediately erupted in the sky, and the floating island began shaking violently and crumbling piece by piece.

Ye Qing roared and raised the Magia Tree high, high in the air. Its branches and roots flailed with mad desperation, but it wasn't able to break free no matter what it tried.

On a related note, the floating island seemed incapable of floating without the Magia Tree to support it. It immediately plummeted toward the ground.

Boom boom boom!

The dust clouds were massive, and it sounded as if the deafening rumbles would never end. A long time later, when both the dust clouds and the rumblings finally subsided somewhat, neither Ye Qing nor the Magia Tree was anywhere to be seen. All Mountain Tunneling King could see was the debris.

"Young master! Young master!"

Mountain Tunneling King waited until the dust cloud subsided some more before rushing into the giant pile of debris and calling out to Ye Qing again and again.

"Cough! Cough!"

It was at this moment he heard a coughing sound from a certain direction. When he turned around, he saw Ye Qing standing on top of a pile of debris, pinching his nose and coughing non-stop.

Mountain Tunneling King immediately raced forward and showered him with concern, "Are you alright, young master?"

He knew that Ye Qing was fine, of course. He was the man who ripped out the Magia Tree by the roots after all. However, that was no reason for him not to show his concern.

"I'm fine... cough! Cough!"

Ye Qing responded before summoning his astral qi and pushing away the dust and soot covering his body. He then asked, "Where's that man?"

"My apologies, young master, but I failed to catch him," Mountain Tunneling King's voice turned a tad fearful as he replied.

"Do you know who he is?"

Luckily for him, Ye Qing was a reasonable man. The strange man was definitely a Grandmaster, and he was strong enough to catch even him off guard. It was perfectly natural that Mountain Tunneling King wouldn't be able to catch up to such a guy. He just wanted to know the strange man's identity.

Mountain Tunneling King let out a sigh of relief before answering, "If I'm not mistaken, he is the one they call Ugly Slave, young master."

"Ugly Slave?" Ye Qing lifted his eyebrows.

"Ugly Slave is ranked ninety-third on the Earth Champions Ranking, and he was born with full body paralysis. His parents discarded him in the wilderness after finding out his disability, but he was rescued by the Heretic Doctor, Xu Songshan."

Mountain Tunneling King explained, "Unfortunately for Ugly Slave, Xu Songshan wasn't called the Heretic Doctor because his methods were unorthodox, but because he was pure evil. He loved experimenting his drugs and methods on live subjects, and Ugly Slave had been a victim almost since the day he was born. I probably don't need to tell you how horrible that is."

"Although Ugly Slave was born crippled, he was surprisingly talented in the ways of martial arts. In fact, he was a martial genius. Despite his broken body, he invented a martial art called the 'Body Separation Soul Controlling Art' that allowed him to detach his limbs from his body and control them using subsouls. Essentially, each limb is an entity of its own. It is quite anomalous."

Chapter 743: Celestial Palace In The Clouds

"Be careful, young master. Ugly Slave is cruel, unpredictable, vengeful and cunning. Since you hurt him, he will surely seek you out for revenge," Mountain Tunneling King added while recalling all the rumors regarding Ugly Slave.

"I would've sought him out anyway, so that's perfect," Ye Qing sneered.

"That's true. I'm sure he won't be a match for you, young master."

Mountain Tunneling King gave Ye Qing an obsequious smile before voicing his curiosity, "By the way, where is the Magic Tree, young master?"

"It's right here!" Ye Qing responded and raised his left hand. As it turned out, he was holding a small, crystalline tree about three or four inches tall in his left hand.

“That’s the Magia Tree? Why did it become so small?” Mountain Tunneling King was stunned to say the least. He could not understand how or why the gargantuan Magia Tree had shrunk down to this.

“I’m not sure myself. It became like this after I ripped it out of the ground,” Ye Qing replied with a shrug. As he said, the Magia Tree began shrinking after he ripped it out of the earth, and the floating island began crumbling. By the time they hit the ground, it was only three or four inches long.

Appearance wise, nothing else seemed different about the Magia Tree. It still had a massive canopy, and its branches were covered in many Magia Fruits.

As he spoke, Ye Qing casually waved the Magia Tree a little. Then, something unexpected happened. The Magia Tree abruptly shone brightly, and the Magia Fruits flipped open to fire a blast of wind and lightning. When it hit the ground, everything within a hundred meters immediately went up in flames.

Boom!

“What the...”

Ye Qing was stunned, of course. He was also feeling a little light-headed. It was a sign that he had used up a little too much spiritual power.

The Magia Tree’s light slowly dimmed, and the Magia Fruits closed themselves. It returned to normal after that.

“Huh. Whoever says that nothing good comes out of a setback? This is wonderful!”

Ye Qing quickly figured out what just happened and broke into a wide grin. He didn’t know why, but the Magia Tree hadn’t died after he ripped it out of the ground. Instead, it transformed into something resembling a Strange Artifact. As long as he provided it with spiritual power, then the Magia Fruits would unleash their Magia.

He lost a Magia Fruit, but earned an entire Magia Tree as a result. This was awesome to say the least!

He would need to experiment with it. For starters, he wanted to know if he could identify the Magia imbued in each Magia Fruit. Even better, he wanted to know if he could control each individual Magia. If he could, then the Magia Tree would be a priceless weapon.

“Congratulations, young master! Congratulations on obtaining a... Magia artifact!”

“Thanks, but it remains to be seen how valuable it really is.” Ye Qing shook his head before saying, “Anyway, we’re done here. Let’s get out of this place.”

“Yes, young master.”

Ye Qing took the lead, and Mountain Tunneling King followed closely behind.

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“Hah...”

Mountain Tunneling King let out a long stream of white breath as he trekked toward heavens-know-where, his hair and eyebrows covered in thick ice.

“Y-young master... is it just me, or is it getting colder?” Mountain Tunneling King asked while rubbing his hands furiously. He looked back and forth between Ye Qing—the young man was currently busy experimenting with the Magia Tree—and the huge, round sun above their heads.

Looking at the sun, you would think that the environment would be swelteringly hot. In reality, the sunrays felt as cold as ice and penetrated all the way to the bone. It was colder than standing naked in the middle of the coldest winter, which was why even he, a Grandmaster, was affected to a certain extent.

“Yeah. It’s probably because of the sunlight. Remember that the natural laws of this place are chaotic and in shambles. Most things do not work as they seem.”

As he spoke, Ye Qing gave his Magia Tree a shake. A sword beam missed the tip of Mountain Tunneling King’s nose by millimeters and cut open the grassy ground underneath his feet. Globbs of blood immediately spilled out of the grass, and a dead body was revealed. It looked like the body had just died not long ago.

Maybe it was because the cold had slowed down his thoughts, but it took Mountain Tunneling King a good few seconds before he realized what just happened—or rather, what almost happened to him. His back immediately broke out in cold sweat.

If it wasn’t for Ye Qing, he might have been swallowed by the grassy ground and killed just like the dead warrior.

“Thank you for saving my life, young master.” Mountain Tunneling King hurriedly voiced his thanks.

“Mm. Stay alert,” Ye Qing instructed before returning his attention to the Magia Tree.

A short while later, a light rain began falling from the sky. The drizzle looked soft, dreamy, and invigorating like a spring rain, but...

“Shit! It burns!”

Mountain Tunneling King nearly jumped when the raindrops hit his skin and sizzled like it was oil. He hurriedly covered himself in a layer of astral qi.

The rainwater wasn't as ice cold as he thought it would be. Instead, it was as hot as boiling water.

Ye Qing didn’t seem to notice it though. It was probably because the rainwater automatically slid off as soon as it came within one meter of him. It was as if he was protected by an invisible shield. Not a single drop was able to touch his skin.

As time passed, the rainwater grew hotter and hotter. It wasn’t long before the entire place was colored in steam, and it felt like they were food inside a cooking pot.

Despite his astral qi, Mountain Tunneling King was sweating non-stop and turned completely red like a boiled lobster.

“Young master... I don’t think I can keep going...”

Mountain Tunneling King tried to wipe away the sweat on his forehead, but when he looked down at his hand, he realized that he had accidentally wiped away an entire layer of skin. The worst part was that he couldn’t feel any pain whatsoever. Clearly, his flesh had been cooked from the inside out.

At this rate, he really was going to be cooked like a lobster. Throw in some sauce and vinegar and add in a bottle of wine, and he would be the perfect dinner!

Ye Qing shot Mountain Tunneling King a glance before shaking the Magia Tree again. A beam of green, floral light struck the Grandmaster and filled him with a cool, refreshing sensation. His ailments disappeared, and his body recovered in just the blink of an eye.

“Thank you, young master!” Mountain Tunneling King saluted Ye Qing.

“You’re welcome. You should—”

Ye Qing looked up at the endless rain above his head and frowned. He was going to send Mountain Tunneling King back to the entrance.

The reason he brought the Grandmaster over in the first place wasn’t because he thought he would be useful, but because he was hoping to intimidate the man with his exploits. He wanted to cement his loyalty and make it so that Mountain Tunneling King would serve him from the bottom of his heart.

He succeeded. He could clearly sense Mountain Tunneling King’s fear and respect—no, reverence toward him. The Grandmaster now viewed him like his one true god, and he could no longer sense even a speck of betrayal in his heart. Therefore, it should be safe to send him back to Shangguan Hongjin, Pedant Earth and Mrs. Basket.

However, he wasn’t able to finish his sentence before a palace suddenly appeared in the sky. It was huge, magnificent-looking, and surrounded by thousands and thousands of ribbons of auspicious qi. It looked like a celestial palace floating in the clouds.

“Hahaha...”

The next moment, a bright laugh came from the palace. The clouds swirled, and the image of a woman sitting in a large hall appeared.

The woman looked like the paragon of beauty itself. Stunning, bewitching, fantastical. She was so beautiful that no singular term could hope to properly describe her. One look was all she needed to steal one’s breath and soul.

The moment the woman appeared, the rain froze, the fog stilled, and the wind stopped. It was as if time itself had frozen for this woman; capitulated to her in awe of her beauty.

At that moment, every living being in the world fell in love with that woman.

Then, they began charging toward the palace—more specifically, the woman—at top speed.

Ye Qing and Mountain Tunneling King were no exception.

Chapter 744: Cities Have Fallen Over Her Beauty

Countless people swarmed the palace from every direction. There were genius warriors from the Huan Champions Ranking such as Xu Rulin, Defeated, the Holy Son of Maitreya, Zhang Lingyang; Earth Champions Ranking Grandmasters such as Blood Rakshasa, Mistress Qu, and the Mortician; and many, many more nobodies.

Everyone's face was fraught with love and intoxication. They could only stare blankly at the woman in the sky and walk toward her.

Auspicious clouds joined together to form multiple flights of stairs that led up to the sky. The bewitched people woodenly climbed the stairs and toward her. It wasn't long before they were all gathered in front of the palace.

"Celestial palace my ass... Peh!"

Ye Qing hid a scoff as he stared at the palace in front of him. In fact, he had snapped out of his bewitched state even before he set foot on the staircase of auspicious clouds. The reason he continued to act bewitched was because the woman's laughter gave him a very familiar feeling. Specifically, it reminded him of the severed hand he saw during the Hill Carrier's Treasure Appreciation Auction.

The hand had been so bewitching that everyone had fallen in love with it at first sight. However, its influence was practically nothing compared to the woman inside the palace. After all, everyone within tens, maybe even hundreds of kilometers of her had fallen hopelessly in love with the woman after she showed herself. Among the influenced were powerful warriors from the Human Champions Ranking and Earth Champions Ranking as well.

That wasn't all. He could feel her influence growing the closer he got to the palace.

The reason he awoke so quickly was one, because he entered the Grandmaster stage and was much, much stronger than he was before, and two, because of the Profound Yellow Mother Qi.

The Profound Yellow Mother Qi was a natural karmic qi with the ability to improve one's body and talent, shield one from negative or demonic influences, and greatly bolster one's physical and mental defenses. It was infinitely useful.

Thanks to the Profound Yellow Mother Qi, he was able to shake off the woman's influence quickly and see the palace for what it truly was.

In another person's eyes, the stairs were made of auspicious clouds. But in his eyes? They were built from countless dead bodies.

Just the same, the so-called celestial palace looked huge, magnificent and luxurious to most people, but what he saw was a dilapidated building that seemed horribly damaged by the ravages of war.

Everyone ran inside the palace after they set foot on it. Ye Qing was no exception.

The interior of the palace looked pretty broken as well, but it was wide and spacious, and glimpses of its former glory peeked out here and there.

There was a huge throne at the center of the palace. A woman was sitting on it.

She was the one who appeared outside the palace earlier. She was exactly as—no, she was even more beautiful and charming than the illusion they were shown. Even with his mental fortitude, one look at her face was almost enough to steal Ye Qing's soul away.

Something was strange, however. There was a peachwood nail stuck inside her forehead. Thin and long, it pierced through her whole head and nailed her to the throne behind her back.

There was no bloodstain around the wound though. In fact, the peachwood nail looked as red as blood. It was as if the nail had absorbed all the blood inside her head.

Besides that, the woman was missing her left hand as well.

If Ye Qing only suspected that she was the owner of the severed hand he encountered at the Treasure Appreciation Auction before, now he was one hundred percent certain.

The woman looked incredibly lifelike, but Ye Qing's demonic thought told him that there was no life inside her body. He wondered why.

The warriors who entered the room began forming lines in front of the woman. When they were ready, a man stepped up to the woman, cut open his wrist, and held it to her luscious lips. Almost immediately, his body began shriveling at an visible rate. Clearly, the woman was feeding on his blood.

Although he was dying, the man did not snap back to wakefulness or notice his state at all. He just wore an obsessive, infatuated smile on his face.

A short while later, the man was completely drained and turned into a withered corpse. But somehow, he was still moving. He stiffly stepped behind the woman and stood there.

The man's smile never changed from the start until the end. His eyes did not stray from her for even a second either.

As for the others, it was almost as if they were staring at the air. They did not find the bizarre, positively terrifying scene disturbing in the slightest.

After the man stepped away, another warrior walked up to the woman, cut open his wrist, and fed the woman as well.

It wasn't long before the woman had sucked five people's blood. One of them was a Grandmaster too.

Ye Qing wondered if it was his imagination, but the woman seemed to look even more lifelike than before after consuming five people's blood.

Is she still alive?

Ye Qing could not help but entertain the terrifying thought.

The Dark Overlord Li Hentian was the greatest warrior in the world eight hundred years ago. However, this woman probably wasn't too far behind him. Assuming she really was still alive, this meant that she had somehow lived for over eight hundred years. Just how scary was that?

It was at this moment a familiar figure walked toward the woman. He was none other than Zhang Lingyang.

Ye Qing hadn't fought Zhang Lingyang back at the basin, but he did probe him with his demonic thought before. That was how he knew that the man was exceptionally strong. So strong, in fact, that he could not have beaten him before he became a Grandmaster.

It was also why he did not believe that Zhang Lingyang was still enthralled by the woman's supernatural charm.

He was unable to perceive the warrior's inner thoughts, however. Not even a little. It was like he was peering into a bottomless old well where the water was perfectly still.

He was right. After Zhang Lingyang reached the woman, he abruptly pulled out a short saber and thrust it at the woman's throat.

Clang!

What happened next stunned both him and Zhang Lingyang, however. When his saber struck the woman's throat, it actually sounded like he was hitting metal. It failed to leave even the slightest mark on the woman's skin as well. Not only that, Zhang Lingyang was pushed back a few steps, and his hand was numb from the impact.

"Oh my... they say that a pretty girl's skin is made of water, so why are yours harder than even stone?"

Zhang Lingyang shook his wrist while wearing an odd expression on his face. "I was going to give you an easy death since you're so pretty, but I guess I have no choice but to get violent. This sin is going to haunt my dreams to come!"

Despite his frivolous words, Zhang Lingyang was as tense as he could be on the inside. It was because he knew how powerful the woman was. The only reason he was immune to her influence was thanks to his master's gift, a Five Thunder Heavenly Master Seal, an item of supreme yang.

The reason he came here despite being immune was one, he wanted to know exactly what was the thing that bewitched so many people at once, and two, he wanted to nab a treasure or two. That was why he came here after all; to become rich as fuck.

At first, he was quite satisfied with his decision. For one, the woman really was one of, if not the prettiest women he had ever seen in his life. If she wasn't a blood-sucking monster, then he really would have hesitated to destroy such a pretty thing. Two, the peachwood nail was a valuable treasure. And how did he know? It was thanks to his man's intuition, of course!

Of course, he was sure that he wasn't the only one who was untouched by the woman's influence. They must surely be plotting the same thing as him. But who was he? He was the champion of the Human Champions Ranking; the future of the Dragon Tiger Mountain! Cowardice and hesitation was not in his blood!

More importantly, he was certain that no one could catch up to him as long as he managed to kill the monster and take the peachwood nail.

To pull off this feat, he would need to kill the woman in one strike. That was why he chose the Demon Suppressing Saber. The Demon Suppressing Saber was a weapon specifically designed by the Heavenly Master Mansion to defeat evil and suppress dark powers. It was especially potent against evil and yin-type Strangers such as the one right in front of him.

Unfortunately, things didn't go as planned. He had imagined many scenarios in his head, but he never imagined that his Demon Suppressing Saber would fail to harm even a hair on the woman's person.

He was on his highest alert as a result of this.

The pic below is Chi Wuyao from Against The Gods. I believe it's the best pic that describes this upcoming character.

Chapter 745: Heavenly Master Nine Word Command

As soon as he finished talking, Zhang Lingyang charged toward the woman once more, the Demon Suppressing Saber spinning in his hand and drawing a demon suppressing rune in the air.

He swung his saber, but the five withered corpses behind the woman rushed out at the same time. One of them stood in front of the woman and took his attack head on, disintegrating into a pile of ashes as a result. The other four attacked him from multiple directions.

In response, Zhang Lingyang flipped his palm upward to reveal three flowers that sprouted six leaves.

In one palm strike, he sent the four corpses flying through the air like rag dolls. Lightning burst out of their body and disintegrated them into ash as well.

“Tsk tsk... you think that a couple of walking trash is enough to stop I, Zhang Lingyang? You could control everyone here, and you still wouldn't be able to defeat me!”

Zhang Lingyang scoffed and tried to attack the woman again, but he had just twitched a muscle when he felt a blast of wind behind his back. With a step in and a spin, he traded places with his ambusher and struck him at the back of his head.

Bang!

It was like he was striking a gong, except that the impact was dull and fleshy. The ambusher immediately collapsed in a heap.

The woman gave him no time to breathe though. A couple more warriors attacked him, and one of them was even a Grandmaster.

“You're actually going to try and overwhelm me with numbers?!”

Zhang Lingyang rolled his eyes. He didn't want to make a big fuss about this, but it would seem that he had no choice but to get serious.

While holding the Heavenly Master Five Thunder Seal in his right hand, Zhang Lingyang pressed his tongue against the palate and growled thunder in his abdomen. When the noise climbed up to his mouth, it transformed into the word “Bright”.

When the word left his lips, a strong wind swept the hall as if it was the command of a god, and the sound reverberated throughout the area.

The Heavenly Master Nine Word Command was a secret art passed down within the Heavenly Master Mansion of Dragon Tiger Mountain. The nine words were Heaven, Clear, Earth, Bright,

Dragon, Tiger, Home, and One. Each word possessed their own unique uses, all of them were incredibly powerful.

Of the nine words, “Bright” was the one that sounded most like the rebuke of a god. It possessed the power to suppress evil influences and clear the mind, and it was best used to awaken those whose minds had been bewitched by evil spirits.

That was why he was using it right now. He was hoping to awaken the bewitched warriors and stop them from attacking him.

Unfortunately for him, his attackers and the rest of the group only blinked once as if they were about to jolt back to reality. Then, their eyes glazed over, and their assault on Zhang Lingyang resumed.

“Now how is this possible?”

Zhang Lingyang looked like he had seen a ghost. The Heavenly Master Nine Word Command had never failed him before, but then again, there was always a first time. He had no choice but to defend himself.

That wasn’t all. While Zhang Lingyang was kept busy, the rest of the group continued to walk up to the woman and feed her fresh blood.

As she consumed more blood, the woman’s face began to turn rosier and rosier. Somehow, she looked even more attractive than before.

Unable to break free from his attackers, Zhang Lingyang had no choice but to shout, “Hello? We’re all going to die if that woman comes back to life! Stop pretending and help me already!”

“I thought you said you could handle all of us at the same time, Little Heavenly Master? A mere spirit should be no problem for you.”

In the crowd, Chu Wangsun closed his book and said slowly. His tone was cold and indifferent as if he was just stating a fact.

“Nonsense! Don’t you know who I am, Brother Chu? I am the handsome, compassionate and low-key Zhang Lingyang! I would never make such a shameless comment! You must have heard wrong!” Zhang Lingyang declared without a shred of shame whatsoever. “Anyway, help me already, Brother Chu! Who knows what might happen if we take too long?”

Chu Wangsun did not respond. Instead, he took one step forward and appeared in front of the woman in the blink of an eye. Then, he swung his book at the woman’s forehead.

As the book descended, the image of an ancient sage appeared behind his back, and the sound of wind, rain, and recitations filled everyone’s ears. Be it family, national, or global matters, all matters deserved a book of its own. Therefore, one might say that a book contained the weight of an entire world.

The warriors who attempted to stop him were immediately brought to their knees. Then, the book struck the woman squarely in the forehead.

BOOM!

There was a deafening noise. The hall shook, and both the woman and the throne sank three inches into the ground. They were fine though. If anything, it was Chu Wangsun's book that shattered into a million pieces.

Chu Wangsun lifted an eyebrow. It wasn't just because his "A Book, A World" failed to deal any damage to the woman whatsoever, but also because the controlled crowd were charging toward him with reckless abandon.

His expression remained calm, however. He lifted one finger and brought it down on the woman's forehead. At the same time, one man covered his back with a storm of sword qi, and another chanted Buddhist mantras to shield him from danger.

They were Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya. Clearly, they too had snapped out of the woman's influence.

Chu Wangsun knew they would help him in a timely fashion. That was why he didn't bother to cover his back.

He simply needed to focus on what was in front of him.

This time though, he wasn't aiming at the woman; not exactly. He was aiming at the peachwood nail on her forehead.

Right before Chu Wangsun's finger would hit the nail, the woman on the throne opened her lips a little and made a little murmur.

It was a soft, lazy voice as if she had awoken from a good night's sleep. It was also one of the sexiest voices anyone had ever heard in their life.

Such was her voice that Chu Wangsun's finger slowed down considerably. At the same time, reluctance, pain, and hesitation flitted through his eyes.

"Brother Chu! Wake up!"

Seeing this, Zhang Lingyang shouted like a thunderclap once more. The fluttering books and recitations above Chu Wangsun's head also shaved away at the woman's influence.

Thanks to this, Chu Wangsun quickly regained his consciousness and resumed his attack.

His finger finally made contact with the peachwood nail, and...

Nothing.

That was it.

He could not push further no matter what. Why?

It was because the woman was slowly opening her eyes.

When the woman's eyes fluttered open, all seemed to fade away into nothing except hers.

There was no one and nothing who would not be moved by such beauty.

That was why Chu Wangsun succumbed.

Zhang Lingyang, Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya too lost themselves in her body.

Everyone was wearing an infatuated, crazed expression.

“Hmm...”

The woman wanted to move after she opened her eyes, but the second she tried, mysterious runes abruptly sprung out of the peachwood nail stuck in her forehead. At the same time, it emitted some sort of demonic sound that caused the woman’s face to become contorted in pain.

Her painful expression was such that everyone could not help but sympathize with her. They could not help but think that such an expression did not fit a woman like her.

“Repentance? You want me to repent? Keep dreaming, Li Hentian!”

Suddenly, the woman broke into a smile. It was a smile that could topple cities in an instant.

All at once, the bewitched warriors raised their hands and cut open their wrists. The woman’s vermilion lips parted a little, and streams of blood flew toward her from every direction.

The streams of blood were three inches from her lips when suddenly, they turned a corner and flew toward a separate direction.

“Hahaha... apologies, but I think I can make use of this blood better than you.”

There was a red-haired woman in red robes at the direction the blood was flying to. She looked a little pale for some reason. “What do you say, Brother Cui, Sister Qu?”

“I don’t need anything. I just want her. I only want her.”

“In that case, I want that peachwood nail.”

A woman wearing a long palace dress too stepped out of the crowd and said.

Chapter 746: The Number One Celestial of Wulin

“Blood Rakshasa, Cui Qiuyuan, Qu Langhuan[1]...”

Ye Qing raised a curious eyebrow. The world was a small place when you have enemies. Not only did he recognize all of the Grandmasters present, two out of three of them held a grudge against him.

The woman in red dress was Blood Rakshasa, the handsome middle-aged man was the Mortician Cui Qiuyuan, and the woman in long palace dress was Qu Langhuan, one of the six Mistresses of the Li Hentian Palace. He had met her first at the Ghost Tower, and more recently at the Death Sea.

Blood Rakshasa was looking frail despite her best attempts to disguise her weakness. It was because he screwed her over back at the basin, of course. Her main cultivation art, the “Blood Soul Divine Light” was rooted on fresh blood. Naturally, the best way for her to recover her strength was to consume massive amounts of blood. Moreover, the stronger her victim, the greater the vigor and vitality contained within the blood, the greater the rejuvenation and strengthening effects.

Right now, everyone gathered inside the hall was either a young genius or a Grandmaster. In other words, they were all champions. It was one of the reasons why she chose to intercept the streams of blood. Not only would it prevent the strange woman from growing stronger, the blood could heal her injuries and even advance her cultivation further.

Cui Qiuyuan, the “Mortician” had lost his physical body to yours truly earlier, though it looked like he had created a new body using a secret art or something. It was clear that his mind was a little unstable though. It was probably because his mind was somewhat incompatible with his new body.

His objective was as clear as day. He wanted the woman on the throne.

Judging from how strong the woman was even in her current state, she had to be a Sage in the past. Moreover, her physical body was intact, and even her consciousness seemed to be fairly well preserved. She was the perfect material to create a Corpse Spirit.

If he could obtain her, he would surely grow much, much stronger than before.

As for Qu Langhuan, she wasn’t looking her best either. If he had to guess, she had fought a harsh battle not too long ago.

The reason Qu Langhuan wanted the peachwood nail was obvious: it was a Strange Artifact that had suppressed a Sage for over eight hundred years. To say that it was priceless would be an understatement.

Finally, all three of them chose to reveal themselves now because they thought that the situation was well under control. In fact, they were so comfortable that they had already decided on how to share the loot in a matter of sentences.

Suddenly, the woman on the throne looked at Qu Langhuan and asked softly, “Who is Yan Qingyan, that menial, to you, girl?”

Qu Langhuan stared at the woman with shock and fury. “How dare you! You will not address her Holy Consort of my Li Hentian Palace as a menial!”

Yan Qingyan was one of the thirteen Dark Consorts of the Dark Overlord, Li Hentian. She was also the founder of the Li Hentian Palace, and she addressed herself as his Holy Consort.

“Li Hentian Palace? Holy Consort?”

A faint smile appeared on the woman’s face. It was attractive, beautiful, and full of scorn. “Are you telling me that that menial dared to misuse the Dark Overlord’s name and even styled herself as his Holy Consort? Who does she think she is?”

“Hmph! Why not? Her Holy Consort is one of the Dark Overlord’s Thirteen Dark Consorts!” Qu Langhuan retorted.

“... His Thirteen Dark Consorts? Hahahahaha...”

The woman giggled when she heard this. It was so melodious, so charming, that even Blood Rakshasa and Qu Langhuan—both of them women—lost themselves in her giggle for a moment, much less the men.

Several breaths later, Qu Langhuan finally recovered her wits and burned with embarrassment and anger. “Why are you laughing?”

“Why else? I am simply incredulous that a servant girl who is barely qualified to give me a massage and warm the Dark Overlord’s bed would be so deluded as to call herself his consort, of course!”

The woman smiled at Qu Langhuan. “Wouldn’t you think the same if you were in my position?”

“You dare! You will regret your transgression!” Enraged, Qu Langhuan launched a palm strike with two of her fingers curled inward, and the other three stretched out. A cold wind blew, and a bitter rain fell when she executed the palm technique.

A sudden death, an eternal separation. Its name was the “Divine Palm of Hateful Separation (Li Hen)”.

The woman on the throne looked positively scornful when she saw the palm technique, however. Her lips parted, and she blew away the cold wind and bitter rain with a single breath, leaving behind only fragrant air that reminded one of spring.

“You...” Qu Langhuan was stunned. She wasn’t expecting her “Divine Palm of Hateful Separation” to be dismantled so easily.

“Your technique looks sorrowful, but there is no substance in it. It is clear you have never experienced separation. Is this how Yan Qingyan teaches the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’?”

The woman looked at Qu Langhuan with calm eyes. “Separation is bitter, hate is sorrowful. Such is the cold wind and bitter rain that the soul may break. Only by experiencing the bitterest parting and the most sorrowful hatred humanity has to offer could one grasp the essence of ‘hateful separation’ and the meaning of misery. Only then could you truly claim to have grasped the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’.”

“What, has Yan Qingyan never taught you about this? Or has she forgotten about it?”

Qu Langhuan blanched. “How did you know about the core of the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’?”

The Divine Palm of Hateful Separation was a palm technique in the Divine Art of Hateful Separation, and the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’ was the Li Hentian Palace’s ultimate art and the very foundation of their sect. Naturally, few outsiders were privy to it. However, not only did the woman know about it, she seemed to know it intimately. Of course Qu Langhuan was shocked by this.

“Why? Because I am the one who created the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’. That menial only knew it because I taught her.”

The woman stared at Qu Langhuan’s slack-jawed face and continued, “Hmm. It seems that that menial has expropriated the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’ for herself. I am not surprised. She has always been a selfish, contemptible menial.”

“You may not know this, but the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’ I taught her is incomplete. Does your body feel hot as if you were submerged in a pool of lava every yin day of a yin month of a yin year, and cold as if you were exposed to the coldest winter every yang day of a yang month of a yang year? Moreover, the greater your power, the worse your suffering becomes?”

“Im... Impossible! How could you know this? Who are you?”

All the blood drained away from Qu Langhuan’s face. If she was skeptical of the woman’s claims before, now she was starting to believe her. It was because everything she claimed up until this point was the absolute truth, and for obvious reasons, the flaws of the “Divine Art of Hateful Separation” were strictly kept as a secret. No one except the sect head and the Mistresses were made aware of it.

“Since the menial dared to expropriate the ‘Divine Art of Hateful Separation’, I am sure she wouldn’t tell you my name.”

The woman fell silent for a moment as if absorbed in an old memory before continuing, “I am Murong Xianxian.”

“Murong Xianxian?”

Cui Qiuyuan, Blood Rakshasa and Qu Langhuan blurted out instinctively. Then, their eyes slowly grew wider and wider.

Murong Xianxian was not a nobody’s name. On the contrary, it was such a famous name that there was almost no one in the world who hadn’t heard about it.

“I did not think I would still be remembered eight hundred years later,” the woman admitted.

“You’re Murong Xianxian... but shouldn’t you be dead? Why are you here?” Qu Langhuan looked confused.

Chapter 747: The Secret From Eight Hundred Years Ago

Powerful *wulin* sects had given up their entire family fortune just to earn a meeting with Murong Xianxian.

Promising geniuses had fought each other to the death just to earn her smile.

Famous clans had clashed against one another just to make her happy.

Aristocratic families had given up entire treasure hoards just to earn her favor...

Still, if beauty was all Murong Xianxian possessed, then she wouldn’t be famous even eight hundred years later. Blessed with extraordinary talent and an eidetic memory, she was adept in countless martial arts, methods and essentials. There wasn’t a single art in the world—music, go, literature, painting—she hadn’t grasped; no annals of history or philosophy she wasn’t familiar with. She was literally the embodiment of perfection; the closest human there was to being divine at the time.

Naturally, the Murong Clan exploited her fame to recruit countless warriors and grow their strength tremendously. It didn’t take long before they earned the title of the greatest *wulin* clan in the realm, and for a time, it even looked like they were going to become the greatest clan in the entire world.

Unfortunately, the very person that raised them to the heavens would also be the one who cast them into hell. Murong Xianxian was so famous that she drew the attention of Li Hentian, who at the time was “merely” known as the supreme warrior of the Dark Ways.

Back in the day, Li Hentian was quite the domineering and unruly man. He had issued a Dark Overlord Token and commanded the Murong Clan to surrender Murong Xianxian to him in three days. Otherwise, he was going to annihilate them all.

Naturally, Murong Xianxian disregarded his threat. Riding high on their recent successes, they believed that the Dark Overlord's threat was nothing more but the foolish, conceited words of a delusional man. They even made a statement declaring that they would end Li Hentian where he stood if he so much as set a single step within the Murong Clan's compound.

The Murong Clan thought for sure that the Dark Overlord would reconsider his decision and slink away with his tail between his legs, so when he actually showed up at their doorstep, no one was expecting him at all. As if that wasn't enough, he was alone.

He alone was enough. With his fists and his fists alone, Li Hentian waltzed right through the Murong Clan's door and crushed anyone and anything who dared to stand in his way. Despite mobilizing their army of warriors and throwing everything they had at the man, the Murong Clan was ultimately found wanting. Li Hentian had singlehandedly annihilated their forces and slew the Murong Clan to the last.

In just one night, the century-old Murong Clan was no more. According to the legends, Murong Xianxian had cast herself to a sea of flames and committed suicide in order to preserve her honor.

As the victor, the remains of the Murong Clan lifted Li Hentian to even greater heights of fame and glory. In fact, he was more or less as famous as Murong Xianxian, though of course the reputation they enjoyed were very different. The Dark Overlord Li Hentian only ever incited fear, respect and hatred among the people, whereas Murong Xianxian won the deepest sympathy and sorrow even after she was gone.

Some people said that Murong Xianxian was always going to bring disaster upon herself and her family eventually. Such was the fate of everyone who was too good for this world.

Some people cursed the jealousy of the heavens and lamented the fact that no one like Murong Xianxian would ever grace humanity again.

And some people simply wept at the loss of the one and only Murong Xianxian. Some time later, it was even remarked in Rouge that one of the greatest losses of humanity was surely the death of Murong Xianxian.

In any case, all accounts of Murong Xianxian agreed on one thing: Murong Xianxian was dead, and she was no longer with them. But now, it would seem that they were gravely mistaken. Not only did it look like the greatest beauty of the world eight hundred years ago, Murong Xianxian, was still alive, she had appeared here, she had appeared in a place that was intricately tied to her supposed murderer, the Dark Overlord Li Hentian. How could they not be shocked by this?

Assuming that she was actually Murong Xianxian, then how was it possible that she was still alive after eight hundred years? Even a Sage could only live for two to three hundred years at most. There was no way anyone could live for over eight hundred years... right?

That's right. The woman before them was no ghost, yin soul, or dark being attempting to come back to life via possession. She was a living, breathing human being.

“Dead? Do you want to know why I haven’t perished in a sea of flames eight hundred years ago? Or are you curious why I’m still alive eight hundred years later?”

Murong Xianxian smiled. “I can answer both questions if that is your wish!”

“We are most interested, miss!” Cui Qiuyuan answered with clear interest.

“Very well. I shall begin from the first question.”

Murong Xianxian began, “I have not, in fact, perished in a sea of flames eight hundred years ago. It is but a lie Li Hentian and I had cooked up.”

“A lie?” Blood Rakshasa frowned.

“Yes, it is simply a lie to fool the entire world,” Murong Xianxian confirmed. “Back then, Li Hentian and I had arrived at an agreement: if he assists me in faking my death, then I will marry him and become his wife.”

“You what?!”

The three Grandmasters exchanged incredulous glances with each other. “Excuse me. Was the Dark Overlord not the one who destroyed the Murong Clan after all?”

“No, it was him,” Murong Xianxian answered.

“Did he threaten you into submission or something?” Qu Langhuan asked.

“Did the Murong Clan abuse you? Do you actually loathe them to the bone?” Blood Rakshasa asked.

“The Murong Clan cherish me like a pearl in their palm. They obey my every whim, and they have never abused or mistreated me. Naturally, I love the Murong Clan dearly,” Murong Xianxian answered.

“... Then why did you marry the man who killed your entire clan? Don’t you hate him?” Qu Langhuan grew more confused than ever.

“Li Hentian killed my family and destroyed my clan. Of course I loathe him to the bone. I only wish I could drain his blood dry, feed on his flesh, and cut him into a million pieces,” Murong Xianxian answered. Her words were heartless to put it mildly, and yet her expression and tone were so calm it was almost as if she was talking about someone else. Everyone felt an involuntary chill down their spine because of this.

“If you hate the Dark Overlord that much, then why did you fake your death and marry him? Why are you helping your enemy?” Qu Langhuan asked exasperatedly.

“It is precisely because I hate him that I must marry him,” Murong Xianxian answered.

Blood Rakshasa: "..."

Qu Langhuan: "..."

Cui Qiuyuan: "..."

Forget the girls, not even the insane Mortician could understand her logic.

Seeing their befuddled expression, Murong Xianxian explained patiently, "You have no idea how powerful and terrifying Li Hentian was. They say that I am the closest human there was to a perfect being, but in my opinion, that honor truly goes to Li Hentian. His strength is godlike and unparalleled. No one could ever hope to defeat him in a fair fight."

"Exempting overwhelming power, one cannot hope to defeat a foe they do not understand. Therefore, the only way to kill him and take revenge against him is to get close to him, know him, understand him. Only then can I understand his flaws and weaknesses. Only then can I do the impossible."

Murong Xianxian's smile widened. "And there is no one closer to a person than the partner you share a bed with, is there?"

"I see! So you married the Dark Overlord to kill him!" Qu Langhuan finally understood what Murong Xianxian was talking. "Did the Dark Overlord know about this?"

Yet again, Murong Xianxian gave them a nonsensical answer. "Of course he did."

"What? Then why did he accept your hand in marriage?" Blood Rakshasa asked.

"Because he is Li Hentian, the Dark Overlord. Because he is as arrogant as he is strong," Murong Xianxian replied simply. "And because I am Murong Xianxian. No one can ever turn me down."

Qu Langhuan and Blood Rakshasa fell silent after that. She... was right. The Dark Overlord feared nothing and no one. That was why he dared to marry a woman who he knew loathed him to the bone. Not only that, the one who offered her hand in marriage was Murong Xianxian, the so-called number one celestial of *wulin* and the crowning jewel of humanity. As she said, no one, not even the Dark Overlord, could possibly reject her.

"What happened next?" Cui Qiuyuan asked.

"My plan was both a success and a failure," Murong Xianxian answered.

"What do you mean?" Qu Langhuan asked.

"It was a success, because I did manage to figure out Li Hentian's personality, flaws and weaknesses completely after decades of hard work."

Murong Xianxian smiled. "Li Hentian is an arrogant, domineering man who adored beautiful women but disdained authority. He is also a man who enjoys luxury, pleasure, making friends and a lively atmosphere. So, I convinced him to abandon his fame and power through wealth, sex, intoxication, and excitement and create the Demonbearer Abode, a place where he could retire to

and indulge his hobbies to his heart's content. Then, I persuaded him to recruit beauties, collect treasures, and make friends from all over the world."

"In the *jianghu* and *wulin*, there is nothing more poisonous than greed, jealousy, foolishness, and delusion. I knew that it was only a matter of time before such actions would draw the envy and hatred of the masses. When the time was ripe, it took barely any effort to turn Li Hentian into the public enemy of the *jianghu*."

"After that, I leaked the location of the Demonbearer Abode to his enemies and manipulated them into a coordinated invasion. With the combined might of three Sages, the Dark Overlord and the Demonbearer Abode were ultimately vanquished."

"So, my plan was a success. I had successfully killed Li Hentian and taken revenge for my family and my clan."

Chapter 748: Her Face Smiles, But Her Heart Weeps

I see.

Realization struck Ye Qing. From the beginning, he had had this strange feeling that the Dark Overlord's downfall was a little too convenient. The stars had aligned just a little too well almost as if an invisible hand had manipulated Zhuang Juyun, Chen Miaozen, Ning Xiliu into waging war against the Dark Overlord.

Now, he knew for certain that it wasn't a feeling. It was all Murong Xianxian's design.

He had to admit that Murong Xianxian deserved her title as the number one celestial of *wulin* and the crowning jewel of humanity. How many people in this world could bear to surrender themselves to their enemy? How many were willing to invest decades to understand them, scheme against them, and finally kill them? And how many more actually succeeded in their endeavor?

Murong Xianxian did it. She succeeded where so many others would have failed.

Cui Qiuyuan, Qu Langhuan and Blood Rakshasa were quite shocked as well. Be it the truth behind the Dark Overlord's sudden disappearance, the war between him and the three Sages, the hidden relationship between Murong Xianxian and the Dark Overlord, or the true reason behind the Dark Overlord's death, each secret was only more shocking than the last.

A moment later, Qu Langhuan asked another question, "Since you killed the Dark Overlord and successfully took revenge against him, why did you say you failed?"

"Because of my current state, of course."

Murong Xianxian sighed. "The peachwood nail in my forehead is called 'Repentance'. It is a Disaster-class Strange Artifact that could be used to nail a person's body and soul and preserve their consciousness for thousands and thousands of years. In a sense, it is a form of immortality, but it is also one of the cruelest. It is near impossible for me to move my body, and I must suffer an endless wave of pain day and night. Since there is no one but me in this place, I must endure endless days of aching loneliness as well. It is easily one of the most terrible torture devices in this world."

“As for why it is named ‘Repentance’, it’s because it’s meant to drown its victim in eternal repentance, of course. Do you know who’s the one who subjected me to its horrors?”

“Is it the Dark Overlord?” Qu Langhuan said tentatively.

“Naturally.” A strange smile spread across Murong Xianxian’s face. “He knew I’m the one who plotted his downfall, so before he died, he nailed me to this place using ‘Repentance’ with the intention of torturing me for eternity. He wanted me to beg for death’s sweet release while repenting my decisions and actions day and night.”

“But why should I? Li Hentian killed my family and destroyed my clan. It is perfectly natural for me to want to take revenge against him, just as there is no heaven in this world who would judge me sinful for doing what I did. And since I have committed no sin, then why should I repent? Why should I regret anything?”

“I am right. I have never regretted my decisions, and I never will.”

“Hahahahahahaha!”

Suddenly, Murong Xianxian burst out in laughter. “You’ve won your whole life, but in the end, you still died in my hands, Li Hentian. You died, but I still lived, so the final laugh goes to me. I am the victor, and you the loser! Hahahahahahaha!”

Murong Xianxian was laughing, but Ye Qing could tell that she was really crying. Or rather, she was both laughing and crying at the same time.

She was laughing because she had taken revenge for her family and the Murong Clan, and she was crying because the price she paid was the Dark Overlord, her husband.

Yes, the Dark Overlord was the one who killed her dearest family and clan. However, he was also her husband; the one she had shared a bed with for many decades. Even if they did not share the same dream, how could she possibly feel nothing for him?

Besides, it was clear from Murong Xianxian’s tone that Li Hentian treated her very well. In fact, it sounded like he indulged her every whim no matter how unreasonable or dangerous it was. After all, the Dark Overlord was famous not just for his martial prowess, but also his intelligence and wisdom. How could he not realize the true reason Murong Xianxian chose to marry him? How could he not be aware of her secret machinations to kill him?

He knew everything, and yet he pretended that he knew nothing. Why?

Because of love, of course! He loved her from the bottom of his heart!

Was Murong Xianxian unaware of Li Hentian’s love? With her intelligence? Of course not. She just refused to acknowledge it!

Unfortunately, a human wasn’t a plant. They could not be truly indifferent toward everything. Li Hentian had given his heart to her not for a day, but for many decades. Try as she might, how could she not be moved by it?

So she laughed as she cried. She was laughing on the outside, but crying on the inside.

Eventually, Murong Xianxian grew tired of laughing—or more accurately, crying. Once she had recovered her composure, she looked at Cui Qiuyuan, Qu Langhuan and Blood Rakshasa and asked, “Now that you’ve listened to my story, what will you do? Are you still going to kill me?”

The trio looked surprised and troubled. What *should* they do?

They were troubled because their thoughts were a jumbled mess right now, and because their opponent was *the* Murong Xianxian.

“Allow me to enlighten you on the consequences before you make your decision. If you kill me, you shall walk away with nothing.”

Murong Xianxian looked at Blood Rakshasa and began, “Before I die, I will kill everyone here and annihilate their blood essence. You have my word that you won’t be able to obtain even a single drop of blood.”

She then looked at Qu Langhuan and said, “You wish to obtain Repentance? If I die, I will destroy it with me and leave you with nothing.”

Finally, she looked at Cui Qiuyuan and declared, “You want my body, but I can tell that your desire is pure. There is not a shred of lust in your bone. Regardless, I will dissolve my body into ash before I perish.”

All three Grandmasters stared at her with deep frowns on their faces.

“Trust me, I can do what I claim I can do. Of course, you are free to test my word if you don’t believe me,” Murong Xianxian ended with a calm smile.

Cui Qiuyuan, Qu Langhuan and Blood Rakshasa exchanged glances with each other. They could see the hesitation in each other’s eyes.

If Murong Xianxian was anyone else, they might have scoffed at her threat and attacked her already. However, the woman before them was *the* legendary Murong Xianxian. How could they not take her threat seriously?

“Since it looks like you aren’t able to arrive at a decision immediately, allow me to provide you with a suggestion.”

Murong Xianxian continued after waiting for a moment, “If you kill me, then you will get nothing. But if you free me, then I promise to reward you handsomely.”

Once again, Murong Xianxian looked at Blood Rakshasa first. “You desire a warrior’s blood essence, don’t you? If you free me, then I can supply you with as many Sage’s blood essence as you want.”

Blood Rakshasa’s breath immediately hitched in her throat. If what she said was true, then her cultivation level would improve tremendously, and her mastery of the “Blood Soul Divine Light” would grow a step further.

Before Blood Rakshasa could say anything, Murong Xianxian turned to Cui Qiuyuan and said, “I believe that you practice a martial art that allows you to control corpses, which means that you have

a need for powerful bodies. If you lend me your aid, I can help you locate the bodies of the Sages scattered across in this realm. There are at least four Sage bodies in the Demonbearer Abode including the Dark Overlord's, and I can lead you to them."

Cui Qiuyuan's breathing immediately grew heavy. There was nothing more tempting to him than a powerful body, but the Dark Overlord? That was the man who dominated the Spring and Autumn Period eight hundred years ago. Just how powerful and flawless must his body be? If he could transform it into a Corpse Spirit, then he would be the first person ever to accomplish such a feat!

"As for you, you desire Strange Artifacts and treasures. I can give you items that are even better than 'Repentance'."

Murong Xianxian turned to Qu Langhuan next. "On top of that, I can correct the flaws in your 'Divine Art of Separation'. You are not far away from mastering the martial art, but that also means you are but years, maybe even months away from suffering a deviation and perishing. I'm sure you know better than me that I am not trying to trick you."

Qu Langhuan's heart skipped a beat. Of course she knew that Murong Xianxian wasn't trying to trick her. After all, she was already at the state where her internal energies were starting to slip out of her control.

A Mistress of the Li Hentian Palace was a powerful figure who answered to one and only one person alone. Naturally, they were granted access to secrets that were normally kept hidden from others. For example, she knew that not a single person who cultivated the "Divine Art of Hateful Separation" had died of old age. All of them had died a sudden death because of varying reasons.

Not only that, she heard that the Holy Consort, Yan Qingyan had passed away from insanity while she was cultivating behind closed doors. For obvious reasons, this was top secret knowledge in Li Hentian Palace that was only known to a handful of people. Assuming that Murong Xianxian was telling the truth, it would seem that the reason Yan Qingyan went insane was most likely because the "Divine Art of Hateful Separation" she practiced was flawed.

While she was thinking, Murong Xianxian continued, "If you free me, I can teach you the complete, flawless version of the 'Divine Art of Hateful Separation'. You will never have to worry about dying a sudden death again, and you will become stronger than ever before."

"And finally, Li Hentian had collected countless treasures from all over the world. I can tell you all where they're stored if you free me from my eternal prison."

"So? What do you say?"

Cui Qiuyuan, Qu Langhuan and Blood Rakshasa exchanged glances with each other again. This time, their hesitation had been replaced by desire.

Chapter 749: Cooperation

"We must admit that we are tempted, miss," Cui Qiuyuan clasped his fists together in salute and said, "but how can we know that you're not lying to us? Please forgive me for saying this, but what if you went back on your promises as soon as we freed you?"

It would be all for naught, and we would have put ourselves in unnecessary danger, don't you agree?"

"I cannot give you a guarantee, for such a thing does not exist in this world. Potent oaths do not function in this realm either." Murong Xianxian replied simply, "You must simply choose to believe or disbelieve me."

Eyebrows furrowed, the three Grandmasters fell into an extended silence after hearing this.

Murong Xianxian looked as calm as ever. She didn't seem worried in the slightest that the three Grandmasters would turn down her offer. While wearing a smile that did not reach the eye, she added, "Besides, I've been sealed away for over eight hundred years. Even if I was free, my strength is less a hollow shadow of what it used to be. You outnumber me drastically, and there are even three Truemen and one Grandmaster among you. Are you truly afraid that I would go back on my own words? If you really are such cowards, then you wouldn't have journeyed into this realm in the first place, would you?"

As she said this, Murong Xianxian's eyes curled into crescents. She was staring straight at Ye Qing.

At first, the three Grandmasters did not understand what she was saying. Then, realization struck them, and they nearly jumped on their feet. Murong Xianxian was saying that there was a fourth Grandmaster in this hall, and not a single one of them had noticed anything! Then, they noticed Murong Xianxian's gaze, followed it, and found Ye Qing.

Ye Qing was astonished. His "Paranirmitavaśavartin Heavenly Demon Sutra" was extraordinary in terms of concealing and altering one's aura, and as far as he could tell, his concealment was perfect. This was proven by the fact that none of the three Grandmasters noticed his presence despite standing mere meters away from him. So, how did Murong Xianxian find him out?

"You're right, Miss Murong." Knowing that the game was up, Ye Qing stopped pretending and leaked a hint of his aura. He saluted Murong Xianxian first before glancing at Cui Qiuyuan, Qu Langhuan and Blood Rakshasa. "Well met, Brother Cui, Mistress Qu, Miss Blood."

Luckily for him, he had the foresight to alter his appearance and his energies when he saw the Grandmasters earlier. It was why neither of his nemeses noticed that he was the bastard who kicked their asses before. Otherwise, this would have been a very volatile meeting.

"You know us? Who are you?"

Cui Qiuyuan stared at Ye Qing. For some reason, he felt a whiff of familiarity from the young man.

"How could I not? All three of you are famous Grandmasters, and I've looked up to you for a long time."

Ye Qing clasped his fist and introduced himself, "I am Ye Yipin[1]. Nice to meet you all."

"I have none. I am just a nobody," Ye Qing replied smilingly.

Murong Xianxian suddenly spoke up, “You are too humble, warrior. Truemen are common, and Grandmasters are rare. But a Grandmaster who isn’t even thirty years old? You would’ve been a one-of-a-kind genius even eight hundred years ago. You could not possibly be a nobody.”

“You flatter me, Murong Xianxian. I dare not receive such a compliment from you!” Ye Qing shook his head.

The reason Murong Xianxian spoke of Trueman and Grandmaster as if they were two different things was because they were considered different back in the olden days. Trueman referred to warriors who cultivated qi, whereas Grandmaster referred to warriors who tempered the body. Qi practitioners walked the orthodox way of cultivation and focused on refining essence into qi, qi into spirit, and spirit into god. Once they had cultivated a yang god, they were collectively referred to as Trueman.

On a related note, those who successfully forged the physical body, the true qi, and the yang god into one and combined their Way with the world was considered a Sage.

As for body-tempering warriors, they generally neglected the mind and spirit and focused on honing strength and body. If their body reached the level of a Sky Dragon[2], then they were considered a Grandmaster.

If they successfully combined their body with the world and proved their Way through strength, then they were known as a God-On-Earth[3].

In later times, martial arts became extremely popular, and the people discovered that qi practitioners could hone the body just as body-tempering warriors did not necessarily have to neglect the mind and spirit. That was why the line between Trueman and Grandmaster gradually blurred until they were treated the same as one another.

But of course, there were still some noble clans or powerful sects that maintained the distinction between Trueman and Grandmaster.

“A body-tempering Grandmaster?!” The three Grandmasters—or more accurately, Truemen— exclaimed in surprise and grew even more wary of Ye Qing. Despite this, they knew better than to press Ye Qing or even intimidate him via force at this point of time. They simply returned a nod and acknowledged his existence.

“So? Have you made up your minds?” Murong Xianxian looked at the trio. “The young warrior already has. What about you three?”

The three Truemen exchanged looks with each other before nodding. “We accept your proposal, miss. We only hope that you won’t go back on your words.”

“I never lie,” Murong Xianxian answered.

“So, how can we free you?” Cui Qiuyuan asked.

“It’s simple. You simply need to remove ‘Repentance’ from my forehead.” Murong Xianxian answered. “However, please remember ‘Repentance’ has absorbed nearly all

of my willpower, soul, vigor, and vitality for the past eight hundred years. If you remove it now, then I will instantly perish and scatter into nothing.”

“Therefore, you must allow me to feed on these people’s vigor and soul first to restore what I’ve lost. Only then can you remove ‘Repentance’ by force.”

Ye Qing and the rest of the Truemen nodded in acknowledgement. No wonder Murong Xianxian had fed on the warriors’ blood earlier.

“I don’t mind you feeding on these people, miss, but can you let some of them go?” Qu Langhuan spoke up suddenly.

“Oh? Do you mean these four?” Murong Xianxian glanced at Zhang Lingyang, Chu Wangsun, Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya.

Neither Ye Qing nor the other Truemen wasn’t surprised by Qu Langhuan’s request. If Qu Langhuan was your ordinary heretic—or on the opposite spectrum, the batshit insane type—then she would have eliminated them at first notice. After all, these geniuses carried so much weight that their losses would surely deal a huge blow to the orthodoxy.

“Let me guess. The one who used the ‘Heavenly Master Nine Word Command’ probably hails from the Heavenly Master Mansion of Dragon Tiger Mountain.” Murong Xianxian looked at Zhang Lingyang and shot him a smile. “Am I right, child?”

“Hehehe! You’re both beautiful and wise, miss celestial! That’s right! This junior is Zhang Lingyang, a member of the Heavenly Master Mansion of Dragon Tiger Mountain!”

Zhang Lingyang abruptly snapped out of his stupor and saluted Murong Xianxian. Clearly, he had awakened a while ago.

“You have a silver tongue for sure.” Murong Xianxian chuckled.

“Thank you for the praise.” Zhang Lingyang beamed at her. “And thank you for pleading on my behalf, Mistress Qu. I won’t forget this favor!”

“You’re welcome, Little Heavenly Master.” Qu Langhuan gave him a nod. She wasn’t surprised that Zhang Lingyang was able to snap back to reality. He was the champion of the Human Champions Ranking after all. There was no way he wouldn’t have multiple trump cards under his sleeve.

Zhang Lingyang then looked at Chu Wangsun, Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya and waved, “Brother Chu, Brother Defeated, Holy Son, what are you waiting for? Come greet our miss celestial already!”

Chapter 750: Confucian Sage

Chu Wangsun stopped pretending and schooled his features. He then greeted Murong Xianxian calmly with a salute, “This one is Chu Wangsun of the Jixia Academy. Well met, Miss Murong.”

“Jixia Academy! A rare one who broke free from the pedantic and old-fashioned ways of Confucianism to practice both Confucianism and martial arts too. You’re definitely a one-of-a-kind talent.” Murong Xianxian smiled. “Your path is a difficult one though.”

Chu Wangsun replied expressionlessly, “Thank you for your guidance, Miss Murong.”

“Your name is Chu Wangsun?” Cui Qiuyuan’s eyes abruptly flashed with killing intent. He immediately made a grab for Chu Wangsun.

A piece of paper with the word “Benevolence” abruptly appeared above Chu Wangsun’s head. It was just a normal Xuan paper, and the seal script word looked perfectly ordinary as well. However, the moment the paper appeared, a vast, grandiose qi instantly filled the hall. It was anything but aggressive despite its immense power though. As the word suggested, its power felt gentle and warm.

Try as Cui Qiuyuan might, he was unable to get within one meter of Chu Wangsun no matter what.

“What is the meaning of this, senior?” Chu Wangsun looked at Cui Qiuyuan in puzzlement.

“What do I mean? Don’t you know what you did?” Cui Qiuyuan’s eyes burned with anger as a piece of rag appeared in his hand. Tattered and covered in bloodstains, it gave off a corrupted and filthy aura.

The rag floated forward like a living creature.

Sizzle sizzle sizzle!

As soon as the rag made contact with the grandiose qi, the air began warping like a heat haze. The two distinctively different energies clashed like boiling oil against water—literally, as the rag abruptly caught on fire and burned violently, spreading its filthy aura even further.

As for the paper, it began to turn brownish as the corrupted energy visibly chewed through its power reserves.

A hint of gravity entered Chu Wangsun’s normally unflappable expression.

“Brother Cui! There’s no need to go straight to violence, is there?”

Qu Langhuan took a step forward and tried to stop the conflict, but Cui Qiuyuan exploded, “Mind your own business!”

Brimming with violence and anger, the Mortician curled his fingers like talons and swiped at Chu Wangsun.

Cui Qiuyuan’s outburst was worse than she had imagined. Qu Langhuan immediately froze with indecision. Neither Chu Wangsun nor Cui Qiuyuan were people she could afford to offend after all.

Blood Rakshasa said nothing. She clearly had no desire to help either party.

Murong Xianxian simply smiled beatifically as if this was a show.

“There seems to be some sort of misunderstanding, senior.”

Blood Rakshasa and Murong Xianxian could afford to sit by and do nothing, but Zhang Lingyang, Defeated and the Holy Son of Maitreya could not. Although Qu Langhuan was defending them, they were the inferior force in this hall, and they could not count on her to be firm when push came to shove. They must help Chu Wangsun if only to ensure that they would not be helpless if the three Truemen and one Grandmaster suddenly decided to turn on them.

Besides, they were all promising geniuses of the young generation and so were acquainted with each other to a certain extent. That alone was a good reason not to leave Chu Wangsun to his own devices.

However, right before they were about to intervene, their consciousness suddenly blanked out for exactly one breath. One breath wasn't much time at all, but it was enough time for a battle to reach its conclusion.

During this one breath, Cui Qiuyuan pushed another inch through the wall of grandiose qi and suffered immensely as a result. His fingers had melted away like wax, leaving behind only an eerie skeleton. However, the paper above Chu Wangsun's head was finally ripped in half.

As soon as the paper was torn, Cui Qiuyuan's bony hand immediately seized Chu Wangsun by the throat.

Although his opponent was the Mortician, a famous Trueman on the Earth Champions Ranking, Chu Wangsun should not have been so helpless. The reason he was defeated this quickly was one, Murong Xianxian had injured him earlier, and two, he underestimated Cui Qiuyuan's determination to kill him. By the time he realized his life was truly on the line, it was already too late.

And yet, for whatever reason, he couldn't. The anger and bloodthirst were so hot, so irresistible, that he gave in to it and tightened his grip. There was a loud crack, and Chu Wangsun's hyoid bone was crushed just like that.

In fact, Cui Qiuyuan regretted his rash decision as soon as he crushed Chu Wangsun's hyoid bone. However, it was already too late for regrets, not to mention that he personally wasn't afraid of the world-acclaimed Jixia Academy. He decided to see this through until the end and kill Chu Wangsun here and now.

Having made his decision, bluish black corpse qi immediately burst from Cui Qiuyuan's fingers. They felt cold and eerie.

The "Corpse Massacre Hand" enabled its practitioner to massacre the body and extinguish the soul with one hand. It was Cui Qiuyuan's ultimate technique. As long as he could rip off his opponent's head, he would be able to snuff out their life and extinguish their soul at the same time.

It showed how determined Cui Qiuyuan was to kill Chu Wangsun.

Zhang Lingyang and the others had jolted back to reality, but at this point, they were too late to save Chu Wangsun.

Right before Chu Wangsun would die, a grain-sized dot of light suddenly appeared from Chu Wangsun's forehead. It was shining with undeniable radiance despite its miniscule size.

The light grew brighter, and it transformed into a white-haired, ordinary-looking old man wearing rags.

When the old man appeared, he looked down on Cui Qiuyuan as if he was alive. Then, he summoned a ruler into his hand and brought it down on the Trueman's wrist.

The old man's strike looked perfectly ordinary and casual. There was nothing special about it whatsoever. Yet somehow, it landed squarely on Cui Qiuyuan's wrist before he could react.

Thwack!

A crisp sound resounded throughout the hall, and Cui Qiuyuan staggered back with his force and his aura completely dispelled. Somehow, the ruler strike had completely neutralized a Trueman.

"Get lost!"

After he was done rebuking Chu Wangsun, the old man struck him on the forehead again. It was such a forceful strike that his forehead turned red and swollen in an instant.

Then, something unexpected happened. Chu Wangsun abruptly grew transparent and disappeared in no time.

"Those who are benevolent are favored by the heavens. I hope you'll behave, all of you."

The old man disappeared as well after saying that, though he shot Murong Xianxian a glance right before he was gone.

"Interesting. Who is that man?" Murong Xianxian asked.

"I think... I think he's the Chief Libationist of the Jixia Academy!" Qu Langhuan answered with a tremor. The old man wasn't the real Chief Libationist, of course. He was just a wisp of his spiritual intent. Despite this, it was powerful enough to repel a famed Trueman like Cui Qiuyuan effortlessly. As far as she was aware, the only one who could do such a thing was the Confucian Sage.

"I see. Eight hundred years ago, I paid the Jixia Academy and the Chief Libationist at the time a visit as well. However, that old man was extremely old-fashioned and stuck to his ways. I am glad that a more interesting character has replaced him," Murong Xianxian remarked with interest.

Cui Qiuyuan did not say anything. Judging from his ashen face, it was clear that he was not feeling good right now.

Ye Qing was also licking his lips. He wasn't expecting his murder attempt to draw out the bloody Confucian Sage of the Jixia Academy himself.

That's right. He was the one who influenced Cui Qiuyuan's emotions in secret and borrowed his hand to kill Chu Wangsun. His plan was going so smoothly too. Unfortunately, he failed to account

for the fact that the Chief Libationist had left a wisp of spiritual intent on Chu Wangsun's person, and the Sage ultimately managed to save him.

It was clear that the Chief Libationist valued his student a lot.