

## T. Times 151

Chapter 151: Master and Servant Switching Positions? No Man's Land!

Despite Zhao Changhe's Conan-level analytical skills, he could only watch Sisi in a daze as she pulled out a small compass-like gadget and meticulously surveyed the surroundings.

Getting a pocket-sized luopan[1] was probably not easy. Perhaps she even stole it from Thief Saint Ye Wuzong...

Zhao Changhe was completely clueless when it came to geomancy, tomb-robbing, and such matters. At the moment, he regretted reading too much of Lu Xiaofeng[2] rather than Ghost Blows Out the Light.

Even if he tried to emulate Lu Xiaofeng, he could not do so. After all, Lu Xiaofeng had excellent movement arts and nimble fingers far superior to even Taka Kato's[3]. As for himself, he was built like a tank. He needed to rely on the help of others when investigating cases, and even if he did have nimble fingers, he had no place to use them.

It was quite embarrassing.

All he could do was follow Sisi cautiously as she paced around. "What are you surveying?"

While surveying, Sisi said, "What means do they have to make the vicious qi surge into the sword pond? If they had such means, they would have been able to control this place long ago... I can deduce that their plan must involve triggering an outbreak of the main tomb's defensive measures, destroying everything around it completely. Only then would it be possible to break through this space and cause turmoil at Tiger Hill above, while at the same time causing the collapse of the sword pond. As for the old man who is responsible for triggering this series of events, they don't really care whether he lives or dies. He only has about a month left to live anyway."

"So, my guess about the ants was right... Are you trying to figure out where the main tomb is located?"

"Obviously. Do you think I've just been trying to measure to size of your Dragon Bird?"

She really seems to have a bone to pick with that term...

Sisi suddenly stowed away the luopan and darted out. “I’ve got a general idea of where it is now. Let’s go!”

Zhao Changhe followed after her and asked curiously, “Why do you seem to be more anxious than me?”

“If we fail to stop this and the tomb collapses, we will definitely die. Why in the world would I not be anxious?!” Sisi said angrily. “I was just fine being a little maid, but now I’ve been dragged into this crazy death trap by my crazy master! Zhao Changhe, let me tell you, if I die here, I’ll come back to bite you even as a ghost!”

“It would be much better if you bite me and come, then you can become a ghost.”

Sisi: “?”

Swish, swish, swish!

Streams of sword qi began shooting all around them once again, seemingly even more ferocious than before.

“That old man must be close to the main tomb. Hurry!” Sisi had no time to argue with him. She fully unleashed her true abilities and sped forward.

In Zhao Changhe’s eyes, she moved like a goddess dancing across the waves, gliding through the air gracefully, evading thousands of blades that failed to even touch a sliver of her skin.

She was both beautiful and swift, reaching the opposite end of the passage in just the blink of an eye.

What was most amazing was her movement art that combined the Thief Saint’s movement art and the Celestial Maiden Scattering Flowers Art of the Maitreya Cult. It could surprisingly arouse desires within those who saw it even without the use of spiritual illusions. She was a genius, successfully merging the things that she had secretly learned and creating her own unique version of it. Behind her beauty lay a deadly undercurrent of murderous intent.

“Come on!” Sisi spun around at the end of the passage, her eyes blazing with fury.

Zhao Changhe gritted his teeth and swung his saber wildly, hacking his way forward.

He could not shake off the feeling that their roles of master and servant had switched right now. It was as if his prestige had fallen into the mud. While Sisi moved gracefully through the streams of sword qi like treading the waves, he clumsily made his way through like a mud-covered dog.

Not only was he struggling with his self-image, but the environment truly was quite challenging. Although they had yet to reach the core area, and the peripheral blades of sword qi were mostly just “cannon fodder” of sorts, it was still incredibly difficult to deal with. It had even been able to significantly restrict and hinder the old man who was at the level of those on the Ranking of Man, forcing him to reserve his strength and remain vigilant against the onslaught from all directions.

Sisi’s agility was perfect for this environment, but ironically, it was Zhao Changhe, who obviously possessed greater combat prowess, who was having a difficult time. The relentless assault of sword qi from all directions made it exceedingly difficult for a man like him, who used a broad saber.

“Is this how a master is supposed to be?” Seeing Zhao Changhe struggling halfway through, his clothes torn and tattered from the constant attacks, Sisi finally dropped the act and sneered, “With how you’re faring, I seriously doubt if you can even make it to our destination.”

Zhao Changhe bared his teeth, “Are you rebelling?”

Sisi snorted coldly, “The important thing right now is for us to reach our destination quickly! Not to debate whether or not you’re behaving like a master should!”

“Well, that’s simple.” Zhao Changhe suddenly grinned. “I can move faster than you, do you believe it?”

Sisi was taken aback. She watched as Zhao Changhe abandoned any attempts to protect his non-vital areas, allowing the sword qi to cut through his body while focusing solely on protecting his vitals. Instantly, his speed increased exponentially, and he charged forward like a raging bull. In the blink of an eye, he got to where she was.

Sisi was stunned. “You... Don’t you feel pain?”

“I was originally just worried about losing control of myself if the vicious qi invaded my body, but it seems that the sword qi isn’t as bad as I thought. I can handle it, so why not just do that?” Zhao Changhe replied, showing off a bit. “Where to next? Lead the way!”

“...”

Sisi led the way, soaring ahead. She then said, “If this is indeed the tomb of the Sword Emperor, the sword qi here should be acting as its guardian, and it should not have contained any vicious qi. The presence of vicious qi worries me. I can’t explain it. If it’s just because the Lu Clan had killed a lot of people, then it’s a minor issue. What I’m truly concerned about is...”

“What?”

“The possibility that the Sword Emperor isn’t actually dead. Thoughts of chaos have been gradually resurging and spreading, and that may be the cause of the emergence of vicious qi within the tomb. This could also be the reason why the sword qi has managed to leak into the space outside this dimension. It’s the most likely and most dangerous scenario. If the Sword Emperor is awakened by the vicious qi, then it could end up not only threatening Gusu, but the entire divine land[4].”

The terrifying consequences of this possibility stunned Zhao Changhe for a moment. He was left in such a daze that he could hardly feel the pain of the sword qi cutting into his body. “This...”

The disparity in power between the previous era and the current one was something that he had experienced many times. If an existence worthy of being called an “Emperor” in the previous era were to really be awakened by the vicious qi, it could indeed lead to the downfall of the entire empire. It would be impossible for anyone to resist such immense power, even Xia Longyuan.

Sisi pondered for a moment before continuing, “Things might not be that bad... Logically speaking, even the defenses at the periphery of the tomb should have been beyond our capabilities to bypass. The fact that the streams of sword qi weren’t at that level of power suggests that the power in this place has greatly diminished after the countless years since it was established. Therefore, even if the Sword Emperor truly awakens, he may not have the same strength he did in his prime.”

Zhao Changhe nodded. He found this explanation more plausible with the evidence of the weakened sword qi. If that were the case, then perhaps the individuals at the top of the Ranking of Heaven would still have a chance against the Sword Emperor. Since there were still tall people to hold up the sky when it fell, those who were still in the pond below as hidden dragons did not need

to worry too much about the distant future. For now, the two of them simply needed to focus on stopping the Lu Clan from doing something foolish.

Speaking of which, Sisi seems to know quite a bit about the previous era. Moreover, she was even able to tell that the old man from the Lu Clan was approaching death with just a single glance.

Could she really have learned all of that from just half a year in the Thieves Guild? Since Ji Chengkong is from the main branch of the Thieves Guild as well, shouldn't he also have this knowledge?

She knows about the previous era, yet she could not even recognize the founding saber of the current empire, Dragon Bird... Just what exactly are her origins?

While Zhao Changhe was pondering, a violent explosion sounded ahead. Sisi's expression changed drastically, "These fools really have no idea what they're doing. They're using methods that would anger the Sword Emperor's tomb, attempting to incite the vicious qi here and have it break through the upper space! Did these fools never consider the possibility of prematurely awakening the Sword Emperor with what they're doing?! All of them will be buried with that stupid old man! Do they really think that they can just charge at the Tang Clan's sword pond?!"

Zhao Changhe could not be bothered to respond. He had been cut all over by the sword qi when he rushed over, and he did not have much energy to spare for pointless conversation.

He rushed ahead of Sisi and turned at the next intersection, only to be met with the sight of a massive stone door. The old man from the Lu Clan was frantically bombarding it, laughing maniacally as he did so. "Feel the anger! Charge! Break through this damned space! Show me what happens when the vicious qi that has been tormenting our Lu Clan redirects its wrath on the Tang Clan!"

What a mess...

Zhao Changhe did not have the time to complain. He leaped several zhang through the air and directly used Scattering the Gods and Buddhas, aiming his strike at the old man's head.

The nearby vicious qi grew denser and more frenzied, condensing into a solid form. Even the surrounding sword qi came to have a crimson, bloodthirsty aura. The area right before the entrance to the main tomb became a crimson hell, with a bloody vortex seemingly trying to surge upwards.

To make matters worse, the entire space felt like it was trembling, causing Zhao Changhe's heart to pound with fear. He felt as though the terrifying ancient Sword Emperor was rising up from behind the heavy gate in front of him.

This strike had nearly exhausted all of his strength. Every wound on his body burst open, blood gushing out from them like a fountain. His blood-soaked figure eerily fit perfectly in this scene that resembled a crimson hell.

“Did you seriously think that I wouldn't be able to deal with you brats at the fourth and fifth layer of the Profound Gate just because I've been exhausting myself?” The old man laughed maniacally and suddenly thrust his sword at Zhao Changhe's Danzhong acupoint.

This was the most obvious flaw in the Scattering the Gods and Buddhas. Zhao Changhe's acupoint-shifting skill could not be used in this situation. His only option was to retract his saber and sweep it horizontally to try to deflect the attack. However, by doing so, he would be completely canceling out the Scattering the Gods and Buddhas. Furthermore, the most serious problem was whether he would even be able to deflect the strike of someone at the ninth layer when he was only at the fifth layer himself. With such a huge difference in their power, exposing one's flaws like this was simply courting death!

As expected, Zhao Changhe retracted his sword and swept it horizontally, striking the side of the old man's sword

To the old man's astonishment, his sword was actually deflected. He even felt as if his strength was inferior to Zhao Changhe's!

He took a step back in surprise, intending to reorganize his offensive, but was even more shocked to find that Zhao Changhe's eyes had turned completely blood-red. His face was contorted and filled with madness, just like when his grandson had pretended to have gone mad from the vicious blood qi.

At this moment, Zhao Changhe could no longer recognize him, nor could he even recognize himself.

No Man's Land!

This was the second time that he used this forbidden move of the Vicious Blood Art.

After having absorbed so much vicious qi along the way, the amount of vicious qi in his blood and qi had already exceeded the limit. Even if he did not actively use this ultimate technique, he would probably start to lose his mind and go mad soon enough. By voluntarily gathering the vicious qi and using it, he not only gained some initiative, but also exceeded his original level of power due to absorbing so much vicious qi.

Sisi, who had intended to help him, gulped and quietly stepped back.

This guy's combat instincts and willpower are really terrifying. I didn't even think that the reason why he has been allowing himself to get cut countless times by the sword qi was that he wanted to unleash all of the vicious qi he absorbed once we got here...

Sisi had felt like she had been standing up a few moments before, but now she felt like she was kneeling down once again...

Chapter 152: The Twilight of a Hero? To Hell With That!

Swish!

A saber light carrying a speed and power that far surpassed what Zhao Changhe could usually display swept toward the old man with overwhelming might.

The old man swiftly dodged and repositioned himself behind Zhao Changhe in an instant. From that position, he immediately thrust his sword at Zhao Changhe's neck.

In his madness, Zhao Changhe did not care whether his neck would be pierced or not. He immediately twisted his upper body and spun around, as if intending to cleave the old man in half at the waist!

The old man did not dare to forcefully block the attack and quickly withdrew to make it easier to deflect the strike.

His swordsmanship was indeed exquisite. In the process of withdrawing to dampen the force of the attack, the tip of his sword also managed to graze Zhao Changhe's hand. Normally, if an opponent had been hit by this counterattack, they would have lost the grip of their weapon, but Zhao

Changhe, who was oblivious to pain at the moment, continued his relentless assault, swinging his broad saber like a windmill, taking up much more space than a single weapon should've been able to.

The old man did not dare to confront the saber head-on and retreated once more, feeling somewhat despondent now.

He had weakened too much from when he was at his peak; he was no longer the powerhouse of the ninth layer he had once been. Despite his profound internal cultivation, he was still mortal, after all. His aging body could not keep up. The fierce battle had already taken its toll on him.

Even before entering this place, the two exchanges that he had had earlier with Zhao Changhe, despite seeming simple, had actually already been too intense for him. Otherwise, he would have tried to finish the youngsters off long ago... but the fact was, he couldn't.

Upon entering this place, with countless streams of sword qi relentlessly assaulting him, his blood and qi had weakened and his combat power had diminished long before he arrived at the gate of the main tomb. While his internal cultivation was at the ninth layer, his body at the moment could perhaps even be worse than that of an untrained weakling. With the state he was in, how much of his true combat power could he really unleash?

In contrast, the power boost that Zhao Changhe gained from using No Man's Land was simply outrageous.

How can someone at the fifth layer of the Profound Gate unleash such incredible might? Nobody would bat an eye if he said he was at the sixth or seventh layer. Even if I encountered someone at this level outside, I would have a hard time, not to mention in this environment where sword qi is flying all over the place. How is this guy able to just let these qi blades strike him like that?!

Even though he could still rely on his agility to barely dodge and evade Zhao Changhe's attacks, the space where he could dodge had been largely restricted. He had to constantly divide his attention to simultaneously deal with the storm of sword qi.

The old man sadly realized that not only was he barely a little stronger than the lunatic he was fighting, but the longer they fought, the weaker he became. Eventually, he would fall into a disadvantage.

The twilight of a hero. This phrase suddenly appeared in his mind.



I cannot spare any more time here. I need to do something quickly!

A fierce light flashed in the old man's eyes, and he suddenly made a move that Sisi, who was watching the battle from the side, could not understand.

The old man actually took the initiative to approach the point where Zhao Changhe's saber strike was at its strongest rather than avoiding it to find a weakness.

As Dragon Bird swooped toward his head, the old man raised his sword to parry it. Clearly unable to withstand the ferocious might, his sword was bent out of shape and sent straight toward the gate of the main tomb.

In the midst of his frenzy, Zhao Changhe did not have the capacity to think and instinctively continued his onslaught, exerting all his might to defeat the enemy before him in one final strike! "Oh no!" Sisi suddenly realized that the old man had simply been interrupted earlier on his mission to provoke the main tomb. It looked like he no longer wanted to continue fighting them and was using himself as bait to draw Zhao Changhe's frenzied power to strike down the gate!

Sisi did not have the time to alert Zhao Changhe as his saber was already at the gate. She stomped her foot in frustration, but she also felt a sense of admiration in her heart. The dying old man who sacrificed so much for his family had gained her respect.

However, just as this mixed feeling of anger and admiration rose within her, she could not help but be stunned by what she saw next.

Zhao Changhe's saber did not hit the gate at all. Instead, as if he had anticipated the old man's move, his saber automatically followed the old man as he dodged.

The old man: "?"

Sisi: "?"

Having completely misjudged the trajectory of the saber, how could he dodge at the last moment?

The old man forcibly blocked with his sword as Dragon Bird struck down with a loud clang, finally splitting the sword into two. The old man seized the opportunity to retreat, but his chest was drenched in blood from the exchange.

Now, it became even more difficult for him to evade the sword qi. The sound of wind swept past, and the old man was left covered in wounds in just a few moments.

“You...” He clutched his chest and looked at Zhao Changhe in disbelief. “You’ve still got your rationality! The madness just now was all fake!”

Zhao Changhe grinned, “What? Your grandson or great-grandson can pretend to go mad and I can’t?”

The blood-red tint of his eyes still remained. With a ferocious expression on his face, he shouted, “Your sacrifice for your family may be respectable, but is it only your sacrifice?! The greater the accomplishment, the greater the harm! Never mind whether or not the Sword Emperor is awakened, just the destruction that the vicious qi can cause in Gusu is ridiculous. Do you not care for the countless innocent people that will die from that? The only thing you care about is your Lu Clan making use of the catastrophe to dominate Gusu! You think you’re some kind of hero? Go to hell!”

With a thunderous roar, he raised Dragon Bird once again and struck down directly at the old man’s chest!

The old man was about to retreat and dodge when a strong gust of wind suddenly came from behind him. Sisi, who had been watching the battle, confirmed that Zhao Changhe was actually sane and finally joined the fight!

With the injuries that had accumulated on his body, the old man no longer had the strength to avoid the pincer attack. He no longer dodged, allowing Dragon Bird to strike his chest and the dagger to stab his back. At the same time, he threw his broken sword directly at the tomb gate!

“Fuck!” Zhao Changhe did not anticipate this, and he could not intercept the broken sword in time.

The old man’s eyes flashed with jubilation, but it abruptly stopped.

Meanwhile, Sisi had somehow managed to swoop in, and right when the broken sword was about to reach the gate, she managed to grab its hilt with her delicate hand.

The air seemed to have stopped for a moment. Zhao Changhe's saber had already cut into the old man's chest, breaking several ribs and nearly splitting the old man in half.

Despite being on the brink of death, the old man's eyes remained fixed on the gate.

In fact, he had no idea how close he actually was to triggering the rampant vicious qi within the main tomb. Regardless of whether it was Zhao Changhe's earlier attack that he had tried to guide to hit the gate or his last throw, he had no idea if he would succeed in his goal with just that last bit of disturbance. But when the situation had reached such a point, everyone subconsciously felt as if success was just within reach...

The old man murmured to himself, "Just a bit more... Just a bit more... You guys..."

Zhao Changhe and Sisi exchanged a wordless glance.

But at that moment, the main tomb's gate suddenly began to vibrate violently. The vague feeling of seismic activity became more pronounced, almost causing them to lose their footing. The surrounding sword qi no longer attacked them but gathered together and formed a vortex.

The old man burst into manic laughter. "I did it! I succeeded! Victory belongs to my family in the end, haha... Hahaha!"

Amidst his crazed laughter, he breathed his last.

Zhao Changhe lowered his saber and looked up at the swirling mass of sword qi that was gradually converging into the shape of an ancient sword. It exuded a majestic and daunting aura as it was surrounded by a vortex of vicious qi. It looked like it could soar into the sky at any moment.

He stabbed his saber into the ground, then leaned on it with his bloodied chest. He sighed and said, "Did he really succeed? Did we do all that for nothing..."

Sisi said softly, "Don't worry, the interruption we caused led to a far different outcome... At least there is no sign of the Sword Emperor's revival."

Zhao Changhe sensed around for a moment and nodded. "I can sense the emotions in the vicious qi here. It was the old man's intrusion that angered the vicious qi. But there is also some kind of external attraction, causing the vicious qi to find an outlet and surge upward. The space has not collapsed, so our efforts weren't in vain."

Sisi added, "Well, that does seem somewhat better. At least we won't be blown up by the collapsing space."

Zhao Changhe said, "With the vicious qi and sword qi condensing into a single mass, it doesn't seem like it will spread and engulf Gusu. At most, it will surge toward the sword pond. As long as those outside can contain this sword qi..."

Sisi sighed, "That is true, but there are two problems."

"What?"

"First, if Maitreya has arrived, the Tang Clan may be doomed. Who will contain the sword qi, Maitreya?"

"..."

"Second..." Sisi's voice seemed to squeeze out from between her teeth. "Since the space has not collapsed and it's just the sword qi surging out... How are we supposed to leave this place?"

Zhao Changhe slowly straightened his body and took a deep breath. "Since the vicious qi is merely surrounding a sword formation...when it rushes up, can't we just hitch a ride?"

Sisi's eyes widened. "Are you crazy?! While the sword qi at the core is indeed the worst part, even just the surrounding vicious qi can make any nearby living creatures... Ugh..."

"Yes, ordinary creatures may not be able to approach such a rich and concentrated vicious qi, but that's what I've been practicing." Zhao Changhe opened his arms. "As long as you dare to hide in my embrace, I dare to take you out. "

Sisi felt like the biggest sucker she had ever been in her entire life at this moment... She had originally come here to look for a so-called treasure of vicious qi, only to end up being brought to a

dead end where she could not get out. Then, she had to fight someone, got nothing out of the fight, and now she had to place herself in someone's embrace.

Where is the treasure that I came here for?

Zhao Changhe seemed to know what she was thinking and said softly, "We know where the entrance is, and now an exit may be opened up by this sword qi... As long as we don't die this time, can't we come back in the future?"

Sisi said, "In the future, either the Maitreya Cult will wreak havoc here, or you and the Tang Clan will control this place and kick me out."

Zhao Changhe smiled slightly. "Half of this place belongs to you. Even if Tang Wanzhuang comes, I'll make sure she doesn't exclude you. I'll even fall out with her if he dares."

"What's the use of you falling out with them? Who do you think you are... The Tang Clan might kick you out too, you idiot..." Sisi muttered under her breath. However, she did not say anything else. She cautiously approached him and nestled herself in his blood-soaked embrace.

Zhao Changhe looked up at the sky, and the simple sword shape finally solidified completely. It then rose toward the sky amidst the swirling vicious qi.

### Chapter 153: Twists and Turns

To the two people in the middle of the action, it seemed like hours had passed from the time when Zhao Changhe had disguised himself and entered the forbidden area of the Lu Clan to the time when the ancient sword soared into the sky. In reality, however, it had actually not been that long. In total, it had only taken about the time it took for a stick of incense to burn.

Around the same time that Zhao Changhe and Sisi arrived at the Lu Clan's forbidden area, the atmosphere at the entrance of the Tang Clan's estate reached the boiling point.

Tang Wangsheng naturally tried to prevent the outsiders from entering the Tang residence, but under the repeated provocation of the members of the Lu Clan and the lurking members of the Maitreya Cult, more and more of those from the major families and other uninformed members of the public became convinced that the Tang Clan, which had been adamantly preventing anyone from entering, had ulterior motives.

In reality, if anyone were in the Tang Clan's position, they would have most likely reacted the same way! After all, who would simply let thousands of people rush into their home?

But at this moment, the public opinion had been swayed.

Tang Wangsheng realized that his words were not getting through, and in his rage, he finally said harshly, "Have you all forgotten where you are?! This is the Tang Clan's residence! Are you all trying to rebel?"

This phrasing simply could not be any worse, and it was clear that even now, he had yet to realize the true extent of the situation. His harsh words only served to further fan the flames, and under the leadership of the Lu Clan, people began to rush through the main gate of the Tang residence. Some even used their movement arts to directly jump over the walls.

Tang Wangsheng was furious. "Stop them!"

After such a long stalemate, the members and guards of the Tang Clan had long since been prepared and were able to quickly respond. And so, a fierce battle erupted at the entrance to the Tang residence.

The situation had completely spiraled out of control.

The Tang Clan was indeed the strongest clan in Gusu, with deep roots and numerous talented individuals. However, even with all their strength, they could only hold their ground at the entrance.

But as Tang Wangsheng watched the chaotic scene, he finally began to feel uneasy.

Even if we manage to hold on like this, what then? How are we going to resolve this mess?

Whoosh!

The head of the Lu Clan, Lu Yuanting, had directly approached Tang Wangsheng and thrust his sword swiftly at him.

Tang Wangsheng was furious. "Capture this bastard, and this matter will be settled!"

Lu Yuanting just sneered.

The two family heads quickly engaged in battle.

Both of them were at the ninth layer of the Profound Gate, but neither of them were on the Ranking of Man. They were evenly matched. Initially, Tang Wangsheng thought that he was slightly stronger than Lu Yuanting, but as they fought, he began to feel that something was amiss.

Lu Yuanting did not possess any particularly outstanding skills. However, Tang Wangsheng could not help but notice inexplicable accidents taking place. While he was fighting against Lu Yuanting, others around him would suddenly swing their sword at him. After a while, someone would stumble and accidentally thrust a dagger at him. After a few more exchanges, some of his own men would be thrown toward him.

All of the interruptions seemed to be aimed solely at him. Meanwhile, his opponent did not face any such interruptions at all. It was as if someone was constantly trying to distract him, but when he tried looking around, he could not find who was causing the problem or where the problem lay.

Naturally, the problem was the members of the Maitreya Cult mixed among the crowd, but Tang Wangsheng had no way of knowing that.

With the covert assistance of the members of the Maitreya Cult, the guards of the Tang Clan were gradually forced to retreat. After a while, the gate was breached and forcefully blasted open, and a flood of people surged into the estate.

Tang Wangsheng inwardly cursed. He shouted sternly, "Protect the women and children!"

However, the crowd had no intention to target the women and children at all. Everyone's first instinct was to charge toward Tiger Hill at the rear mountain.

Lu Yuanting's goal was to create the illusion that the Tang Clan was spreading vicious qi throughout Gusu. By doing this, they would be able to incite others to overthrow the Tang Clan and later comply with the Maitreya Cult in taking over the region. Naturally, he would not directly target any of the women and children. His goal had always been clear: to reach the Tiger Hill Sword Pond and draw out the vicious qi inside.

Tang Wangsheng did not know or understand this. He was sweating profusely as he led the Tang Clan's forces, fighting and retreating until they eventually reached Tiger Hill, where they stood on the Thousand People Rock.

When they reached this point, Lu Yuanting halted the crowd and shouted, "Brother Tang! We've only come here to verify if the vicious qi is coming from Tiger Hill. We did not come here to harm your Tang Clan. Can you see that now?"

Tang Wangsheng was extremely furious and chuckled sarcastically, "Then let me ask you, have you verified it yet? There's no damn vicious qi in the Tiger Hill Sword Pond!"

"That's not necessarily the case!" Lu Yuanting waved his hand coldly. "Bring Shaoxiong over here!"

Tang Wangsheng was startled. He saw someone in the distance bring Lu Shaoxiong through the crowd. Lu Shaoxiong, who had previously gone mad and become irrational, now appeared calm, albeit still dispirited. There were still traces of vicious qi lingering on his body, but it seemed to be temporarily suppressed.

A sense of foreboding suddenly rose in Tang Wangsheng's heart.

It seems that the Lu Clan has come prepared. Could Lu Shaoxiong really resonate with something here?

Lu Yuanting said, "If Brother Tang has nothing to hide, then do you dare to let my son go to the edge of the sword pond?"

Under the gazes of everyone present, Tang Wangsheng instinctively felt uneasy but could not find a reason to reject the proposal. He could only say, "If there aren't any issues, how do you intend to conclude this?"

Lu Yuanting sneered and said, "I'll offer my head as compensation!"

Tang Wangsheng took a deep breath, unable to say anything more. He could only watch helplessly as Lu Shaoxiong walked to the edge of the sword pond.



Amidst the gazes of the crowd, Lu Shaoxiong approached the edge of the sword pond and weakly crouched down. Then, he lightly stretched his hand to the water's surface as if he were testing its temperature. After that, he slowly immersed himself into the water, going deeper and deeper until only his head remained above the surface.

Everyone held their breath, watching intently for any changes in the water.

After a while, nothing happened.

Tang Wangsheng's face lit up with joy, but then the crowd suddenly erupted into murmurs, "Movement! There's movement! There's movement in the water!"

Tang Wangsheng looked over in shock. Sure enough, the water in the pond had begun to ripple as if there was wind blowing through the area. But in fact, it was a windless night, and nobody's hair was swaying.

How is there movement in the water?

Upon careful observation, there seemed to be an extremely faint tremor coming from below, as if the aftershocks of a distant earthquake had reached them.

If there was anyone here who had experienced what had happened at the shores of the Ancient Sword Lake, they would recognize this as the turbulence from overlapping dimensions.

However, most people, including Tang Wangsheng himself, were unaware of this. When he was faced with this inexplicable tremor, he was at a loss. Even though nobody sensed any vicious qi, everyone directed gazes full of skepticism toward him.

Actually, the reason for this was very simple:

The sword qi left in Lu Shaoxiong's body, which had originally aroused Dragon Bird's excitement, naturally resonated with the sword qi from the same source below. It was as if an avatar had finally seen the outside world, causing the sword qi below to gather and become restless as if it wanted to break free and experience the outside world as well.

This location corresponded to the position of the main tomb, hence why it was said that “Below the sword pond is the main tomb of the Sword Emperor.”

The sword qi gathering below at this moment was the same as the one Zhao Changhe had seen at the entrance of the main tomb.

When Lu Shaoxiong brought the sword qi in his body to the sword pond above, triggering a response from the sword qi below, the slight tremor born from the response of the sword qi was the signal that they had set with the old man.

Merely triggering a response from the sword qi was not enough to cause it to surge upward, but if someone were to provoke the main tomb, causing the vicious qi to gather and converge, would the gathered vicious qi disperse after killing the offender? Of course not. Vicious qi, once gathered, did not dissipate easily. It would only rampage and continue to tear apart all life it encounters!

And in a sealed space, what form of life could it “see”?

Of course, it was the person resonating with it from above! After all, his body was full of life! While the sword qi outside was essentially similar to an avatar, the corresponding main body was now rushing upward intending to reunite with the part that had split off.

It was a very simple theory, and it was the only method that the Lu Clan could think of to have something break out of the dimensional fragment. After Lu Shaoxiong accidentally got struck by the sword qi, the Lu Clan began planning for this moment.

They had never considered the possibility of the Sword Emperor reviving, nor had they ever spared a thought about the possible consequences of vicious qi surging out and wreaking havoc in Gusu.

They only wanted to have the vicious qi break out of the dimensional fragment and lay all the blame on the Tang Clan, fulfilling their century-old goal.

As for what happened next, Maitreya, who was on the Ranking of Man, could handle it!

However, amidst the crowd’s skepticism, Tang Wangsheng’s astonishment, and Lu Yuanting’s ecstatic expression, after more than ten breaths of time, the pond water still was merely rippling. Nothing actually happened.

Naturally, this was because Zhao Changhe, at this time, had been engaged in a fierce battle with the old man, interrupting the plan.

Lu Shaoxiong was sweating profusely in the water, wishing he could dig out the sword qi from his body, but the water still only continued swaying, and there was still no vicious qi to be seen anywhere.

Lu Yuanting's expression of joy froze on his face. What's going on? We had repeatedly tested this at the entrance before. The sword qi inside would always gather and surge out when it sensed external sword qi. Could it be that this isn't the case at the exit?

Or could the ancestor below make a mistake?

Just as he was hesitating, shouts and cries suddenly came from afar. It seemed like there were thousands of troops engaged in a fierce battle outside, with flames soaring into the sky.

Tang Wangsheng abruptly ordered his relatives beside him, "Go and see what's happening."

But before they could even move, guards from outside rushed in and reported, "Master, the young master led the military into the city and found well-prepared members of the Maitreya Cult around our city gates. They seemed to be waiting for an opportunity to seize the city in one fell swoop. After being discovered by the young master, the members of the Maitreya Cult clashed with the military. Then, those from the Maitreya Cult began causing chaos everywhere in the city and trying to seize control of the gates all around the city. Even...even Abbess Puxin of the Tranquility Hall turned out to be a follower of the Maitreya Cult..."

Tang Wangsheng glared fiercely at Lu Yuanting. "So this is why you gathered a crowd today to falsely accuse my Tang Clan! By taking us out, it would be easier for you to cooperate with the Maitreya Cult to seize control of Gusu, right?" Lu Yuanting was dumbfounded. How did things turn out like this?

Not only did nothing substantial happen at the pond, but how could that incompetent Tang Buqi think to lead the military into the city and end up discovering traces of the Maitreya Cult ahead of time?

At this moment, an extremely fat figure flew over under the moonlight, laughing loudly, “Vicious qi soaring into the sky, of course it was caused by the Tang Clan!”

It was Cult Leader Maitreya of the Maitreya Cult!

After he said that, he suddenly threw something into the pond before anyone could stop him.

The water in the pond roared madly, and the vicious qi finally surged. At this time at the gate of the main tomb below, the old man from the Lu Clan had just died. The vicious qi rampaged wildly, and the ancient sword began to soar into the sky.

Maitreya looked up to the sky and laughed heartily, “The Tang Clan brought vicious qi into the city, while Maitreya saves all living beings. Is there still anything to doubt?”

A flood of spring water emerged under the moonlight, and a fairy’s soft sigh seemed to come from the clouds. “If you had truly managed to take control of the entire region, perhaps that narrative would have indeed spread throughout Jiangnan in the future... But unfortunately for you, although I’ve come a bit late, I still managed to make it here in the end.”

#### Chapter 154: The Noble Buqi

If someone were to rank all the beauties in the world, the extremely beautiful woman approaching under the moonlight had a very high chance of being chosen as the most beautiful woman in the world. However, Maitreya, who was usually extremely lustful, held no romantic thoughts toward her. If anything, he felt straight up pissed.

Why the hell are you here?!

When one’s opponent was strong to a certain degree, what you cared about was no longer their appearance but rather your own life and death.

Maitreya had actually arrived quite some time before. It was just that he did not want to make an appearance too early on to avoid alerting the people of Gusu that the Maitreya Cult would be taking action in the region. He had been waiting until vicious qi surged from within the Tang residence, which was supposed to incite the people of Gusu to gang up on the Tang Clan. They would then come to sort out and take control of the situation, facilitating their rule over the region in the future.

Therefore, he had been lurking for so long, but unexpectedly, the plan of the Lu Clan had inexplicably gone awry just when they were on the verge of success!

What was even more infuriating was that the military, whose discipline had significantly deteriorated as of late and whose generals would all frequently lodge in brothels, had somehow been reorganized and dragged out by Tang Buqi. They stormed into the city and killed many followers of the Maitreya Cult after catching them off guard.

While the hastily assembled and chaotic army was not that powerful, the same went for the Maitreya Cult in Gusu!

Seeing that everything was about to fall into chaos, Maitreya made a decisive decision and immediately threw out the treasure of vicious qi that he had just obtained into the sword pond, which then pulled the vicious qi below upward. With that, their plan should have finally been back in motion.

But who could have expected that after all that, Tang Wanzhuang would actually arrive?!

Maitreya, who originally had the power to suppress everything and could easily solve any unforeseen events, suddenly encountered someone who could actually defeat him.

The capital was thousands of li away. This meant that Tang Wanzhuang must have sensed the crisis that Gusu was about to face as soon as she learned about the upheaval in Yangzhou several days ago. As soon as she realized what was about to happen, she must have rushed here without waiting for her subordinates since they would only serve to slow her down.

Just like in the Luo Family Village back then, she always managed to arrive at critical moments. If she had even so much as delayed her departure for another meal, she would have likely ended up coming here too late.

Maitreya could not help but feel a sense of exhaustion. With this woman who holds an important position in the imperial court here, things are much more troublesome. When Vermillion Bird went to kill Luo Zhenwu, she must have felt the same way back then. It's just that back then, Luo Zhenwu ended up getting killed by some young man out of nowhere. However, it seems like that young man is now on Tang Wanzhuang's side.

That young man seems to be in Gusu now...wait, could he have something to do with how things have ended up like this?

Even as these thoughts flashed through his mind, Maitreya did not stop. Seeing Tang Wanzhuang approaching him with her sword under the moonlight, he took the initiative to launch an attack!

Tang Wanzhuang's illness had never been resolved. After traveling thousands of li to come here, there was no way she was in peak condition. Thus, he felt that launching a swift attack and not giving her a chance to catch her breath was his best shot at winning!

Spring water gently sprinkled, a faint fragrance fluttered down.

Buddhist light shone brightly, lotuses bloomed in the sky.

A confrontation between the third and the fifth on the Ranking of Earth began above the Tang residence. This was no longer a playful tentative confrontation like what had taken place above the Ancient Sword Lake; this was a battle of life and death!

Tang Wanzhang had fought two demonic cult powerhouses as of late: Vermillion Bird ranked fourth, Maitreya ranked fifth. From this, the reason Tang Wanzhuang was so eager to break through could easily be discerned. If she had not broken through quickly, she did not know if she would be able to handle these two powerhouses. Even then, there was still the Black Tortoise ranked second, along with a thief, who everyone dreaded, ranked first.

This was not even mentioning the Ranking of Heaven...

In any case, among the top five on the Ranking of Earth, four of them were wanted criminals. How difficult was it for the Demon Suppression Bureau to handle such matters?

Before Tang Wanzhuang broke through, she was already third on the Ranking of Earth. Now, forcibly breaking through had injured her lung meridian. No one knew for sure whether her current strength was higher or lower than before. That was why Vermillion Bird and Maitreya avoided confronting her if they could, fearing this injured young lady.

But at this moment, he could no longer simply wait and see, and a battle of life and death erupted between the two of them.

On the other hand, Tang Wanzhuang was also feeling extremely troubled at the moment. Regardless of whether she could defeat Maitreya or not, the outcome could not be determined easily. What should she do about the situation at the sword pond?

Maitreya could just sit back and watch as the vicious sword rose from the pond and slaughtered everyone present, but could she do the same?

Who could lend her a hand?

\*

By the sword pond, the situation was slightly better than before.

Although there was indeed vicious qi rising from the pond at this moment, the people who had been instigated by the Lu Clan earlier were not as hostile toward the Tang Clan as they were earlier. Most people had seen with their own eyes that it was Maitreya who had triggered the vicious qi by throwing something into the pond. They couldn't be sure whether this vicious qi belonged to the pond or to Maitreya.

But regardless of people's current perceptions, which side they stood on, or whether or not they wanted to wait for the outcome of the battle between the two powerhouses on the Ranking of Earth, none of them were given the time to think about things and make a decision.

Because a few moments later, the vicious sword emerged from the pond.

People watched in horror as space twisted unnaturally, as if it was a desert mirage, then cracked like glass. The pond water was truly overflowing at this moment, and in the next instant, the beautiful sword pond disappeared.

In its place was a massive sword. Lu Shaoxiong, who had not managed to leave the pond earlier, was directly crushed by this sword. His screams were drowned out amidst the thunderous upheaval of the space, and no one could hear him as he was crushed into paste.

Lu Yuanting stood there in shock, unable to summon even the grief of losing his son.

This sword was not only terrifyingly powerful but also surrounded by a chilling aura of vicious qi, captivating the hearts of those around.

It felt as though they were in some kind of bloody battlefield, with limbs strewn about, bloodthirsty beasts prowling, vultures circling overhead, the sky ruptured open, and the eyes of gods and demons glaring menacingly through the cracks. Just a single glance was enough to leave one's heart trembling in fear!

Swish, swish, swish!

Countless streams of sword qi rained down, enveloping everyone, regardless of faction, within a baptism of blades.

This was the sentient vicious sword unleashed by the provocation of the old man of the Lu Clan. It had come to annihilate all living beings!

Screams rang out one after the other. In an instant, whether they were from the Tang Clan or part of the various troublemakers that had come, they were left either dead or wounded. Blood pooled around the Thousand People Rock, mixing with the pond water that had overflowed, turning Tiger Hill into a hellish landscape.

Even Lu Yuanting had not anticipated facing such a situation.

“Quickly, leave!” Tang Wanzhuang's voice came from above. “No matter what side you are on, turn around and evacuate in an orderly manner! The Tang Clan will stay behind and keep the sword qi at bay. The sword qi isn't as powerful as you think!”

For a moment, the air seemed to quiet down. Then someone shouted, and everyone panicked, scrambling to flee. Tang Wanzhuang's instructions for an orderly evacuation were completely disregarded. Even the members of the Tang Clan, and even Tang Wangsheng himself, were no exception. Each of them cursed the others for not holding the rear, and each of them regretted not having been born with an extra pair of legs as they dashed away from the pond.

However, this was a mountain path, after all, so how wide could it really be?



Only half of the massive vicious sword had risen out from the ground, and the sword qi had not even been released for the second round, yet people were already pushing and shoving, trampling over each other, resulting in countless dead and injured.

No one knew whether more people had died from the earlier round of sword qi or from being trampled by others.

While Maitreya was fighting with Tang Wanzhuang, he laughed loudly, “First Seat Tang, you work so hard for these pieces of trash? And you want your self-righteous Tang Clan juniors to hold the rear? Pfft, hahahaha... Apart from you, there has not been anyone of any worth in the Tang Clan for a long time! In my opinion, it would be better for you to simply join my Realm of True Void and experience true bliss. Why waste your efforts on these useless people? I feel sorry for you just watching them.”

Tang Wanzhuang’s face remained as calm as water, offering no response to his taunts.

While Maitreya was laughing wildly, a flash of sword light streaked through the mountain. Someone flew over the trees and rushed straight toward the vicious sword. He stood alone with a sword in hand right before the vicious sword. “This is Tiger Hill Sword Pond, this is the mountain of the Tang Clan. Members of the Tang Clan shall hold the rear. Those who still think their surname is Tang, stand beside me!”

The crowd that was rushing down the mountain path paused for a moment and turned to look back.

Tang Buqi was standing before the vicious sword, looking particularly lonely.

Even though only half of the vicious sword had emerged, it was already taller than everyone here...

In his drunken state, Tang Buqi once admitted he was afraid of death. But now, even though everyone could see his trembling hand and shaking legs as he faced the terrifying vicious qi that could cause thousands of people to lose courage, he stood there as if rooted to the spot, a true pillar of the Tang Clan.

Many people looked at each other and suddenly rushed back toward him. “Young master!”

“Cousin!”

“Nephew!”

“Let me help you!”

Suddenly, a wall of people appeared in front of the vicious sword. Everyone stood with their swords ready, forming a solid defensive formation.

Swish, swish, swish!

The second round of sword qi descended like rain.

However, this time, people realized something: as long as they were not intimidated by the vicious qi and they formed a defensive formation to counter it, the scattered sword qi was not all that difficult to block after all.

As long as the sword qi was dispersed like this, it was even something that Zhao Changhe could withstand with his own flesh and bones. How powerful could it really be?

Ding, ding, ding, ding!

Sounds similar to pearls falling on a jade plate resounded. The members of the Tang Clan were actually managing to intercept all of the sword qi without a single person getting injured!

Maitreya’s expression changed, and Tang Wanzhuang finally revealed the first hint of a smile tonight. “Oh, did someone just say there’s no one else in my Tang Clan?”

“Hahaha!” Tang Buqi, leading the group, successfully intercepted the rain of sword qi. Despite his voice trembling earlier, he now sounded triumphant. “That’s it? That’s all you got?! Ancient evil sword, you should have come out earlier and let yourself be taken away long ago!”

Boom! The sword finally broke out of the alternate space completely, announcing that the barrier of the dimensional fragment was now broken and the two dimensions were connected once again.

The massive sword turned around and pointed at Tang Buqi.

Tang Buqi: "...I was joking just now..."

Maitreya laughed and said, "It's not all that incredible for them to be able to block the scattered sword qi... However, can these people handle this ferocious giant sword? It's a pity that even those with a bit of backbone from the Tang Clan will all be lost after thi—"

Before he could finish saying the word "this," Maitreya's eyes suddenly bulged.

A man covered in blood, carrying a girl in his arms, emerged from the ground, coming out together with the sword hilt.

As soon as they landed, the man set the girl in his arms aside, took hold of the broad saber from his back, and fiercely swung it down at the vicious sword. "There's someone who's been excited to meet you this entire time. It's been wanting to have a go at you. It's perfect now that you've formed into a sword! Even if I can't beat up the Sword Emperor, I don't think you're the Sword Emperor, are you?!"

#### Chapter 155: The Rightful Ruler of Today

Everyone was stunned. Nobody could understand how Zhao Changhe had come from below.

Tang Buqi thought to himself, Appearances truly can be deceiving. So while we were digging through brothels outside, you were actually digging underground? But why are you covered in so much blood? And who is that girl you're carrying? Is she the maid I gave you? Why does she look nothing like her?

However, the person who was most shocked at the moment was actually Sisi.

Not only was Zhao Changhe injured and covered in blood, but he had just used a skill that would leave him in a weakened state. Normally, anyone in his condition would want to rest and recuperate, but he was now swinging his saber fiercely, as if his injuries and state of weakness were irrelevant.

This ferocity contrasted starkly with his previous calm demeanor when they were solving the case. Sisi could not fathom how these two incredibly different personas could coexist in a single person.

Bang!

With a resounding bang, Dragon Bird heavily struck the ancient sword. However, instead of the jarring sound of metal clashing, what reverberated was the crisp yet somewhat dampened sound of a violent collision of energy!

The ancient sword swayed slightly. Zhao Changhe flipped backward, then rebounded off of a rock, launching himself back toward the sword as he swung his saber once again!

Despite a slight difference in strength, he could still hold his own!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The ancient sword surprisingly slashed horizontally and vertically, using simple sword moves. It was as if someone invisible was actually holding the sword as it engaged Zhao Changhe's Dragon Bird in a back-and-forth battle. With each clash, sword qi scattered around them, as if the sword was a wild animal losing fur as it engaged another animal in battle.

Meanwhile, Tang Buqi and the others were struggling merely resisting the sword qi.

Is this how one man and one sword engage in battle against one another? Where is its weak point? Does it even have one? Hell, how is he even able to fight against it?

The ancient sword gave off a sensation that it was utterly undefeatable. It gave off the impression that it would crush anyone and anything that collided with it. Tang Buqi even doubted whether Tang Wanzhuang or Maitreya could face off against it, so how exactly was someone like Zhao Changhe, who was much weaker than them, able to be so evenly matched against such a fearsome sword?

However, Tang Wanzhuang and Maitreya, who were in the midst of a fierce battle, knew what was going on.

The power of this ancient sword really was not as great as everyone thought.

Firstly, it was not the personal divine sword of the Sword Emperor. Instead, this ancient sword was merely made up of the sword qi that was left in the tomb to protect it. Although it did contain the intent of the Sword Emperor, it was far from being able to reach his level of power.

Secondly, as Sisi had suggested earlier, while the sword qi may have indeed been extremely powerful in the past, with each individual stream of sword qi possibly even possessing the power of an expert on the Rankings of Man, Earth, or Heaven, the countless years that had passed had significantly weakened them. While the aggregate power of the sword qi was indeed still strong enough to break out of the dimensional fragment, the energy required to do that was no joke. How much could possibly remain after carrying out such a huge feat?

When looking at it this way, the ancient sword really wasn't that strong at all.

The reason it felt unbeatable was mainly the thick vicious qi that surrounded it. This type of energy had always had the ability to affect the mind and induce fear in those who witnessed it. When in such a horrible state of mind, it would be nearly impossible to muster any will to fight back. Combined with the enormous size of the ancient sword and the terrifying disturbance caused by its emergence from a separate space, it created an overwhelming psychological pressure.

But as long as there was someone who could completely ignore the influence of the vicious qi, they could go head-to-head against it!

Apart from the two who were on the Ranking of Earth, the only person currently present who could ignore the influence of vicious qi and even feel like a fish in water around it was Zhao Changhe!

An area filled with vicious blood qi had long since become his best stage!

The ancient sword in the air swept at him violently.

Hwoaa!

Zhao Changhe held his saber with both hands and ferociously slashed downward.

The muscles all over his body bulged and his hair came loose, his long locks dancing in the wind.

From afar, it was unclear whether the sword was a vicious sword or if Zhao Changhe himself was a vicious god. Which one of them radiated a more violent energy?

Bang!

The sword and saber clashed once again, and Dragon Bird let out an excited cry.

With vicious blood qi and the might of an emperor, the sword possessed qualities that perfectly matched Dragon Bird's, further stimulating its already eager fighting spirit!

Zhao Changhe exerted strength in his legs, shot forward like a cannonball, and pursued the sword once again.

In the eyes of the onlookers, this saber strike, which seemed to contain the ferocity of a thousand armies and the overwhelming aura that left the masses bowing their head, appeared much stronger than the intent of the Sword Emperor.

It was as if Zhao Changhe had always been suppressing Dragon Bird's might, only releasing it without restraint at this moment.

Whether it was the madness of the saber or the majesty of the sword, new era dominance or the aura of the ancients, it seemed like the winner would be revealed in this final clash!

Boom!

A blast resounded as energy swelled and vicious qi surged like a tide, sweeping over several zhang.

With the energy wrapped in vicious qi, trees snapped and rocks shattered. The area within several zhang of the impact point had been reduced to flat ground.

This was beyond Zhao Changhe's power. This was the power of Dragon Bird and the ancient sword!

Tang Buqi and the others retreated after hastily strengthening their defensive formation. They struggled to withstand the increasingly dense rain of sword qi and vicious qi, but their hearts surprisingly felt increasingly calm and stable.

This sword rain was becoming weaker. Previously, it had raged and killed people, but now it felt like nothing.

Moreover, the massive ancient sword in the sky was continuously shrinking. At this moment, it was almost the same size as Dragon Bird, and it was still shrinking...

Tang Buqi finally understood how to kill a sword coalescence like the ancient sword. In the end, it was still just a collection of sword qi. As long as it was repeatedly engaged, its energy would continue to weaken and it would naturally dissipate.

Swoosh!

A nearly invisible glimmer suddenly shot toward Zhao Changhe.

Maitreya had realized that the situation had become unfavorable. Even though he would place himself at a disadvantage against Tang Wanzhuang by doing so, he wanted to destroy Zhao Changhe.

Sisi forcefully lunged forward.

I've finally caught sight of the light at the end of the treasure trove, there's no way I'm going to let a bald bastard like you ruin things for me! Unfortunately, Sisi seemed to have completely forgotten that the other party was the person ranked fifth on the Ranking of Earth. Did she really have what it took to intercept even a casual attack from someone of such caliber?

The dagger seemed to cut through the glimmer, but it did not actually hit. It merely grazed past it, and the hidden weapon still continued on its flight straight toward Zhao Changhe's sword, where it then emitted a crisp sound as it appeared to collide against something solid.

Zhao Changhe was thrown backward, but surprisingly, his chest was unharmed.

With a stomp on the ground behind him, he leaped up again, swinging his saber as he angrily declared, "I'll remember this! I, Zhao Changhe, shall claim your head for this transgression!"

Swish!

Distracted from launching a sneak attack on Zhao Changhe, how could Maitreya still withstand Tang Wanzhuang's attack? A sword light flashed across his chest and blood sprayed from it. Meanwhile, Zhao Changhe's chest remained unscathed. It was a horrible trade.

Maitreya could not figure out what in the world was hidden in Zhao Changhe's chest pocket that could actually withstand his attack. At this moment, if he did not retreat, he would die under Tang Wangzhuang's sword.

With no time to think, Maitreya suddenly sprayed a mouthful of blood, forcing Tang Wanzhuang to step back slightly. He then swiftly retreated and fled. "When my holy cult eradicates all opposition, I will make sure that you two experience eternal damnation!"

As he spoke the last few words, he vanished from sight.

Almost at the same time, Dragon Bird struck the ancient sword once more, causing it to waver and finally dissipate.

The remnant vicious qi and imperial qi then swirled around Dragon Bird, then gradually got absorbed by it. Dragon Bird then emitted the roar of a dragon along with the long cries of a saber, as if proclaiming itself as the rightful ruler of today!

Zhao Changhe plunged Dragon Bird into the mud.

Dragon Bird: "..."

It wanted to react...but after shaking a bit, it quietened down.

That was because Zhao Changhe was now truly completely exhausted. Even when using it as a support, he still struggled to remain standing. It was as if it wasn't for its support, he would collapse to the ground.

Tang Wanzhuang stood silently on a distant treetop, observing Zhao Changhe.

His entire body was riddled with wounds, evidence of the sword qi that had cut into his body again and again. Internally, his true qi, as well as his blood and qi, were completely exhausted. Externally, he was covered in blood, barely resembling a human.



Any child could come and push him over at this moment, and he'd fall on his face.

However, the aura of the vicious qi and the will of an emperor that lingered around Dragon Bird seemed to perfectly merge with him, making him appear like the ruler of heaven and hell alike.

Tang Buqi and the other onlookers felt their hearts trembling at this moment. Tang Buqi secretly thought that the title that the Maitreya Cult had given Zhao Changhe suited him still really well. He did resemble a bloodthirsty asura...no, actually, that somehow did not seem adequate anymore.

Perhaps the title should be elevated to something more apt?

Zhao Changhe had no idea that Tang Buqi was still capable of such thoughts at this moment. He found even lifting his head a bit strenuous as he slowly glanced at Tang Wanzhuang.

As the night breeze brushed past, her exquisite clothes fluttered. Under the moonlight, her beauty was incomparable. And when one stared at her captivating eyes, one could glimpse an unfathomable depth.

After exchanging a brief glance, Tang Wanzhuang was about to speak when Zhao Changhe turned his head, his gaze softening as he looked at Sisi beside him. He whispered, "Thank you for blocking that just now."

Sisi also turned her head and looked at him, thinking to herself that her intention had not actually been pure, she just wanted the treasure. Furthermore, even though she had tried to block the attack, she had failed to do so.

But looking into his eyes, she did not say any of that, only murmuring, "Don't even think about leaving me out."

Zhao Changhe responded with a smile, "If she dares, I'll fall out with her."