

## T. Times 196

### Chapter 196: Emotional Understanding

Cui Yuanyang did not know if her feelings really were all just a result of her youth and ignorance... Anyway, the more that others said so, including even Zhao Changhe himself, the more unconvinced she felt, and the more she convinced herself that it was genuine affection.

While naivety and ignorance were indeed quite often associated with people at this age, it should not just be forgotten that there was another word that also corresponded to people at this age: rebelliousness. Back then, when she had sneaked into the mountain stronghold and eventually gone to look for Zhao Changhe, was it not exactly because of such rebellious tendencies?

After Zhao Changhe left, she thought about him every day. She rejoiced in his feats that flashed in the Tome of Troubled Times, bragging to everyone and saying, "See, my big brother Zhao is amazing!"

Eventually, all her thoughts seemed to boil down to her liking him.

However, she did not really know what to do when it came to interacting with the person she liked. She had never felt the urge to kiss someone the way it was described in the stories she had read. At most, she would feel somewhat expectant toward certain things, curious as to what they would feel like... but she did not really desire them all that much.

When she thought about trying it out, she would feel disgusted just looking at other men's mouths, but now that it was her big brother Zhao, it did not seem as disgusting. If she was going to try it out, then she could only do so with him.

Does this... Does this count as liking someone?

She only knew that she really liked being with Zhao Changhe very much. It was as if as long as he was around, there was nothing else in the world that attracted her.

She particularly liked the feeling of nestling in his arms, as if she were wrapped up in a really warm blanket.

She would sometimes have doubts in her mind. Is everyone else actually right? Is what I'm feeling really just some kind of dependency born out of the hardships we faced? Is what I'm feeling not actually love?

But now, he had not even asked her whether she agreed or not; he had just directly gone and "sealed the deal."

It felt like an electric current surged straight into her brain, leaving her feeling dizzy and fuzzy all over. The only thing that kept swirling inside her mind was the thought: So this is how it feels...

Then, bits and pieces from the stories that she had read flashed through her mind.

So that electric current that those books were talking about was actually real.

That dizziness that those books were talking about was actually real as well.

There was also that description that mentioned something along the lines of losing yourself and feeling as if you're completely at their mercy.

So that was true as well.

All those books also had another thing in common. They all said that if you were kissing someone you liked, it would feel very good. On the other hand, if you did not like them, you would instinctively resist their advances.

Yangyang affirmed her feelings at this moment. I feel very comfortable, and I'm not resisting in the slightest. See, I said that I liked him and I was right, yet nobody believed me. Hmph...

Despite how long this series of thoughts that flashed through the young girl's mind seemed to take, the kiss actually only lasted for a short time.

Her lips were soft and sweet, and they felt wonderful, but Zhao Changhe still felt a little guilty. After gently kissing her lips for a short while, he pulled back.

Seeing her eyes blur, along with the bewildered look on her face, Zhao Changhe felt even more guilty and said softly, “Yangyang...”

As soon as he said one word, Cui Yuanyang came to her senses and said, “Why so fast?”

Zhao Changhe: “?”

“I even started using the Qinghe Purple Qi Art, wanting to see how many breaths I could last. Big brother Zhao, I’m not that weak now, it’s okay...” Cui Yuanyang smacked her lips twice. “Mmm, it felt really nice. However, I feel like the girls without internal arts are quite pitiful, they probably won’t be able to last several breaths before they have to pull away...”

Zhao Changhe tilted his head back, and the guilt he had been feeling completely dissipated. However, the charming atmosphere that had been present just now had also passed.

At this moment, all his previous thoughts flew away. He simply hugged Yuanyang like she were a child, rested his chin on her head, and said softly, “What a child.”

“Hmph.”

She savored the feeling, and she actually wanted to try it again. However, she also felt that it was very comfortable to be in his arms like this and thus felt too lazy to move. And so, she simply lay on him and mumbled, “You say that I’m a child, yet you kiss me. You’ve indeed become bad now, and you say things without actually meaning it...”

“Okay, okay, you’re a big kid.”

“You do know that many people get married at this age, and many people my age are even mothers already. You’re the only one calling me a child.” Cui Yuanyang started to lose her temper. “If you keep saying that, then you can’t kiss me anymore!”

It’s over. She’s really become a woman now, and it all happened even faster than Sailor Moon’s transformation.

Zhao Changhe wanted to cry but no tears came out.

Cui Yuanyang bit her lower lip. She quietly grasped the large arm that was wrapped around her waist and slowly moved it upward. “You said that I haven’t changed at all, but that’s not entirely true... I feel like there have been some slight changes in some areas. Do you want to measure it?”

Clack!

The sound of a vase being shattered came from outside the courtyard, and the guards apologized in unison, “Ah, our apologies, Miss. We accidentally knocked over a flower pot.”

You broke a flower pot and you feel the need to report to me all at the same time?!

Cui Yuanyang’s face turned beet red, realizing that the guards were not there just to protect her safety, but also to protect her...safety. They didn’t want her to be eaten up by the big bad wolf.

But wasn’t the kiss just now what everyone referred to as being eaten up? What else would it be?

“Ahem.” Zhao Changhe felt too embarrassed to measure any of the changes in her body. He stood up and gently placed Cui Yuanyang down, then ruffled her hair. “We shouldn’t just talk about these things. Come, show me how much progress you’ve made in your sword art.”

In fact, neither of them was in the mood to test their martial arts. Facing each other, they could see the embarrassment and amusement in each other’s eyes.

After looking at each other for a long time, they suddenly burst into laughter.

Two dry coughs came from outside the courtyard, and Lu Ya knocked on the gate before slowly entering.

Cui Yuanyang respected this guest elder very much and greeted him politely with a blushing face, “Uncle Lu.”

“Young master Zhao, after careful consideration, I’ve decided to put an end to this spectacle.” Lu Ya nodded fondly and looked at Zhao Changhe helplessly.

Zhao Changhe had no choice but to cup his hands in respect and ask, "Senior, can you explain?"

"The Cui Clan is not as unbridled as the jianghu. Regardless of whether you've been engaged or not, according to tradition, you should not even see each other before marriage. After all, you can see how Yuanyong and the young lady of the Wang Clan were kept apart," Lu Ya said with a wry smile. "The head of the Cui Clan can be said to be very open-minded by letting Yanyang come out this time, considering that you two have not seen each other for a long time... But, how should I put it... Don't overdo it. It really would not look good if this were to get out."

The young man and woman's faces turned a deep red, and they simultaneously lowered their heads and said nothing.

They both had similarly stubborn temperaments. If the elders were too rigid, the two of them were the kind to even elope on the spot. But when they were being treated this fair and sincere way, the two of them only felt embarrassment and obediently listened to the elder's words.

"Actually, our original plan was to meet you at the Wang Clan. In public, with all the guests present, there would not be any room for gossip. It's quite normal for old friends to get together and speak a few words with one another in private after such events. But who could have known that the Four Idols Cult would cause trouble and lead to an unexpected encounter on the road? Frankly, it would not be very good if word of this were to spread..."

Zhao Changhe said with pain, "Aristocratic families are really troublesome. They've always got so many rules."

"This is not exactly a rule... Of course, if you say that aristocratic families care much more about saving face as compared to heroines of the jianghu like Yue Hongling, then that's correct," Lu Ya said leisurely. "The important thing to take note of here is that you have not met the conditions of the clan head. It would be ugly if your relationship were to become regarded as an affair. If you have truly met the conditions that were set, then why would we care about those rules of not being allowed to see each other before marriage?"

Zhao Changhe was startled for a moment, and then he cupped his fist and said, "You're right."

Lu Ya was also startled. He examined Zhao Changhe up and down, and said, "They say that you're unruly, but you're actually quite reasonable."

“When I’m talking to someone reasonable, then I would naturally be reasonable too.” Zhao Changhe turned around and ruffled Cui Yuanyang’s hair once more. “Besides, I would never want Yangyang to be laughed at by others.”

Cui Yuanyang stomped her foot. “In the end, you’re still leaving?”

“Why are you protesting now? We’ll meet in two days anyway.” Then, Zhao Changhe suddenly became serious. “Yangyang, how about we arrange a little show?”

Cui Yuanyang was puzzled. “Huh?”

“The official stance of the Cui Clan is that I am a toad wanting to eat swan meat, and I was kicked out by my prospective father-in-law. But since he appreciated my efforts in escorting you and did not want to be regarded as ungrateful, he set up a three-year agreement. This is how outsiders perceive the situation right now. If we meet at the Wang Clan, you can’t just show up like how you imagined, you have to follow this narrative.”

Cui Yuanyang scratched her head in frustration. “But that narrative doesn’t say anything about my attitude.”

“You owe a debt of gratitude, but I’m still just a toad, so it’s awkward for us to meet. So, you must keep your distance. Actually, you don’t need to act deliberately, you’re not much of an actress, so you’ll just end up giving yourself away... Just talk with me less, it will seem more believable that way.”

“Why do we have to do this? I don’t want to not talk to you...”

“Because I think that there will be a good show at the Wang Clan this time. This coming banquet is by no means just an ordinary birthday banquet. It might not even just be an occasion for sword testing or competition as some people speculate. No, I’ve got a feeling that there will be huge changes during this banquet. If we pretend to be distant, it will lead others to make wrong assumptions, which could be useful in the future...”

Almost at the same time, Vermillion Bird said to Xia Chichi, “Alright, stop pretending to be dead over there. You’ll attend the Wang Clan’s banquet as the sixth Hidden Dragon. Something will likely happen during this banquet. Your task is to participate and grasp the situation firsthand. I’ll be observing, and I’ll provide support when needed.”

Xia Chichi stole a glance at her and said deliberately, “As a witch, I’m afraid that I’ll probably become the target of public criticism and be kicked out after a few words.”

Vermillion Bird left with a wave of her sleeve. “Stop pretending. You have your most reliable ally inside. You’re clearly smiling

## Chapter 197: Goodbye, Fire Serpent of Yi

In fact, the birthday banquet that the Wang Clan was holding was not exactly in two days, but rather still a good couple days away.

However, with how the guards would kick over flower pots at the slightest hints of intimacy, the two of them could not continue with their inappropriate behavior with straight faces. Cui Yuanyang had just learned the taste of a kiss, yet she couldn’t do anything but pout angrily and hurry to Langya.

They were warmly welcomed by the Wang Clan, and they made a conspicuous display when they arrived, as if to tell the world, Look, I didn’t come with Zhao Changhe. I headed straight to the Wang Clan!

On this trip this time, she actually also bore the responsibility of discussing the wedding arrangements for the wedding between her brother and the young lady of the Wang Clan. Despite the fact that she seemed more impetuous than even a wild warrior, when it came to etiquette and important matters such as marriage, she knew how to act. Sadly, this wedding isn’t mine. Well, at least I get to see how it’s supposed to go with my brother going first.

As for Zhao Changhe, he returned to the Taiyi Sect, where he sparred with Xuan Chong to improve his own martial arts and broaden his knowledge by exposing himself to Daoist martial arts.

At the same time, he was trying to figure out how to break through to the fifth level of the Six Harmonies Art.

Although he could have attempted to break through to the sixth level of the Vicious Blood Art a long time ago, he had refrained from forcefully raising his cultivation. He was mainly doing this because his cultivation of the Six Harmonies Art was lagging behind. In the past, the two were around the same level, and he experienced the wonders of having both his internal and external cultivation at the same level. Anyway, he felt that his internal cultivation should ideally be at most one level lower than his external cultivation.

Unfortunately, due to the limitations of his meridians, his progress in cultivating his internal arts had been comparatively slower than his external arts. Now that he was in a Daoist sect, the orthodox lineage of internal cultivation, he wondered if there was anything he could learn or refer to while staying here.

Since he had a premonition that pivotal changes would be taking place at the Wang Clan's banquet, he sincerely hoped to settle the matter regarding his internal cultivation in the next few days. He really wanted to improve his combat power, so that he could be prepared for any of the coming events.

When he sought guidance from Gui Chen, the old Daoist remarked, "Young friend, your internal cultivation is actually on the brink of a breakthrough. In fact, considering your circumstances, I truly cannot say that you were or are in a great position to be practicing internal arts. For you to have achieved the fourth layer of the Profound Gate the way you did might sound unimpressive, but it is honestly incredible. It is remarkable for you to have reached such a level in just half a year. Of course, it cannot be disregarded that the cultivation technique that you are practicing is a divine art. If it were someone else, someone who was more suitable to practice the technique, they would have likely already reached an even higher level of cultivation."

"...If you're trying to tell me that I'm squandering an exceptional cultivation technique, then you can just say it. I can take it."

"Your meridians limit you significantly. It is simply not something that your talent or insights can change," said Gui Chen. "It seems that you've received guidance from an expert, allowing you to achieve a calm and focus that's very suitable for practicing this particular internal art. This has contributed largely to managing to progress through the fourth layer and reaching this critical juncture. If it had not been for that, it would have been highly unlikely for you to reach this point as fast as you did."

Zhao Changhe was taken aback. He realized that Tang Wanzhuang's efforts had also been for this.

"Since you are practicing a divine art, then you should theoretically not face too many barriers. However, a minor barrier or obstacle for others can become a major one when it comes to you. Once again, this is due to your circumstances and physique. In this situation, there is actually a very simple auxiliary method that you can use to overcome the obstacles and achieve a breakthrough."

Zhao Changhe humbly asked for advice, "Please tell me."



“In your situation, dual cultivation is extremely effective and can provide you with significant improvements.”

Zhao Changhe: “...”

“Of course, there are also some medicinal aids that you can use to hasten your breakthrough, but as Daoists, we believe in gentleness and avoid forcing things. With that said, I do have some pills here that are less aggressive and can offer you some assistance. You can try them, but don’t set your expectations too high, as even I have limited abilities.”

Zhao Changhe took the pills and thanked the old Daoist. “Thank you very much.”

“The union of Yin and Yang is the harmony of the two polarities, and this gives rise to the four symbols.[1] Although this might not be the main ideology of the Four Idols Cult, they have delved into it deeply. I noticed that you seemed to be on relatively good terms with the Fire Serpent of Yi. I suggest that you inquire about it when you meet her again, they might have unique insights on this matter.”

“...Alright.”

After receiving the medicine, Zhao Changhe felt that this round of questioning had been rather fruitful. He was not in a rush and spent some time practicing sword arts and other martial arts with Xuan Chong before leisurely returning to his accommodation to digest what he had learned.

Xuan Chong could not be underestimated. Zhao Changhe would not be able to defeat him without making a breakthrough.

Ranking tenth on the Ranking of Hidden Dragons and reaching the seventh layer of the Profound Gate were no easy feats. Everyone at the forefront of the Ranking of Hidden Dragons had potential, and when it came to the people among these top ranks, it was difficult for them to surpass another that was of similar ranking and cultivation.

However, Zhao Changhe was familiar with the principle of using softness to overcome hardness, such as Tang Wanzhuang’s Spring Water Sword Intent.

Ultimately, regardless of the school of martial arts, when one was at the Profound Gate, the fundamental principles remained the same.

Sparring with someone of a comparable level but slightly stronger was a highly valuable experience for Zhao Changhe. Zhao Changhe wanted to take out the page of the Heavenly Tome and review the spars, but he did not dare to bring it out.

He was currently staying in a guest house provided by the Taiyi Sect, and it would be troublesome if someone were to discover the Heavenly Tome. Besides, he always felt like the Fire Serpent of Yi might appear at any moment.

In the end, he refrained from taking out the Heavenly Tome.

The guest house that he was provided was equipped with a guqin and a chess set. He sat by the guqin and played it leisurely. It served as both practice and meditation.

According to Gui Chen, playing the guqin was a form of internal cultivation as well. Meditation was not necessarily the only way to increase one's internal cultivation. No wonder Tang Wanzhuang, despite her young age, had so much time to practice both martial arts and the four arts. It turns out that when it comes to her system of cultivation, every activity contributes to her practice.

Under the bright moon, as a clear breeze blew through a Daoist temple, Zhao Changhe played the guqin. If Xia Chichi and Cui Yuanyang were to witness this scene, their jaws may have dropped.

Is this the Zhao Changhe that the world knows? Why does he seem less like a wild bandit and more like an old woman...

Vermillion Bird, wearing the mask of the Fire Serpent of Yi, stood silently on a nearby wall, watching Zhao Changhe playing the guqin. The red lips underneath her mask subtly curled.

His skill is average at best. But, how should I put it... He is carefreely and leisurely playing the guqin from his heart. He isn't practicing the guqin out of compulsion, nor for someone else to hear. The music that comes from his hands feels free and at ease. This intent with which he's playing the guqin can fill the gaps in his skills. This is difficult to come by in the mundane world.

Ding!

As he played one last note, Zhao Changhe stopped and calmly said, "If you are here to pay me a visit, why aren't you saying anything?"

Vermillion Bird was slightly startled. She had not expected him to notice her presence.

She did not dwell on it, however, and said calmly, "With how leisurely the mood was, I did not want to interrupt."

Zhao Changhe looked up at her mask with some surprise, "Does the Four Idols Cult also value elegance?"

"The saintess has been lonely since she was a child. Just because she lacks elegance does not mean that she isn't able to appreciate it. Furthermore, it certainly does not mean that the others in the Four Idols Cult are ignorant of it," Vermillion Bird said lightly. "The Four Idols Cult is not a clan and does not raise its members from childhood. There are all kinds of people in the cult, each with their own hobbies and identities. We are all simply gathered and united by one ideology."

"Are you still trying to recruit me into your cult? Did Venerable Vermillion Bird assign you another mission to try and recruit me?"

"Yes."

"I already refused Venerable Vermillion Bird, so what's the point of even assigning you such a mission?"

"Your refusal was not a firm one. It merely stems from a lack of faith, which is entirely normal," said Vermillion Bird. "If you join the cult, your faith can gradually be solidified and reinforced. It really is not a large problem."

"But I don't want to join."

"That's why I'm here. We can negotiate the conditions under which you would be willing to join the cult."

Zhao Changhe pondered for a moment, and then he chuckled and said, "No wonder Venerable Vermillion Bird did not personally come to discuss this matter with me. After all, she is used to

being high and mighty, and she would likely not want to lower her status to negotiate with me. Am I right?”

Underneath the mask, Vermillion Bird’s face turned ugly. “That’s right.”

Zhao Changhe pondered for a moment and said seriously, “If your cult can help me solve the problem with my meridians, I can join. Even if I might not be faithful, I will still do work. You can trust my word.”

Vermillion Bird sighed. “We understand your condition, but we are powerless in this regard. However, we can promise you that if we find any treasures of heaven and earth that can aid you, we will leave them for you.”

Zhao Changhe nodded and said, “Then let’s lower the stakes. I’d be fine with joining as long as Chichi and I can be together.”

“...We would rather find you treasures of heaven and earth.”

“Why must you make things so complicated? Chichi and I are in love with each other, and my situation is suitable for dual cultivation. As long as you allow us to dual cultivate, everything is settled.”

Vermillion Bird frowned slightly and said, “You plan to rely on dual cultivation? Did Gui Chen teach you that? I’ll slap his mouth if you say that nonsense again.”

Zhao Changhe looked at her strangely.

Vermillion Bird realized that her behavior did not match that of a mere Fire Serpent of Yi. She quickly tried covering it up and said, “While dual cultivation can be useful, forming a dependent mindset surrounding it is not beneficial. If you must consider doing such actions every time you want to break through, then just what kind of martial path even is that? Is that the path of the Maitreya Cult or the Harmonious Union Cult? If you ask what the Four Idols Cult’s opinion is on the matter, we believe that it would be best to abstain from such actions. In fact, abstaining from such actions would be beneficial to the blood and qi of your Vicious Blood Art.”

Zhao Changhe nodded and said, “I understand. I’m not saying that I will rely on it every time, I just want a partner I can cultivate with. Can the Four Idols Cult agree to that?”

## Chapter 198: Impossible, Absolutely Impossible

Vermillion Bird was so angry that she nearly ground her teeth to pieces, thinking to herself that the thought processes of Zhao Changhe and Xia Chichi were remarkably aligned. No wonder they were so in love with each other, both their minds were fixated on this one thing.

At first, you mentioned that you wanted to resolve the issue with your meridians, which, although a high demand, can still be considered a normal condition or ask. So, how the hell did the conversation end up on this topic?

Suppressing her frustration, Vermillion Bird gritted her teeth and said, “Do you think that the Four Idols Cult is like some Myriad Flowers Tower? That we’re here to pick girls out for you? You might as well go look for Tang Wanzhuang. She’s the one who runs an actual Myriad Flowers Tower!”

Zhao Changhe sighed. “Who do you think taught me to play the guqin?” “Are you saying that you’re entertaining offers from other factions?” snapped Vermillion Bird.

“It’s not like that,” Zhao Changhe said seriously. “First Seat Tang has been very kind to me. I would not use her as a bargaining chip.”

Vermillion Bird said, “However, the imperial court is in conflict with our Four Idols Cult. Since you are so loyal to Tang Wanzhuang, then there’s no need for us to negotiate.”

After a moment of silence, Zhao Changhe slowly said, “Times change, and people change as time passes. Half a year ago, Venerable Vermillion Bird would not have even thought of recruiting me to join the cult. Just two months ago, the Four Idols Cult was out for my head due to my relationship with Chichi. But look at the situation now.”

Vermillion Bird fell silent. She felt regret when such events were brought up. Zhao Changhe had been right under her nose. Back then, she could have easily taken him into the cult. He would have probably even been very grateful for being provided with guidance and shelter. It’s just that, she never thought...

But then again, that version of Zhao Changhe might not have ended up the same or even similar to the one standing before her at this moment.

Zhao Changhe said, "It seems that Venerable Vermillion Bird's philosophy is heavily aligned with those of demonic cults. Why are you in such a rush? We can simply spend some time getting to know each other first. This will allow me to better understand your doctrines and ideologies, and you can see if I'm a good fit once I've become more familiar with everything. We can easily make a decision then, can't we? With things being as they are, you're uncomfortable, and so am I. Besides suggesting to loosen the restrictions between Chichi and me, what else can I ask for?"

Vermillion Bird responded indifferently, "That's easy for you to say. Where are we supposed to find the time to familiarize ourselves with each other? As for being together with the saintess, just forget about it. She will always say good things about you regardless of how long you spend with one another, which basically renders it meaningless."

"How about letting me get to know someone else? I think you'd be a good fit."

Vermillion Bird could not help but retort, "Do you two share a brain?"

Hmm, interesting.... So Chichi also made this proposal?

As expected of my wife.

Now that I think about it, based on the information you guys have on me, Chichi's father is actually technically my father as well.

Vermillion Bird snapped irritably, "We wear masks precisely because we can't be seen with you. Unless, of course, you are willing to be directly associated with the Four Idols Cult."

"What if you take off your mask and reveal your true identity? Others wouldn't know who you are then, right?"

"But then you would know, wouldn't you? My true identity has its own status and its own uses. Do you really think that I would reveal it to you just because you asked? Besides, I don't have the time to spare for you," Vermillion Bird said calmly. "Let's leave it at that for now. I understand your intentions and I will convey them to the venerable. Directly negotiating terms does indeed seem rather crude, it's not as shameless nor as silent as what Tang Wanzhuang is doing."

Zhao Changhe couldn't find the words to retort.

“Alright, I will be on my way. Based on my analysis, at least during the Wang Clan’s banquet, the venerable is unlikely to concern herself too much with your relationship with the saintess, so make good use of it.” As she spoke, her voice turned somewhat flirtatious and amused. Then, she vanished in a blaze of fire.

Zhao Changhe shook his head slightly. He was not particularly bothered by the event just now and went back to playing the guqin. In his view, the Four Idols Cult was truly just a basic contact. It was a coincidence that they all came to Langya at the same time and began communicating. Anyway, they had not even properly started discussing anything yet, so he would likely have more in-depth exchanges with them in the future.

Little did he expect that before he could finish playing another piece on the guqin, Venerable Vermillion Bird would arrive.

Zhao Changhe looked at the seductive and charming red lips of Vermillion Bird speechlessly, and sighed. “Venerable, is there anything I can do for you? Have you come to listen to some music at the Daoist temple?”

Vermillion Bird said calmly, “I heard from Fire Serpent that you’re currently troubled by your meridians for your internal cultivation?”

“Indeed.”

“Don’t place your hopes on dual cultivation too much, or you’ll just end up very disappointed,” Vermillion Bird said lightly. “Your meridians are already set to be narrow. Long-term dual cultivation may indeed somewhat improve your condition, but just making use of it to make breakthroughs is horrible behavior. It’s no different from the actions of the Maitreya Cult. Dual cultivation has never been some miraculous method of cultivation, it’s just an auxiliary art. I hope you keep this in mind.”

Zhao Changhe said, “You seem to be competing with First Seat Tang on who can teach me better?”

“I can’t teach you, but I can give you a taste, at least to show you how beneficial it is to join our holy cult.”

With that, Vermillion Bird suddenly reached out and pointed her finger between Zhao Changhe's eyebrows.

Zhao Changhe did not even have the time to react before he was touched. He reluctantly accepted the reality that if Vermillion Bird wanted to kill him at this moment, it would quite literally be as easy as lifting a finger.

As her finger touched the point in between his eyebrows, a vague sense of enlightenment emerged in his mind, and he suddenly saw a sky filled with countless stars.

These were not actually stars, but the acupoints all over his body. They were shining as bright as stars.

In fact, he had felt this sensation when he first began practicing internal arts. The dantian was like the moon, while the acupoints were like stars. It felt as if his body was its own universe.

Unfortunately, that was merely a display of the overall framework of his body when he was just starting out. As he progressed in his cultivation, he could no longer sense this macroscopic experience. Instead, he had to slowly uncover it piece by piece, hoping that he could one day see that entire universe once more.

Now, with the single touch from Vermillion Bird's finger, he was once again brought back to the macroscopic view of his body's framework.

The difference from his initial experience to the one brought about by Vermillion Bird was that she emphasized the forms of the four idols. The brightest stars in the night sky formed the shapes of the Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermillion Bird, and Black Tortoise. When it came to these acupoints, he had actually already lit up some of them himself, while most were still unlit.

"This is the principle of the Four Idols Cult's cultivation technique. For the system of cultivation that you are compatible with, you will simply need to follow the series of star charts. For example, I embody the Vermillion Bird, while Chichi embodies both the Azure Dragon and White Tiger," Vermillion Bird's voice echoed in his ears. "My purpose in showing you this star chart is not to teach you a cultivation technique but to provide you with a way to circumvent your issues."

Zhao Changhe took a deep breath and said, "Please advise me."



Vermillion Bird replied calmly, “Assuming that you can resonate with your star position, you can use the power of your position to rush through the Profound Gates that you have yet to overcome. There is no need for you to exhaust yourself by strictly following a single meridian all the way through. To some extent, this can help you avoid the problem with your narrow meridians.

“You can picture it this way, when dealing with a strong opponent, a volley of arrows is generally more effective than a single arrow. The question now is, can you resonate with your own constellation? If you can’t, then everything is off the table. It simply means that you are not destined to join our Four Idols Cult.”

“And if I manage to do so?”

“Then that position is yours, and we can discuss further terms. This would be the so-called familiarization process that you suggested.”

“Okay. How do I go about resonating with a position?”

“Your cultivation has not reached those acupoints, so you would originally not have been able to resonate with them. However, since I’ve activated your star chart for you, you only need to immerse your consciousness into it and sense these acupoints. The ones that resonate with you will naturally light up on my star chart, and then I’ll know which one you resonate with.”

As her words trailed off, the four idols star chart that had just been lit up went dark.

Zhao Changhe quietly focused inward, attempting to sense and relight those acupoints.

He soon realized that this not only tested his martial arts talent but also his memory. With so many stars, how could he recreate the pattern that he had seen just now? He discovered that he had already forgotten everything. He was now troubled about how to go about remembering the patterns.

Forget it, it doesn’t matter, no matter what shape it is, I’ll just try feeling out all of the stars and light up as many as I can. I’ll pretty much just leave it up to fate. Vermillion Bird probably thinks that this should be how I got about it as well.

Zhao Changhe tried to light up a star in the lower corner and found that it was not difficult. They lit up instantly.

Vermillion Bird's eyes flickered with intrigue. This at least indicated that he was well-suited to practice the cultivation technique of the Four Idols Cult, and that he would face almost no obstacles.

Then, a second star lit up, then a third....

Gradually, the southern region was lit up entirely, including the pattern for the Vermillion Bird and nearby stars that did not belong to the Vermillion Bird's constellation.

Vermillion Bird's bright eyes widened. What does this mean?

I've never seen anything like this before. It does not fit with the patterns of our four idols at all. Why are they all lit up?!

In the context of the Four Idols Cult, each star actually represented a type of martial arts, and the four idols were especially emblematic of four distinct types. It was impossible for someone to encompass them all.

The only exception to this had been the Night Emperor!

Zhao Changhe did not know why, but he felt that this was very easy. It was like watching a live demonstration of the Sword Emperor in the illusory world created by the Heavenly Tome. He could choose which part he wanted to be demonstrated, and in the same way, he could choose which star to light up.

After a few moments, the stars shimmered in the sky, fully lit.

Vermillion Bird suddenly stopped and took two steps back in shock.

Zhao Changhe opened his eyes in confusion. "Is something wrong? If all the stars are lit up, then doesn't that mean I contradict the meaning of the four idols?"

"Yes... yes." Vermillion Bird's voice trembled slightly. "This is probably... the meaning of an emperor. This does not coincide with the four idols... You and me...."

She wanted to say that it was contradictory, but she could not properly articulate herself. She was trembling, unable to speak properly.

It might not necessarily be contradictory. There was another possibility: the Night Emperor.

Of course, if all the stars were lit and could be utilized, then all the martial arts in the world were at the cultivator's disposal.

Is that possible? No... no way, absolutely impossible....

Zhao Changhe inquired, "As you said, I have not actually cultivated these acupoints yet. Even if I can sense and light them up, how do I make them empower me and help me break through?"

"They inherently contain power. It's just that ordinary people can't sense them at all. Since you can sense them, you can try to call upon their power to assist you in breaking through using the technique I imparted to you..." Vermillion Bird secretly hoped he would succeed. But if he did not, then that was honestly fine with her as well.

Zhao Changhe closed his eyes. The myriad acupoints within him shone brightly. Then, it was as if countless threads of energy descended from all directions in the sky and rushed toward the fifth Profound Gate.

At the same time, he operated the energy within his dantian according to the Six Harmonies Art in full force, having it advance along the central meridian and straight toward the Huagai acupoint.[1]

There was the sensation of a loud boom as the fifth Profound Gate was forcefully shattered.

Zhao Changhe opened his eyes, meeting Vermillion Bird's gaze.

Vermillion Bird's eyes looked as if she had seen a ghost.

## Chapter 199: Yellow Springs Drunkard

Vermillion Bird had traversed the world for so many years. She had become a big shot feared by the masses, and she was truly knowledgeable and composed.

Before this, she even thought that she would not be shaken to her core even if Mount Tai were to collapse right before her.

However, her mind was truly blank at this moment.

In this situation, if it were instead a newcomer to the Four Idols Cult that was here before Zhao Changhe, such as Xia Chichi, the shock that they would feel would not be as severe as the one that Vermillion Bird was experiencing. This was because they were likely to simply think that this was just the result of the inheritance of the Night Emperor, and they would simply bow and worship.

However, with how knowledgeable Vermillion Bird was, her understanding of this situation was much different from theirs.

Vermillion Bird was a true master and one of the world's top martial artists. There were very few who could match her understanding of martial arts. This was especially so for when it came to martial arts related to the Four Idols Cult, as even Black Tortoise would not dare claim to surpass her in this regard.

Vermillion Bird had never even considered such a situation being a possibility.

Even if Xia Longyuan's inheritance had the grandeur of encompassing all things under the stars, it would not be able to so easily call upon the power of the stars. Each star represented a different type of martial arts, and in this world, few could achieve this feat. As far as Vermillion Bird knew, only the Night Emperor had been able to do so.

If he could truly accomplish this, Xia Longyuan could simply declare himself the leader of the Four Idols Cult and everyone would kneel to him in reverence, no questions asked. Having the members of the Four Idols Cult follow him would be as simple as snapping his fingers. In such a situation, there would be no need for things to have become as complicated as they have today.

At most, Xia Longyuan had the likeness of the Azure Dragon, and that was probably what led Chichi's mother to think that he could represent the Azure Dragon. But even if that was the case, he would not be able to achieve such a feat.

But if it were instead the inheritance of the Night Emperor, achieving such a feat would indeed be possible. However, according to Vermillion Bird's understanding, even if it were the Night Emperor, he would not be able to do so just half a year after first stepping into the world of martial arts and while merely at the fourth layer of the Profound Gate.

In just half a year of practicing martial arts, how many martial arts has he encountered? And even if he has seen all the martial arts in the world, how much could he truly have comprehended with his cultivation that's only at the fourth layer of the Profound Gate?

Just how is he able to do this? I can't wrap my head around it at all.

If.... What if he truly is the inheritor and successor of the Night Emperor, or perhaps even the reincarnation of the Night Emperor? What then? Am I supposed to kneel before him or what?

Fortunately, her face was hidden under the mask. Zhao Changhe could not see Vermillion Bird's expression clearly. He could only sense her profound astonishment. He never would have expected her to be so shocked to the point where she was stunned silent. Seeing that she had been silent for quite some time, he said, "It seems that you're quite unsure about my situation?"

"Uh... Mm-hm," Vermillion Bird uttered absentmindedly.

Zhao Changhe said, "I don't think you need to dwell on it too much. Your intention was simple from the start: to give me some benefits, allow me to see the advantages of joining the cult, and to see if I'm compatible with the Four Idols Cult's cultivation techniques. This was all so that it would be easier to discern what position I might hold if I were to join, right?"

"Mm-hm..." Vermillion Bird was still absent-minded.

"It's hard to say whether I am suitable to join the cult right now, but at least I know the benefits of joining," Zhao Changhe stood up and bowed. "Thank you for your guidance, Venerable. The method you have shown me will greatly assist me in overcoming the difficulties I come across in my internal cultivation. Regardless of whether I join the cult or not in the end, I will always be grateful for this and owe you a favor."

Vermillion Bird finally began to come to her senses. She thought about how if he was not compatible with the technique, then she would have to take it back. After all, how could they just allow such a valuable method to spread so easily for nothing?

As for how she was going to take it back? By killing, of course. Demonic cults never hesitated to act ruthlessly.

Zhao Changhe never would have thought that Vermillion Bird, who had been negotiating with him just moments ago, had actually been considering killing him on the spot.

But at this moment, those thoughts had all disappeared.

Forget about killing him—Vermillion Bird was even contemplating whether or not she should kneel down. And if she did kneel, she believed that she would have to confess and repent for having harbored murderous intentions earlier.

No, I must discuss this with Black Tortoise as soon as possible. I can no longer make decisions involving him on my own. But before I contact Black Tortoise, I need to continue observing and figure out what is really going on!

Vermillion Bird took a deep breath and said calmly, “I trust that you remember favors. But ultimately, this method is not a fundamental and permanent solution. It would still be best for you to find a way to expand your meridians.”

“I understand.”

“In that case, let us not mention the condition of finding a partner for you for now. Let’s leave things like this for now. Your situation is quite peculiar. I need to think about it some more.”

After Vermillion Bird finished speaking, she practically fled as if her life depended on it.

If she did not leave to calm herself down, she was afraid that she would eventually not even dare to make eye contact with him anymore.

Zhao Changhe did not expect that Vermillion Bird to be so eccentric and unreasonable. At this moment, he was equally puzzled about the situation.

Unfortunately, her method of imparting knowledge and techniques directly to the spiritual platform is too advanced. I have no idea how to manifest it so that the Heavenly Tome can analyze it. I don’t even know how to begin to describe it.

As he contemplated, he realized that his situation, which even Vermillion Bird could not understand, might have something to do with his long-term association with the Heavenly Tome.

After all, the page of the Heavenly Tome that he had was originally meant for the Night Emperor. It was normal for it to have inextricable connections with the Four Idols Cult. There was even a possibility that it was the source of the Four Idols Cult's techniques. His long-term exposure to the Heavenly Tome's macroscopic view of martial arts might have corresponded to the stars in that sky.

From this perspective, it would not be unreasonable for him to be considered to have inherited the Night Emperor's legacy. Of course, Zhao Changhe did not dare to say such a thing out loud. He was not even sure if this was actually the reason behind what had happened. Moreover, the probability of him being killed for having the treasure meant for the Night Emperor far outweighed the probability of being respected and revered.

In this case, it seemed that he should pay the Ancient Sword Lake a visit again to see if there were more treasures to be found in the sword chamber, and also to meet some old friends.

Exploring the secrets of the era and unraveling the mysteries of the Heavenly Tome were far more important to Zhao Changhe than any trouble the Wang Clan might be planning. If it was not for Chichi and Yangyang being here, he would not even bother with whatever tricks the Wang Clan was up to.

Zhao Changhe stood still for a moment. The fifth-layer true qi that resulted from his breakthrough just now gathered and merged with the blood and qi in his body, then transformed into vicious qi.

The Six Harmonies Art continued to support and enhance the Vicious Blood Art.

One might wonder why he suddenly wanted to break through when he had been in no hurry for so long.

The main reason was that Wang Daozhong had just seen that he was a martial artist with internal cultivation and external cultivation at the fourth layer and the fifth layer, respectively. Yet in the blink of an eye, he had advanced, and he believed that nobody would have been able to predict that.

At this moment, he also reached the sixth layer of the Vicious Blood Art.

\*

Time passed swiftly, and the day of the birthday banquet of the Wang Clan's young master, Wang Zhaoling, finally arrived.

The banquet had been causing quite a stir lately. The Wang Clan sent people everywhere to invite those on the Ranking of Hidden Dragons. Even though they were arrogant and domineering in their invitations, what had really caused an uproar was that even after receiving the invitation, one had to undergo an assessment to qualify for attendance. Public opinion was in an uproar, and people across the lands were watching them closely.

Especially under the premise of the invasion of barbarians and the rebellion of the Maitreya Cult. Bandits were roaming everywhere, and the entire nation was in chaos. If things went wrong, the barbarians would be able to enter the pass tomorrow and Maitreya would move north the day after. For the Wang Clan to still be displaying such leisure and luxury truly disappointed those with insight.

Some people thought that the aristocratic families were just arrogant and brainless and that this was nothing special.

Others, like Gui Chen, believed that the Wang Clan was testing the hearts of the people.

But regardless of whether they were insensitive or angry, no one dared to say no to the Wang Clan.

The imperial court was silent and the various clans were calm. Tang Wanzhuang, who was fighting against Maitreya in Jinling, shook her head and remained silent when asked about it. Other than those who could not be found, such as Han Wubing, and those who could not leave their posts due to important matters, such as Tang Buqi and Wan Dongliu, all the other hidden dragons who were invited came to attend the banquet.

Well, that was what the Wang Clan said. As for the ones who did not come...whether they had not been found or simply refused to come, no one really knew.

Outside the Wang Residence, countless spectators from all over crowded around, mainly to guess who would come. Some even set up betting stalls for the occasion.

Judging from this lively scene, no one would have imagined that this was a nation in turmoil, facing both internal and external troubles.



“They’re coming, they’re coming!” murmurs spread throughout the streets.

A young Daoist and a man carrying a broad saber entered the city side by side, talking and laughing as they walked. When they saw the crowds parting to give them respectful gazes, both of their expressions froze for a moment.

What’s with this reception?

But then they heard someone say, “That’s Daoist Priest Xuan Chong of Mount Tai. I’ve had the fortune of meeting him before.”

“The Tenth Hidden Dragon!”

“Of course he’d come, Mount Tai is just in the neighboring county.”

“Then that guy next to him... What’s with his saber? He can’t be someone who’s just learning, right?”

“Nonsense. This is a banquet to host hidden dragons, and he’s accompanying Xuan Chong! Who else could he be but the Bloodthirsty Asura?”

As soon as those two words came out, the atmosphere momentarily chilled, and some people even showed signs of fear.

Zhao Changhe was speechless. Is my reputation really that terrifying?

Xuan Chong was also speechless, “Everyone, you’re all neighbors from the same hometown. Stop crowding around, what’s there to see?”

A man of the jianghu who had met him once said with a smile, “Daoist priest, we did not come all this way just to see who is attending the banquet.”

“Huh? Then why?”

The man pointed to the gate of Wang Residence at the end of the road. “Do you see that? The gate is closed. With such a heavy solid wooden gate, it would be quite awkward to force it open or chop it down. It seems like the Wang Clan is having the attendees of the banquet showcase their movement arts. We’re all here to witness the movement arts of the hidden dragons.”

Xuan Chong’s expression turned ugly.

Is the Wang Clan not going too far? Are they treating the hidden dragons like monkeys?

He turned to look at Zhao Changhe and saw that he had already gripped the hilt of his saber. It looked like he was going to hack the gate open.

As everyone was showing signs of anticipation, a ragged drunkard stumbled over behind them, almost crashing into Xuan Chong.

Xuan Chong kindly helped him up and said, “Mister, you’re incredibly drunk. You should drink less next time.”

The drunkard was still holding a wine gourd in his hand at this time. After hearing what Xuan Chong said, he took another gulp and continued stumbling forward, mumbling incoherently, “A life with wine~ So why not be drunk and merry~ No longer a drop to enjoy in the Nine Springs...”

Seeing him unable to even walk straight, it seemed like he might actually end up in the Nine Springs if he drank any more.

“Hey! Hey! Hey!” A passerby kindly tried to pull him away. “Mister, ahead of you is the gate of the Wang Clan’s residence. It’s closed. It’s closed. Hey! Hey!”

The man lunged forward, dodging the kind passerby’s attempt to pull him away, but he only became even more unsteady. His foot caught on the steps and he fell forward. His head was going to hit the gate.

The people around could not bear to watch

Bam!

The man's head made solid contact with the gate as expected.

However, instead of the expected blood and injury, the latch behind the gate directly broke and the gate swung open.

The drunk man rubbed his head and continued to stagger inside, "So this really is someone's home... I thought this place was a prison or something, with how they're blocking people from entering..."

The guards of the Wang Clan inside looked at each other in disbelief. They did not stop him. Instead, someone quickly ran inside to ask about what to do now. Why bother stopping anyone when the gate broke right away.

The streets fell silent.

Someone quietly asked, "Who was that?"

"Who else could it be? That guy can only be the former fourth hidden dragon. He should now be the Second Hidden Dragon, Yellow Springs Drunkard Situ Xiao."

Zhao Changhe let go of the hilt of his saber and smiled brightly. "Just this scene alone makes this trip

## Chapter 200: Just Break It

Now that I think about it, the only impression I really have of Cui Yuanyong is when he challenged Yue Hongling. It may have been a draw, but if we are to split hairs, it was his loss. Both of them were injured, but he was probably a little more injured. Hmm... I really have to thank him for sending Yue Hongling to my stronghold back then. I still remember those days fondly.

At that time, I only had a vague concept of Cui Yuanyong's strength. I never really got a direct understanding of how strong he actually was or is. But now that I compare him with Situ Xiao, my future brother-in-law is really amazing.

Zhao Changhe knew that although his external arts had a certain toughening effect and his ability to withstand attacks was quite good compared to ordinary people, it was not of this caliber. If he were

to try and break down that gate, he would have probably taken some time to do so, and he would have then looked rather pitiful. That was why he had been reluctant to move forward.

But Situ Xiao just casually pushed his way in, as if it was nothing. The obstacle set up by the Wang Clan suddenly turned into a joke.

His ranking as Second Hidden Dragon truly seemed well-deserved.

Zhao Changhe was originally rather unwilling to attend the banquet, but he now felt that making the trip was worthwhile. Was it not the aspiration of a man to see more heroes of the jianghu?

He did not rush to go in. Instead, like the spectators on the street, he enthusiastically found a spot, then poked his head and watched the street, wanting to see who else would come and what they would do.

Xuan Chong really did not know whether to laugh or cry at this moment. “Brother Zhao, brother Zhao?”

“Huh?” Zhao Changhe responded. “I just want to take a look. You can go ahead.”

Xuan Chong shook his head, thinking that this guy was indeed just like an idler in the jianghu... He could not be bothered to stay and watch. The gate was already open, was that not good enough? He would just go in and be done with it rather than wait for the people from the Wang Clan to act stupid again and close the gate. If they closed the gate again, that would be quite annoying to deal with.

Sure enough, as he approached the gate, the guards of the Wang Clan had brought over a new latch and seemed to be about to latch the gate again.

It looked like the new latch was actually made of copper. This was probably because they believed that they had underestimated the heroes with the previous wooden latch.

But as several guards pushed the gate, they discovered that they could not seem to close it no matter how hard they tried. It was as if there was a large stone blocking the gate from closing.

When they went to check, they saw Xuan Chong standing there leisurely, casually keeping the gate open with one hand. He greeted them, “Hello, it’s broad daylight, so why are you closing the gate? You’re making it seem as if we’re coming here to do something illicit.”

The guards pushed and pushed, but Xuan Chong, who appeared to have an average build and not much strength, was able to stop them from closing the gate without even looking like he was exerting much effort. They could not see him straining himself, nor could they see a single drop of sweat on him. Despite their collective effort, they could not make the gate budge at all.

One of the guards apologized and said, “Daoist priest, we are just following orders. Why are you making things difficult for us?”

“Then are you saying that I should make things difficult for myself?”

“No, that’s not it. It’s fine for you to simply enter, Daoist priest. Do you really care that much about others’ affairs...”

Xuan Chong chuckled and said, “I actually do, and I’m afraid that I’m even doing this for your own good... The hidden dragons of the divine land are not all righteous characters. In fact, even that Situ Xiao is quite a sinister character. If one of them were to come after you, I honestly doubt that the Wang Clan would aid you or avenge you.”

“T-they probably wouldn’t do something like that, right? If they did that, they would be offending the Wang Clan...”

Sure enough, several more people came soon after, and they all honestly presented their invitations for verification and entry.

However, none of them even thanked Xuan Chong, who was holding the gate for all of them. They even looked at him as if he was a bit foolish.

“Who are they?” Zhao Changhe asked among the crowd.

“I don’t recognize many of them, but I do know one. He’s the young master of the Dai Clan in the northwest and he’s ranked sixteenth.”

Zhao Changhe nodded and said, “Indeed, not everyone has backbone.”

Meanwhile, one of the guards of the Wang Clan laughed at Xuan Chong and said, “Did you see that? Why are you even blocking the gate for such ungrateful people? Wouldn’t it be better to just leave them be and have them demonstrate their movement arts? Wouldn’t it allow for a grand view of the jianghu?”

Before he could finish speaking, a thin monkey-like figure darted past, and one of the golden nails holding up the plaque above the Wang Clan suddenly disappeared, causing it to tilt to one side.

One of the guards exclaimed, “Who goes there?!”

The thin figure, having already moved like a breeze past the gate, chuckled and said, “As a thief, I’ve got to make sure I can escape. That latch is too big, so I’ve got to steal a nail.”

The crowd was whispering amongst themselves, “Who is the thief?”

“It’s Ji Chengkong. He managed to move up two spots and made it to the bottom of the rankings.”

“Ah... The Tome of Troubled Times was too flashy back then, so I didn’t notice.”

“The Wang Clan thinks so highly of themselves, yet they’re about to lose their plaque... If I were the Wang Clan, I would open the gate wide to welcome the guests. If this continues, I’m afraid they might lose face entirely.”

“If we’re talking about a grand view of the jianghu, it’s how they’re going to slap the Wang Clan’s face, isn’t it?”

“Hehe...”

As people whispered amongst themselves, a fragrant breeze brushed past them.

A slender girl wearing a tiger mask quietly appeared in front of the gate, looking somewhat curious as she observed the stalemate between Xuan Chong and the guards.

The tiger mask was white and so was her attire. She gave off a charming and cute yet eerily mysterious vibe.

Nobody knew where she had come from or how she had appeared.

A name immediately emerged in everyone's mind: the Sixth Hidden Dragon, White Tiger Saintess Xia Chichi of the Four Idols Cult!

Zhao Changhe could not help but smile wryly.

While others would only think of Vermillion Bird when they saw the Vermillion Bird mask, the same could not be said when they saw the White Tiger mask. Chichi had unfortunately been exposed by the Tome of Troubled Times, making it so that she could not hide her identity at all. Thus, there was not much of a point in wearing the mask, all it really did was conceal her appearance.

The crowd murmured, "She's here too! How did the Wang Clan manage to send an invitation to the Four Idols Cult?"

The guards looked solemn, ignoring Xuan Chong. A figure who looked to hold some authority stepped forward and addressed Xia Chichi, "If you are truly the White Tiger Saintess, please show your invitation. It's not that we want to make things difficult for you, but with your mask covering your face, we aren't able to tell if it's really you."

"Really?" Xia Chichi smiled lazily.

With a flash of white, before anyone could react, her slender hand was already gripping the neck of the one who seemed to be the leader of the guards. Her charming voice did not conceal her chilling murderous intent as she said, "How about now, do you believe it's me?"

The crowd was silent.

Even Zhao Changhe blinked a few times.

From his perspective, Chichi had always been very well-behaved and cute...

As for when she tried to stab him with a dagger? He had already forgotten about it.

Anyway, at this moment, the little witch looked like a little white-clad version of Vermillion Bird. She really embodied the look of a saintess of a demonic cult. She looks quite appetizing indeed...

Sadly, the only one finding her appetizing was Zhao Changhe. Everyone else was terrified, not doubting for a moment that she was truly capable of breaking the captain's neck where they stood.

The group of guards had no intention of arguing with Xuan Chong anymore. They swarmed out, surrounding Xia Chichi. "Are you here to attend the banquet or cause trouble?"

"Hah..." Xia Chichi chuckled lazily. "I truly wonder if you invited everyone to welcome guests or to show off. If it were not for the formal invitation, wouldn't it be completely normal for my Four Idols Cult to be killing the dogs of the Wang Clan?"

Following her words, she flicked her slender hand.

The captain was sent flying out like a cannonball. He crashed into the gate and rolled all the way into the courtyard like a gourd.

Xia Chichi strolled forward leisurely. The guards dared not stop her, and they merely watched helplessly as she went through the gate.

Inside, the guards who were holding the copper latch subconsciously stepped back.

The eyes underneath the White Tiger mask darted around. Suddenly, she reached out and the gate latch somehow ended up in her hand. With her slender figure holding the massive latch, there was a charming contrast that added to her allure.

She tilted her head and then suddenly threw the latch toward the street with a flick of her hand. "What's there to watch?! That latch is made of pure copper. It's worth quite a bit of money. Take it and buy some drinks."



As the latch flew through the air, it emitted a roaring sound akin to a tiger's growl, turning into a streak of golden light as it shot toward the crowd on the street.

In the eyes of the onlookers, it looked as if the latch had transformed into a tiger pouncing at its prey.

Those not in its path wondered if those who were would be able to keep their lives when the latch landed.

As the crowd scrambled to steer clear of the latch's path, a large hand reached out from among the crowd, deftly catching the latch as if he were patting a small cat.

When the crowd turned to look who it was, they saw Zhao Changhe holding the gate latch. He laughed and scolded her, "I'm just here to watch the fun, you little troublemaker! Why are you ruining the mood?"

The little white tiger tilted her head and smiled. "What's there to watch?"

Zhao Changhe weighed the latch and said with a smile, "Then I'll just smash it to pieces."

Whoosh!

The gate latch flew back, the roar it emitted even fiercer and more intense than before.

If the previous throw resembled a tiger pouncing, then this time it resembled a golden dragon soaring through the nine heavens.

BANG!

The latch crashed heavily into the gate, smashing it apart. Now, the thick wooden gate could no longer be shut.