The Eternal 61

Chapter 61: A Poem of Peach Blossom

Jia Rong put on a flattering smile and said, "Young Master Yun, what do you want from me?"

Yunxiao pointed to Lu Yao and said coldly, "She is my friend."

Lu Yao was caressing her throat. She had a feeling that it was almost broken, and there was a streak of a purple bruise on her fair skin, which was pitiable to look at.

Jia Rong froze for a moment, then stepped forward without saying anything. He raised his hands above his head while bowing deeply, and said sincerely, "Miss Lu Yao, I was reckless. Please accept my apology!"

Taken aback, Lu Yao waved her hand in panic and stepped aside, quickly pulling Jia Rong up. She wanted to say something, but then felt a pain in her throat and began to cough violently.

Ji Meng had a bitter face. 'If only these alchemists could treat me like this!'

Jia Rong took out a milky pill from his ring and handed it to Lu Yao. "This pill can promote blood circulation and dissolve bruises."

Lu Yao refused to accept the pill, so it was Jia Rong's turn to panic, and he desperately stuffed the pill into her mouth. Only then did he breathe a sigh of relief and looked carefully at Yunxiao's face.

After witnessing Yunxiao refining pills and a mystic weapon, Jia Rong had elevated his position in his mind to the same level as the Holy One of alchemy, a supreme guru. Since he began to cultivate in seclusion, he pondered hard about Yunxiao's explanation to Zhang Qingfan and Xu Han, and soon had a vague feeling that he was about to break through into the second tier. He was extremely shocked and delighted.

However, at this critical moment, his cultivation was interrupted by Lu Yao. One could imagine how angry he was. If it were not Yunxiao who was looking for him, the Alchemist Association would have exploded by now.

"You are more gifted than I imagined. I didn't expect you to break through the second tier so soon. Your future achievements will definitely be greater. I'm going to refine a log of medicinal pills this time, so I need your help."

"Refining pills!" Jia Rong's eyes burst into light as he said excitedly, "What raw materials do you need? I'll get them all ready!"

"I have all the raw materials ready. This refining may take a long time. Find me a training room first, as I need to settle Ji Meng."

Many alchemists were also warriors. Although their achievements in martial arts were relatively low, they also needed to cultivate in seclusion, so there were many training rooms in the association. Jia Rong chose the largest one for Ji Meng to use.

In the training room, Yunxiao walked to a wall. After pondering for a brief moment, he took out his Black Girl and held it high before slashing it down against the wall.

His sword styles were wide open, fierce and sharp. The walls of the training room were all made of hard black iron, but every strike he made took away a piece of iron with sparks flying out in all directions. Soon, small characters appeared one by one in neat rows.

Those small characters were exquisite and beautiful, carved out one by one by the rough big sword like flowers blooming.

The sword styles were powerful and fierce, but they managed to produce such lifelike, delicate handwriting. Ji Meng was deeply shocked by the sharp contrast between two decisively different styles appearing under one man's sword at the same time.

Jia Rong was also a one-star warrior. Although his understanding of martial arts was not profound, he could feel the uniqueness of Yunxiao's sword styles. He held his breath and did not dare to disturb.

A moment later, a poem was carved on the wall, the characters of which looked like blooming flowers.

'In the Peach Blossom Land there is a peach blossom plot,

A peach blossom lover lives in a Peach Blossom Cot

The peach blossom lover plants peach trees in days fine

He sells his peach blossoms for money to buy wine.'

With the appearance of the poem, a place full of peach blossoms suddenly emerged in front of the two men. They felt as if they were suddenly under peach blossoms falling from all over the sky.

Yunxiao seemed to be very satisfied with his work as he smiled and said, "Ji Meng, if you still can't comprehend the higher artistic conception of peach blossom from this poem by the time I finish my cultivation, it proves that you are not gifted, and you won't have to follow me again."

After he had finished speaking, he did not wait to hear Ji Meng's answer.

Ji Meng was completely immersed in the strokes that contained the amazing sword intent, and peach blossoms were in full bloom over his spiritual altar. He could no longer hear Yunxiao. All of a sudden, he sat cross-legged down and began to rotate his Primordial Qi, falling into deep thought.

Jia Rong said in astonishment, "Young Master Yun, he..."

Yunxiao shook his head slightly. "Let's go! It's time to do our own thing."

They closed the door of the training room and went back to the place where Yunxiao had refined the Black Girl. This time, Jia Rong gave a very strict order, that was no one was allowed to disturb them even if the king died. His rebellious order startled Lu Yao, but she nodded and passed on the order nonetheless. After Liang Wenyu learned about this, he sent four Martial Masters to guard the door for them, just in case.

Yunxiao walked around the refining room and chose several tough cauldrons, tapping them a few times to show that he was satisfied. Last time, he had blown up an excellent cauldron. If it were other alchemists, they would have been asked for compensation. But instead of scolding him, Zhang Qingfan and Xu Han took the damaged cauldron to study.

"We'll use these few cauldrons. Let's make the first batch of pills," said Yunxiao. "Your job is mainly to learn, but you will take over when my soul power is exhausted. I don't expect you to do much, but I need you to do all the odd tasks for me."

Upon hearing that his main job was to learn, Jia Rong's eyes lit up and he said hastily, "Odd tasks are good, I like to do all the odd tasks for Young Master Yun!"

Yunxiao narrowed his eyes slightly and sent a stream of divine sense into the Divine Realm Tablet in his dantian. Suddenly, a beam of light flowed over the tablet and then rushed to his eyebrows. A third eye seemed to appear between his two eyes, from which came shooting out a beam of light. In just a flash, the whole refining room was filled with various materials.

Jia Rong was taken aback. Staring blankly at the roomful of things, he exclaimed in horror, "Young Master Yun, you didn't empty the association's inventory, did you?"

"These things are from the Li Family's vault. I've moved them all here. We will use what we need, and I will return them to their original place when we are done."

Jia Rong clicked his tongue secretly. The Li Family was the number one leader in Tianshui's military, but Yunxiao had emptied its vault...

As his mind wandered, Yunxiao said in a low voice, "Some of the medicinal pills I'm going to refine this time are things of pure Yang. With my current soul power, I fear that I cannot control the whole process. Even if a person's skill is excellent, it is absolutely impossible to replace the role of soul power. Therefore, the first thing we have to do is to advance to the second tier of alchemists. You and I both need to advance!"

Jia Rong put on a straight face. His flattering appearance suddenly disappeared, and his eyes flashed with the light of an alchemist. "Understood, Young Master Yun!" he answered loudly.

"Good!" Yunxiao was very satisfied with his attitude. "But before that, I'll have a cup of tea."

Jia Rong, "..."

While Yunxiao was cultivating in seclusion, a major event occurred in Tianshui.

The patriarch of the Li Family, Li Chunyang, who everyone thought was controlled by Li Yi, suddenly appeared. Not only did he regain the power of the family, but also declared Li Yi a spy of the enemy state. He issued a statewide killing order, and swore that he would kill anyone who sheltered this man!

His high-profile comeback had cheered up the military circle of Tianshui which had been in the doldrums, as if it had been re-injected with vitality. Military figures began to appear frequently and actively in the court, making everyone speculate.

In addition, Li Chunyang also took the opportunity to root out Li Yi's accomplices and confiscate the property of several court officials in the capital. These court officials were all those who supported Li Yi and suppressed the Li Family during his absence. Several of them were beaten to death while trying to stop the Li Family from ransacking their mansions, and their bodies were fed to the dogs. This had completely shocked all other officials in the court.

For a moment, people were in a panic. In the beginning, many powerful officials requested the king to impeach Li Chunyang. However, after the bodies of the killed officials were dragged to the market and fed to the dogs, the whole court immediately quieted down and no one dared to say another word.

The whole state seemed to acquiesce in his misbehavior, allowing him to beat all his political opponents and confiscate their properties until the matter gradually subsided. But, the main character of the whole incident—Li Yi—seemed to have disappeared completely, never to be seen again.

In the prime minister's residence, the Lan Family's courtyard...

The current chief advisor of the state, Prime Minister Lan Hong, was sipping tea and listening to the report given to him by his men.

"The Deputy Minister of Rites, Zhang Baisheng, had seven family members killed and was robbed of seven million gold coins worth of property. Among those killed were his sixth concubine, one of his nephews, and five servants. Twenty-three people were seriously injured with either their arms or legs broken, and hundreds were slightly injured. Zhang Baisheng himself had his left leg broken."

A well-dressed man beside Lan Hong—his eldest son and also Lan Xuan and Lan Fei's father—Lan Guang said angrily, "Father, do we just let that old codger act arbitrarily and kill all the loyal officials of the court at will? Does he mean to revolt?"

Lan Hong put down his cup and said with a smile, "Lan Guang, you are still too short-sighted and cannot see the facts. If Li Chunyang really wanted to revolt, he wouldn't have made such a scene. Right now, he is just picking up some flies and ants to fight. It doesn't matter at all."

"Is he just venting his grievances about his imprisonment?"

Lan Hong snorted coldly and looked at Lan Guang contemptuously. "Do you really think this old codger is so easy to be imprisoned? He had most likely turned Li Yi's trick to his own use and deliberately hidden for a period of time. With that, he could see the current situation clearly and, at the same time, find out the enemies of the Li Family who were hidden in the dark. Oh, he also took this opportunity to make some money. Over the past few days, I reckon he must have obtained hundreds of millions of gold coins by confiscating the property of his political opponents."

"So much!" Startled, Lan Guang blurted out, "Why didn't His Majesty do anything to him?"

"His Majesty? Hmph!" Lan Hong said coldly, "His Majesty is too old to do anything. Moreover, he is also waiting. He wants to see what Li Chunyang is really up to. If I am right, Li Chunyang will turn over more than half of the money he has collected to the state treasury by the day after tomorrow at the latest."

It dawned on Lan Guang at last and he said, "I understand now. Over the years, the Li Family has been suppressed by His Majesty, especially financially, which has caused them to make ends meet every year.

He is taking the opportunity to refill his family's treasury. But, hundreds of millions of gold coins is really a horrifying figure. If he doesn't turn over half, how can His Majesty rest assured?"

Lan Hong took a sip of tea. His eyes became more and more cloudy as he muttered to himself, "Why did this old codger jump out at this time? Has he seen the situation clearly? How? Why can't I see it?"

"Father, the situation you mentioned, could it be..."

Chapter 62: Qin Yang's Agitation

Lan Hong raised his hand to interrupt him. "For what do you think His Majesty has allowed him to misbehave? For the gold coins?" He said coldly. "Hmph! Haven't you noticed that among those people Li Chunyang dealt with, apart from those who have resentment with the Li Family, the rest are all from Prince Qin Yang's faction?"

Shocked, Lan Guang stood up from his seat as he said gravely, "Do you mean Li Chunyang has taken sides? Didn't he support Prince Qin Yang before?"

"He used to be in favor of Prince Qin Yang, that's all. At our level, if the situation is unclear, we will not easily choose sides. Moreover, the decline of the Li Family is an indisputable fact. The incident of Li Yi is the best touchstone for the Li Family. Once Li Chunyang falls and Li Changfeng is suppressed, the Li Family will definitely fall apart! Li Chunyang saw the situation clearly, and so did His Majesty, so he should not have chosen sides so hastily! What the hell is he thinking? Has he gotten any information we haven't?"

Lan Guang was also puzzled. "Prince Qin Yang should have a better chance of winning, and that's what people want."

After pondering for a moment, Lan Hong said, "Could it be that he wants to put all his eggs in one basket? If he helps Qin Yue succeed in his accession to the throne, he will undoubtedly be the greatest contributor, and the Li Family will continue to prosper for hundreds of years! Hmph! Li Chunyang, you are really bold! If you lose, your family will be beyond redemption!"

"Father, shall we do something?"

"No!" Lan Hong said in a low voice. "We must be cautious right now. We've got a lot of talented juniors in our family, while the Li Family has no capable person apart from the recently emerged Li Yunxiao. However, this Li Yunxiao is somewhat mysterious indeed..."

Suddenly, his eyes lit up and he said in shock, "Is the reason Li Chunyang dares to put all his eggs in one basket...is it because that Li Yunxiao can cure Xiao Qingwang's internal injuries?"

Lan Guang's heart skipped a beat as he blurted out, "How is it possible? Xiao Qingwang's injuries are beyond the power of the whole state! But...if he really supports Qin Yue, the final outcome will be even more uncertain!"

Lan Hong sighed and said seriously, "Lan Guang, you must remember that you cannot expose your intentions and strength too early under any circumstances during this period of regime change. Even if we don't render any meritorious service, we must not make any mistakes. Only in this way can our family continue to pass on in Tianshui."

"I understand, father!" Lan Guang bowed deeply.

While Li Chunyang was collecting wealth on a large scale, Qin Yang, the eldest prince, was in deep anxiety.

He was visited by his subordinate officials every day to complain. These people were all his direct subordinates, and many of them were secretly supporting him. If he let Li Chunyang continue to cause trouble and did nothing, it would chill the hearts of those who supported him.

He had visited the palace several times to seek an audience with the king, but he was rejected every single time. He knew that his father had shunned him. He also knew exactly what the king was thinking. Li Chunyang's mischief had suppressed his power and slightly balanced the strength of the two princes, which was a situation the king would like to see. Of course, the king's only dissatisfaction was how this incident had enriched the Li Family's financial resources.

Qin Yang was extremely angry after being turned away several times, so he began to gather his men to find countermeasures. Some said that they should continue to endure while others said that they should raise their banner straightaway. The different opinions made his already agitated mood more violent.

Just then, a strong voice suddenly came from outside the door, "Let me provide Your Highness three plans to ensure that Your Highness can successfully ascend to the throne!"

Qin Yang's face flickered, and his eyes burst with a light as he recognized the owner of the voice. "How could you, a spy from the State of Baizhan, still have the courage to come to see me? You are the one who caused all this! Since you are here, leave your head behind!" He cried out in a cold voice.

At his command, a large number of warriors poured in from everywhere and surrounded the three visitors. Seeing this, Li Yi burst out laughing. "Your Highness, you are already in a dangerous situation. Why do you still want to kill me, the only person who can help you now?"

Qin Yang said coldly, "What a joke! I am the prince of Tianshui, and you are a spy from Baizhan. It is only natural that I kill you!"

A murderous aura suddenly exploded out from the two men standing behind Li Yi, who were dressed in silvery white martial outfits. A chill immediately spread in the hall, causing the temperature to drop sharply. It was so cold that some civil officials were even shivering now.

Standing next to Qin Yang, Gao Feng's pupils constricted. He leaned over and whispered into the former's ear, "These two men are extremely strong, both of them being Martial Lords. This Li Yi is not simple either. He has the cultivation base of a Great Martial Master."

A sneer flashed on Li Yi's face as he cocked his head triumphantly and said, "With the strength of the three of us, Your Highness will have to pay a pretty steep price if you want to take us down, and it will be a major blow to your current strength."

Seeing Qin Yang remain silent, he went on, "Besides, the purpose of my visit is entirely to help Your Highness. Why don't Your Highness let me present the three plans? Oh, I recently heard that Li Chunyang seems to have made contact with Qin Yue."

Qin Yang's expression finally changed. This was exactly what he feared the most at present. With anger surging in his eyes, he said in a low voice, "Tell me, then!"

Li Yi strode forward as he cleared his throat and said, "Li Chunyang's strength has greatly improved after he came out of seclusion, and he seems to show a faint sign of breaking through to the realm of Martial Kings. Both his personal strength and the strength of the military he represents are going to be a tremendous help to Qin Yue, making it difficult for Your Highness to compete. Therefore, my first plan is to transfer Li Chunyang out of the capital!"

Qin Yang sneered, "Li Chunyang is a very powerful man with a senior status. Even His Majesty might not be able to transfer him out of the capital. If your other two plans are as whimsical and laughable as this, you don't have to tell me anymore!"

A trace of anger appeared on Li Yi's face. "Since I dare to say it, I naturally have great confidence!" He snorted coldly. "There is no need for Your Highness to worry about this, I will naturally do my best to make this work. When that happens, Your Highness just needs to make use of the favorable situation to push matters through!"

"Oh?" Qin Yang looked incredulous as he said suspiciously. "So, you have a way of transfering Li Chunyang out of the capital? Well, I'm very interested to hear it."

Li Yi smiled, his eyes gleaming as he said lightly, "The city of Kunjin and the Great Python Mountain are on the border between Tianshui and Baizhan. The mountain is full of wild animals, including even legendary demon beasts, making it extremely difficult for ordinary people to pass through. In addition, the terrain there is high in the east and low in the west, forming a natural barrier. Your state has stationed an army, the Golden Lion Army, in Whitehead Town near Great Python Mountain, whose commander happens to be Your Highness's man."

Qin Yang's pupils constricted as he said in a serious voice, "Say whatever is on your mind!"

Li Yi snorted softly as he narrowed his eyes and said, "I wish to borrow a written permission from Your Highness so that our troops can pass through Great Python Mountain and Whitehead Town, then march from the south and surround Kunjin, trapping Li Changfeng and his Flying Dragon Army, who are stationed in the city!" Qin Yang broke the armrest of his chair with a palm strike and bellowed, "In your dreams! If Whitehead Town and Kunjin are lost, then thirteen cities in the eastern part of our state will completely lose their barrier and be exposed to your heavy cavalry! At that time, what we will lose is not only one town and one city, but more than half of our land!"

Li Yi said hurriedly, "Your Highness, you need not be angry. The purpose of sending troops is only to help you. As soon as the task is completed, they will naturally withdraw from Kunjin."

Qin Yang sneered, "Do you think I am a three-year-old child? Li Yi, I didn't expect you to have a talent for telling jokes!"

Li Yi reddened slightly. "Your Highness, why don't you listen to all my plans and weigh your gains and losses before giving me the answer?"

A trace of killing intent flashed through Qin Yang's eyes as he sat back in his chair. Meanwhile, Li Yi continued, "As long as Kunjin is surrounded, we will cut off all its supplies of grain and fodder. Without provisions, Li Changfeng's Flying Dragon Army of 400,000 men can last for three months at most. By that time, Li Chunyang, who is far away in the capital, will naturally not be able to sit still. He will definitely assemble an army and leave the capital to rescue his son. Once he leaves, it will be the best time for Your Highness to strike!"

He glanced at Qin Yang and found that the prince was expressionless while quietly listening to him, so he went on, "There are three military forces in the capital—the armed force belonging to the Li Family headed by Li Chunyang, the Imperial Guards under the king's command, and the force headed by Your Highness. As long as Li Chunyang leaves the capital and we can pull Long Qing to our side, the whole capital will be in Your Highness's hands. That will be the time to carry out my second plan—kill Xiao Qingwang!"

With a murderous look, he said coldly, "Xiao Qingwang has not recovered from his internal injuries. Whether that little bast*rd Li Yunxiao can really cure him or not, his strength will be greatly reduced. Your Highness won't need to do anything, as I'll send someone to carry out this plan for Your Highness!" "Why should I kill Commander Xiao?" Qin Yang snarled. "You are making me destroy my own shield! If he's gone, who else in my state can resist the Martial Kings from your state?"

"Your Highness, if Li Yunxiao really cured Xiao Qingwang, is he on your side or Qin Yue's side?" Li Yi sneered. "At that time, Qin Yue will have not only Zhong Lishan, but also Xiao Qingwang. If that happened, Your Highness will not be able to achieve what you want even if Li Chunyang is transferred out of the capital!"

A trace of shock mixed with anger flashed through Qin Yang's eyes, and he then fell silent. He was originally in a good situation, but it seemed that the situation had become precarious ever since Li Yunxiao appeared. "Then, I will kill Li Yunxiao straightaway so that he can't treat Xiao Qingwang!" He said furiously.

Li Yi also became very angry when he heard the name and said with a towering killing intent, "Li Yunxiao must be killed, but we cannot let Xiao Qingwang go either. Your Highness had once sent someone to assassinate Qin Yue and Li Yunxiao, but what was the result?"

He deliberately glanced at Gao Feng, who was standing beside Qin Yang, and the latter's face suddenly turned cold. Not only did the assassination fail, they even lost a deputy commander of the State Guardians. The failure had made both Gao Feng and Qin Yang extremely furious!

"Once we have killed Xiao Qingwang, Commander Gao will be the commander-in-chief of the State Guardians!" Li Yi continued. "With all five units of the State Guardians, as well as the whole court under control, tell me, Your Highness, do you think you can achieve what you want?"

Chapter 63: Cultivating In Seclusion

Qin Yang seemed to have been persuaded. His eyes flickered with a bright gleam and his breath grew short. "And Zhong Lishan? He's Qin Yue's teacher, and having him on his side is also a major problem!"

Li Yi sneered inwardly, but put on a serious look on his face and said, "Zhong Lishan's strength has improved a lot over the years. We have no confidence in getting rid of him. However, after we've killed Xiao Qingwang, we can keep him in check when Your Highness stages the uprising so he doesn't have time to help Qin Yue. The third plan is to get everything ready, so that when Your Highness rises up, all the people will answer your call and pledge their allegiance to you!"

Qin Yang's face was flushed with excitement. After calming his restless mood, he said slowly, "What does Baizhan want? I will never give you Kunjin and Whitehead!"

He had been an army commander for many years and he knew the state geography very well. If this city and town were lost, he would have lost his bargaining chips when the heavy cavalry Baizhan marched south.

Li Yi laughed and said kindly, "Your Highness is treating us as outsiders. Since we are willing to help Your Highness in this way, we naturally regard Your Highness as family. Our condition is very simple, that is, your state must withdraw from the upcoming competition for the ranking of the upper states. In addition to giving our state some material help, your state must also help my state win the ranking of the upper state in terms of force at the critical moment."

Qin Yang arched his eyebrows and said in disbelief, "That simple?"

"Yes, it's as simple as that," Li Yi laughed. "To tell the truth, with Tianshui's current national strength, it is already very difficult for you to compete for the next ranking of the upper states. Our state has been recuperating in the past five years. Under the wise leadership of His Majesty, Baizhan's national strength is getting stronger, so the position of the upper state is almost in our pocket this time. Of course, other opponents are also very strong, so we need Your Highness to do all you can to help my state rise to the top!"

Qin Yang was lost in thought. Tianshui's retrogression was inevitable, but he was confident that he could lead the state to the position of an upper state again in a few years as long as he ascended to the throne! With a look of determination in his eyes, he said, "How can I believe you will withdraw after surrounding Kunjin?"

Li Yi smiled and said, "Even if we make a detour to surround Kunjin, as long as Li Changfeng stays in the city, they will attack us from inside and outside when Li Chunyang's rescue arrives, and we will suffer heavy losses. At this moment when the ranking battle is approaching, Baizhan does not want to waste any strength. The only purpose of our troops is to suppress Li Chunyang and help Your Highness ascend to the throne!" He took out a list and handed it to Qin Yang. "These are some of the materials our state needs. I hope Your Highness can fulfill it after ascending to the throne."

Qin Yang took the list, and his face immediately turned green when he gave it a look. Although he had guessed that Baizhan would not be so nice to him, such extortion was too naked. In addition to a large number of gold coins, food and equipment, they also requested fifty first-grade mystic weapons, fifteen second-grade mystic weapons, three third-grade mystic weapons, five hundred first-grade medicinal pills, one hundred second-grade medicinal pills, and twenty third-grade medicinal pills!

"Li Yi, you're pushing me too far! You are emptying Tianshui's treasury by asking for so much material!" Qin Yang threw the list away in a rage. Gao Feng's face also grew unsightly after he glanced at the list from the corner of his eye.

Li Yi smiled and said, "These things are just worldly possessions. Compared to the throne, Your Highness should be able to weigh what is more important. If Your Highness has made a decision, come to me at any time."

He dipped his finger in a glass of wine and wrote down his current residence address on the table before leaving with a smile.

Qin Yang sat in the hall with a gloomy face, lost in thought. All his subordinates looked at each other and talked in low voices.

•••

At this moment, Yunxiao and Jia Rong were still cultivating in seclusion within the Alchemist Association.

"This is the twentieth!" Jia Rong wiped the sweat from his forehead and took out a round milky pill from a black cauldron. Although his face was pale, his eyes were gleaming and he looked happy.

"Good! Take a Soul Nourishing pill and continue after rest." Sitting in an array with his eyes closed, Yunxiao said softly, "Bring me a Thousand Birds pill."

"Yes!" Jia Rong walked to a long table and put the pill he had just refined into a transparent jade box. There was already a heap of identical pills inside. Looking at them, he had a complicated feeling in his heart. These pills were called Mysterious Fire pills, which were genuine second-grade medicinal pills and could only be refined by second-tier alchemists. However, he had effortlessly refined them under Yunxiao's guidance. Not only that, he had even mass-produced them.

He put his hands into the other two jade boxes, fishing out a green pill and a pale yellow pill respectively. After taking them out, he frowned and said, "Young Master Yun, there is only one Soul Nourishing pill left, and there are not many Thousand Birds pills left."

With his eyes still closed, Yunxiao said slowly, "After you take this Soul Nourishing pill and restore your soul power, refine a cauldron of Soul Nourishing pills, then stop refining the Mysterious Fire pills and help me refine some Thousand Birds pills."

"I...I...I will refine the Soul Nourishing pills and Thousand Birds pills?" Jia Rong trembled and said excitedly, "Young Master Yun, are you...are you going to pass me the recipes of these two pills?"

Yunxiao frowned slightly as he opened his eyes and threw out a piece of paper, then said coldly, "You have been with me for so long, why do you still behave like a novice? They are just low-level medicinal pills. Why are you so excited?"

Jia Rong hurriedly ran over and picked up the paper on the ground, shaking with excitement. Although he had not yet taken the Soul Nourishing pill, he seemed to have fully recovered already. He did not dare to say a word for fear of being scolded again, although it was not a bad thing to be scolded by Yunxiao.

This Soul Nourishing pill was by no means a low-level pill, but an upgraded product of the first-grade Soul Nourishing pill. Although it was only a second-grade pill, its effect seemed to be stronger than some other second-grade soul-nourishing pills. In the past, whenever Jia Rong exhausted his soul power, it took him at least three days to recover if he took other second-grade soul-nourishing pills. But now when he took this soul-nourishing pill, it only took one day!

This was an absolutely amazing effect, which was tantamount to increasing the efficiency of alchemists by three times, and also increasing the cultivating effect on soul power by three times! If this news were to spread, even the fourth-tier Alchemist Association in Firecrow Empire would send someone here to ask for the recipe, not to mention those fifth-grade Alchemist Associations in the surrounding regions. Perhaps, it would even get them killed! And that Thousand Birds pill was not a simple medicinal pill either. According to Yunxiao, although the medicinal pills taken by common warriors to directly improve their strength tasted good and felt extremely comfortable after consuming, there were always hidden risks in the strength obtained by medicinal pills. However, this pill was not an ordinary pill that enhanced strength, but a pill that could stimulate the body.

It did not improve the strength of warriors through the power contained in itself, but continuously stimulated the potential of the warrior's body through mild stimulation, thus achieving the miraculous effect of cultivating the physical body and meridians together. Its disadvantage was that it tasted terrible, and when taken, it stung the entire body as if a thousand birds were pecking at the flesh.

Everyone who pursued martial arts was extremely tough, so this kind of pain was nothing at all.

After taking the last Thousand Birds pill, Yunxiao continued to sit cross-legged in the array to cultivate. Basically, all the refining tasks were handed over to Jia Rong. Although he was extremely tired, Jia Rong's heart was filled with tremendous happiness. He wished he could continue refining pills like this for the rest of his life.

After taking the Soul Nourishing pill, he sat opposite Yunxiao and began to nourish his soul. He felt streams of coolness flowing into his spiritual altar, which made him feel extremely comfortable. His recovery this time seemed to be much faster than before, and his soul fire seemed to be stirring.

"This!"

Jia Rong was pleasantly surprised. This was the sign of breaking through to the second tier!

He was deeply disappointed when his previous opportunity of breaking through to the second tier was interrupted. However, that opportunity was actually triggered for no reason when he enlightened over the bottleneck during his study of alchemy. He knew it was just a coincidence, and with his soul power at that time, he could not break through at all. Even so, every second he immersed himself in that state, he got more experience and understanding, which were of great benefit to his future breakthrough.

But how long had it been? How did the opportunity come again?

Jia Rong was dumbstruck. He did not dare to be careless and began to cautiously exercise the soul cultivating technique Yunxiao had taught him, slowly gathering his soul power in his mind and carefully feeling the slight quiver of his soul fire.

The quivering rhythm grew stronger and stronger, driving the pace of his life force and making his soul fire almost break through the shackles and enter a completely new world.

Jia Rong held back his intense excitement. This rhythm was exactly what he felt when he broke through the first tier. It was a sign of success!

All of a sudden, a panicked voice exploded in the refining room, "Young Master Yun, something has happened to your family! Master Liang asked me to call you out of your seclusion!"

Lu Yao's anxious voice came in.

Puke!

Jia Rong, who was at a critical juncture, was shocked by the voice and coughed out a mouthful of blood. The light in his eyes gradually dimmed, and the rhythm of his soul fire was completely disrupted, causing it to wreak havoc in his mind.

"Young Master Yun, I..."

His heart was filled with fear. Although he had never experienced this situation, he had read it in the notes of many senior alchemists. It was a very serious soul storm which could hurt his soul or, if serious, leave him completely unconscious and become a vegetable.

Pa!

At some point, Yunxiao was already standing in front of Jia Rong. He put a hand gently on his shoulder and then said softly, "Open your eyes and look at me."

His words seemed to have a magical power. Jia Rong raised his head unconsciously and opened his frightened eyes to look into his eyes.

Yunxiao's pupils began to turn into two demonic-looking red crescent moons with boundless black backgrounds, making Jia Rong feel as if he had been sucked into the world within the pupils. All of a sudden, the red moons and the black collapsed at the same time, and the clouds between heaven and earth all dispersed, revealing a clear sky on which faint golden dots could be vaguely seen. Then, these golden dots suddenly gathered together, transformed into a line of large characters while glowing with a dazzling golden light.

"Great Expansion Divine Technique!"

Chapter 64: Ji Meng Breaks Through

At the moment when the four golden characters appeared, Jia Rong felt as if his eyes were pierced by tens of millions of golden needles. At the same time, a force that made his soul tremble rushed directly into his mind and burst into full bloom.

Puke!

He screamed and felt his head crack as he coughed up another mouthful of blood. Then, after hearing a deafening rumble ring out in his mind, he fell to the ground in pain and lost consciousness.

Yunxiao's eyes returned to normal. He examined Jia Rong, then took out a gold needle and inserted it into Jia Rong's head.

"AHHH!"

Jia Rong screamed again and suddenly jumped up from the ground.

Yunxiao kicked him and scolded, "You are as weak as a woman, fainting from such a mild pain! How are you going to follow me in the future?"

Jia Rong held his head in his hands with grievance and cried out, "Young Master Yun, I...how miserable my life is! Just now I had a chance to break through to the second tier again, and I was on the verge of success. But...your friend, Lu Yao, she is really my bane!"

"Second tier? Aren't you already second tier?" Yunxiao snorted.

"Ah?"

Jia Rong froze for a moment, then found that his mind was extremely clear, and there was a freshness flowing in his soul that he had never felt before. He jumped up in an instant and blurted out in horror, "Ah? Ha, ha, haha! Second tier, second tier...This is really the second tier! Haha! I've really advanced to the second tier! Oh, heavens, I'm not dreaming, am I? Young Master Yun, please hit me, hit me hard, see if I'm dreaming!"

Bam!

Yunxiao punched Jia Rong in the chest and sent him crashing to the floor. The floor paved with diamond rock instantly cracked with thousands of lines. Meanwhile, Jia Rong's eyeballs bulged as he opened his mouth and coughed out another mouthful of blood.

He felt a sharp pain as all the bones in his chest were broken. While putting back the bones in pain, he struggled to his feet and said with a sad face, "Young Master Yun, although I asked you to hit me, you didn't have to be so brutal, did you?" Suddenly, his sad face froze and he said in shock, "Young Master Yun, your...your strength?"

Yunxiao sighed, "It took me so many Thousand Birds pills to break through and become a six-stars warrior. It seems that the pill has no more effect on my body, as it can hardly stimulate my potential further. But fortunately, I have also broken through to the realm of second-tier alchemists."

Through cultivating the Tyrant Body Tempering Technique, his physical strength was far beyond that of ordinary warriors, so the stimulation of Thousand Birds pills to his flesh and meridians was getting weaker and weaker.

He took out the alchemist's badge and toyed with it in his hand as he said, "I'm finally worthy of this badge now."

Jia Rong stood with a blank face for a moment before crying out, "Heavens, this is bullsh*t! Young Master Yun, you weren't even a warrior when I first met you, were you? And you weren't even an alchemist, right? You were nothing at that time, but it didn't take long for you to become a six-stars warrior and second-tier alchemist! I...My heart can't take this blow!"

Yunxiao said coldly, "Then I'll help you change to a new heart."

Jia Rong trembled with fear and jumped to the side. His chest was still feeling a sharp pain, and he was covered in blood, looking extremely sorry.

"Young Master Yun, Young Master Yun, do you hear me? There is something urgent going on in your family. Master Liang asked me to call you out of your seclusion." Lu Yao's voice rang out again.

Yunxiao went to the long table and glanced at the few kinds of pills placed on it, then reached out a hand and put them all away. After that, he performed several incantation gestures, and the door of the refining room slowly opened.

At the moment the door was opened, he saw Lu Yao's slim figure bolt backward and hide in a corner, as if she was worried that the people inside the room would suddenly attack her.

Yunxiao said with a wry smile, "Am I such a crass man? No matter what happens, I won't attack a beautiful girl."

Lu Yao blushed and said hastily, "Young Master Yun, something bad happened! Your father is besieged in Kunjin by an army from Baizhan, who have cut off all news. Duke Jingguo is so furious that he is going to lead the army to the rescue, so he told us to call you out of your seclusion and ask you to go back to preside over your family affairs!" "An army from Baizhan is besieging Kunjin?" Yunxiao's pupils constricted and his face grew cold. "I've only been in seclusion for a dozen days, and these people are turning things upside down. It seems they're all tired of living. If that is the case, I don't mind teaching them a lesson."

He headed for the exit without looking back. Jia Rong followed hurriedly, completely forgetting that he had not changed into a clean suit.

Although Yunxiao said those words in a flat tone, they gave Lu Yao a chill. She shook her head slightly. 'I'm not qualified to intervene in these matters. I'd better do my duty as a waitress.' However, in her heart, she wished that nothing would happen to Yunxiao.

She went into the refining room, intending to clean and tidy it. But as soon as she walked in and took a look, she was totally stunned. "Heavens! What happened here!" Everything in the room was in tatters. Not only was the array destroyed, but the walls and floors were all cracked into countless lines, as if they were about to collapse at any time.

This was the best refining room in the association!

"Master Liang! Master Liang!" After she collected her wits, she hurried to Liang Wenyu's office...

•••

Ji Meng had been sitting in front of the Alchemist Association for three days. He sat there cross-legged in meditation, ignoring the fact that many people were passing around him. Occasionally, people who knew him passed by and were also baffled by him. Lu Yao had been kind enough to bring him water and food, but he refused them all.

He just sat there quietly, turning a blind eye to what was happening around him and meditating peacefully, as if he were in the training room.

That was until Yunxiao came down the stairs with Jia Rong.

This was the first time Ji Meng had opened his eyes in the past three days. He got up from the ground and strode forward.

Upon feeling his strong aura, everyone moved to both sides in horror, making way for passage. On the other side stood Yunxiao with a calm expression.

Ji Meng took a few steps and came to Yunxiao in an instant. Then, he raised his hands over his head and bowed deeply as he said in a clear voice, "From today on, I'm willing to follow Young Master Yun and obey Young Master Yun's orders. I hope Young Master Yun can teach me higher martial arts!"

At last, he had completely submitted to Yunxiao after comprehending the peach blossom poem, and was willing to serve him wholeheartedly.

All the people in the lobby heard him clearly, and they looked at the young man in surprise, all guesting his identity. Those who knew Ji Meng's identity were even more shocked as they gaped at Yunxiao.

At the same time, many people also recognized Jia Rong. When they saw him following Yunxiao with such a messy look, their mouths all dropped open.

Yunxiao glanced at Ji Meng and said, "It took you more than ten days to advance to two stars. It seems that your talent is just mediocre. If you want to follow me, it will depend on your efforts."

Those standing around who know Ji Meng's identity were all startled. Who was Ji Meng? He was a Great Martial Master! It was a known fact that the further an individual went on the path of martial arts, the more difficult it would be to advance. And when it came to the level of a Great Martial Master, every step was as difficult as climbing the sky. However, from what they heard from this young man, it only took Ji Meng more than ten days to step into the realm of two-stars...How was that possible!

What turned their faces black was that even though Ji Meng had made it to the level of two-stars in such a short period of time, his talent was just mediocre in this boy's eyes. Except for Jia Rong, everyone was cursing in their hearts, 'Fu*k, this boy is really ignorant!'

With a hint of shame on his face, Ji Meng said seriously, "I'm stupid and have failed to meet your expectations. But, as the ancient saying goes, diligence can make up for weakness. I will certainly pay ten times...a hundred times more efforts than others so that I can follow and serve you!"

Yunxiao nodded and said, "Since ancient times, those who have been able to achieve supreme martial arts not only have had extraordinary talents, but also great attitude and persistence, which are more important than anything else. Your attitude is very good, I like it! From today on, you will be my confidant."

Overjoyed, Ji Meng naturally stood behind Yunxiao, alongside Jia Rong. OF course, Jia Rong showed an envious expression as he asked flatteringly, "Young Master Yun, since Commander Ji is already your confidant, what about me?"

Yunxiao put on a straight face and said coldly, "You? Aren't you my servant? When you break through to the fourth tier, I'll consider accepting you as my confidant."

Servant?

Fourth tier?

Upon hearing their conversation, the eyes of those around them all grew wide, and many even bit their tongues in shock and cried out in pain.

What shocked them even more was that the usually aloof and cynical Jia Rong showed no sign of anger. Instead, he said with a long face, "When will I be able to advance to the fourth tier? Young Master Yun, please let me follow you."

Yunxiao frowned and said, "It depends on your performance. I will think it over. In the next few days, you will work hard to refine ten Thousand Birds pills for Ji Meng. There are so many people watching us here like we are monkeys. We'll talk about other things later."

Jia Rong nodded, then his eyes grew cold as he glanced around. All those swept by his gaze felt a chill in their hearts. They shivered and quickly turned away.

'I thought I had the wrong guy. He's really Master Jia Rong, and his cold and murderous gaze is sharper than before! Heavens, who the hell is that boy?'

Ignoring the thoughts of those onlookers, the three of them left the Alchemist Association straight away.

A group of people stood side by side outside the door. Their expressions were serious and they emanated very powerful aura. As soon as Yunxiao came out of the door, a masked woman in the lead chuckled and said, "Bai Mou is waiting for Young Master Yun here on Prince Yue's order."

Yunxiao laughed, "Well, it's my honor to have Commander Bai greet me personally."

Bai Mou smiled and said, "The situation in the capital is tense now. Prince Yue worries that some people with bad intentions will harm you, so he sent me here to greet you."

She brought three tall steeds for Yunxiao and his company. Then, the group of people rode slowly toward Prince Yue's residence.

During this period, many soldiers were patrolling in the capital, and the common people were all used to it. However, the sharp people still smelled major events emerging in the horizon, making them shake their heads and sigh.

Chapter 65: Enhanced Origin Blasting Pill

As they crossed the street in front of Prince Yue's residence, countless arrows suddenly flew in from all directions. The strength of these arrows was so strong that they produced faint whistles, and their number was so great that they seemed to have blotted the entire sky. Shockingly, they were not weaker than the attack of ordinary warriors.

"Protect Young Master Yun and Master Jia!"

Bai Mou's pupils constricted as she leaped from her horse after giving out an order and performed a hand incantation gesture. A beam of green light shot out of her right hand and exploded into countless small sharp objects in the air, shooting in all directions.

Immediately, miserable cries could be heard coming from all around them.

Countless arrows rained down at Bai Mou, who was in mid-air, but they seemed to be blocked by an invisible force and all fell to the ground. After the first attack, she stepped on the incoming arrows and quickly went to the distance, beginning to slaughter the enemy.

All the people she brought to escort Yunxiao were from the State Guardians, each with at least the cultivation base of a Martial Master. Although the rain of arrows was deadly, it could not hurt them at all. After a moment of confusion, they were able to deal with the sudden attack in an orderly manner.

Under Ji Meng's protection, Yunxiao and Jia Rong were also unscathed. Yunxiao picked up an arrow from the ground and broke it in half, throwing it away casually as he said, "This is an arrow made of green iron bamboo, a standard weapon equipped with the crossbows used by the military."

Ji Meng said while frowning, "Do you mean all these people are under Prince Qin Yang?"

Yunxiao nodded, "I've no doubt about it. Be careful, they won't just send these minions. The real enemy is approaching."

Sure enough, after repeated screams were heard from the distance, Bai Mou seemed to have met her match. From that direction came a constant fluctuation of energy as if she was fighting some powerful enemy.

Suddenly, a ferocious voice rang out from behind Yunxiao, "Kill these people and leave no survivors!"

In the blink of an eye, dozens of figures poured over from all directions. Each of these men was clad in black with their faces covered, and their skills were extraordinary—they were all Martial Masters! As soon as they rushed into Yunxiao's group, they plunged his protectors into a chaotic battle.

When Yunxiao looked at the owner of the voice, he burst out laughing. "So it was you, Old Eight."

Li Yi flew into a rage. Pointing at Yunxiao, he gnashed his teeth and said, "You are lucky to have Luo Yunshang save you the last time, but you will not be so lucky this time! Senior brothers, help me keep others in check. I will kill this bast*rd myself!"

The two men behind him were the Baizhan experts who had been lurking beside him, and they were also his senior brothers from the same sect. They were Guang Yuanjia and Yu Yuanwen, both Martial Lords.

Guang Yuanjia was the man who helped Li Yi escape from the Li Family's courtyard that day. Staring at Ji Meng, he laughed disdainfully and said, "Junior brother, rest assured, none of these dogs will disturb me. You can concentrate on cutting off the boy's flesh piece by piece."

Yunxiao said lightly, "I knew you had betrayed us. Well, as the saying goes, once a servant, always a servant. Since you were a servant of my family, I, as the young master of the Li Family, have the obligation to get rid of the trash personally."

"I've had enough of your nonsense! I'm going to kill you!"

Li Yi could no longer stand it. As soon as he saw Yunxiao's carefree expression, his heart was filled with a monstrous anger! He wished he could tear that face to pieces and step on it countless times! At this moment, the anger accumulated in his heart for days finally exploded out. The sword in his hand suddenly let out dragon roars as he leaped into the air and slashed down at Yunxiao's vital parts.

Just as Ji Meng was about to rush over to protect Yunxiao, an extremely domineering pressure poured toward him.

"Little Great Martial Master, your opponent is me!" Guang Yuanjia laughed. "Show me all the martial techniques you know and let me have a good time. Don't die in one move, or it will be too boring." As he said that, he thrust his spear through the air with its tip pointing straight at Ji Meng's forehead. Specks of ice flickered across the spear, and the temperature in the surroundings dropped sharply.

Ji Meng's heart sank. Not daring to be careless, he quickly turned his sword and swept it at the shaft of the spear!

His slender soft sword darted repeatedly like a serpent, piercing those ice specks. Suddenly, a beam of sword light struck at the spear, causing a blast of ice to burst out of it.

As a result, Guang Yuanjia's spear was immediately knocked to the side. 'How is this possible! I'm a genuine Martial Lord, so how could a Great Martial Master knock my spear away?' After a brief lapse of concentration, he saw Ji Meng's sword flash, and then countless flowers seemed to fall from the air and sweep toward Li Yi.

Shocked, he quickly raised his spear and brought it down at Ji Meng.

Yunxiao took out a pill and threw it to Ji Meng. "Take this pill. Help me hold these two Martial Lords and I will help you after I kill this servant!"

"Hold two Martial Lords? Haha! Do you think Ji Meng is a Martial King? You really don't know the height of the sky!" Li Yi sneered. "How are you going to kill me with the mere strength of a warrior? I am a Great Martial Master of the Three Powers realm! You're such a joker!" Without Ji Meng's interference, he shook out his sword again and thrust it at Yunxiao.

With a calm expression, Ji Meng took the pill Yunxiao threw to him and swallowed it without even looking at it. Suddenly, a strange force began to rotate in his dantian and quickly circulated throughout his body. The meridians inside him were expanding under this surging force, and his body swelled slightly as if he had been inflated.

Jia Rong stared nervously at Ji Meng. He was not concerned about Ji Meng's life or death, but wanted to know the effect of the pill. He had witnessed Yunxiao refine this pill—it was an enhanced version of the origin blasting pill!

Guang Yuanjia sneered disdainfully, "An origin blasting pill? No matter what kind of medicinal pill you take, it can't change the fact that you are a Great Martial Master. Under the realm of Martial Lords, you are nothing but an ant."

At this moment, Ji Meng noticed the abnormality of the pill. He was a nine-stars Great Martial Master. Normally, he could at most have the strength of a peak nine-stars Great Martial Master after taking an origin blasting pill, because the pill had a unique property—its purity determined the level that a warrior could break through after the energy surge. However, no matter how pure the pill was, it was absolutely impossible for a warrior to break through into the next realm.

In other words, even if a peak nine-stars Great Martial Master took this pill, his strength could never break through to the realm of Martial Lords.

But to Ji Meng's great surprise, his Primordial Qi was still rising after soaring to the peak level of a ninestars Great Martial Master, regardless of whether his body could bear it. And in a few blinks of an eye, it had arrived at the bottleneck of Great Martial Masters.

An unspeakable sense of oppression made his whole body red, and his muscles grew larger than before, giving him a feeling that he was about to explode and die while waves of powerful aura kept spreading from him. Even Guang Yuanjia and Yu Yuanwen were staring at him in astonishment as they thought, 'This fella will not die like this, will he?'

"Roar!"

"Roar!"

"Roar!"

All of a sudden, Ji Meng threw his head back and let out three deafening roars, and his aura soared once more. Then, the red all over him was gone, and his muscles stopped bulging as?well. He was completely back to normal, but a murderous aura was quietly spreading from his eyes.

"What? This aura!" Guang Yuanjia cried out in disbelief, his eyes full of horror.

Yu Yuanwen's eyes widened as he blurted out, "Martial Lord! He has reached the realm of Martial Lords! Heavens! What pill did he take just now? Why can it make a warrior break through a realm?" With a gloomy face, Guang Yuanjia said ferociously, "So what if you break through to the realm of Martial Lords? You are merely having the Primordial Qi level of the realm, and your understanding of martial arts is still far from enough! Today, I'll show you the huge difference between a genuine Martial Lord and a fake Martial Lord!"

He shook out his spear and cried out softly, "Mountain Wings, unseal!"

Waves of energy burst out of the spear. In a flash, the spear that had been gray all over turned silver, with rings of silver light rippling out of its shaft. Just the aura of the spear alone had made many Martial Masters in the surroundings feel uneasy and retreat in horror.

"Ice erodes the soul!" Guang Yuanjia cried out. The natural Primordial Qi within a radius of ten meters seemed to have been drained away, turning into streams of cold air and raining down from the sky. Then, the spear pierced through the air with a jolt of his arms and went straight at Ji Meng.

The attack was delivered with all his might. Although Ji Meng's strength had reached the realm of Martial Lords by relying on a medicinal pill, he did not dare to be careless.

After stepping over the threshold of the Martial Lord realm, Ji Meng felt a kind of strength and state of mind he had never felt before. At this moment of breakthrough, his cognition and comprehension of martial arts reached a new level. The poem left by Yunxiao in the Alchemist Association once again appeared in his mind, and a brand-new understanding also emerged in his head, giving him a feeling of enlightenment.

It was not only strength that had advanced for him at this moment!

"Spirit Snake, unseal!"

Ji Meng's eyes sparkled and his face was calm. He completely forgot that his strength had improved because of the medicinal pill. He felt as if he had really broken through, and no matter who the enemy was ahead of him, he had full confidence in winning!

After the Spirit Snake was unsealed, it turned into a small snake, slithering through the ice flakes all over the sky. Wherever it passed, a sharp sound of ice breaking could be heard, and pink peach blossoms fell

out of the thin air. It was as if the spring breeze was gusting across the land, blowing away all the ice and snow and making the peach blossoms bloom.

"Clang!"

Suddenly, Mountain Wings was caught by Spirit Snake, which wrapped around the shaft like a long ribbon and then wound upward rapidly.

Guang Yuanjia was shocked. He could not believe that his ice energy was broken by Ji Meng's inexplicable sword intent, and that the spear in his hand was entangled by the sword and could not move at all. The snake-like sword kept climbing up with an intense murderous aura, and was about to cut off his arm.

"Extreme ice, detonate!" He cried out while pouring all the energy in him into the spear and detonating it instantly!

The spear let out a miserable wail as streams of icy force blasted out of it, sweeping out in all directions. Under the impact of the force, Ji Meng's sword quickly shrank back. But wherever it passed, it still sliced through the icy air, causing the surrounding temperature to rise again.

Chapter 66: Third-grade Mystic Weapon

Guang Yuanjia simply detonated the energy on the spear. Although this could produce a great power, the energy consumed was extremely terrifying, and could also cause great damage to the mystic weapon. He would not have done so unless he had to. After avoiding the crisis, he immediately felt that his aura was greatly weakened, and the energy in his body was at its lowest level.

Shocked and angry, he was about to go mad when he suddenly noticed that the temperature around him was rising. When he looked up, he saw the sky being filled with tens of thousands of peach blossoms, all falling toward him. In just a moment, he would be drowned by them.

The instinct of a Martial Lord filled his heart with fright. These peach blossoms conjured from sword light were the condensation of a martial intent, each flower containing a very advanced martial intent. His body turned cold in an instant. No longer caring for his honor, he shouted loudly, "Junior brother Yuanwen, come and help me quickly! Let's work together to kill this freak!"

He could not think of any words other than 'freak' to describe Ji Meng, who was merely a nine-stars Great Martial Master a few moments ago.

Yu Yuanwen was running back and forth in the chaotic battle and had killed many Martial Masters. He was immersed in the killing spree when he suddenly saw Guang Yuanjia falling in a dangerous situation. He was shocked, and he quickly ran over to help his senior brother. Without hesitation, he conjured up a long weapon which turned out to be a halberd, and then thrust it at the sky. In the blink of an eye, huge ice cubes condensed from icy air rose from the ground, shooting toward the peach blossoms in the air.

Bam!

Two forces smashed into each other and burst into countless blast waves. Yu Yuanwen's face turned somber as he stood shoulder to shoulder with Guang Yuanjia, his halberd in hand. Their eyes were filled with shock.

In the exchange just now, Yu Yuanwen actually lost slightly. Such a result was unacceptable to them. Huge waves surged in their hearts as they thought to themselves, 'What kind of medicinal pill did this guy just take? Why does it have such a heaven-defying effect!'

Jia Rong, who was watching the battle from not far away, kept shaking all over. The power of this enhanced origin blasting pill was not only beyond his expectation, but completely beyond his knowledge! To his further excitement, Yunxiao had given him the recipe for this pill as well.

After making the first move, Ji Meng's fighting spirit became even more monstrous. Endless power poured out of his dantian and seemed to never dry up. After emitting a loud roar, he charged again with his sword. Guang Yuanjia and Yu Yuanwen's faces flickered as if they had been humiliated, and they also charged out sullenly. The three were soon tangled in a fierce battle.

Li Yi, who was fighting Yunxiao in the distance, also noticed the scene. He vaguely had a bad feeling about this, and he was rather baffled. What kind of medicinal pill did Yunxiao take out just now? Why could it allow a Great Martial Master to fight two Martial Lords at the same time? Wasn't that too illogical?

But at the same time, his heart became fervent. 'If only I can get the recipe of this pill and produce it in large quantities...'

With the thought, his eyes immediately turned scarlet as he said ferociously, "Stop running and hiding here and there, Li Yunxiao! Come and die now!"

After fighting for so long, Li Yi's mood also became a little irritable. He had no intention of killing Yunxiao now, but wanted to capture him and then force out the pill recipe. However, no matter how hard he tried, none of his attacks could hit Yunxiao. It was as if the latter was moving with a set of very genius footwork.

Yunxiao was relieved when he saw Ji Meng's condition. The smile on his face gradually disappeared and was replaced by a cold look. "The reason I ran and hid was to give you time to see the performance over there. Since you don't want to watch it anymore, it's time for you to pay off your debts."

"Pay off my debts?" Li Yi asked, puzzled.

Yunxiao sneered, "You have been a servant in my family for so many years, and what you've eaten, used, and worn all belong to the Li Family. But in the end, you chose to betray us. If these are not debts, what are they? Now you will pay off the debts with your life!"

"How arrogant! Taiyin, unseal!"

"Tempestuous Storm!"

Li Yi's mystic sword, which had the ice attribute, was instantly unsealed. The chill on the sword soared at least ten times in an instant while the air was filled with flickering cold light, dazzling to look at. He slashed out the sword casually, causing the cold energy on the blade to immediately rush out like surging water!

He, Guang Yuanjia and Yu Yuanwen were training under the same master, and they all followed the path of ice energy.

Jia Rong's heart was in his throat as he shouted in horror, "Young Master Yun, you must not resist this strike! Run!" In his view, Li Yi could easily kill Yunxiao with his strength as a Great Martial Master, not to mention he was now using a third-grade mystic weapon. Under these circumstances, no one present could be his match.

"Hmph! Although a third-grade mystic weapon is powerful, it depends on who holds it!" Instead of retreating, Yunxiao advanced straight up and gently threw out a palm. His sword, Black Girl, had turned into a mini-form and was hiding in the palm. "You want to kill me? Keep dreaming! A hundred times the force of gravity!"

His Black Girl originally contained only a small piece of Purple Sun Stone. However, he found another large piece in the Divine Realm Tablet later on, and after refining the sword again, the gravity arrays in it could produce a hundred times the force of gravity! Whenever he was alone, he would transform the sword into a mini-form and place it in his palm, so that he could be in the field of gravity anytime and anywhere, and cultivate every second.

After unleashing the Tempestuous Storm, Li Yi was full of confidence, but he suddenly felt his body sink to the ground. A tremendous force was constantly pulling the flesh and blood of his whole body, making him feel as if he was about to collapse, while his Taiyin sword was also being pulled to the ground.

Anyone who suddenly fell under a hundred times the force of gravity would feel extremely uncomfortable. Li Yi had tasted the sudden increase of gravity last time. Although he was mentally prepared, he thought the array in Yunxiao's sword could only produce ten times the force of gravity. With his cultivation base of a Great Martial Master, he could still walk effortlessly under ten times the force of gravity. In fact, he could continue to fight even if it was a hundred times, but this increase came too suddenly!

Although Yunxiao only had the cultivation base of a warrior, with his incredibly tough physique, he forcibly wielded his sword under a hundred times force of gravity. Black Girl suddenly returned to its original form and smashed Li Yi's Taiyin hard!

Clang!

Taiyin had been weighed down by a hundred times the force of gravity, and now it was struck by Black Girl. The strike was unleashed by Yunxiao with all his physical strength. Li Yi staggered, and the powerful impact numbed his palms, causing the sword to fly out of his grip. "My sword!" cried Li Yi as he struggled to get the sword back.

Yunxiao gave a cold snort as he lifted his foot and performed the footwork. At the moment his body moved, the gravity suddenly returned to normal. He rushed out like a bolt of lightning and grabbed the sword, then turned to look at Li Yi, whose face was completely blank. "Although this is not a very good sword, I'll take it all the same as the interest of your years of living in the Li Family," he said with a faint smile.

"Bast*rd! Give me back my sword!"

Li Yi was completely mad. The third-grade mystic weapon was given to him by his master, Martial King Yi Xiaoshan. Of all his fellow disciples, only he had the special honor to be given a third-grade mystic weapon, and he had not had much chance to use it. At last, he was able to use it to his heart's content now, but it did not take long for it to be snatched away by Yunxiao. How could he not go mad?

"Ice Punch!"

Although he had lost his sword, he did not lose his cultivation base as a Great Martial Master of the Three Powers realm. As he threw out the punch, the surrounding temperature plummeted and a gust of biting cold air swept forward to freeze Yunxiao. Soon, tiny ice crystals began to condense over the latter's skin and started growing thicker. Many Martial Masters around him also felt the cold, and their breathing became a little hurried.

Yunxiao snorted disdainfully and said, "You want this sword? Then I'll give it back to you!" He raised Taiyin high and then slashed it down!

The ice crystals in the air all cracked under the sword, turning into water vapor and vanishing. Without losing its momentum, the sword rushed forward and suddenly condensed into an ice sword beam when it was three feet away from Li Yi, glinting brilliantly under the sunlight.

Clang!

The air was filled with the sound of ice crystal breaking apart as Li Yi threw out another punch and shattered the ice sword beam. His eyes were full of shock as he roared, "Ice sword beam! How can you possibly use the ice sword beam!"

Yunxiao scoffed, "This martial technique is so low-level that I can simulate it with just a look. Why are you not bashful of using it?"

Fuming, Li Yi said, "If you're so good, give me back my sword!"

All the Martial Masters who were fighting around them almost fell down when they heard that. Li Yi was robbed of his weapon in a life-and-death battle, but he still had the face to ask his opponent to return it to him! It was indeed an eye-opener for them.

Yunxiao was also struck dumb for a moment, and then burst out laughing. "Do you think I want this piece of trash? It's just a third-grade mystic weapon. I have one too!" He immediately took out the Spring Water Zhang Qingfan had given him.

"It's really a third-grade mystic weapon!" Li Yi was dumbfounded as he cried out in disbelief and anger. "You...Why do you have a third-grade mystic weapon!"

Yunxiao's face grew dark as he sneered, "You have asked too many questions today. Don't tell me that you want to delay so that you can live a little longer? You are dreaming!"

He wielded the sword in his left hand and said, "How much sorrow, pray, can a person carry? Like the spring torrent flowing eastward, without tarry!"

Then, he wielded the sword in his right hand and said, "The fragrance of flowers intoxicated countless guests...a man with a sharp sword swept across fourteen states!"

Two completely different sword qi slashed out at the same time, one left and one right, complementing each other without affecting them. It was as if two warriors were attacking at the same time!

Li Yi was utterly stunned. The shock in his heart was greater than the pressure brought to him by the sword. For a Martial Lord, unsealing two third-grade mystic weapons at the same time was a very difficult task, and he could never use them so well, let alone a mere warrior!

'What's the matter with this Li Yunxiao? Not only can he unseal two third-grade mystic weapons, but he can also unleash sword qi of two different attributes at the same time! This is terrible! This man must be killed!'

Fear began to grow inside him, and he had forgotten about his plan of forcing Yunxiao to give the pill recipe. He only wanted to kill the latter now!

Chapter 67: Cut Off The Arm

Li Yi's face was gloomy as he threw out his fists in great fury, streams of ice energy dispersing the sword qi that streaked across the air. "Even if you can unseal two third-grade mystic weapons at the same time, there is a gap of two realms between you and me! Let's see how you are going to cross it!" He cried out angrily.

"Two realms?" Yunxiao scoffed, "I may still have some fear if you are a Martial Lord. A mere Great Martial Master? Old Eight, look into my eyes!"

Startled, Li Yi looked reflexively into Yunxiao's eyes. He immediately saw two demonic-looking, bloodred crescent moons, surrounded by endless darkness like a bottomless abyss of demons.

Yunxiao's face was cold as he said softly, "Universal Soul Suppressor—Demon Moon!"

"AHHH!"

Li Yi only felt that his mind was lost instantly. With his face turning blank and his hands hung listlessly, he stood there like an idiot.

"Good, very good! Now, you just stand there obediently and let me stab you twice with my swords."

Yunxiao's face became a little ferocious while his eyes glowed evilly, and the veins on his forehead bulged as beads of sweats rolled off his cheeks. Obviously, casting this eye technique was too demanding for him!

He raised the Taiyin sword gently and then slashed it down fiercely!

"Watch out, junior brother!"

In the distance, Guang Yuanjia noticed that the situation was not right, and he immediately let out an anxious roar. His voice was infused with energy, so it rang out like a bell and shook the hearts of those who heard it.

Li Yi shuddered and woke up instantly, horrified to find that the sword was only three inches from the tip of his nose. He could not avoid it!

"Ahh!"

In desperation, his potential shot up. At this critical juncture, he forcibly moved several inches to the side! In the next moment, the sword fell and cut off his left arm! A great pain washed up his shoulder, making him bare his teeth and break out in a cold sweat.

Yunxiao shook his head slightly. He knew that since he had failed to kill Li Yi this time, he would not be able to do it again even if he went on fighting. Therefore, he simply stepped back and stared at Li Yi coldly with the sword in his arms.

The soul attack technique he just cast was called 'Universal Soul Suppressor'. It was a very powerful divine ability that could only be cast by people with strong souls. It consumed a lot of soul power, no less than a high-intensity refinement session.

In addition to their strength, each of those peak-level Martial Sovereigns at the top of the Heaven and Earth Power Chart had an extremely powerful advantage that made their opponents unable to keep pace with. For example, Tyrant Martial Sovereign's imperishable golden body and his previous incarnation, and Gu Feiyang's ninth-tier soul power. This 'Universal Soul Suppressor' was a kind of divine ability that directly attacked the soul. With his ninth-tier soul power in his previous life, even Martial Sovereigns of the Nine Heavens realm did not dare to look him in the eye.

Therefore, with his current soul power of a second-tier alchemist, he could make an unprepared Great Martial Master lose his mind for a short time. However, after failing for the first time, he was unable to cast it for the second time, and Li Yi was already on his guard.

Nevertheless, Li Yi did not know Yunxiao's current situation. After his left arm was cut off, he was utterly horrified, and the feeling of being completely controlled by someone else just now had thoroughly chilled his heart. "Senior brothers, let's retreat for now!" he cried out in a hurry.

Guang Yuanjia and Yu Yuanwen had been pestered by Ji Meng. The more they fought, the angrier they became. Although they had the upper hand under their joint forces, Ji Meng's desperate fighting style, coupled with his unpredictable sword technique, still gave them a great headache.

Now, after seeing Li Yi not only lose the sword given to him by their master but also an arm, the two of them had no more desire to fight. After forcing back Ji Meng with one strike, they immediately retreated to Li Yi's side, grabbed him from left and right, and then leaped into the air to flee.

Ji Meng was about to pursue but Yunxiao stopped him. "Don't worry about these three now. Get rid of their minions."

As soon as the enemy Martial Masters saw that their leaders had fled, they immediately lost their fighting spirit. They retreated as they fought, trying to find a chance to escape the battlefield. However, the State Guardians responsible for protecting Yunxiao had long been furious because of their heavy casualties. They would not let these enemies escape so easily!

Yunxiao watched the slaughter coldly. His face was expressionless as if he was staring blankly, but his heart was filled with surprise.

He clearly felt that the Great Expansion Divine Technique, which was almost impossible to take shape, was able to barely appear in the Divine Realm Tablet after he cast the eye technique once and suffered a great loss of his soul power.

Sure enough, this Divine Realm Tablet was a divine artifact that surpassed the super-grade mystic weapons!

There must be some power in the tablet that could support the manifestation of the Great Expansion Divine Technique. Yunxiao sent his divine sense into the tablet and read the little gold characters in silence. With that, he immediately felt a strange power emerging between the lines that began to flow through the tablet into his body, then gather in the spiritual altar in his mind, nourishing his soul like a stream of clear spring.

The feeling of nourishment was more comfortable and refreshing than any medicinal pills he knew.

Just as the Great Expansion Divine Technique was constantly nourishing his soul through the tablet, with Ji Meng joining in the fray, the twenty or so enemy Martial Masters were quickly killed.

Ji Meng walked up to a dead masked Martial Master and tore off his mask. Suddenly, his eyes burst with anger, and his whole body was shaking.

Looking at his expression, Yunxiao asked, "Is he your subordinate?"

Ji Meng said sadly, "I didn't expect Young Master Yun to have guessed it. Yes, this man's name is Liu Zheng. He had just joined the First Unit not long ago, and he was originally my direct subordinate. He is only twenty-seven years old and a three-stars Martial Master. I used to encourage him. He had a bright future..."

With a solemn expression, Yunxiao said, "As a State Guardian, he couldn't help it. Obeying orders is a State Guardian's highest duty. He is an excellent State Guardian, for he died under his faith. You should be happy for him."

The men responsible for protecting Yunxiao were members of the Third Unit, Bai Mou's subordinates. Half of them were killed, and the remaining ten were all wounded. On hearing Yunxiao's words, they became silent and then saluted the bodies lying on the ground.

Ji Meng said sadly, "They are all good guardians, but they should have died for the state and not a cowardly death like this! I feel unworthy for them!"

"Not everyone can die on the battlefield. As long as they fulfill their duty, they are good guardians."

While the two were talking, a white figure flew over from the distance: it was Bai Mou. Her white dress and veil were stained with blood. Clearly, she was also wounded.

"I can't believe it was Gao Feng who ambushed us with the men from the First Unit! Is everyone all right?" As she glanced around, she saw the bodies all over the ground. Her pupils constricted and her eyes flashed with anger as she gnashed her teeth and cried out, "Gao Feng!"

Yunxiao said calmly, "Let's get out of here as soon as possible to avoid further trouble."

Without saying a word, the group of people began to move forward in silence. But, unbeknown to Bai Mou, the look in the eyes of these guardians from the Third Unit watching Yunxiao and Ji Meng had grown awestruck and respectful.

Soon, they arrived at Prince Yue's residence. Only then did everyone's hearts become relaxed, because not only there were a large number of experts in the residence, but also various powerful arrays. No one would be foolish enough to attack a prince's residence unless they had dispensed with all civilities and did not care about casualties.

Qin Yue personal came out to greet them. Seeing the messy look of the crowd, he quickly asked what had happened and flew into a rage after learning about the situation.

He immediately sent people to settle all the Martial Masters and gave large quantities of medicinal pills and Primordial Stones to everyone, also providing several times more pension and burial expenses to the dead. After he had done all this, only then did the mood of the guardians become slightly better.

Yunxiao and the others followed Prince Yue straight into the council hall. Once inside, he immediately found that many senior ministers in the court were there, and the man sitting at the far end of the hall was none other than his grandfather.

As soon as Li Chunyang saw Yunxiao, his eyes burst with a light and his face was filled with joy. Although they had not seen each other for only half a month, his grandson had advanced by two more stars,

which made him very gratified. With a smile on his face, he said, "What happened? Did you run into trouble on the way?"

Yunxiao gave a brief account of the matter. Not only did the expressions of everyone present change dramatically, even Bai Mou was shocked and felt incredulous.

Li Chunyang's face became extremely dark as he said furiously, "I can't believe this bast*rd 8527 is still in the capital...I thought he had run away. It looks like he has colluded with Prince Yang now. But, they have two Martial Lords, and 8527 himself is a Great Martial Master! How did you escape?"

Bai Mou and Qin Yue fixed their eyes at Yunxiao. This was also the question in their minds.

Yunxiao said lightly, "Thanks to Ji Meng! He alone had kept the two Martial Lords in check, so that we could deal with 8527 and eventually cut off one of his arms. The two Martial Lords panicked and fled with 8527. The other enemies were former State Guardians from the First Unit, and were all killed by us."

Although he said those words in a calm and flat voice, anyone could hear the danger they had been in. Li Chunyang stared at Ji Meng in astonishment and asked, "How could a nine-stars Great Martial Master keep two Martial Lords in check?"

Li Chunyang was Yunxiao's grandfather, so Ji Meng did not dare to be impolite. He said hastily, "This is all because of a magical pill given to me by Young Master Yun. It made me break through to the realm of Martial Lords in an instant, which is the reason why I was able to keep two Martial Lords in check."

"What kind of pill can make a Great Martial Master break through to the realm of Martial Lords in an instant!" Li Chunyang said in shock.

Yunxiao played dumb and said, "You don't know? I found the pill in the family's secret vault. It's said that it can temporarily improve a warrior's strength. However, it has a serious side effect. Within ten days of taking it, the strength of the warrior will become weaker and weaker, eventually falling to the level of an average person, and then slowly recover in another ten days. In other words, you can't fight for twenty days after taking it."

"Do we have this kind of pill in our secret vault?" Li Chunyang thought for a moment, but he never seemed to have heard of it. In any case, since the side effect of this pill was so serious, it seemed that its value was not as high as he had imagined, so he lost interest.

Ji Meng, on the other hand, breathed a sigh of relief in his heart when he heard that. After taking the pill and becoming so strong, he had been worried that it would affect his future cultivation base. Now, he felt at ease upon listening to Yun Xiao's explanation. It turned out that the side effect was that he could not fight in the next twenty days. The enlightenment he had obtained after taking the pill and breaking through to the realm of Martial Lords was more than he could get by cultivating in seclusion for twenty days. He was confident that he would be able to truly break through to the realm of Martial Lords after his next secluded cultivation.

"I didn't expect my brother to collude with the spy of our enemy state just to deal with the Li Family! Can he be so unscrupulous to get what he wants!" Qin Yue said angrily.

Chapter 68: Prince Yue's Residence

Li Chunyang said with his eyes narrowed, "In this case, it's not difficult to explain what happened to Kunjin."

"What happened exactly?" Yunxiao asked, frowning.

"Five days ago," Qin Yue said sulkily, "we had news that Whitehead Town had suddenly been overrun by an army of eight hundred thousand men from Baizhan, and that they had besieged Kunjin at lightning speed afterward. Right now, your father—General Feilong—is still resisting the enemy from within the city. But, his request for help has reached the capital."

"How did the court respond?"

"Kunjin and Whitehead are Tianshui's natural barriers. The consequences will be unimaginable if they were breached. His Majesty summoned all the military leaders and requested Duke Jingguo to lead the rescue."

Looking at Li Chunyang, Yunxiao asked, "What do you think then?"

Li Chunyang was somewhat startled, but was very satisfied with this grandson on the inside. If others heard their fathers were besieged by an army, they would have flown into a rage and could not wait for even a moment to march. But, Yunxiao was extremely calm, without even the slightest mood swings in his eyes.

He smiled with gratification and then said, "Kunjin is easier to defend than to attack. Your father has a legion of three hundred thousand men with him in the city, the Flying Dragon Army, so the mere eight hundred thousand men from Baizhan are not a threat to him. Besides, it is still a question whether these eight hundred thousand men are a real number or not. Now that you say 8527 is colluding with Qin Yang, I'm more convinced that this plea for help is a sham created by them. Their real motive is to lure the tiger out of the mountains!"

"Do you mean their real motive is to get the forces under the Li Family out of the capital so that Qin Yang can do whatever he wants? By the time we find out that things are not as we expected in Kunjin and return to the capital, the dust would have already settled, and it will be too late for us to change the situation?"

"That's right!" Li Chunyang said approvingly. "You are truly my grandson. Haha!"

"But, what if the plea for help is genuine?"

Li Chunyang's smile faded away as he said lightly, "Your father is stationed in Kunjin, a natural barrier, and he has three hundred thousand men from the Flying Dragon Army. If he can't resist the eight hundred thousand men from the enemy army, then it proves that he is incompetent and deserves to suffer some hardships. Moreover, you know I can't leave the capital."

His tone became a little sad when he said he could not leave the capital. Yunxiao naturally knew what he was referring to. Chen Dasheng could only survive for one more month with the Melting Pills and his energy, and now half a month had passed.

After pondering for a moment, Yunxiao said, "Perhaps you are thinking too simply. Even if the plea for help was not written by father, I'm afraid that the situation in Kunjin may not be as optimistic as you think. Baizhan has been blocked to the east of Great Python Mountain for hundreds of years, and has never breached these two places. But this time, they managed to let an army cross the mountain. Do you think their purpose is only to assist Qin Yang to seize the throne and lure the tiger out of the mountains?"

Startled, Qin Yue said in horror, "Do you mean Baizhan really has the intention of invading our state? That's bad, because if Kunjin is lost, all thirteen cities in our heartland will be exposed to their heavy cavalry! What can we do?"

Yunxiao calmly analyzed, "Baizhan's strategy and purpose can be both true and false, which makes it difficult for us to distinguish. But, rescuing Kunjin is a trap that we cannot avoid. Even though we all know that it is a trap, we have to jump in. Otherwise, the consequences will be too serious!"

His analysis made Li Chunyang fidgety and walk back and forth in the hall, scolding angrily, "This Qin Yang is really crazy! How can he do such a thing!"

Yunxiao chuckled and said, "This is not difficult to understand. He had waited so many years for the throne, and the wait is finally coming to an end. But at this moment, Prince Yue suddenly stood up and began to reverse the situation, tilting the balance. This, of course, made him mad. So, it is not surprising that he will take risks!"

Qin Yue said angrily, "My elder brother is too selfish! How could he disregard the safety of the whole state for his own desires? If he really wants the throne so much, I'll not fight with him!"

These kinds of righteous words could be said in front of outsiders, but everyone present here was an old fox. To say such a thing in front of them showed Qin Yue's immaturity.

One of the ministers took the opportunity to flatter by saying, "Your Highness must not do this! Your Highness's love for the people and the world shows that you will be a good king. If the throne is taken by Qin Yang, the future of our state will be dark, and the people will suffer! For the sake of your beloved people, Your Highness must think twice!"

As he spoke, he even wiped away some tears with his sleeve, as if he was worried about the fate of the people and begging on their behalf.

Qin Yue nodded and said, "You have a point, Lord Xu! It seems that I will have to fight Qin Yang for the sake of my people even if I die!"

Li Chunyang was already in vexation, and he became even more furious when he heard these flattering words. "Since Lord Xu is so concerned about the state and the people, I'll provide you three hundred thousand soldiers, and you will lead them to rescue Kunjin," he said coldly.

Lord Xu's face reddened and he was instantly rendered speechless, lowering his head and stammering.

Bai Mou, who had not spoken for a long time, suddenly said, "Young Master Yun, do you have a good plan?"

Despite his youth, Yunxiao had emerged as a key member of their team. Besides, Bai Mou was good at astrology and divination, and she firmly believed that the key to Qin Yue's claim to the throne lay with Yunxiao. Moreover, the development of the situation was increasingly moving in the direction she saw from the stars.

As soon as she asked the question, everyone quieted down and their eyes fell on Yunxiao. The ministers around Qin Yue were disdainful and sullen. They thought this must be a show put up by Li Chunyang because he wanted to cultivate his grandson, as well as highlight his grandson's weight and ability in front of Qin Yue. By doing so, Yunxiao would be able to contribute in the future, thus allowing their family to continue to prosper.

Yunxiao read the faces of these ministers, so he sneered and said, "I do have a plan, but there are too many ears here."

Qin Yue was slightly taken aback, but he waved all the same, signaling the others to leave them alone.

The ministers were stunned and looked displeased while Lord Xu said coldly, "All of us here are close associates of His Highness. Young Master Yun, you don't seem to trust us very much by saying so, do you?"

Yunxiao gave him a contemptuous look and said, "It's not that I don't trust you very much, but I don't trust you at all."

"Li Yunxiao, you are insulting us and are disrespectful to His Highness!"

"If you dare to use your head to guarantee that anything I say today will not get out, then you can stay!" Yunxiao's cold gaze swept over the others as he said, "So are you. Anyone who wants to stay, be prepared to hang your head on your belt. If you have the courage, you can stay."

As soon as Lord Xu was glanced at by Yunxiao, he immediately felt as if an ice sword had pierced his heart, making him almost suffocated with cold. He took a deep breath, but was still shivering with cold, which filled his heart with terror.

The other ministers also felt as if a gust of freezing wind was blowing on their faces, chilling their hearts.

'Who the hell is this Li Yunxiao? Why does he have such an icy glare?'

'What a joke! Why should we use our heads to guarantee that anything he says today will not get out?'

No one wanted to take unnecessary risks, and no one dared to look at Yunxiao's cold and sharp eyes again. One after another, all the ministers walked out of the hall with gloomy faces.

Qin Yue said hastily, "My dear subjects, you all have worked hard for most of the day. Please go to the Drunken Flower Hall in my residence to have a rest. Someone, bring the best singers and musicians in my residence to the Drunken Flower Hall, and also serve my dear subjects the best refreshments and teas!"

As their future monarch, Qin Yue could not chill everyone's hearts at this time under any circumstances. He knew when to use whom. In the past, Qin Yang and his fights were all covert, so he needed this group of civil ministers to criticize and fight the legitimacy for him. Now, however, with the struggle between them gradually coming up to the surface, what he needed most was strong forces. Therefore, the weight of the Li Family had surpassed that of everyone else present at this moment.

Soon, only Yunxiao, Ji Meng, Jia Rong, and Li Chunyang were left in the hall, along with Qin Yue and Bai Mou.

"Young Master Yun, can you tell us your plan now? Or do you want me to leave as well?" Bai Mou asked with a chuckle.

Yunxiao laughed and said, "Haha! You really can tell jokes, Commander Bai!" He put away his smile and said seriously, "My plan is to give consideration to both sides!"

A hint of disappointment flashed in Qin Yue's eyes, but he quickly hid it. He sighed and said, "I've thought about giving consideration to both sides, but our manpower is limited. If Duke Jingguo is not in the capital, what forces would I have to fight my elder brother with?"

Li Chunyang also frowned and said, "You know how His Majesty treats our family now. A large number of important posts in the military have been replaced by Qin Yang's men, and some of my former subordinates have all been either promoted or demoted, depriving them of their military power. Moreover, if Kunjin is really besieged, the only one capable of rescuing them is the Central Army with five hundred thousand soldiers."

At the mention of the Central Army, Qin Yue's face suddenly became gloomy.

Li Chunyang continued, "But, the commander-in-chief of the Central Army is none other than Qin Yang. Although the factions of the Central Army are complex and he may not completely control it, it seems impossible for him to dispatch troops to the rescue. Moreover, His Majesty is in a weak position now, so even if he orders troops to be mobilized, I'm worried that Qin Yang will not obey his order unless I stand up and plead for help. With my reputation, we may be able to recruit some of my former subordinates from various armies."

Qin Yue said hurriedly, "Duke Jingguo, you must not leave the capital. My plan depends entirely on you."

Yunxiao smiled and said, "Yes Grandpa, you must stay in the capital. Let me go for the rescue."

Li Chunyang said in astonishment, "You?" He immediately shook his head and said, "No way! Even if I can recruit some of my former subordinates, these men are all unruly and hard to subdue. No one can control them unless I personally lead the troops."

While frowning, Bai Mou said, "Young Master Yun is still too young! Even if Duke Jingguo can recruit some of his former subordinates, the number and combat effectiveness should be very limited. If something really happens to Kunjin, such troops will not be able to make a difference."

Looking at the sad faces of the crowd, Yunxiao laughed and said, "You seem to have forgotten three people!"

Chapter 69: Three Men

Qin Yue was shocked, and asked hastily, "Three men? Which three?"

The rest of the people were also taken aback, and they pricked up their ears to listen carefully.

Yunxiao held out a finger and said, "The first man will be the commander of the troops. Naturally, I'm not qualified to awe those military big shots. But besides my grandfather, there is another man who can." He paused for a brief moment and smiled, then continued, "Although I can't completely cure him yet, as long as he stays with me and takes medicinal pills on time, he can definitely return to his peak!"

Shocked, Li Chunyang said in exultation, "You...you really found a solution?"

Yunxiao nodded and said, "I have refined some Mysterious Fire pills which can temporarily suppress the cold poison in his body. By using the pure Yang energy to heal his internal injury, he can completely return to his peak during ordinary times."

Li Chunyang's eyes were red as he said happily, "Great! Great!"

Qin Yue could not help but ask, "Who are you talking about?"

Yunxiao laughed, "He is Chen Dasheng, who followed my grandfather to open the frontier and set a land of three thousand miles in Baizhan afire, and was conferred as the Duke of Zhongyong after his 'death'!"

"The Duke of Zhongyong, Chen Dasheng!" Surprised, Qin Yue said, "Wasn't he dead? Didn't he die in the last ranking battle?"

Li Chunyang's eyes grew cold as he said, "To get rid of the people around me, His Majesty had sent Chen Dasheng to take part in that damned ranking battle. He returned to the capital after a narrow escape, but was ambushed on the night of his arrival. If I hadn't found out in time, he would have died! Moreover, after conferring him Duke Zhongyong, His Majesty reduced the title of his family by one rank. Hehe..."

Qin Yue's heart skipped a beat, and traces of cold sweat were oozing out of his forehead as he sensed the chill emanating from Li Chunyang's body and heard the sinister laughter. "How silly of my father! How could he treat a loyal and important minister like this? When I ascend to the throne, I'll definitely restore the Chen Family's title!" He said in a hurry.

Li Chunyang gave a cold snort and said, "Later on, I replaced Dasheng with a death row prisoner and told the world that he was dead. In fact, he had been recuperating in the secret chamber within my residence. But over the years, he has become weaker and weaker..."

A glimmer of light flashed through Bai Mou's eyes. "Is General Chen's injury and Commander Xiao's..."

"Yes!" Li Chunyang said in a low voice, "Their injuries were caused by that Yi Xiaoshan's ice energy!"

Qin Yue wiped the sweat from his forehead and said happily, "Since Duke Zhongyong can come back, he must be the commander-in-chief!"

Yunxiao chuckled and said, "Commander Bai, since you know Xiao Qingwang also suffered internal injuries caused by ice energy, you should know who the second man I'm talking about is, right?"

"Young Master Yun, you are really a genius! I can't believe you have a way to suppress the ice energy," Bai Mou said softly. "With Commander Xiao following you, your rescue mission will naturally be unimpeded! But, I'm very curious now. With the help of General Chen and Commander Xiao, your rescue of Kunjin will certainly succeed. In this case, who will be the third man?"

Yunxiao said calmly, "This third man is naturally Prince Yue's teacher, Martial King Zhong Lishan!"

Qin Yue shook his head and said, "Impossible! Although Teacher Zhong supports me, he will never take part in the affairs of the state. He is unlikely to come forward unless the army of Baizhan is at the gates of the capital."

"I'm not asking him to come forward. Your Highness, have you forgotten the disaster in Tianshui sixty years ago?"

"You mean..."

Sixty years ago, Tianshui's current king, Qin Zheng, was only a prince. At that time, there was a rebellion in the south. The rebels had already arrived at the gates of the capital, and the entire state army was routed, unable to put up an effective resistance.

At this critical juncture, the then dean of Jialan Academy encouraged the students to form a student army and fight the rebels. They not only saved the crisis in the capital, but also sent the rebellious troops back to the south and eventually wiped them out.

From that time onwards, Qin Zheng's father, the then king, conferred the group of students the title of Guardians of the State'!

This was the origin of the Guardians of the State.

Yunxiao said, "It is the holiday season now, and the academy has already started to organize students to sign up for the holiday training mission. Your Highness should know that the academy's past missions were no less dangerous than that of rescuing Kunjin. If this mission is changed to rescuing Kunjin and the reward is doubled..."

"Good idea!" Qin Yue was overjoyed. "Young Master Yun, you are indeed resourceful! If we can mobilize the students of the academy, we will have a large number of Martial Masters, warriors, and apprentice warriors! Such an army is enough to fight even a hundred times stronger enemy!"

"Almost all the experts in Tianshui over the years came from Jialan Academy. Your Highness can mobilize the students in person and bring all the warriors to you. They are the future pillars of the state. Not only that, they will be led by the teachers of the academy, and we all know that even the weakest teachers are Great Martial Masters. Moreover, if we want to suppress the ice energy in Xiao Qingwang and Chen Dasheng, Luo Yunshang must also go with the army. After all, she is a genuine Martial Lord." After hearing what Yunxiao said, everyone was stunned. This move of his was really genius! Through this method, he not only found them a strong army out of thin air, but also put all the future pillars of the state under Qin Yue's command!

Bai Mou's eyes sparkled as she said approvingly, "With Luo Yunshang as the commander of the student army, their strength is stronger than that of the First Unit of the State Guardians!"

Yunxiao narrowed his eyes and said, "Xiao Qingwang's control of the State Guardians is almost nonexistent because his injury is getting more and more serious. Gao Feng's First Unit is now supporting Prince Qin Yang, Commander Bai's Third Unit is supporting Your Highness, while the other three units have their own thoughts. But, as long as Xiao Qingwang returns, who among the five units would dare to disobey him? Your Highness, with the only three Martial Kings in Tianshui on your side, how could you fail?"

"Three Martial Kings?" Qin Yue's eyes went wide as he asked, "Who is the third one?"

Bai Mou's pupils constricted as she looked at Li Chunyang in horror and blurted out, "Is Duke Jingguo..."

"Haha!" Li Chunyang burst out laughing. "Yes, the third Martial King is me! I've already stepped into the Five Elements realm." He looked at Yunxiao with a face full of admiration and a heart filled with great gratification. All the ideas put forward by this grandson of his were genius. It seemed to him that Qin Yue was bound to be the final winner of this game of the throne.

All the people present were shocked until Qin Yue hurriedly bowed down and said with great joy, "Congratulations, Duke Jingguo!"

The others did not dare to be disrespectful either as they all stood up and bowed to Li Chunyang, of course, except Yunxiao.

A Martial King of the Five Elements realm was a state's supreme fighting force. He was above all, and did not even have to salute the king when they met. Instead, the king would have to be respectful toward every Martial King.

"Haha! Don't stand on ceremony!"

Li Chunyang was delighted to see his grandson being so courageous and resourceful. He decided not to hide his strength anymore, and his aura exploded out in an instant. All the people present immediately felt a supreme aura like that of a guru pressing on their hearts. Except for Yunxiao, everyone's mind was shaken.

Of all the people present, Bai Mou and Ji Meng's cultivation base were the strongest, so their feelings were also the deepest. They had no doubt that Li Chunyang was a genuine Martial King!

Qin Yue felt as if a piece of pie had suddenly fallen from the sky and almost knocked him unconscious. He burst into laughter as he went up to Yunxiao and grabbed his hand. "Young Master Yun," he said kindly, "you are indeed the benefactor of my life! If I can ascend to the throne in the future, it must be because of you. Today, I would like to become sworn brothers with you. From now on, we will share the good and bad together. What do you think?"

Li Chunyang's eyes lit up. He knew that Qin Yue did so because he had become a Martial King. Nevertheless, if Yunxiao could become a sworn brother of the future king, the Li Family would naturally be bathed in glory in the future.

Bai Mou also nodded slightly. She agreed with Qin Yue's approach, because Yunxiao was indeed a talent worth being courted.

Stunned, Yunxiao drew back his hand and said awkwardly, "This...this...We'd better wait until later..."

What!

Everyone thought they had heard wrong as their eyes grew wide and their ears pricked up.

Qin Yue froze on the spot. As a prince and the future monarch of a state, he wanted to become sworn brothers with a teenager, which was a great honor and something hundreds of millions of his subjects all over the world did not dare to dream of. But he was refused? He was totally unprepared for this and stood there stupidly.

A cold sweat broke out on Jia Rong's forehead. His admiration for Yunxiao had reached its peak, and he was shouting in his mind, 'Young Master Yun is truly my idol!'

Ji Meng's eyes were full of admiration as well after a brief moment of confusion. As for Li Chunyang, the joy in his eyes deepened after a moment of absence. At this time, he finally knew that a small Tianshui could not keep his grandson.

'This boy has been hiding so deeply before. I think he has already had the idea of leaving Tianshui, so he doesn't take things here to heart. Now, because of the pressure of the situation, he is forced to show his true ability. Hmph! If it weren't for such a major event as regime change, this boy would have been playing dumb all the time, wouldn't he?'

Bai Mou swallowed and rushed to Qin Yue's rescue. "Young Master Yun indeed has his heart set on the state affairs. Now is the time of internal and external troubles, and we should not consider personal honor and disgrace. No wonder His Highness wants to become sworn brothers with Young Master Yun! I think it is better for you to become sworn brothers after His Highness ascends the throne. Don't you think so?"

Qin Yue's face flickered as he said, "Commander Bai is right! Young Master Yun is indeed a rare genius, and I was too impatient. I will announce that we will become sworn brothers on the day of my accession!"

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. The situation was finally eased, and it was better for them to take it as if nothing had happened. In this way, Qin Yue would not feel too humiliated.

However, Yunxiao suddenly frowned at this moment and said, "The day of accession? I think it's better to forget it!" He sighed and then said, "I'm used to being alone, and not used to being brothers with others. I have never thought of becoming sworn brothers with anyone, so don't mention it again."

Chapter 70: Countermeasure

An eerie silence reigned over the council hall. After Yunxiao had finished speaking, everyone's jaw dropped and their eyes were as wide as copper bells. They were all completely stupefied.

'Heavens! Is his mind full of intrigues? Even if he really doesn't want to become a sworn brother with His Highness, he doesn't need to refute a prince like this, does he?'

'After all, there is a distinction between monarchs and courtiers. His Highness is the monarch, and he is the courtier. The courtier should carry out his duty as a subject. How is His Highness going to extricate himself from this awkward position when he has spoken so?'

Even Bai Mou was dumbstruck, and did not know how to ease the situation...

"Cough! Cough!"

With a black face, Li Chunyang coughed a few times and then shouted, "Luckily, you boy have a clear estimation of yourself and know that you are not qualified to become a sworn brother of the monarch as a courtier! Although His Highness thinks highly of you, you just have to carry out your duty as a courtier. You've not wasted my time spent on teaching you the way of a monarch and courtier when you were young!"

Qin Yue laughed awkwardly and said, "Young Master Yun is indeed special, worthy of being the heir of Duke Jingguo."

As he said so, a shadow flashed quickly through his eyes. Everyone present was an expert, and even Jia Rong—who had the weakest strength—had an extraordinary divine sense, so they all saw it.

Both Li Chunyang and Ji Meng were a little worried about Yunxiao in their hearts.

Bai Mou was worried too, but it was Qin Yue she was worried about. After all, her divination showed that Yunxiao's destiny was extremely complicated, and even her mystic technique could not find out anything. On the other hand, although Qin Yue had the fate of an emperor, he must meet Yunxiao to make it a reality. If he bore a grudge for what happened today, he would certainly bring misfortune to himself in the future!

Meanwhile, Jia Rong kept laughing in his heart. His admiration for Yunxiao was like a surging river, endless and out of control...

Of course, Yunxiao's thoughts were much simpler. Who was he? He was the Vanquisher Martial Sovereign, Gu Feiyang! In today's world, the number of people who were qualified to become sworn

brothers with him could not even be counted on one hand! Even the emperors of the super empires were not included in this list, let alone the princes of some states!

Helping Qin Yue ascend to the throne was just something he would do conveniently in the course of his cultivation. If he were not in a good mood, he could always change sides to support Qin Yang. To him, the national fortune of a small state was nothing at all.

When he reigned supreme over the world in his previous life, if it were not for his disciple, Yang Di, who was from Tianshui, he probably would not have known there was such a state on the continent.

Yunxiao naturally knew what everyone was thinking, but his heart for the martial arts was strong. He swept the crowd with his eyes and said, "The honor and disgrace of the floating life are all dust. Life is like a fog...only martial arts are eternal!"

His remark was brilliant in every word, like a hammer blowing into the hearts of everyone present! Everyone seemed to have caught something from his words, but they could not fathom it. Even Qin Yue and Jia Rong, who had the weakest strength, felt their blood rushing and their hearts pounding, and the way they looked at Yunxiao changed once more.

At this moment, Qin Yue suddenly felt that his struggle for the throne was totally insignificant.

With his pupils growing wide and his expression looking a little blank, Ji Meng muttered to himself over and over again, "The honor and disgrace of the floating life are all dust. Life is like a fog...only martial arts are eternal."

Suddenly, an epiphany poured into his head, bursting like a light in his mind. Then, four different powers began to gush out of his dantian and flowed along the four main meridians in his body. The powers blue, red, white, and black—each represented a quadrant, washing every inch of meridians inside him before finally forming a brand-new energy and then returning to his dantian again.

Everyone in the council hall noticed the unusual phenomenon happening to Ji Meng. Four shafts of light, each of different color, were shooting out of his head, and the natural Primordial Qi around him was also affected, reflecting different colors. A few moments later, all of them were drawn into his body, and only then did the phenomenon disappear.

"Martial Lord!"

Bai Mou's pupils constricted as she cried out in shock, "Commander Ji has become a Martial Lord!" A huge wave surged up in her heart, and she turned to look at Yunxiao in horror. Half a month ago when Ji Meng submitted to Yunxiao, he was just a seven-stars Martial Master. How did he manage to break through to the realm of Martial Lords in such a short period of time?

The utterly incomprehensible and unbelievable speed made Bai Mou's mouth drop open, standing there at a loss.

Li Chunyang did not know this, but he was also surprised as he said, "When I broke through to the realm of Martial Lords, I spent six months in seclusion and it had taken me thousands of medial-grade Primordial Stones, as well as countless medicinal pills to succeed. I can't believe you boy can break through the bottleneck in an instant because of an epiphany! Your luck is really amazing!"

Luck? Ji Meng smiled faintly in his heart. The brand-new realm strengthened his heart of martial arts. He gave Yunxiao a grateful look and then bowed to him deeply.

Yunxiao calmly accepted his bow and said with a smile, "This is your destiny. I'll get Jia Rong to refine you ten Thousand Birds pills so you can break through to the realm of Martial Kings as soon as possible. Your current cultivation base is barely enough for you to be my right-hand man."

Ji Meng paused for a moment and then answered seriously, "Yes, Young Master Yun!"

It was barely enough for a Martial Lord to be his right-hand man? Everyone's face grew dark...

Although they did not know the real situation of Yunxiao, only Ji Meng and Jia Rong had no doubt about his words.

Qin Yue was shocked, and at the same time, a trace of envy flashed in his eyes. As a prince, Bai Mou was the only Martial Lord who followed him, and even she was not his subordinate. In any case, he was also overjoyed and said, "Now that we have another Martial Lord in our camp, our chances of winning are even better! I will go to Jialan Academy to see my teacher now!"

Yunxiao nodded and said, "Let's not delay any more. I'll go home with my grandfather now. Ji Meng, go and bring Xiao Qingwang to me. Jia Rong, go and bring Luo Yunshang. I don't care what you do, you must invite her over."

Li Chunyang smashed his fists together and said excitedly, "I will request to send the Central Army to rescue Kunjin in court tomorrow. Let's see His Majesty's attitude. Even if he refuses, I will get a deployment order from him at the very least! With Dasheng and Qingwang leading the army, even if Baizhan sends Yi Xiaoshan to fight us, they will have to suffer a great loss!"

After the discussion, everyone went on to carry out their tasks, and Yunxiao followed Li Chunyang back to the Li Family.

In a secret council chamber at Qin Yang's residence...

In a fit of rage, Qin Yang smashed a priceless dragon chair to pieces with a palm and roared, "You had three Martial Lords while they only had one! You had thirty Martial Masters while they only had twenty! And you had more than fifty of the best crossbowmen from the army! However, only four of you have come back to see me!"

Trembling with anger, he pointed to Li Yi, who had a pale face, and bellowed, "How do you want to explain this to me, you damn slave!"

Gao Feng's face was also very unsightly as he said coldly with a gloomy expression, "The men of my First Unit are almost completely wiped out! They were my best warriors! It was you who said that this mission was foolproof, and it could not only damage Qin Yue's morale, but also eliminate a large number of experts around him. That was why I agreed to cooperate with you! Look at the result now! I managed to keep Bai Mou in check, but what have you done? How do you want to pay for the lives of more than thirty of my warriors and more than fifty of our best crossbowmen?"

Li Yi was filled with shame and indignation. Looking at his wound, he gnashed his teeth and said, "This was all caused by Li Yunxiao and Ji Meng! Ji Meng had tangled my two senior brothers, and that Li Yunxiao cut off one of my arms! Had it not been for them, my plan would have been successful!"

"Did I hear that right?" Qin Yang said angrily, "Ji Meng is just a seven-stars Great Martial Master while your two senior brothers are both Martial Lords! How could he possibly fight two Martial Lords at the

same time? That Li Yunxiao is merely a warrior, and you are a Great Martial Master. How could he have the ability to cut off your arm? Can't you make up a reasonable excuse?"

Li Yi and his two senior brothers were flushed with shame, and they bowed their heads with their eyes full of resentment. Suppressing his anger, Li Yi said, "I'm telling the truth! That Ji Meng had taken some kind of medicinal pill, which instantly gave him the strength of a Martial Lord. As for that Li Yunxiao... that Li Yunxiao..."

At the mention of this name, Li Yi felt a stream of blood about to gush out of his throat. He gasped and then said in a resentful voice, "That Li Yunxiao is even craftier, as he had hidden his strength so deeply! Not only does he possess a third-grade mystic weapon, but he also knows some mystic arts. When I was still in the Li Family, I had already investigated him and the results showed that he was a complete good-for-nothing. Who knew he would hide so deeply? With his crafty mind and strength, he will definitely be a major threat to Your Highness!"

Gao Feng, too, said darkly, "There's something odd about this guy. That night, the mission of assassinating Qin Yue was supposed to be foolproof. But in the end, not only did we fail, but he had used some trick to turn Ji Meng over to his side! He is really a very strange guy!"

Qin Yang looked tired as he waved and said, "I don't want to listen to your explanation any more. How do we deal with this situation now? Give me a solution."

"Your Highness need not worry. Although our operation failed this time, it doesn't matter at all," Li Yi said. "Isn't our plan well underway? When the Golden Lion Army Your Highness has called back from Whitehead Town returns to the capital and joins the forces of the Central Army that have submitted to Your Highness, we will be able to fully control the Central Army. At that time, the whole capital will be under Your Highness's control."

Qin Yue said in a low voice, "I'm not worried about this. But what about Xiao Qingwang? I think it is really possible that Li Yunxiao can cure his injury. At that time, when he chooses to support Qin Yue, who among us can deal with him? Moreover, another Martial King in our state is Qin Yue's teacher, which is the biggest headache for me!"

There was a grim smile on Li Yi's face as he said, "Your Highness can rest assured about this matter. When the time comes, my Master will send an expert to assist us. This Xiao Qingwang is bound to die!" Qin Yang nodded and said, "If so, that would be great. I hope you don't make any mistakes again."

Li Yi swore he would make things right, but there was a trace of sarcasm in his eyes. After that, he left with Guang Yuanjia and Yu Yuanwen.

After a moment of silence, Qin Yang asked, "Commander Gao, do you think these people from Baizhan are reliable?"

Gao Feng's eyes flashed with a murderous look as he said coldly, "If they are reliable, sows can climb trees! I really feel unworthy for my thirty best warriors!"

Qin Yang nodded. "I think so too. It seems that we still have to rely on ourselves. The matter has to be implemented more quickly, and it is also time to force the other three units of State Guardians to declare their stance."

"I understand!" Gao Feng said, his eyes flashing.