The Eternal 71

Chapter 71: The Righteous Energy

"By the way, how is Kong Renyi?"

"I've already arranged it. Lord Kong is also very angry with Li Chunyang for his unruly behavior, ignoring the law and killing the ministers!"

"Hmph! What's the use of being very angry? He is just an old man with no strength to even bind a chicken. It is alright to use him to win the hearts of the people, to wave flags, and shout for righteousness. But in this period of regime change, when killing and bleeding is everything, he is less useful than an ordinary soldier!"

"After all, we haven't dispensed with all civilities, and the daggers have not been drawn yet. It would be nice for him to wave the flags of morality and righteousness and give Li Chunyang some trouble while reducing the Li Family's increasing arrogance. Perhaps, he can bring us an unexpected result. After all, Lord Kong has a great prestige, and he represents all the scholars in the state. Even Li Chunyang would not dare to defy them!"

"I agree! If we can take this opportunity to have the Li Family be despised by the world, it will be of great help to me in taking complete control of the Central Army! As long as that old codger Kong is on our side, the people will be on our side!"

Qin Yang's face finally became a little relaxed. He waved Gao Feng off and paced back and forth in the chamber alone. The look in his eyes kept changing, and he finally smiled and muttered to himself, "These are just irrelevant small fights. As long as that matter can succeed, the throne will definitely be mine in the end even if everyone supports you!"

...

When Yunxiao followed Li Chunyang back to the Li Family's residence, they could see a large crowd gathering at the front door from a distance. Li Chunyang's face turned cold as he said in a murderous tone, "Who is so bold as to block my residence's front door? Come, let's go and have a look!"

They were about to approach when a figure suddenly flashed out from the side. It was Li Xian, who served Li Baifeng. As soon as he appeared, he bowed to Li Chunyang and said hastily, "My lord, something bad has happened! Three disciples of Lord Kong Renyi—Yan Jin, Gongsun Rang, and Yu Zixian—with about one hundred scholars, many of whom are ministers in the court, have listed ten crimes my lord has committed! They are now denouncing my lord!"

"What? That old codger Kong Renyi!" Li Chunyang was shocked, but his murderous aura gradually subsided as he got lost in thoughts. A moment later, he turned to Yunxiao and frowned, "Yunxiao, why don't we retreat for now? When these pedantic scholars have had enough, they will naturally leave."

Yunxiao raised his eyebrows and squinted at the crowd. Each one of the hundred or so scholars was holding a huge banner, on which were written various crimes. Ignoring the content, the writing was indeed fresh and beautiful, emanating an elegant air. There was no doubt that Kong Renyi wrote these banners himself!

"Grandpa, you are bold enough to kill even civil and military ministers, so why are you afraid of these scholars?"

"You know nothing, Yunxiao! Killing a few ministers is irrelevant to the state or the people. But, this Kong Renyi is different. He is a Confucian descendant, representing righteousness and morality, as well as the five cardinal principles of righteousness. His words and deeds are the models of almost all scholars. Even if the king and Lan Hong saw him, they have to address him as 'teacher'. Although he is not a minister in the court, he has a great prestige. If we kill these scholars today, I fear the good name of our family will be lost, and we will be reviled by the world."

"They are too many mediocre people in the world. Why should we fear them? Grandpa, you showed no fear when even millions of troops were at our border, so why fear mere condemnation? The fact that this Kong Renyi chose to jump out at this time tells us that he should have received some benefits or been bewitched by Qin Yang. It seems that he is not a good guy either. Since he is going to overreach himself and stand in front of us, then I will remove him as well."

When Yunxiao finished speaking, his eyes suddenly gleamed with a murderous look, and his face grew cold at the same time. The way he looked at the group of scholars was as if he were looking at a group of dead people.

Li Chunyang and Li Xian were both startled by the murderous aura emanated from him as they followed him anxiously. After all, the Li Family was a family of martial generals, and there was still some respect for scholars in their bones. It was actually a kind of respect for the knowledge of the saints.

The front door of the residence was already tightly shut. Li Baifeng had never seen such a situation before, so he hid in the residence and did not dare to show up. It was unknown how he let Li Xian out to inform Li Chunyang.

More than a hundred scholars, all dressed in white mourning clothes, held up the banners with the crimes and sat on a hunger strike at the front door of the Li Family. The foreheads of the three leaders were even tied with cloth strips, on which were written 'loyalty and courage', 'benevolence and righteousness', and 'wisdom and faith'. They were none other than Yan Jin, Gongsun Rang, and Yu Zixian, who were known among Kong Renyi's disciples as the Three Wises.

As soon as the crowd saw Yunxiao, Li Chunyang, and Li Xian approaching from a distance, they immediately broke out into an uproar. One by one, they stood up and looked at them angrily. The aura of more than a hundred men joined as one, and there was a faint mass of righteous energy hanging in the sky.

The Three Wises exchanged a glance and then began to shout, "Deceiving the monarch, killing ministers, abusing military power, conniving subordinates, being arrogant, disregarding the laws, amassing wealth without permission, killing and ransacking political opponents, being ruthless and unsympathetic! You have committed ten inexcusable crimes!"

"You have committed ten inexcusable crimes!"

Hundreds of men shouted in unison, their voices immediately shaking the sky. Each of these scholars shouted so hard that their faces turned red as they glared furiously at the three from the Li Family. They felt that the righteous cause was in their hands, and they were about to subdue demons and get rid of fiends. Over at the Li Family's residence, the righteous energy condensed and did not disperse, with faint signs of taking a corporeal shape.

Yunxiao picked his nose with a middle finger and soon dug out a large lump of boogers. Then, he rolled it into a ball and flicked his finger to throw it out.

A gust of strong wind cut through the air and flew straight to Yan Jin's face.

These men were all scholars. Even if some of them practiced martial arts, they just wanted to stay healthy, so they had no ability to resist Yunxiao's gust of wind. After rushing into the mass of righteous energy, the booger seemed to be hindered by some kind of obstacle and began to wobble, before finally falling onto Yan Jin's lip.

"Pooh! Pooh! Pooh! Pooh..."

Yan Jin kept spitting in disgust, but he still felt nauseous after doing that for more than a dozen times in a row and wanted to throw up.

"Li Yunxiao, how dare you insult a scholar! It seems that you are guilty of the same crimes as Li Chunyang! You have committed a heinous crime!" Gongsun Rang roared as he directly pinned a label on Yunxiao.

"You are guilty of the same crimes! You have committed a heinous crime!" The crowd roared after him.

Yunxiao did not pay attention to them, but looked up doubtfully at the righteous energy in the sky. He folded his arms over his chest and supported his chin with a fist as he muttered to himself, "This righteous Confucian energy is indeed somewhat special! It seems that I had some prejudice against it in the past."

He put down his arms and picked his ear, then stuck two fingers together.

The faces of the Three Wises fell. They were on high alert as they stepped back at the same time. "What are you...What are you doing?!" Yu Zixian said angrily.

Yunxiao sneered as he looked at the trio sarcastically and said, "Even saints can't control when men have to shit or fart. Why, don't tell me that as Kong Renyi's Three Wises, you have the right to stop me from digging my ear?"

Gongsun Rang frowned and said angrily, "Vulgar!"

A faint whistle rang out as Yunxiao lightly flicked his finger. A lump of earwax pierced through the air and flew directly into Gongsun Rang's mouth. In a fit of rage and shock, the latter belched and swallowed the earwax.

"Blargh!"

Feeling a tumble in his stomach, he immediately bent down and vomited on the spot! Yan Jin just got the booger stuck to his lip, but he ate that earwax! After vomiting for a while, he even began to vomit bile.

"Haha!" Li Chunyang, who had been very worried up until now, could not help but laugh.

Smelling the stench of vomit, the scholars standing around Gongsun Rang frowned and subconsciously moved away from him. Even Yan Jin and Yu Zixian were frowning and keeping a distance from him. The whole crowd suddenly became a little sparse.

Yunxiao looked up at the sky. The mass of righteous energy, which was condensed and gradually taking the shape of a saint, began to show signs of dispersing.

"This righteous energy is indeed composed of the Confucian divine thought of these scholars and natural Primordial Qi, and it seems to be a great tonic. How can I let it go to waste?"

All of a sudden, he gently kicked his foot to the ground, pushing himself into the air and then rushing into the mass of righteous energy. Then, he unleashed all of his divine sense and began to rotate the One Qi of Destiny. Immediately, the righteous energy all over the sky frantically poured into his body.

With that, he immediately felt refreshed and inexpressibly pleased. He performed a strange incantation gesture with both hands while laughing, which expanded several times to form an invisible force field and wrap his whole body.

Yunxiao was suspended over the Li Family's residence with his arms and legs spread out, and there was a spherical bubble on his head, palms, and foot. He hovered motionlessly in mid-air, but his divine sense

was rotating inside at a high speed, and the One Qi of Destiny was frantically absorbing the righteous energy!

"What is happening? Why can he be suspended in midair?"

"I thought only the legendary Martial Grandmasters can fly!"

"He seems to be absorbing out righteous energy!"

Yan Jin was also stunned, but he soon calmed down. "Don't panic, everyone! This kid indeed knows witchcraft! However, the righteous energy we, the Confucian scholars, have cultivated is the most righteous energy between the heaven and earth. As someone who practices witchcraft, he is inviting death by absorbing this energy into his body!"

Yu Zixian showed a look of sudden enlightenment and cried out, "Brother Yan is right. Don't panic, everyone! Calm down and concentrate your mind, and recite the knowledge of saints in silence, so that the righteous energy can grow stronger. Let us destroy this evil man together!"

More than a hundred men immediately sat down and calmed their minds as they began to recite the knowledge of saints in silence. In just a flash, the faint aura of scholars began to emanate from their bodies and rise into the sky with the inaudible recitation.

Li Xian opened his mouth wide and asked in astonishment, "My lord, is Young Master Yun alright?"

Li Chunyang was also extremely shocked. It was true that only Martial Grandmasters of the Six Directions realm could fly in the sky, but Yunxiao obviously had used some kind of secret technique. He said in a low voice, "This boy should know how far to go and when to stop!"

At the moment, Yunxiao was suspended in mid-air and relaxing. After being absorbed into his body, the righteous energy was not only directly converted into Primordial Qi and converged in his dantian, but also continued to nourish his soul. It made him feel extremely comfortable. Meanwhile, his cultivation base, which had not improved for a long time even though he had taken many Thousand Birds pills, began to loosen and was gradually moving toward the peak-level of the six-stars.

Chapter 72: Drastic Measures

'Is it because I cultivate the Tyrant Body Tempering Technique and Great Expansion Divine Technique at the same time? I have absorbed so much righteous energy, and yet I can't even break through another star!' Yunxiao was a little surprised. Previously, he had taken many Thousand Birds pills before he reached the six-stars level. He had had a vague feeling then, but only now did he dare to confirm it.

'It seems that cultivating several cultivation techniques at the same time has both advantages and disadvantages! However, now that I know the Tyrant Body Tempering Technique and the Great Expansion Divine Technique, coupled with my comprehension of martial arts, no one at the same rank as me will be my match!'

His Primordial Qi was still stuck at the bottleneck of the six-stars level after absorbing all of the righteous energy, which slightly disappointed him. He was about to go down when he heard Yan Jin and Yu Zixian. Then, plumes of righteous energy suddenly erupted violently from the group of more than a hundred scholars in the next moment, rushing toward him like waves!

'Fu*k!

'Yan Jin, Yu Zixian, I love you both!'

Yunxiao was overjoyed. It was like a man who did not have enough to eat and was suddenly served a table full of dishes! The pores all over him suddenly opened, greedily absorbing the pure righteous energy while his whole mind was immersed in this wonderful feeling.

In order not to let them stop the supply of righteous energy, Yunxiao deliberately put on a pained expression and shouted angrily, "You... you...How can you do this? You are too cruel!"

As a large amount of righteous energy was absorbed into his dantian, the level of his Primordial Qi finally reached a saturation point. A completely new realm quietly arrived near him; his meridians were all opened in an instant, and his eyes sparkled like electricity. He finally broke through and became a seven-stars warrior!

He was so happy that he wanted to roar, but he continued to absorb the righteous energy greedily and cry out, "Bast*rd! Stop it! Stop it right now! I'm dying! Help!"

The hundreds of scholars on the ground, each with a pale face and large drops of sweat rolling down his forehead, felt their energy being rapidly drained away, which had never happened before. Normally, the more they recited the knowledge of saints, the more energetic they became.

"Everyone must hold on! This evil man is on his last leg!" Gongsun Rang gnashed his teeth. He had swallowed a lump of Yunxiao's earwax and vomited out all his bile, now wishing he could pull the other down from mid-air and dismember him. Therefore, he was the one who released the strongest righteous energy among all!

Li Xian was frightened as he said, "What should we do now, my lord? Young Master Yun seems to be losing it!"

Li Chunyang looked up at Yunxiao in astonishment. Apart from the pained face, Yunxiao's eyes were clear and calm, and there was no sign that he was losing it. Moreover, judging from the aura coming from mid-air...could it be that he had advanced another level?

Finally, after about fifteen minutes, the scholars could not stand it any longer. As soon as they stopped reciting the knowledge of saints, they all became listless, their bodies seeming to be hollowed out as their energies were all lost. It was as if their connection with the righteous energy had been forcibly cut off by someone.

Puke!

Some of the weaker scholars opened their mouths and coughed up mouthfuls of blood, then fell to the ground and fainted. Gongsun Rang also felt dizzy and was teetering from overexertion of his divine sense!

Yan Jin and Yu Zixian also suffered overexertion of divine sense. They looked into the sky in horror, only to see Yunxiao slowly descending with a calm face.

Both of them and some still sober scholars were all dumbfounded. Not only did Yunxiao look unhurt, but his aura seemed to be stronger than before as well.

At the moment when one of Yunxiao's feet touched the ground, the invisible forces on the top of his head, his palms, and his soles burst like bubbles and disappeared.

He landed gently on the ground and straightened up, then slowly opened his eyes. In each of his pupils there seemed to be a streak of golden lightning flashing through, vanishing in an instant. The minds of all the scholars were shaken, and those who were still awake all coughed out mouthfuls of blood while dozens of them fainted on the spot.

Yunxiao let out a long breath and said, "An intermediate seven-stars warrior...not bad! If you worked harder, I should have broken through to the peak level of the seven-stars. Tsk, tsk...I've only absorbed so little of your righteous energy, and yet you can't stand it any longer? Are you slacking in your studies at normal times?"

His words were like a thunderbolt which exploded in the ears of all scholars in an instant! Even those scholars who had fainted were awakened. Everyone was stupefied, and their minds were completely blank!

"What? He... he...he is actually using our righteous energy to make a breakthrough!"

Puke!

Many scholars vomited blood again while Yan Jin and Gongsun Rang were so furious that they each coughed out a mouthful of blood as well and fell to the ground.

"Ah?" Even Li Chunyang was struck dumb. His eyes were widened, but he burst out laughing in the next instant. "Haha! Yunxiao, you are truly my grandson! Well, when you guys return, remember to help me thank Kong Renyi for this generous gift!"

His words further provoked these scholars and damaged their minds, making them all crazy and somewhat absent-minded.

"You... you...You will die a violent death!" Yan Jin cursed in a hoarse voice.

"Don't think you will be fine after just coughing out a few mouthfuls of blood!" Yunxiao snorted coldly as his sharp gaze swept across everyone's face. "You have blocked the front door of the Li Family and accused my grandfather for no reason. Now, it is time to settle the score!" He took a step forward, and a great pressure immediately fell upon the exhausted scholars like a mountain!

Puke!

Yan Jin, who was closest to Yunxiao, was the first to bear the brunt. Under the impact, he coughed out a mouthful of blood and took a few steps back. "What are you...What are you trying to do!" he cried out in horror.

Originally, they came here with a total of more than one hundred scholars vowing to take Li Chunyang down! But unexpectedly, they had all become half-dead like this before they had even said a few words, lying all over the ground. Meanwhile, the walls and ground were covered with all the blood they had coughed out!

Yunxiao sneered, "What am I trying to do? You have gathered at the front door of my residence with more than a hundred men, and yet you ask me what I am trying to do? Are you here to tell me jokes?"

Yu Zixian steadied Yan Jin, who was backing away, and calmed down a little. Then, he stepped forward and thundered, "Your family has committed ten crimes, which are inexcusable!" He knew that this mission was about to fail, but he must hold the five cardinal principles of righteousness on his side and pin the ten crimes tightly on the Li Family in any case!

Yunxiao's eyes flashed as he stared at him and said, "You are indeed here to tell me jokes. Ten crimes? Do you think His Majesty is blind? You are clearly saying that His Majesty is a real big assh*le and a bad king, for he had failed to distinguish the loyal ones and sycophants, as well as estranged the virtuous courtiers and become close to the villains! Am I right?"

"You...This...You..." For a moment, Yu Zixian became tongue-tied and was at a loss. At that moment, Gongsun Rang hurried up and said angrily, "Li Yunxiao, don't you avoid the important and dwell on the trivial! You are quoting out of context and talking nonsense!" Yunxiao raised his head slightly and gave him a contemptuous look as he scoffed, "You? Is it because you just swallowed my earwax that you have become stupid? I don't want to talk to a person who eats excrement."

Puke!

Gongsun Rang was so angry that he vomited a mouthful of blood again. Having been dealt with the repeated blows, he was unsteady on his feet and kept stepping back while pointing at Yunxiao with a trembling finger, "You... you..."

All the Three Wises had suffered losses and vomited blood!

The rest of the scholars, who had not yet fainted, were all pale; their eyes had become somewhat dazed after losing their energies. When they saw their three leaders fall one by one, they were utterly struck dumb, all staying where they were at a complete loss.

The scene was completely different from what they had imagined. What should have happened was Li Chunyang surrendering under their condemnation and being executed for his crimes!

Why was this happening? Brother Zhou, Brother Zhang, Brother Meng, Brother Shitu... One by one, the gifted scholars who usually gave out advice on the state affairs all fell on the ground like dead pigs, amidst puddles of their own blood...

Li Chunyang, too, was dumbfounded. He could not believe that a group of pedantic scholars, whose only means of scraping a living was through lip service, were coughing blood with anger because of what his grandson had said.

There was a strong smell of blood in the air, so Yunxiao frowned and said, "Originally, you would surely die for offending my family. But for the sake of helping me advance, I will give you another chance."

"How arrogant! We are disciples of the saints, the scholars! Do you dare to kill us!" One of the scholars shouted angrily.

Yunxiao ignored him and reached out a hand before waving in the air. Immediately, a banner flew into his grip, which read 'Ten Crimes, Inexcusable!'. With a sarcastic smile, his figure flashed and arrived in front of the scholar who had just spoken in the next instant. Then, he lightly slapped the top of the scholar's head with a palm.

Pa!

Just like that, the scholar's head cracked like a watermelon, pale yellow brains and bright red blood spurting out and spilling all over the ground. After that, Yunxiao slapped him on the chest, causing a stream of blood, as thick as an arm, to spew out of the now headless neck.

Everyone gasped and felt cold all over!

They had never seen such cruelty before. These scholars, who spent their days studying the books of saints, appreciating flowers, the moon, the autumn scenery, and not even daring to slaughter chickens and ducks, were utterly struck dumb. It was then that fear began to creep into them, and they finally realized that they were in big trouble now!

Yunxiao threw the white banner over the stream of blood, and the blood immediately washed away the few large words!

He clenched his palm into a fist, with which, a large mass of blood gathered in the air and then moved over the banner under his control. Soon, a few bright red words appeared on the back of the banner: 'Kong Renyi is a false righteous man, a real tortoise!"

He threw the banner into the middle of the group of scholars and said lightly, "Hold this banner and walk around the city three times. Shout out the words on it every three steps. I will send someone to follow you, and I will kill all those who do not shout, who shout wrongly, and whose voice is not loud enough!"

"Li Yunxiao, aren't you afraid of being condemned by the world and..." Yu Zixian pointed angrily at Yunxiao and scolded. But all of a sudden, he felt a pain in his neck, and then found that his body was shrinking in his sight. At the same time, the ground was moving away from him, and everyone was looking up at him in horror. At this moment, he was shocked to realize that his head had been cut off and thrown up into the air. Chapter 73: A False Righteous Man, A Real Tortoise

Pa!

Yunxiao snapped a long bamboo growing in a corner of the roadside with one hand and poked it through Yu Zixian's head, holding it like a meatball stick!

"I'll call this bamboo pole a 'hundred heads pole'. Let's see how many heads I can hang on it."

The scholars' faces instantly turned pale and their whole bodies went cold! Yunxiao had killed Yu Zixian, one of the Three Wises, and hung his head on a bamboo pole without even batting an eye. So, for him to kill them, the so-called gifted scholars, was as easy as killing ants!

Yan Jin and Gongsun Rang froze on the spot. They felt as if they were in a trance, and everything was so unreal. The companion who had been reciting poems and sleeping at the riverside with them yesterday was now reduced to a humble corpse, with his head stuck high on a bamboo pole.

Yunxiao walked up to Yan Jin with the bamboo pole and said coldly without emotion, "I'll give you three breaths, shout out the words on the banner!"

Yan Jin shivered. He mustered up his last bit of courage as he gritted his teeth and said, "A scholar prefers death to humiliation! Although I die today, my name will live forever! You may have won for now, but you'll be damned forever!"

Yunxiao ignored him and counted calmly, "One!"

The word 'one' struck Yan Jin like a hammer, making him tremble. Although scholars had moral integrity, who could hold it firmly when facing a real crisis of life and death? He only felt that the three breaths were as long as a hundred years, but when Yunxiao shouted 'two', he felt that the time passed too fast.

"Two!"

His body trembled violently again, his eyes full of complexity and fear while his lips were shaking as well. He looked a little out of his mind at this moment.

"Three!"

As the word 'three' was shouted out, Yunxiao's indifferent expression remained unchanged, but a murderous aura exploded out of him. He took out the Taiyin sword, the blade of which glinted sharply under the sunlight. Yan Jin felt a tingling pain in his eyes, and as he looked at the bloody head on the bamboo pole, he saw its face seem to have changed into his. Suddenly, the last bit of courage in him melted away like snow under the hot sun.

"Ah! No, don't kill me! I don't want to die, I don't want to die! Young Master Yun, I was wrong, I know I was wrong! Please spare my life!" He had a complete mental breakdown and fell to his knees in front of Yunxiao.

The rest of the scholars all covered their faces with hands and wept bitterly.

Yunxiao put the sword on Yan Jin's shoulder and said indifferently, "Shout out!"

"Shout out?" Yan Jin looked up shakily at the scarlet words on the banner and burst into tears. As soon as he began to cry, he seemed to put down all his obsession as he shouted out, "Kong Renyi is a false righteous man, a real tortoise..."

All the scholars turned their faces away with sadness welling up in their hearts. Among the five constant virtues of Confucius, the most important virtue was the respect for heaven, earth, monarch, parents, and teacher. Whether or not Yan Jin could save his life today, his sin of insulting the teacher alone was enough to make him never hold up his head again.

Yunxiao said with satisfaction, "Good, this is more like it." Then, he put the sword on Gongsun Rang's shoulder and said coldly, "What about you?"

Gongsun Rang bowed his head in pain, but he was more decisive than Yan Jin. "Kong Renyi is a false righteous man, a real tortoise!"

"Haha! Good! After eating my excrement, you've become cleverer! These pretenses of righteousness are not even a fart in front of me!" Yunxiao's face grew cold as he pointed to the rest of the scholars and said coldly, "If any of you do not shout within three breaths, I will kill you!"

A chill emanated from the sword and instantly enveloped everyone's heart. Meanwhile, the sky seemed to turn dark as well, making them feel depressed!

"I...I'll do it!" Finally, someone began to break down, weeping and shouting, "Kong Renyi is a false righteous man, a real tortoise."

He had opened the gap, and as even Yan Jin and Gongsun Rang had already shouted, the rest had nothing to worry about. After all, being alive was more important than anything else!

Consequently, the air was immediately filled with shouts.

For a moment, all the people in the residence were startled. They thought they heard it wrong. Weren't these scholars scolding their Old Master just now? Why had it changed? Why were they insulting Kong Renyi now? After listening to it several times and confirming what they heard, they hurried to inform Li Baifeng about it.

Li Chunyang and Li Xian were frozen in place as well. Even though they were there, they could not believe what they saw and heard. Each one of these scholars, who took saints as their spiritual support, was lambasting Kong Renyi! Such a sudden change completely overturned their knowledge...

"Why are you shouting so unhappily?" Yunxiao frowned and said. "I don't want to hear an unhappy voice. Now, all of you have to shout happily! I'll add one more rule: I'll kill anyone who weeps or doesn't laugh!"

Everyone gasped and immediately stopped weeping as they began to laugh. "Haha! Kong Renyi is a false righteous man, a real tortoise! Haha! A real tortoise! Hahaha!"

Li Chunyang fainted again!

Only then did Yunxiao show a smile and say approvingly, "This is more like it!" He beckoned at Li Xian and handed him the bamboo pole as he said, "Take this group of people around the capital three times. Remember the rules I just mentioned. Kill anyone who dares to violate them, and hang their heads on this bamboo pole! I want to see how many heads are hanging on it when you come back!"

All the scholars trembled and shouted harder and louder. Meanwhile, Li Xian raised the bamboo pole and led the group through the streets.

Soon, the whole capital boiled up, and everyone ran out to watch as they heard the shouts of this group of scholars.

"Haha! Kong Renyi is a false righteous man, a real tortoise! Haha! Hahaha!"

Li Baifeng was calmly drinking tea in the residence. It was just a group of scholars demonstrating outside. As long as they did not rush in, he was safe. Everything would be settled when the Old Master came back.

"Fourth Master! Fourth Master!" A servant trotted in.

"What is it? Why are you so panicked, 9527?" Li Baifeng put down his cup and asked in alarm. "Did they break in?"

9527 said hurriedly, "No, Fourth Master, they are lambasting Kong Renyi outside, saying that he is a false righteous man and a real tortoise, and they sound very happy!"

"What!"

Li Baifeng was stunned. He lifted his cup and took a sip of tea, then pondered for a brief moment and said, "Isn't that weird? Come, let's go out and have a look! Call all the guards in the residence!"

When they opened the front door nervously, they were shocked to find Li Chunyang and Yunxiao standing out there.

Li Baifeng said stupidly, "My...my lord? Yunxiao? You are back? Where are those scholars?"

"Hmph! What a useless thing!"

Li Chunyang looked very angry as he kicked Li Baifeng away and strode in, with Yunxiao smiling faintly as he followed inside.

Li Baifeng felt a little puzzled. He also wanted to follow, but Li Chunyang stopped him. "Hold it right there! You go outside the door and clean up the place. Don't follow Yunxiao and me!"

The old and the young went straight to the courtyard and entered the secret chamber. Meanwhile, Li Baifeng went outside the door with a group of servants. Looking at the blood all over the ground and the wall, as well as the two headless bodies, everyone was immediately shocked. He thought to himself, 'Did my lord kill all the scholars in his anger? But where are the bodies? Where have all the bodies gone?'

Inside the secret chamber, Chen Dasheng was fast asleep. After checking his condition, Yunxiao frowned and said, "His condition is worse than I expected. But it doesn't matter. With me here, he can't die even if he wants to!"

Li Chunyang watched nervously as Yunxiao stuffed a medicinal pill into Chen Dasheng's mouth. "How long will it take him to wake up?" he asked. He knew about Chen Dasheng's current state. The longer he stayed in a coma, the worse it would be. He needed to stay awake as much as possible.

Yunxiao chuckled, "He's awake."

Sure enough, Chen Dasheng slowly opened his eyes. After taking a good look at the people in the chamber, he said with a wry smile, "I fainted again. This time I was lucky to wake up, but I don't know if I will have such good luck next time."

Yunxiao said, "Try to stand up."

Chen Dasheng looked at him as if he was an idiot and said, "Try to stand up? I haven't stood for five years..." His words suddenly stopped, then a strange look appeared on his face, and his eyes were full of shock!

"I...I can feel my legs!" He cried out excitedly. "Boy, how did you do it?"

Yunxiao smiled and said, "It's actually very simple. You are suffering from an extreme cold poison. That Sun Zhengzong only knows how to refine Melting Pills to nourish you, but it can only treat the symptoms. The method of eradication is not only to neutralize the ice, but also to remove the cold poison. This Mysterious Fire pill of mine can ward off cold and dispel poison, but it is only a secondgrade medicinal pill. Therefore, we also need pure Yang energy to help you heal your injury."

As he explained, Chen Dasheng had already propped his hands on the edge of the barrel and stood up, before slowly releasing his hands.

Fearing that he might fall, Li Chunyang stepped forward to help him, only to be hugged by him. Chen Dasheng trembled with excitement and wept with joy, "Brother, after all these years, I finally...I can finally stand again!"

"Good brother, good brother!" Li Chunyang, too, was excited and hugged Chen Dasheng tightly. For the past five years, while Chen Dasheng had suffered, so had Li Chunyang.

Chen Dasheng wiped away his tears and said happily, "Brother, you have a good grandson! I envy you so much!"

Li Chunyang said with a wry smile, "This boy...this boy..." He found himself at a loss for words to describe this grandson, so he suddenly sighed and said, "Well, if I had told him about you earlier, perhaps you wouldn't have suffered so much."

Chen Dasheng laughed, "I'm so happy I can stand up now. I can't ask for anything else."

"Lord Chen, you have to lead the army east in a few days, so you can't be so depressed," Yunxiao said with a smile.

"Lead the army east?" Chen Dasheng paused for a brief moment before bursting into laughter. "Haha! You boy can really joke!" He pointed to his head and said, "I can only recall my military career here."

Yunxiao smiled and said, "Why don't we make a bet?"

Chapter 74: Treat The Cold Poison

Chen Dasheng was dumbfounded as he looked at Li Chunyang, who was smiling without saying a word, and asked in astonishment, "Brother, what he said can't be true, can it?"

Li Chunyang patted him on the shoulder and sighed, "Brother, although your injury has not healed yet, I need your help again."

With his eyes widened, Chen Dasheng burst out laughing. "Haha! I can't believe I would have the chance to put on my battle suit and gallop through the battlefield again! Brother, if you need any help, just tell me! I'll definitely do as you bid!"

"We'll discuss this later," Li Chunyang nodded and said. Then, he turned to stare at Yunxiao, his eyes glowing green as if he was looking at a treasure vault.

Yunxiao felt a chill run down his spine, and he asked warily, "Why? What are you looking at?"

With a look of gratification on his face, Li Chunyang said, "You are indeed a second-tier alchemist. Now I really believe it!"

Suddenly, his face lit up with greed and his eyes narrowed as he smiled and said, "A second-tier alchemist must have many good things, right? At first, I was really fooled by you, but now when I look back...that medicinal pill which allowed Ji Meng to instantly break through to the realm of Martial Lords, should be refined by you, right? Also, what is the Thousand Birds pill you gave Ji Meng? I am your grandfather, so you can't give me anything lesser than him."

It turned out that he was trying to blackmail Yunxiao!

Yunxiao said with a wry smile, "I don't have anything good with me."

Li Chunyang's face darkened as he said angrily, "You don't have anything good? Where is the secret vault of the family? Answer me!" He scolded in rage, "Heavens! The wealth our family has accumulated for hundreds of years has been completely emptied by you! I wouldn't be so angry if you just emptied the secret vault, but now the whole secret vault has disappeared! Heavens! If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't have believed it! Are you so poor that you have to take away even a cave?"

"This..."

Traces of cold sweat oozed out of Yunxiao's forehead. He did not intend to tell anyone about the Divine Realm Tablet. Looking at Li Chunyang's carnivorous eyes, he took out a bottle of pills and handed it over while saying, "These are the Thousand Birds pills, a medicinal pill that stimulates the potential of the human body through toxicity. After taking it, the body will be extremely uncomfortable, but when the medicinal strength disappears, there will be no problem or side effects left."

The effect of Thousand Birds pill on him was getting weaker and weaker, and it was useless for him to keep them. So, he took them out generously.

"A medicinal pill that can stimulate the potential of the human body without side effects?" Li Chunyang took the bottle with great joy and put it in his pocket, then continued to squint at Yunxiao.

"Damnit! You are not going to continue to blackmail me, are you? In other families, it is the elders who give the juniors things!"

"Where is the secret vault? Where is the cave?"

"This is a bottle of Rain pills which can clear the mind, keep the mind calm during meditation, and get rid of all distractions and mental demons!"

"What? A medicinal pill that can get rid of mental demons!"

Li Chunyang quickly grabbed the bottle and took off the cap, putting it to his nose for a sniff. Then, he pocketed it with a look of disbelief. When meditating, the most feared thing was to be disturbed by mental demons. If one could not get rid of distractions and keep the mind calm, then meditation was harmful and useless, not to mention capable of improving one's cultivation base.

This kind of medicinal pill had always been in high demand but short supplied on the market, because no one would sell it.

After extorting two bottles of pills, Li Chunyang stopped giving Yunxiao a hard time. After all, Yunxiao was his grandson, and could not be drained in one go. He would have plenty of opportunities in the future. Yunxiao shivered as he looked at how Li Chunyang stared at him, as if he was a fat pig.

Li Chunyang suddenly smiled and said, "All the guests are here, so let's go out and meet them." The whole residence was covered by his divine sense, and nothing that happened could escape his perception.

Xiao Qingwang, Luo Yunshang, Jia Rong, and Ji Meng had been brought to the council hall by Li Baifeng, and various teas and snacks had been served. As Li Chunyang helped Chen Dasheng in, Xiao Qingwang's pupils constricted and he rose abruptly from his chair. Staring at the two men in horror, he cried out, "Chen Dasheng? And you, Li Chunyang! Since when did you become a Martial King!"

Luo Yunshang was not familiar with Chen Dasheng, so she did not have much emotional fluctuation. But when she heard that Li Chunyang had stepped into the realm of Martial Kings, her eyes were instantly filled with shock.

Chen Dasheng looked on with melancholy as if he was recalling something. He smiled wryly and said, "Qingwang, we haven't seen each other for five years."

Xiao Qingwang stared at him for a while and then said in a low voice, "You were also attacked by the extreme cold poison...I thought you were dead."

With a bitter smile, Chen Dasheng shook his head. After Li Chunyang helped him sit down, he sighed and told the story again.

After hearing his story, Xiao Qingwang flew into a rage and said, "Chunyang, why didn't you come to me at the beginning? If it were really His Majesty's doing, I would never sit by idly!"

Li Chunyang sighed, "You were also seriously injured then, and I had only become a Martial Lord at that time. I didn't have the strength to handle it, so I had to hide Dasheng."

Xiao Qingwang became silent. In the past few years, his influence had also gradually declined. Although his title of a Martial King was still there, it was getting weaker every day, to the point where he could not control all five units of the State Guardians. After looking at Chen Dasheng and then at Yunxiao, his eyes brightened and he asked directly, "Young Master Yun, have you found a method to treat our injuries?"

Yunxiao nodded, "Yes. I have refined a pill called Mysterious Fire pill, which can suppress the extreme cold poison. However, its grade is too low, only second-grade, and its medicinal strength is limited. If you wish to fully recover, you'll need Teacher Luo's pure Yang energy."

He toyed with the pill bottle in his hand and said, his eyes wandering a little, "If I completely cure your injury, I hope you can do something for my family."

Xiao Qingwang was overjoyed as someone could finally solve the problem that had troubled him for many years. But, when he heard the second half of Yunxiao's words, he was lost in thought. Before long, he said seriously, "I understand this. We should always repay the favor others have bestowed upon us. I can do three things for you unconditionally, as long as you don't put me in a too difficult a position."

"Well, three things are enough!" Yunxiao's eyes burst with a light as he laughed and handed over the pill bottle containing the Mysterious Fire pill with both hands.

Yunshang did not seem to care about these things. She just looked at Yunxiao in shock and asked in horror, "You...You have refined a second-grade medicinal pill? You...How did you make it?"

Yunxiao did not know how to explain it, so he spread out his hands as he put on a helpless look and said, "I don't know either...I refined it by accident. Luck, it must be luck."

Yunshang recovered herself after a brief absence. There was a strange look in her eyes as she shook her head and said, "I see. You have been hiding so deep that even I have been fooled by you. I was so worried about you."

Yunxiao was slightly moved. He knew that Yunshang had really cared about him in the past, but after he learned that the person in her mind was actually his previous life, he immediately had a strange feeling. As a result, he felt very unnatural whenever he saw her. So, he said with sincere gratitude, "Teacher Luo, thanks for everything you have done for me. This time, if you help Lord Chen and Commander Xiao heal their internal injuries, the Li Family will definitely pay you a satisfactory reward."

Shaking her head, she said, "Commander Xiao and Lord Chen are the backbones of the state, so it is my duty to help them. You don't have to pay me anything. If you have the inspiration one day, don't forget to play the Guangling melody for me. I really want to hear it." The expression on her face was unusually calm, but when she mentioned 'Guangling melody', her eyes seemed to ripple with emotions.

Yunxiao's mood seemed to ripple with the look in her eyes as well. He was shocked, and quickly looked away, lowering his head as he said seriously, "I will definitely play the melody for you."

When he said that, his mood seemed a little depressed. Yunshang paused for a moment, then nodded and said nothing more.

After some further discussion, the crowd decided to stay at the Li Family's residence. Yunxiao put Jia Rong in charge of the treatment, and after giving him some instructions, he went on to cultivate in seclusion.

The next day, Li Chunyang went to court early in the morning in order to obtain the military deployment order.

It was the first time Yunxiao had entered the family training room. It was much more magnificent than the academy's, but there was no gravity array. Anyhow, he had Black Girl with him, which always put ten times the force of gravity on him.

The cultivation techniques he was cultivating were the best, and he used the most correct way of cultivation. Even if there was some snag, he should have made the breakthrough and become a Martial Master long ago according to his original expectations. However, even after he had absorbed the toxins

in Meng Bai's body and the righteous energy that more than one hundred scholars had spent many years to cultivate, he still remained as a seven-stars warrior.

It puzzled him so much!

He exhaled deeply and performed an incantation gesture with both hands, then held his breath and concentrated his mind, sending his divine sense into the Divine Realm Tablet inside his dantian.

Previously when he used the eye technique, some strange reactions seemed to have occurred in the tablet, and its internal space could allow the Great Expansion Divine Technique to completely manifest. This gave him the urge to unleash this artifact's potential as quickly as possible.

His divine sense manifested itself in the tablet and transformed into his appearance as it stood quietly in the independent space.

"I have seen many mystic weapons with a hidden independent space. They all refined simple space laws into artifacts through arrays, but the space here is dead space..."

Yunxiao muttered to himself as he looked at the white clouds floating in the bright clear sky. He took a deep breath and said strangely, "The space here seems to be a world of its own, like a mystic realm, and it seems...alive?"

He dared to be one hundred percent sure that the refining method of this tablet was far above his understanding!

After frowning and pondering for a while, a light flashed through his eyes and he said in a low voice, "No one in the whole Heavenly Martial Continent has the ability to refine this Divine Realm Tablet!"

His feet trod lightly on the ground, and he quietly felt the rhythm of the space. After staring at his body for a long time, he said to himself, "The rules in this tablet seem to be different from those in the outside world, which are able to let the divine sense manifest and the soul take shape."

He took a few random steps and made a few movements, following which, his expression suddenly became a little strange.

Chapter 75: The Soul Form

After pondering for a moment, Yunxiao's soul form sat cross-legged down in the Divine Realm Tablet and performed an incantation gesture with both hands, just like his true-self in the outside world. Together, both his forms began to meditate. The difference between them was that his true-self was absorbing the natural Primordial Qi in the outside world while his soul form was condensing soul power in the Divine Realm Tablet. They were meditating at the same time, and even though they were spiritually connected and came from the same origin, they did not distract each other.

"Sure enough, the Laws of the World in here are different!" His eyes lit up and his face beamed with joy as he said excitedly, "It means I can divide myself into two when meditating and cultivate my soul and my flesh at the same time! In this way, even though my cultivating path is tougher than that of others, I can save half the time! Moreover, the Great Expansion Divine Technique can be manifested in the Divine Realm Tablet...With all these combined, my goal of restoring the soul power of a ninth-tier alchemist is no longer so distant!"

It was a hundred times more difficult to cultivate the soul than martial arts. Although Yunxiao had various soul cultivation techniques up his sleeves, there was never a shortcut in the path of the Great Dao.

No matter how good the resources one had, one could not omit hardship and the tempering of time. It was through endless cultivation that a warrior or alchemist could become a hero.

Although Yunxiao still could not understand this Divine Realm Tablet, he was already spiritually connected with it. He knew it was because he was too weak now, and his priority was to increase his strength as soon as possible.

His soul began to cultivate the Great Expansion Divine Technique in the Divine Realm Tablet while his body performed the various strange moves of the Tyrant Body Tempering Technique in the secret chamber. In the meantime, he carefully controlled the gravity force to make himself struggle on the verge of collapse; only in this way could he keep breaking through. Slowly, he increased the gravity force to thirty-fold, which was the limit he could withstand right now. His muscles and limbs were stretched taut, and he could feel waves of tremendous ache and distending pain coming from them. His soul-form in the tablet felt that too, and it frowned slightly.

Suddenly, a faint light about the size of a bean shot out of the forehead of his true self, and then from within the tablet came flying out ten inferior-grade Primordial Stones, hovering in a row in front of him.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

Yunxiao waved his hand with the miniature Black Girl. A beam of golden light flashed through the air, and all ten Primordial Stones exploded in the next instant, causing the natural Primordial Qi in them to spread out like boiling water vapor. The shattered stones turned into colorless powder and scattered within the secret chamber.

"Drain now, One Qi of Destiny!"

He straightened up, and his taut body bounced back to its original form, no longer in the queer posture. Then, he put his palms together and sat down while the pores all over him seemed to open at once. Meanwhile, the millions of cells in him began to breathe as the rich Primordial Qi that filled the secret chamber poured over to him.

His breathing matched the movement of the blood and Qi throughout his body. With an inhale, he drained half of the Primordial Qi contained in the ten Primordial Stones, which was then converted into the purest energy and circulated within him. During the process, more than half of the Primordial Qi would eventually be lost, a small part would be absorbed by his flesh, and what was left would condense and settle down before returning to his dantian through the meridians, becoming a part of his energy.

Yunxiao opened his eyes, and his face was covered with shock and surprise. "Soul, body, and Qi are indeed inextricably linked with each other. With the help of the first two, I was able to absorb about eight inferior-grade Primordial Stones at a time by circulating the One Qi of Destiny. In my previous life when I was at this level, it would be a feat if I could absorb even two at a time."

His eyes gleamed as he said to himself, "Under the condition of cultivating the three at the same time, I need several times as much Primordial Qi as an average warrior to make a breakthrough, but I also

absorb Primordial Qi several times faster. In this way, I'm not in a disadvantageous position. And if I continue to cultivate this way, even the energy of low-stars Martial Masters may not be as vast and pure as mine! By the time I return to the peak of the Nine Heavens Realm, there will be no one on the whole Heavenly Martial Realm that can match my strength!"

With enthusiasm in his eyes, Yunxiao took out handfuls of Primordial Stones and threw them into the air, then kept hitting them with Black Girl. One stone after another exploded, and the concentration of Primordial Qi in the chamber soon was so high that it almost solidified!

"Drain them all, One Qi of Destiny!"

If these Primordial Qi were left as they were, they would eventually return to nature. However, under the power of his One Qi of Destiny, he seemed to have become the center of a tornado while the Primordial Qi around him kept rushing into him like smaller tornadoes.

No one would have believed their eyes if they were given a chance to witness this.

Gu... gu... gu...

His body suddenly began to make all kinds of strange noises as it expanded like a balloon at a speed visible to the naked eye while his meridians were suddenly enlarged several times.

'Not good! I've absorbed too much! I'm too greedy!'

He was horrified to find that under the influx of such a large amount of Primordial Qi, his body's endurance reached its peak in a very short period of time, and he felt that all his limbs and bones were going to burst!

"Screw it, I've never feared death! It's just the Primordial Qi of hundreds of inferior-grade Primordial Stones. They can't make me burst!"

His eyes turned red, and his veins and meridians bulged, covering him all over like the tangled branches of an old tree, making him look very horrible!

"Roar!"

"Roar!"

"Roar!"

Suppressed roars burst out of his chest like thunder, then his skin began to crack with blood gushing out of them; even his eyes were bleeding at this point. Yet, his expression was unusually calm, and his eyes were as clear as water.

The chamber suddenly quieted down, and the Primordial Qi that had been swirling madly became slow and began to stop flowing. Yunxiao sat there motionless as if he had lost his life, and even the light in his eyes began to fade slowly.

'This feeling...Is it really too much for me? Is my body beginning to disintegrate?'

'What a joke! How is that possible?!'

He jerked his head up and his eyes shone brightly again, as if there were stars exploding in them. Meanwhile, his soul in the Divine Realm Tablet suddenly disappeared, and his divine sense returned to his mind!

"Roar!"

As an unyielding roar burst out of his mouth, his eyes widened, his palms clenched into fists, and his bones crackled! Then, all of a sudden, the quieted down Primordial Qi in the chamber was pulled once again and began to pour crazily into his body!

"Screw you, the realm of the seven-stars warrior! I will run you over like nothing!"

He let out a roar, and then used his powerful divine sense to guide the large amount of Primordial Qi pouring into his body to rush frantically at the bottleneck of the seven-stars realm, slamming at it over and over again like waves. His blood and Qi were boiling as bloody blisters emerged one after another over his skin. He clenched his jaws tightly while all his seven orifices were bleeding profusely!

Boom!

A loud boom thundered in his mind, and he immediately felt relaxed. Meanwhile, a brand-new power poured into his limbs and meridians, making him feel extremely pleasant and comfortable!

"I've done it at last! Haha! I'm not dead yet! Haha!"

Yunxiao laughed and his eyes were full of madness. Just now, if he had been unlucky or careless, his body would have exploded and killed him!

But, which one of those martial arts experts was not as crazy as him?

While feeling the power of an eight-stars warrior running through him, Yunxiao's heart was filled with a lingering fear. He thought to himself that he would never risk his life again like this. He was lucky this time, but it did not mean that he would be as lucky every time. If anything wrong happened even once, he would die instantly.

There was a separate restroom and bathroom in the secret chamber, where he washed the blood off his body and changed into a clean suit. The gashes on his skin also recovered rapidly under the power of his energy.

Just as he was about to continue his meditation and stabilize his cultivation base, someone sent a voice transmission from outside the door, saying that he had something urgent to discuss with him.

He frowned, and his face showed a trace of displeasure and helplessness as he opened the door and walked out.

Standing outside the door was his grandfather. As soon as he saw Yunxiao came out, he smiled awkwardly and cleared his throat, "Well, I really didn't want to disturb you, but...ah! Ah? You... you... what's going on? You made it to an eight-stars warrior!" He swallowed what he had meant to say as his eyes grew wide and his mouth opened large enough to fit a watermelon.

Yunxiao frowned and said, "Tell me what is it. If you didn't disturb me, I was planning to come out after I became a Martial Master."

"Ahh!"

Li Chunyang was dumbfounded and seemed completely stunned. After all, what he saw was too shocking and incredible. The day before yesterday, Yunxiao had just absorbed the righteous energy of the group of scholars and broken through to the seven-stars realm, but how did he become an eight-stars warrior after only two nights?

How was that possible? Even if Yunxiao took ninth-grade medicinal pills as his meal every day, he still could not have achieved such an absurd result!

If he continued to make progress at this rate, wouldn't he announce that he had become a Martial Sovereign in a few months?

Yunxiao turned to enter the chamber. "If you have nothing to tell me, I will continue to meditate."

"Ah! Hold on! I do have something to tell you!"

Li Chunyang grabbed Yunxiao in a hurry. He tried to take the tremendous shock in his heart as an illusion, and only then did he come to his senses. Then, he held his breath and decided not to probe Yunxiao's strength again, so that he would not lose his composure.

After he had calmed down, he quickly gave a brief account of the matter. It was about the military deployment order; Li Chunyang had not gone to the court.

After the incident of the Three Wises, all the scholars had either retired, returned to their hometowns, or become mad. And all of a sudden, the business of the flower boats along the Qinhuai River became extremely bad.

It angered Kong Renyi so much that he vomited blood and had a high fever. Even so, he asked someone to carry him on a stretcher to the court and called upon all the imperial preceptors from the imperial colleges, waiting for Li Chunyang to give him an explanation. This scared Li Chunyang, and he quickly slipped away when he saw them from a distance. He heard that they were still waiting in the court today and would not give up until he appeared. Out of desperation, he came here and called Yunxiao out.

"Fu*k! They are just a group of weak scholars! What are you afraid of, Grandpa? Kill whoever stands in your way!" said Yunxiao fiercely with a murderous look in his eyes.

Chapter 76: I'm Here To Kill

Li Chunyang's heart skipped a beat as he said with a wry smile, "If they were ordinary ministers, it'd not be a big deal for me to kill them. However, this Kong Renyi is a descendant of Confucius. He represents the orthodox Confucianism, and his words and deeds are examples of all the scholars in the world. If I kill him, I'll definitely be criticized by the whole world, and I'll be poked in the back wherever I go."

Yunxiao stared at him with piercing eyes. "Grandpa, you still attach yourself too much to the secular world," he sighed and shook his head. "You know, for people like us who pursue martial arts, what we should pay attention to is strength. After all, whoever has the greatest strength will have the right to speak, and we should never hesitate to repay kindness and take revenge. The so-called orthodox Confucianism is nothing but a tool used by secular emperors to fool the common people. In our eyes, it is no different from dung. When we hold sway and smile proudly over the clouds, who do you think , among all the people in the world would dare to scold us?"

Li Chunyang was struck dumb. Yunxiao's words exploded in his mind like thunder, filling his head with a buzzing noise.

"People like us should reign over the world! Grandpa, you've been on the battlefield for so many years and experienced so many battles, and you've never been afraid. Why are you afraid of a mere pedantic Confucian scholar today? Don't let me look down on you!" Yunxiao's eyes grew cold and a strong, undisguised murderous aura spread from him. "I'll kill those pedantic worms today! Let's see who can stop me!"

What Yunxiao said had struck his ears like the roar of thunder and given him a feeling of sudden enlightenment, as if the path of martial arts had suddenly opened up before his eyes. If a man was timid in doing things, how could he succeed? A warrior should always advance bravely!

The murderous aura emanated from Yunxiao was so tremendous that it flowed with the air as he walked and pressed in the face of Li Chunyang, making the Martial King shudder and creating a storm in his heart. He was a veteran who had galloped on the battlefield for many years and killed countless people, and yet he was still frightened by it. It was a kind of fear rising from the deepest part of the soul, a primal fear!

'How could this boy have such a strong murderous aura? It's like he once killed hundreds of millions of people and was entangled with countless karma! Even I felt a little scared in front of him!'

Li Chunyang's eyes were filled with confusion. He found that he knew less and less about this grandson.

The murderous aura was emanated by the soul. Although Yunxiao did not kill as many people as Li Chunyang in his previous life, they were all almighty experts, and the murderous aura of each of them was at least ten thousand times more than Li Chunyang's. And because he once stood at the peak of the continent, the supreme temperament from the depths of his soul was simply awe-inspiring.

Soon, the two of them started for the court, riding side by side on white horses. Along the way, they made no effort to conceal their aura, so the people on both sides of the street had already felt a shudder of fear and quickly moved away even from a long distance.

As they rode, Li Chunyang studied his grandson's expression. His heart was filled with mixed emotions, but at the same time, it also gave birth to a desire to pursue the endless road of martial arts. Originally, he was already satisfied after he became a Martial King and felt that he had reached the peak of his life. But at this moment, as he sensed the grandmaster's aura exuded from Yunxiao, he immediately felt that he was too narrow-minded, and that he had only just started in martial arts.

He secretly made a decision that after he had helped Qin Yue, he would completely cut his ties with the secular affairs and devote himself to cultivation.

"Who goes there? This is the front gate of the palace. You must not be rude! Dismount and walk immediately!"

The pupils of the guards stationed in front of the palace constricted when they saw two white horses charging at them from a far distance. They were shocked by the boldness of the two men, and one of the guards quickly took a deep breath and shouted at the top of his lungs.

With a sullen look on his face, Yunxiao focused his voice into a line and spewed it out, making it explode over the palace. "There is an urgent situation on the front line, and I have important military information to report to His Majesty directly! Please forgive me for being rude, but this cannot be delayed!"

Startled, the guard cried out hurriedly, "No matter what urgent information you have to report, you must dismount immediately and wait for us to inform His Majesty!"

"It's too late, get out of the way!"

"You are not allowed to be rude here! Dismount immediately!"

"If you don't get out of the way, don't blame me for being ruthless!"

"How dare you! If you don't dismount, you will die!"

"Well, you asked for it." Yunxiao sighed softly. In the blink of an eye, two white horses had rushed to the front of the palace as the two guards quickly drew their sabers. With a hint of determination in his eyes, Yunxiao unsheathed the sword of Taiyin, its blade gleaming coldly as its tip stabbed the guards' eyes in an instant. Then, it flashed again, sending two heads tumbling up into the air.

Li Chunyang's pupils constricted slightly. "Why kill them? You can just teach them a lesson," he said in a low voice.

As a veteran who had led troops for many years, he regarded his subordinates as his kin.

Yunxiao narrowed his eyes and his murderous aura grew stronger. "I'm here to kill today!"

While frowning, Li Chunyang fell silent and just rode behind Yunxiao. His grandson's actions and thoughts were completely beyond his understanding now, but at the same time, the latter also gave him a supreme feeling. Therefore, he did not want to interfere with him now and just wanted to quietly watch how he would handle the matter.

In any case, Yunxiao still had him, a Martial King, behind him. In the worst case scenario, they could just leave the state. No one in the entire Tianshui could stop him save for the one from Jialan Academy. After listening to Yunxiao's words, his obsession with secular affairs gradually faded, and he no longer cared about such things as loyalty to his state.

"Who is so bold to intrude the palace and kill the guards!"

Several angry voices were heard from inside the palace while many guards began to crowd in from all directions. It was the morning session of the court right now, so all the ministers were in the great hall, and the stretcher on which Kong Renyi lay was also placed in the corridor inside the hall. Meanwhile, hundreds of imperial preceptors from the imperial college also knelt outside the hall.

"I'm the son of General Feilong, Li Yunxiao! I have an urgent military intelligence to report to His Majesty! Since it is extremely urgent, I can't wait for the guards to inform! Please get out of the way!" Yunxiao said loudly while his sword gleamed coldly. The guards had surrounded the two of them, but no one dared to approach.

"I don't care who you are! Since you dare to kill the palace guards, you will die today!" A figure rose into the air. The man was round and stout, and when he spun in the air toward Yunxiao, his huge sleeves filled with air, making him look like a colorful ball.

He came over Yunxiao in the blink of an eye, and he threw out his short arm and thrust his palm at Yunxiao along with a loud cry. Meanwhile, dark clouds appeared in the sky while a power of four different colors converged in his palm, forming waves of strong pressure that kept pressing down. Yunxiao was completely trapped by the force. Not only was he unable to move, but his body was also under tremendous pressure, as if a mountain was bearing down on him. Under the pressure, his steed let out a piercing whine, then exploded into a puddle of blood and bones and flesh.

He narrowed his eyes and said coldly, "Level three-stars of the Four Quadrants Realm...A Martial Lord expert!"

Li Chunyang was very surprised. He knew this man was the head of the palace guards, Jing Feibai, but he did not expect his strength to be at this level. Without waiting for the man's palm to fall, he suddenly leaped from the horseback at a speed that was hard for the naked eye to see.

Bam!

The crowd only saw that the two figures seemed to have collided in the air, then the fat one coughed out a lot of blood before spinning away like a ball that had its air leaked. Yunxiao was the only one who saw his grandfather grab Jing Feibai's arm and break it, then kick him in the chest.

With a solemn expression, Li Chunyang fell from the air and said coldly in a powerful voice, "How dare you stop us from reporting urgent military intelligence? If anyone dares to get in our way again, I will kill him!"

The faces of all the guards around turned pale in an instant. They could not believe Jing Feibai, who was as powerful as a god in their hearts, was so vulnerable, and they all recognized who this old man was—the Duke of Jingguo, Li Chunyang! Now, they were even more frightened, and no one dared to stop them.

Li Chunyang glanced around coldly, then nodded slightly at Yunxiao, which meant, 'We can go now, and I'll be behind you today. Let's see who dares to stop you!'

Yunxiao knew the old man was waiting to see his performance today. He smiled, then strode forward while cried out, "I'm General Feilong's son, Li Yunxiao! I have an urgent military intelligence to report to His Majesty!"

His voice kept spreading, and soon it was heard in the great hall.

Everyone in the hall was shocked. Qin Yang's face flickered as he kept sneering in his heart. "Father," he said while stepping out of the rank, "the pair of grandfather and grandson from the Li Family is becoming more and more lawless. What do they think of the palace as? How can they kill the guards and force their way into the palace? This is outrageous! They should be executed!"

Qin Yue's forehead was wet with cold sweat. He had been waiting for Yunxiao, but he did not expect him to make such a fuss when he finally got here. There were many people waiting for them in the court too, including Qin Yang and Kong Renyi, the descendant of the saint who was eager to teach them a lesson. Now, with the killing of the guards, the strategies he had already thought of to obtain the military deployment order were all rendered useless.

Qin Zheng was fuming as he sat on his dragon throne and coughed violently. "Send Li Chunyang and Li Yunxiao to the court!"

"Send Li Chunyang and Li Yunxiao to the court!" The decree was passed down by the eunuchs.

When the guards heard the decree, they all breathed a sigh of relief and wiped the cold sweat from their foreheads. If the king's decree was not passed down and Yunxiao walked straight into the great hall, they would have to face capital punishment. But if they stopped him, they would be killed nonetheless. So, the king's decree was equivalent to amnesty for them. Hurriedly, they backed off and let him pass.

"Halt!"

Suddenly, a loud cry rang out from ahead. Hundreds of imperial preceptors and scholars kneeling outside the hall glared at Yunxiao and Li Chunyang as they rose to their feet, completely blocking their way.

"Li Chunyang, Li Yunxiao, you two have committed heinous crimes! Not only did you insult the descendant of Confucius, but also tortured hundreds of scholars! Your sin is inexcusable! Today, outside the great hall of the palace, under the bright blue sky, the two of you will be put to death! The Heaven and Earth will bear witness of you being punished!"

"You will be put to death! Heaven and Earth will bear witness!" Hundreds of people shouted angrily at the same time, and for a moment, their aura seemed to have risen significantly.

Chapter 77: The Law

Yunxiao looked up at the sky, but he could only vaguely see a little bit of the righteous energy gathering. Seeing that, he shook his head in disappointment. "These imperial preceptors of the imperial college have read the books of the saint for so many years, but it is all in vain in the end. They are not even as good as those scholars. Such little energy is not worth wasting my effort to absorb."

Clang!

Without saying anything, he drew the sword of Taiyin and slashed it down at them!

Several shrieks rang out as five or six men's necks were cut by the sharp blade; blood spewed out of the wounds like fountains and spilled everywhere. They covered their necks with both hands, but their pupils gradually dilated due to excessive blood loss, and before long, they fell to the ground and died on the spot.

All the imperial preceptors sucked in a cold breath and hurriedly spread out to both sides in horror. They never thought that Yunxiao would dare to kill someone outside the great hall. The murder had shocked them, and none of them dare to shout again.

Yunxiao put away his sword and stood where he was. The indifferent expression on his face made him look like a God of Slaughter. The imperial preceptors, on the other hand, were sad and angry, and some even began to weep in low voices.

He gave them an indifferent look, then said in an emotionless voice, "The affairs of the court are not for you scholars to meddle in. You are used as pawns by others, and yet you still think you are standing up for benevolence and righteousness. How ridiculous and laughable! Those scholars who came to me the day before yesterday and you are all pawns. You have done so many things, but they had no influence on the court affairs. And if you continue to do this, you wouldn't even know how you died. Just stay in the imperial college to teach and research. That's where you're supposed to be."

He looked toward the great hall as he gave a sneer, and then continued, "Also, if Kong Renyi is really a man of righteousness, he shouldn't have let you get in my way outside the throne room and die for him." When he had finished, he followed Li Chunyang into the hall.

After hearing what he said, the imperial preceptors seemed to understand something. But when they looked at the bodies of their companions, they were still sad.

What happened outside the hall was witnessed by all the courtiers and Qin Zheng. They were in great shock, for they had not expected Yunxiao to be so presumptuous!

Kong Renyi even got up from the stretcher and cried, "Heavens! Your Majesty, you must uphold justice for this subject! You must put these two demons to death!"

The emperor, Qin Zheng, flew into a rage and bellowed, "How dare you, Li Yunxiao! How could you kill someone right in front of me, outside the throne room?! First you killed the imperial guards, then the imperial preceptors! You are absolutely lawless!"

Yunxiao walked forward with his head held high. He did not kneel and kowtow to the emperor, but just cupped his hand and said, "Your Majesty, it is because I obey the law that I killed these people!"

"Nonsense!" Qin Yang jumped out and said angrily, "When you kill someone, you have to pay for it! Since you dare to commit crimes in the palace, that means you have no respect for the law! You must be executed!"

Yunxiao turned to look at him and sneered sarcastically, "Oh? So, Your Highness also knows about laws?"

'You've gone too far! Let's see how you can get away today.' Qin Yang gave a cold snort as he held his head high and put on a superior air, "Of course!"

"In that case," said Yunxiao loudly, "is the Minister of Personnel here?"

In the rank, the Minister of Personnel, Ban Wenlin, frowned and hesitated for a moment before stepping out. "I'm here! What can I do for you, Young Master Yun?" As the Minister of Personnel, although his position was lower than that of Lan Hong and Li Chunyang, he was also a high-ranking official. But, since he did not take part in the struggle between the two factions and did not want to offend anyone, he politely addressed Yunxiao as 'Young Master Yun'.

Yunxiao cupped his fist and bowed. "I don't quite understand a few things, so I hope my lord can give me some advice."

Ban Wenlin made a hand gesture and said, "I'm all ears, Young Master Yun."

"May I ask what is the punishment of stopping someone from reporting urgent military intelligence according to the law of the state?" Yunxiao asked as he looked at Qin Yang coldly.

The minister froze for a moment, then frowned and replied, "As the urgent military intelligence is related to state affairs, those who stop it from being reported should be punished by the execution of his or her whole family, according to the law of the state."

Everyone looked suddenly enlightened, thinking to themselves that no wonder Yunxiao kept shouting he had urgent military intelligence to report just now. It seemed that the two guards really died for nothing.

Qin Yang was struck dumb, and his face grew very dark. He did not expect Yunxiao to use such a loophole. "Fine! Even if the two guards had committed a capital crime, what about those imperial preceptors outside the hall?" he said in a cold voice. "You cold-blooded murderer! They are knowledgeable and they hold themselves aloof from the world, devoting themselves to nurturing the younger generations and cultivating countless pillars of the state. Yet, you've killed them without saying a word! Did you also do this out of your respect for the law?"

"You've died a miserable death!" Kong Renyi started crying at the right time.

Yunxiao gave the two men a cold look and scoffed, "Let's put aside the fact that these imperial preceptors have slandered my grandfather and me for now," he said while turning to the Minister of Personnel. "My lord, can you tell me what is the punishment for those who slander an important official of the court?"

Ban Wenlin's frown tightened. He gave Yunxiao a meaningful look and then said, "If it is really slander, the punishment for the offender will be beheading."

Qin Yang did not know that there was such a law. These court officials had become accustomed to framing and slandering each other, but they had never thought that those imperial preceptors were actually just low-level officials.

With his eyes turned red, Kong Renyi bellowed, "If the slander is made by common people, then they should obviously be killed. But, these imperial preceptors are officials of the state, and what they said is true, not slander at all!"

Yunxiao squinted at him and sneered, "What they said is true? Saint Kong, be careful of what you say or I'll accuse you of slandering me too! I was summoned by His Majesty, but those imperial preceptors stopped me from entering the throne room. Let me ask you, Saint Kong, what punishment should be imposed on those who obstruct the execution of imperial edicts?"

"This..." Kong Renyi was immediately dumbfounded. It was their plan to prevent Li Chunyang and Yunxiao from meeting the emperor. However, they did not expect the emperor to summon the pair of grandfather and grandson, nor did they expect Yunxiao to act so ruthlessly. Now, it seemed that those imperial preceptors also died for nothing.

Shaking his head slightly, Ban Wenlin said, "Anyone who obstructs the execution of imperial edicts should be punished by the execution of his or her entire family."

"Very good!" cried Yunxiao. "If my memory serves me right, one of those imperial preceptors is Saint Kong's nephew, so his family naturally includes Saint Kong. As the leader of Confucianism and the descendant of Confucius, your words and deeds are models for the world to follow. Naturally, you should also know that the law of the state is as harsh as iron, and that the law knows no kindness!"

Kong Renyi began to panic. "You...you..." For a moment, he did not know what to say, and then he suddenly had a brainwave. Hastily, he bowed down to Qin Zheng and cried, "Your Majesty, you must uphold justice for me!"

Many of the courtiers on the side wanted to step out of the rank and say something, but they did not want to offend the Li Family. Moreover, when they heard Yunxiao say 'the law knows no kindness', they had nothing more to say.

Such a dispute could be very serious or be dismissed with just a wave of a hand, and it all depended on Yunxiao's attitude. Of course now, he was about to turn it very serious.

Li Chunyang, who was standing behind Yunxiao, stared at the scene in bewilderment. It never occurred to him that the problem which had given him a great headache could be solved in this way. 'Is he...really my grandson?'

The Li Family had always been a family of military commanders. The war of words had always been their weakness, and they were no match for those pedantic scholars at all. But today, Yunxiao had not only intruded the palace and killed some people along the way, but also seized the initiative in his hand and forced Kong Renyi into a corner with law and morality.

Meanwhile, all the courtiers were aghast as well. If Kong Renyi's conviction was confirmed, did it not mean that the descendant of the saint would be executed? But, if he were not convicted, Yunxiao would definitely not give up.

Now, even the emperor had a headache.

Qin Zheng's face was full of anxiety and his eyes were glazed. Compared with the last time Yunxiao saw him, his spirits were noticeably worse. The main reason was that he was too old and had been addicted to wine and lust; the other reason was that he was too deeply poisoned. Judging from his appearance, he probably would not live much longer.

He thought for a moment and then said slowly, "Teacher Kong is the descendant of the saint and also my first teacher. It was his nephew who did this, and he is innocent. For his great contribution to the state, I hereby pardon Teacher Kong. As for his nephew, drag him out of the palace and behead him."

"Long live Your Majesty! Thank you for pardoning me!" Kong Renyi bowed down in exultation and kowtowed repeatedly.

After hearing that he was pardoned, Kong Renyi did not care about his nephew but just kept flattering the emperor. This made some courtiers, who thought that he was innocent, begin to resent him.

Qin Zheng's decision had taken account of both sides; Kong Renyi was pardoned and Yunxiao was given an explanation. It was considered a very clever decision, and both sides should be satisfied under typical circumstances. However, Yunxiao was not giving up. "Your Majesty, you can't do this! It is precisely because Saint Kong is the model of all the people in the world that we have to enforce the law more strictly! Besides, if a prince violates the law, he must be punished like an ordinary person as well. Is Saint Kong more honorable than a prince?"

"Li Yunxiao! You...you..." Seeing that Yunxiao was determined to push him to his death, Kong Renyi roared furiously, "His Majesty's decision is not something you can question! You clearly don't place His Majesty in your eyes!"[1]

Yunxiao looked at him like a fool and sneered, "Of course, I don't place His Majesty in my eyes!"

His words immediately caused an uproar. Even Li Chunyang opened his mouth wide and did not know what his grandson was going to do. Qin Yue, on the other hand, felt his head begin to hurt. The situation had been good for them, and Yunxiao had pushed Kong Renyi to a tight corner. But, why did he suddenly utter such a rebellious remark?

Qin Zheng froze for a moment and then flew into a rage. He was about to jump up when he saw Yunxiao pointing to his own heart and putting on a respectful look.

With a voice full of emotion, Yunxiao said, "His Majesty is to be placed in here! As His Majesty's subjects, we must always keep His Majesty in our hearts and carefully listen to every piece of advice and decree of His Majesty, instead of just mentioning His Majesty like you! What are your intentions? No wonder you dare to disobey His Majesty's imperial edict, because you don't place His Majesty in your heart! Do you think you are more honorable than His Majesty? Or, do you think His Majesty is not good enough? Does that mean that you want His Majesty to give you his seat?"

"Ah?" Everyone was stunned again.

Before Kong Renyi was cleared of the crime of obstructing the imperial edict, he was immediately branded as a rebel by Yunxiao!

[1] 'Place someone in the eyes' means having respect for someone. As the author plays with the word 'eyes' here, I have no choice but to translate in this way. Read on, and you will understand.

Chapter 78: Irritate To Death

Kong Renyi felt his head go blank. He was already ill because of anger, and now he was even more furious. Pointing a trembling finger at Yunxiao, he murmured, "You... you..."

After shivering for a while, his movements suddenly stopped and his pupils began to dilate.

Puke!

All of a sudden, he threw his head back and spat out a mouthful of blood, which was the result of all the depression and anger accumulated in his chest. After finishing the last move, he fell back heavily on the floor with a loud bang, completely showing no sign of life.

Kong Renyi, the great scholar of the generation, was irritated to death!

The whole hall was in shock!

Yunxiao could not help but chuckle. "Teacher Kong is truly the descendant of the saint and the great scholar of the generation. He chose death to atone for his fault, which makes him a man who knows about righteousness and shame. Even though he had committed a crime, we should just forgive him since he is dead. I hope Your Majesty can make a wise verdict."

Everyone in the hall looked at each other, all thinking that Yunxiao was too vicious. Kong Renyi was already irritated to death, but he still refused to let him go, and insisted on setting him up with a crime. 'This boy will seek revenge for even the smallest grievance... I must not provoke him!'

Qin Zheng coughed violently for a while before he managed to calm himself down and said, "Yunxiao is right. Now that Teacher Kong is dead, we shall forget whatever that happened. Also, as Teacher Kong is a great scholar of the generation, we need to hold a state funeral for him and let the people mourn."

After all, Qin Zheng had been on the throne for a long time, so he knew he did not need to offend the Li Family for a dead and worthless person. Therefore, he agreed to Yunxiao but at the same time, spoke so vaguely that he did not convict Kong Renyi or clear his name.

If Kong Renyi could hear that, he would probably have come back to life due to anger.

Soon, some eunuchs and maids carried Kong Renyi's body out and cleaned up the great hall. Meanwhile, those imperial preceptors were crying outside, but many of them began to ponder and look at the incident calmly as well after they had listened to Yunxiao just now.

Feeling a little tired from sitting too long, Qin Zheng reclined in his dragon throne and asked, "Duke Jingguo, Li Yunxiao, what is the urgent military intelligence that made you kill the guards and rush in here?"

The grandfather stepped aside to show that he was letting his grandson take charge today. As a result, all the people in the hall immediately fixed their eyes on Yunxiao. All kinds of complicated thoughts flashed through their minds while Qin Yang's face grew extremely dark.

Yunxiao said in a loud voice, "Whitehead Town has fallen and millions of troops from Baizhan are besieging Kunjin! Your Majesty, please send troops to the rescue immediately!"

Qin Zheng listened quietly, but when he found that there was nothing to follow that statement, he was slightly struck dumb. "And?"

Yunxiao stared at him with wide eyes and said, "And? That's it, and now we wait for Your Majesty's military deployment order."

"Ah?" Qin Zheng's jaw dropped. "This...isn't this the intelligence we received a few days ago? So, this is the urgent military intelligence you mentioned?" A trace of anger appeared on his face. "I knew this long ago!"

Qin Yang said angrily as well, "Li Yunxiao, how could you kill two palace guards and several imperial preceptors for a piece of outdated military intelligence? You will be beheaded for your crime!"

Yunxiao gave him a contemptuous look and said disdainfully, "Don't keep talking about beheading people here. If you are so great, go to the front line and behead the troops of Baizhan! All you know is how to behead your own people! Do you think that will make you someone great? Hah!"

"You..." Qin Yang was so angry that he did not know what to say, causing his neck to turn red. But, he immediately recalled that Yunxiao had a shrewd tongue. 'I better not argue with him. Even Kong Renyi was irritated to death by him... if I argue with him, I might be the next one.'

After figuring this out, he just gave Yunxiao a sharp look, then closed his mouth and stopped talking.

"Ah!" Yunxiao looked as if he had suddenly caught the light. "I forgot that the Golden Lion Army in Whitehead Town was under Your Highness's command, and they had all been beheaded by Baizhan's troops. No wonder Your Highness can only behead your own people in the capital."

His remark completely disregarded Qin Yang's feelings, and it was not only a satire on the prince, but a question on his responsibility that pointed to the crux of the problem—it was the failure of his troops that had led to the current situation.

Qin Zheng narrowed his eyes and casually glanced at Qin Yang, seeing which, the prince sucked in a cold breath in his heart. The Golden Lion Army had a history of hundreds of years guarding Whitehead Town, and ahead of them was the Great Python Mountain where demon beasts roamed, a natural barrier that no army of Baizhan had ever crossed before. Therefore, what happened this time was somewhat mysterious, and the courtiers had been guessing the truth. As someone who had been an emperor for years, it was impossible for Qin Zheng to not be aware that there was something fishy going on.

'If Father knows that I had deliberately let the enemy troops into our territory in order to fight for the throne, I am likely to be deprived of my status as a prince, and even lose all my right to ascend the

throne!' He broke out in a cold sweat, but then he thought to himself again, 'Well, as long as I don't admit it, no one can find the evidence to accuse me!'

"Kunjin is guarded by General Feilong's Flying Dragon Army of 400,000 men," said Qin Zheng in a slow voice. "Even if the enemy has a million troops, the city is difficult to break through. That's why everyone here and I think that this call for reinforcement is fake. The real purpose of the enemy is to divert our Central Army and then march directly south to invade our capital."

"I see! But, if this intelligence is real..." Yunxiao said solemnly, "When Baizhan breaks Kunjin, it can then send its troops south and take all the thirteen main cities of Tianshui. At that time, can Your Majesty's Central Army hold off a million enemy troops?"

What he said was exactly what everyone was worried about. For a moment, all were silent.

With a cold face, Qin Yang winked at a courtier. The man shuddered and wiped the cold sweat off his forehead with the back of his hand, then stepped out of the rank and said loudly, "Li Yunxiao, it is your father who is trapped, so you have deliberately described the situation to be so urgent out of your worry for him. We all can understand that. However, military affairs are a state affair, and we can't make any decision at will. We must take our time to consider our options."

The courtier was helpless and very nervous. After witnessing Yunxiao's aggressiveness, his heart was already filled with fear. But, he could not disobey Qin Yang's order, so he had no other choice but to stand out.

Clang!

The cold sword of Taiyin jumped out of its sheath, piercing through the air in a beam of cold light and pointing at the courtier's throat. The hall immediately broke out in a commotion as many guards hurriedly clustered around Qin Zheng while shouts of 'Protect His Majesty!' rang out from here and there.

With a sneer, Yunxiao said, "You treacherous traitor! How could you put the safety of our state at risk? Before the army marches, I'll kill you and offer your blood to the banner!"

Qin Zheng's face was ablaze with anger as he coughed violently. "Li Yunxiao, how dare you draw your sword in the throne room! What are you trying to do!"

"Your Majesty, I came with an urgent military intelligence. As it was too urgent, I've not disarmed myself, so I beg your pardon! Fortunately, I've found a traitor today, and I can use my sword to remove this worm from among Your Majesty's subjects!"

As he said that, he slightly pushed the sword forward. Although the tip of the sword had not touched the skin, a stream of cold air penetrated the man's flesh, causing blood to ooze out which quickly froze and turned dark purple. The courtier's legs were shaking from fear, and in the next moment, he dropped to his knees with a foul stench wafting out of his pants. While shivering, he screamed, "Please save me, Your Majesty! Your Highness! Your Highness!"

Qin Yang could no longer hold himself back. Stepping out of the rank, he said, "Father, this Li Yunxiao is toying with the life of an important courtier! He is disturbing the court! Please Father, I beg you to put him to death!"

Meanwhile, Li Chunyang's face grew dark and a powerful aura exploded out of him, forming into a mighty pressure and smashing down onto Qin Yang. Weak as he was, the prince could not resist the pressure of a Martial King. In the blink of an eye, he was knocked flying away, slamming into the wall with his ribs broken and a mouthful of blood spewing out of his mouth.

While fuming, the grandfather said in a cold voice, "Who wants to put my grandson to death? Stand out right now!"

The sudden attack startled everyone in the hall. No one could believe that Li Chunyang had just beaten the prince in the throne room!

The shivering courtier was completely frozen when he saw that his backer was beaten like nobody. 'I'm doomed! I've chosen the wrong side!' He rolled his eyes, then passed out and fell to the ground.

Qin Zheng's pupils constricted, and his eyes flashed with a trace of anger and fear. He could feel that Li Chunyang's aura was stronger than before, which only meant that he had made quite a significant breakthrough in the recent years. Realizing that, the emperor's heart sank.

"Your Majesty! Which is more important, the safety of the state or the life of this useless old fool? Do you still have to hesitate?" Yunxiao's face turned cold as he stared at Qin Zheng and said, "If Your Majesty thinks that I'm messing around, then pretend that I've not told you about the urgent military intelligence, and we from the Li Family are more than happy to go back to our home and stay out of all this!" He glanced at all the courtiers around and gave a sneer. "If the throne is taken by someone else, all of these good-for-nothings can still be the new emperor's subjects, enjoying the same titles and wages. But, Your Majesty... Hehe, what a bunch of loyal subjects!"

One with a shrewd tongue, one with mighty strength, the pair of grandfather and grandson rendered all the people in the court speechless, and no one had the courage to stand up against them.

Qin Yang struggled out of the crack in the wall. He was covered in blood, and his eyes were filled with venomous hatred. But, he had learned his lesson, so he did not utter a single word but walked straight back into the rank.

Qin Yue, on the other hand, was laughing in his heart. From what he could see, if Qin Zheng refused to send the troops, it was highly possible that the grandfather and the grandson would overthrow the emperor right here in the throne room!

Qin Zheng's serious face gradually relaxed, and he said in a voice thick of tiredness, "Yunxiao is right. In that case, I hereby decree that Duke Jingguo will be the commander of the rescue mission. He will assemble an army from the Central Army and set out today!"

Li Chunyang arched his eyebrows and said loudly, "Your Majesty, this subject has grown weaker in the recent years and is no longer capable of the important task. In any case, this subject will find a suitable person to be the commander. Please rest assured, Your Majesty."

'Fu*k! Judging from his aura, he is likely a Martial King already! Is this called being weak?' All the courtiers were cursing in their minds.

Qin Zheng's face was dark as he snorted coldly and said, "Whatever!"

Meanwhile, Qin Yang glanced at the rank of generals. A few of them, who were loyal to him and the chiefs in charge of the Central Army, nodded at him. Meanwhile, the prince sneered in his heart. 'Even if

you, Li Chunyang, were there personally to assemble the troops, I still can give you an empty shell, let alone now that you are going to assign the task to someone else! Hah! Let's see what you can do now!'

Chapter 79: Recruitment

The exchange of glances between the few men were all seen by Yunxiao. With a sneer, he stepped forward and said, "Your Majesty, there's one more thing. I hope Your Majesty can lend me the imperial sword, so that when someone does not obey the imperial edict, I can execute them on the spot!"

That instantly took the color out of the faces of Qin Yang and the few military chiefs, and filled their eyes with astonishment. Yunxiao's unexpected move had thrown them into confusion. With the imperial sword, he could kill them without seeking permission if they disobeyed his orders, and they would die for nothing just like Kong Renyi.

Qin Zheng paused for a moment, then waved his sleeve and said, "The imperial sword is a murderous weapon, and it will be inauspicious to lend it to you. What you all should do is work closely with the Central Army and throw the enemy out of our territory. Don't ever mention the imperial sword again!" He knew what Yunxiao's intention was; therefore, he rejected the request swiftly. Fearing Yunxiao would keep on pestering him, he said hurriedly, "I'm tired. The court is dismissed!"

Upon hearing that, Qin Yang and the group of generals breathed a sigh of relief. Then, they turned to stare resentfully at the pair of grandfather and grandson.

Yunxiao kicked the unconscious courtier and woke him, then pulled him up like a chick. "When the army marches tomorrow, I'll offer your blood to the banner!"

The courtier wailed and burst into tears, and when he saw Qin Yang, he quickly cried out, "Your Highness, please save me!"

Qin Yang's face was gloomy. He knew it was impossible for him to save the man from the grandfather and grandson, so he only said, "I'll take care of your family. Rest in peace!"

When he heard that, the courtier rolled his eyes and passed out once again.

"Your Highness is truly a man of benevolence!" Yunxiao burst into laughter. "I'll take my leave now. See you all tomorrow at the muster roll platform!"

Together with Li Chunyang, he turned and walked away while dragging the courtier with him.

Qin Yang's face turned extremely dark as the few generals of the Central Army gathered around him, their eyes flickering. At that moment, Qin Yue walked past them and asked with a look of concern, "Brother, are you hurt? I have a few bottles of excellent healing elixir, the quality of which is at the third grade. Why don't I get someone to bring them to you later?"

With his face growing cold, Qin Yang smiled and said angrily, "Don't celebrate too soon, Qin Yue! We don't know yet who will be laughing in the end. When the time comes, I'll definitely give you the best treatment."

"Oh!" Qin Yue shook his head and sighed. With a trace of ridicule in his eyes, he said, "It hurts me when you reject my kindness. But never mind, just don't be so reckless next time, will you? Duke Jingguo is a mighty man, and I'll be very sad if he accidentally kills you. Haha!"

When he finished, he could not help but burst out laughing. He had never been so happy after fighting Qin Yang for so long. The group of courtiers behind him also laughed together as they took their leave.

Soon afterward, the great hall was left with only Qin Yang and those loyal to him.

After leaving the palace, Qin Yue mounted on a horse and rode toward Yunxiao and Li Chunyang. It took him only a brief while to catch up with them, then he ordered someone to bring the courtier away and lock him up for tomorrow's ceremony. His face beamed with admiration as he smiled at Yunxiao and said, "Young Master Yun, what you've done today has awed the entire court! By the way, Jialan Academy is recruiting students for the army today. Do you want to join me and have a look?"

Yunxiao considered for a moment, then smiled and said, "Alright. Since this student army will be Your Highness's most loyal troops in the future, I'll go with you and have a look."

Qin Yue was very excited. The formation of a student army suited his needs perfectly. Young as he was, he had little supporters in the court and not many trusted followers, so his priority now was to cultivate a force loyal to him. Those common students who were strong and had no backgrounds were the perfect candidates.

Hence, the group changed their course and rode toward Jialan Academy.

Although it was a semester break, the academy was still very lively. Every year during summer, the academy would list out some training missions for students to choose from. These missions were not only very intensive, but also came with handsome rewards, which were extremely attractive to students who were mostly poor.

Zhong Lishan was well aware of how important this was to Qin Yue, so he had excluded the teachers who were connected to the people in the court from the recruiting process, and only put those with clean backgrounds in charge. Qin Yue had also assigned Bai Mou to oversee the entire exercise. The students became extremely excited when they saw the commander of the State Guardians, resulting in a sharp spike in registration!

In front of a registration counter, Meng Wu was begging a teacher. "Please let my brother sign up. He is also a warrior and has met the conditions of registration."

"I've told you, only students of the academy can sign up!" the teacher said impatiently. "And take a look at your brother! His face is pale green and he is so skinny. He is clearly malnourished! How can he fight the enemy? Now back off and don't block the others behind!"

"Malnourished?" Meng Bai glared at the teacher and slapped the table with a hand. "I eat half a lamb every day! How could you say I'm malnourished?"

The students around them burst into laughter. "How could he eat half a lamb when he is not even taller than half a lamb!"

The teacher was angry, but then he found it funny as well. "I can tell your brother is gifted because he could become a warrior at such a young age, which is rare even in Jialan Academy," he told Meng Wu seriously. "Why don't you wait until the semester break is over, then bring him to sign up for the academy?"

Meng Wu looked resigned while Meng Bai shouted angrily, "You just wouldn't let me sign up, would you? Fine! I'll ask my Master to help! Master sure can help me!"

While smiling, the teacher asked, "Oh? You have a Master? Well, unless your Master is the Dean, he can't do anything even if he's here. Now tell me, who is your Master?"

All of a sudden, a calm voice rang out behind him, "I'm his Master."

Everyone turned to where the voice had come and each of them looked surprised. Li Chunyang and Prince Qin Yue were not known to many, but Yunxiao and Bai Mou were already famous among students.

"What? Li Yunxiao is his Master?"

"He can't be serious, can he? That Li Yunxiao had just become a warrior himself not long ago."

"It's hard to say. Li Yunxiao is quite strong. Have you forgotten that he is the one who had defeated Lan Xuan with one move?"

"Strong? Hah! That's because his family is rich and powerful, so he can access plenty of resources and advance martial techniques! If I were the young master of the Li Family, I would have long become a Martial Lord!"

"You're just jealous! For me, being rich and powerful is part of a man's strength! Don't let him hear what you said, or you'll have to pay a serious price!"

As soon as Meng Bai saw Yunxiao, he ran over happily and cried out, "Master, I knew you will show up when I need you! This old man refuses to let me sign up!"

Meng Wu was happy to see him too, but there was a hint of nervousness on her face. "Young Master Yun!" She walked up to him and greeted in a low voice.

Li Chunyang said in amazement, "You...you have taken in a disciple?" He gave Meng Bai a few glances, then immediately exclaimed, "Aye, this boy is so young and yet he is already a warrior! Is he even fifteen years old? Why is his face so pale and malnourished? He is such an outstanding disciple! You should have fed him more! A boy in his age needs a lot of nutrition to grow his body! Come here, boy, let grandpa give you some money. Go and buy some meat!"

Meng Bai felt blood rushed up to his face. "Who are you, old man? You are very rude!" he said angrily. "I have plenty of money! And how could you say I'm malnourished?"

It was then that the teacher in charge of registration came back to senses. Unlike those students, he knew who these people were. Hastily, he ran over and greeted, "Rong Zhi offers greeting to Prince Qin Yue, Duke Jingguo, and Commander Bai!"

"What? This young man is Prince Qin Yue?"

"That old man is Duke Jingguo?"

The students around them exclaimed while Meng Bai's face turned pale in an instant. 'Duke Jingguo? Does that mean he is Master's grandfather? But just now I...'

Pa!

As he stood there in a daze, Yunxiao slapped him in the face and knocked him flying away. "How dare you call my grandfather an old man! Lock yourself in the twenty-fold gravity chamber for a day and a night!"

There was a look of surprise in Bai Mou's eyes when she saw Meng Bai. "Rong Zhi, let the boy sign up."

"Understood!" Rong Zhi answered immediately.

Qin Yue smiled as he glanced at the students, whose eyes were filled with awe and respect. "Listen up! Those of you who render outstanding performance in this mission can join the State Guardians directly and become my personal guards, regardless of your background."

The crowd boiled immediately. They could join the State Guardians and become Prince Qin Yue's personal guards! For these poor warriors, such rewards were undoubtedly attractive. Moreover, everyone knew Qin Yue was one of the strongest contenders for the throne, and if he were to ascend the throne in the future, his personal guards would become the emperor's trusted followers!

"Teacher Rong, I want to sign up!"

"Hey, don't push!"

"Fu*k! Aren't you done yet? Get out of here after you've signed up! It's my turn!"

"Line up, people! Don't push!"

"Fu*k! Who is poking at my ass? Don't let me catch you, pervert!"

•••

The students poured in frantically to sign up, seeing which, Qin Yue and Bai Mou exchanged a look with pleasant smiles in their eyes. "Duke Jingguo, Young Master Yun, let us wait over there. The list will be out soon," said Bai Mou. "I estimate we will have over two thousand students signing up this time, and the weakest of them would be at least warriors."

Qin Yue was very excited. He knew that an army of two thousand warriors could fight against one with twenty thousand soldiers or more. After all, warriors were stronger than ordinary soldiers, and it was very possible for one warrior to fight against hundred soldiers.

Yunxiao smiled at Meng Wu and said, "We'll take a rest over there. Bring Meng Bai to me."

Meng Wu blushed when she looked at Yunxiao and her heart raced. She did not know why her hatred for this man, who had intruded her life, had turned into longing. Recently, whenever she was free, her mind would fill with his face. However, when she finally saw him today, she felt blood rush up to her cheeks, and she did not dare to look him straight in the eye.

She nodded hurriedly and ran away to look for Meng Bai, who was thrown hundreds of meters away by Yunxiao's slap.

Chapter 80: The Battle To Establish Authority

Li Chunyang squinted at Meng Wu as he smiled and said, "Boy, she's a good girl, with those good hips of her. She should have no trouble bearing children for you."

"Watch your mouth!" Yunxiao glared at him.

"Ah?" The grandfather pretended to have understood something. "So, another girl has taken your heart? Well, you can still take this one as your concubine. Now tell me, who's that girl? When are you going to bring her to me?"

Yunxiao showed him a middle finger and snapped, "Stop it!"

Before very long, the registration result was out. A total of two thousand, three hundred and thirty students had signed up. Among them twenty-seven were Martial Masters, and the rest were all warriors. Qin Yue could hardly contain the excitement in his heart. These students were the future pillars of the state, and now they were all his, which meant he had grasped the future of the state!

The martial arts arena was packed with people. Zhong Lishan walked up to the grandstand and made a clarion call, with which, the crowd fell silent in an instant.

He glanced at the students with sharp eyes, then said in a deep, powerful voice, "You are the most outstanding students of the academy. Sixty years ago, it was your seniors who had formed the first student army, fought the rebels, and saved Tianshui from peril. Now, with the enemy troops besieging

Kunjin, our state is facing imminent danger once again. Therefore, I have learned from our seniors and gathered you here, so we can contribute to the state!"

"Contribute to the state!" All the students were high in spirits, with ardor and zeal coursing through their blood.

Zhong Lishan raised a hand to quiet down the crowd. "The campaign will be presided over by Prince Qin Yue, and after this is over, His Highness will lead you to a brighter future!"

The arena immediately burst into loud applause, and all eyes shone with enthusiasm. The prospect of becoming the prince's trusted followers had given them hope for the future.

The dean turned to look at Qin Yue, but his pupils suddenly constricted and his eyes stopped at Li Chunyang. He was utterly shocked!

Li Chunyang returned his glance with a big smile, which confirmed his suspicion—the old man had broken through and become a Martial King.

He was happy, though. For many years after Xiao Qingwang was wounded, there had been not an opponent whom he could fight with all his might. Li Chunyang's calm expression immediately stirred him up; he slightly narrowed his eyes and released his aura, which formed into a powerful pressure and soared into the air like a dragon, sweeping out menacingly.

With a cold snort, Li Chunyang put his palms together. Suddenly, his aura compacted into an arc and slashed out through the air. Sharp cutting noises spread in all directions as the arc smashed on the pressure, instantly producing a powerful vortex of force that spun over the arena.

Much of the pressure was dragged up into the air, but some still scattered into the surroundings. The students' faces fell as the force pushed at them, and many were knocked off their feet, falling to the ground on their backs.

By now, even a fool could tell that some people were fighting in the dark. Shocked from that revelation, everyone glanced around.

Meanwhile, Zhong Lishan burst into laughter. "I would like to invite Prince Qin Yue to speak to us!"

The students were confused by the satisfied look on their dean's face while Li Chunyang narrowed his eyes and sunk in deep thoughts.

Apart from the two men, Yunxiao was the only person who saw what happened—his grandfather had suffered a small defeat in that brief exchange. He smiled and did not take the outcome seriously. Zhong Lishan was a seasoned Martial King and had already reached the rank of four-stars while his grandfather was only a one-star Martial King. There was quite a gap between them.

Qin Yue stepped up the grandstand. An aura of someone who had remained in a superior status for a long time wafted out of him, making all the students beneath hold their breath and focus their attention on him, waiting quietly for him to talk.

He smiled and tried his best to calm down, then said in a loud, clear voice, "I have only four things to tell you today. First, each student who has signed up will receive three thousand gold coins! Second, if anyone dies in the battle, his or her family will receive the pension of a grade-five officer, and those who come back alive will receive another three thousand gold coins and be promoted to grade-five officers! Third, those who perform deeds of valor in battle will be incorporated into my personal guards!"

The students cheered at the top of their lungs when they heard that. As long as they survived the mission, they would each have six thousand gold coins and be directly promoted into a grade-five officer after graduating from the academy. And even if they died, their families could receive the pension of a grade-five officer, which was more than enough for them to live comfortably. It was like a pie falling from the sky. Normally, when a student graduated, he or she would have to start as a grade-seven page in the army, and it would take at least ten years to be promoted to grade five, unless the student was already a Martial Master, which gave him or her the right to directly join the State Guardians.

As for the third point, that those who performed deeds of valor in battle would be incorporated into the prince's personal guards, it was simply a complete change of one's destiny. After all, if Qin Yue really ascended the throne in the future, they would be the emperor's personal guards, with the status that was not lower than that of the grade-one courtiers!

When those students who had not signed up heard the lucrative rewards, their eyes immediately grew wide and their hearts were filled with regret!

"And lastly, I've decided to appoint Li Yunxiao as your commander. He will lead you to fight the enemy, and I want you all to obey his orders!"

A hush fell over the crowd, and Zhong Lishan frowned slightly. Even Yunxiao was gaping, as Qin Yue's decision came as a surprise to him.

"Why? You disagree with this?" Qin Yue glanced coldly at the crowd, but no one dared to make a sound.

Suddenly someone shouted, "Yes, I disagree unless he can defeat me!"

Then, another voice rang out as well, "Me too!"

The crowd immediately turned to the two students, and when they saw who the speakers were, they nodded silently.

If there were anyone who dared to challenge Yunxiao after he had defeated Lan Xuan with one move, that would be the two students who ranked higher than Lan Xuan on the Minor Power Chart—Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng!

"It's good for young people to be energetic and dare to challenge," said Qin Yue with a smile. "Come out then, Young Master Yun. Please don't lose, for that would be a slap in my face."

Yunxiao had a bitter smile on his face. It was true that Qin Yue would suffer a blow in dignity if he were to back off now. The prince was in the midst of establishing his authority, and he could not afford to suffer any kind of losses that would impact his effort. With no other choice, Yunxiao walked up to the arena as he glanced at Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng and said indifferently, "Fight me together, both of you."

The arena was boiling once again. The top few students in the Minor Power Chart were all idols of many people, and Yunxiao's arrogance angered them. Although he had defeated Lan Xuan with one move, most people thought it was largely due to luck. How could he ask both of their idols to fight him together? Lin Yu and Bai Chengfeng, on the other hand, looked very angry as well, as if they had been deeply insulted.

Of all the people, only Zhong Lishan was shocked. He had been so busy looking at Li Chunyang just now that he had ignored Yunxiao. 'He's already an eight-stars warrior? I thought he had just become a one-star warrior not long ago? How did he do that?'

'Impossible, this is absolutely impossible!'

He felt it absurd and quickly dismissed the thought that Yunxiao had broken through continuously and become an eight-stars warrior in just slightly over ten days. However, no matter how he studied Yunxiao with his divine sense, he found that he was truly an eight-stars warrior! His expression immediately turned strange like a duck with its neck squeezed by someone.

Yunxiao walked up the arena to where he had defeated Lan Xuan with one move. His statue was standing mightily not far away, shining dazzlingly under the bright sunlight.

Lin Yu, who was on the left, suddenly jumped up and thrust his spear a few times, then stepped lightly on the tip of the spear and fell back on the ground.

His beautiful performance immediately won him a round of loud cheers and applause. With the spear in hand, he said angrily, "Li Yunxiao, you are too arrogant!"

Yunxiao smiled faintly and said, "So what? I have the strength to be arrogant."

"We'll know if you truly have the strength after this!" Lin Yu squatted down a little, then thrust his spear and jumped tens of feet forward, leaving afterimages behind him as the tip of his spear went for Yunxiao's vital spots.

"He's so fast, and his attack is so powerful!" All students were shocked while those in the front rows felt a stab of pain in their ears from the explosive noise caused by the attack.

Zhong Lishan's eyes lit up as he said approvingly, "The attack is as powerful as a tiger and a dragon, and there's a faint tiger roar mixed with a dragon screech. Although this Lin Yu is only a three-stars Martial Master, he can already perform such a fearsome attack. He's truly gifted!"

Li Chunyang's pupils constricted; he was worried about his grandson. He knew Yunxiao was strong, but he had never seen the latter fight before. Moreover, Yunxiao's opponent was a three-stars Martial Master, and the attack was such a mighty one that perhaps even a five-stars Martial Master might not be able to defend against it.

"Not bad, the Dragon and Tiger Spear Technique! In this case, I'll subdue the dragon and tiger today!"

Yunxiao's pupils shone with a strange light as he took a step and locked himself in a horse stance, then lifted his right fist and casually pushed it out toward the tip of the spear. Meanwhile, he smiled and said, "Watch carefully, Meng Bai! Didn't you keep asking me to teach you the Tiger Knuckle Fist? I'll teach you now!"

"Tiger Knuckle Fist!"

"What!" All eyes grew wide in an instant. It was not Yunxiao's choice of Tiger Knuckle Fist that shocked them, but his action of fighting the sharp tip of the spear with his fist! Was he mad?

Yes, under the protection of Primordial Qi, a warrior did not have to be afraid of sharp weapons, but Yunxiao was one realm lower than his opponent!

Bam!

The fist smashed on the spear tip, causing it to produce the vibrating sound of a mystic weapon.

The Tyrant Body Tempering Technique cultivated by Yunxiao was the strongest body tempering technique in the world, which had given him a body as strong as a diamond!

"He stopped the attack! How's that even possible!" Everyone was shocked while Zhong Lishan and Li Chunyang had their mouths dropped open.

"Yes! Master is so strong! Defeat him, Master!" Meng Bai shouted excitedly. The Tiger Knuckle Fist performed by Yunxiao was exactly the same as the one he had learned from Uncle Li, but Uncle Li had never dared to fight a spear with bare hands.

Lin Yu could not believe what had happened. The force that came from the shaft had broken the skin of his palm and almost knocked the spear out of his hand. Although he did not know how Yunxiao did that, he knew that if he didn't fight with all his might, he would probably never have a chance soon.

"Unseal!"

"The spear that moves like a tiger and a dragon, the Roaring Spear of Dragon and Tiger!"

As soon as the spear was unsealed, it transformed into numerous shadows and flew up into the air. Shockingly, all the shadows were actually tigers and dragons! While roaring, they swooped down from all directions and enveloped Yunxiao in an instant!