

## Three Realms 201

### Chapter 201: Dan Fei's Punishment

The spirit medicine gave off a chilly warmth as it was slathered on Dan Fei's buttocks. The medicinal effects it had gave off a weakening and itchy feeling, nearly making her entire body feel weak and powerless. She felt the weakening and itchy sensation seep down into her heart from the surface of her skin. There was something that was scratching at her heart, it was an indescribable feeling.

In that moment, she wished both for Jiang Chen to hurry and finish applying the liquid, and she vaguely felt that this feeling didn't seem that bad and she didn't want it to end so quickly.

However, her sense of shame triumphed in the end and she cleared her throat, about to speak.

Jiang Chen had already finished applying the antidote and he pulled up her leather shorts. "I'm done."

Although he only applied a bit of healing liquid, it had been a great test for him. Despite seeing countless numbers of beauties in his past life, the body of his current life was still that of a hot-blooded youth.

Dan Fei's figure was indeed very worthy of pride. When Jiang Chen was applying the antidote, he'd been able to feel those extremely perky buttocks. It would be a falsehood to say that he wasn't disturbed with a woman on his lap at all.

It was a good thing that there was only one injury here, decreasing the amount of time that Jiang Chen spent in awkwardness.

Dan Fei was also quite embarrassed as she stood up and she didn't dare meet Jiang Chen's eyes. She only said lowly, "Thank you."

Jiang Chen smiled dashingly and he walked a distance of about twenty to thirty meters away, leaning against a tree as he sat down cross legged.

"It's still some time before daybreak, get some rest."

Dan Fei didn't sleep at all that night. All sorts of notions flitted through her head throughout the entire night. She berated herself for her willfulness first, then she was excited about capturing four baby spirit animals. She was then still a bit panicked about the poison, but then, she celebrated surviving a disaster.

But mostly, the moment and sensation of Jiang Chen slathering the spirit liquid on her buttocks seemed to be frozen in time. It was locked to and deeply imprinted in her consciousness. It wouldn't go away no matter how much she refused to think about it.

Before today, Dan Fei wouldn't even roll up her sleeve when she interacted with men in the outside world. Very few touched even her arm, much less than such an embarrassment inducing place.

And today, without any forewarning, she had been touched by a man in such close quarters, and in such a sensitive place to boot.

Dan Fei had always preserved her personal purity, and thus, it was difficult for her heart to not pound like a madly dashing fawn at this moment. She would occasionally become lost in a deep reverie, and sometimes, she couldn't help but revisit the sensation in her mind.

Utilizing the cover of night, she cast a guilty look at Jiang Chen. When she saw that Jiang Chen maintained his stance of sitting cross legged and that he was an unmovable as a mountain, Dan Fei's thoughts were even more in a disarray.

"What is wrong is me?! This brat Jiang Chen hasn't done anything to me. He can treat this calmly, so why am I the one thinking wild, random thoughts?" When Dan Fei saw that Jiang Chen was unmoving as a mountain, she both slightly admired him and also felt slightly depressed.

In her view, Jiang Chen should be like her, unable to find peace all night long as well.

Her thoughts had free rein all night until the faint rays of dawn scattered down from the sky. Dan Fei only came to her senses when a night's worth of ridiculous thoughts were dispelled by the morning light, and her mind regained its clarity.

When she checked herself again, she noticed that the injuries had already healed. The most amazing thing was that there was almost no trace of any injury on the surface of her wounds.

"Just what miraculous medicine did Jiang Chen use? It healed my external injuries quickly, and there's no trace left on my skin at all. It's as if it was never injured!"

Dan Fei discovered that the more time she spent with Jiang Chen, the more she discovered that there were many unfathomable secrets hidden on this young man's body.

The lordmaster had an eye for them alright, he had long since discerned Jiang Chen's unique aspects.

Dan Fei hadn't come into much contact with Jiang Chen before, and now that she had many opportunities to interact with him, she realized that he appeared harmless to man and beast, and even a bit of a lazy scoundrel when she thought about it.

However, there seemed to always have been a mysterious halo hidden on Jiang Chen's body.

From that day at the banquet, he'd used a jug of wine that seemed so poor that one almost couldn't bear to take it out and turned it into the best gift with a shake of his body.

The Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon had been more dead than alive, and so many experts had been unable to give a conclusion. He'd shed light on this mysterious matter with some careless words.

Elder Ning was more than forty years old, but one Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill had immediately made her twenty years younger. Dan Fei had found out, through private investigation, that this pill did indeed have something to do with Jiang Chen.

When she took another look at how Jiang Chen had made almost no major movements since arriving in the capital, she realised that he had turned situation in the capital inside out unbeknownst to all. Even the usually calm and steady first prince Ye Dai had ended up with dust on his face several times, and he almost departed from his usual urbane grace and lost his composure several times.

The usually well-behaved fourth prince Ye Rong, who seemed to hold himself aloof from the world, had suddenly risen to fame, his influence rising to prominence. He almost had the air of being on an equal footing as the first prince.

The Skylarell Kingdom Medallion hadn't made an appearance in thirty years, yet, the lordmaster had abruptly given it to this young man all of a sudden.

A large number of bizarre things had cropped up after they made it into the maze realm.

The mortal rank creatures had circled around them whenever they saw him, as if there was a miraculous halo around Jiang Chen that caused even the mortal rank creatures to give way.

Jiang Chen's methods in that fight against the giant ape had caused her to be even more shocked. The throwing dagger techniques that he deployed at the end gave even Dan Fei, someone who regularly watched the lordmaster practice, a sense of gazing upon a high mountain and being unable to see through him.

He then healed her wounds. His knowledge and manipulation of all sorts of spirit medicines and poisons had demonstrated a level of ability that was absolutely not something that a young man would possess.

When he'd administered the antidote to her just now, Dan Fei had even been mentally prepared to allow that darned brat to take a small bit of advantage of her. However, Jiang Chen had been refined and civil, as if that dratted rogue from before wasn't him at all.

He was at times lazy, and at times like a thug. Sometimes violent like a demon, other times as unfathomable as a sage. He was also sometimes as courteous as a gentlemen.

These drastically different traits actually appeared on the same person. Dan Fei had to admit that she really couldn't understand Jiang Chen.

Dan Fei once again prepared breakfast when she got up. She then found a source of water and immersed a piece of cloth in it, not wringing it dry.

She walked to Jiang Chen, "Stop pretending to be asleep and wipe your face."

When she saw that Jiang Chen still retained traces of her graffiti, Dan Fei felt amused and she suffered from a guilty conscience.

Jiang Chen suddenly opened his eyes, "Offering your attentions for no reason whatsoever, something is definitely up. This is your second attempt to get me to wash my face, is there something on it?"

Jiang Chen stood up and went to find a water surface to take a look at what was going on with his face.

Dan Fei was greatly worried and she cast away all thoughts of demureness. She grabbed Jiang Chen's arm and swiped at his face with the cloth.

Jiang Chen grabbed her jade hands and yanked the piece of cloth down to see the black charcoal marks on it.

"Sister Dan Fei, to think that you have such a child's heart to draw on my face. It looks like you won't know that I'm not one to trifle with if I don't punish you!"

Having said that, he hauled Dan Fei up with his left hand and smacked her butt, slapping her seven to eight times in one go.

This change was extremely sudden, and Dan Fei hadn't thought it was at all possible that Jiang Chen would use this sort of method to punish her.

After being swatted a few times, the pain on her butt was one thing, but Dan Fei was acting like her entire being had been electrocuted and she stood there, petrified.

"He... he hit my butt?" Dan Fei's brain was a muddled mess. She only felt that Jiang Chen had domineeringly broken through a territory that no one had ever trespassed before. A sense of embarrassment and shame surged up as she fell onto the ground, crying with a sense of aggrievement.

Jiang Chen had completely forgotten Dan Fei's identity in his vexation.

He suddenly came to himself after the seven or eight hits had finished.

He seemed to have gone overboard? If this punishment had landed on that little girl, Eastern Zhiruo, the little girl would've chuckled merrily and acted even more wildly.

If it'd been on Gouyu before she'd become his follower, she would resist unto her death and maybe even fight him. Now that she was his follower, she'd likely take it quietly and then be sullenly angry at him.

However, Dan Fei, a woman who usually looked quite open and accepting, had actually burst out crying!

Her charming shoulders were shaking slightly. Although she hadn't broken out into loud sobs, she couldn't help but sniffle and appeared to feel quite wronged.

Jiang Chen had handled many problems in his past life, but he never had much talent at handling a woman's tactics of crying, making a fuss, and then threatening to harm herself.

He wanted to say something when his consciousness suddenly shifted and his entire being shot through the air to a region in the west like a javelin.

"Who is it? Sneaking around, show yourself!"

When Dan Fei heard Jiang Chen's words, her body also wavered slightly as she also stood up, carefully concealing her slightly reddened eyes.

There were disciples of the Skylareel Kingdom all over the maze realm. Dan Fei didn't want her current condition to be glimpsed on by others.

"Liu Can, is that you?" Jiang Chen's tone chilled.

A dark figure dashed out of some shrubbery in the west. It was the Azure Heaven Northern Palace disciple, Liu Can.

"Liu Can, what are you doing here?"

Liu Can looked at Jiang Chen and then looked at Dan Fei, smiling coldly, "I was just passing by, what does that have to do with you?"

"Get out of my way."

A beam of killing intent flashed through Liu Can's sinister face, "Jiang Chen, this is the maze realm, you better keep a clean mouth and don't give me an excuse to kill you."

"Kill me?" Jiang Chen laughed leisurely. "You, eunuch?"

When Liu Can heard this degrading term, the expression of a poisonous viper surfaced on his face, "Jiang Chen, you dumb animal, I'll let you strut around for a while!"

Contrary to expectations, Liu Can, who had a bone deep hatred of Jiang Chen, actually didn't continue making trouble for him. Liu Can's figure flashed as he vanished in the vast plains.

Jiang Chen's brow furrowed as he looked in the direction that Liu Can had vanished in, contemplating something.

Dan Fei had already walked over by now. Her expression was faint as if nothing was out of the ordinary. It was like the matter of swatting the butt hadn't happened at all.

A woman's heart was unfathomable. Although Jiang Chen saw Dan Fei like this, he didn't actually dare to treat her like nothing had happened.

"This maze realm is expansive, but he happened to pass by coincidentally. Do you believe that?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Doesn't matter." Dan Fei's attitude was detached. "He wouldn't dare to act wildly in the maze realm even if he had ten people's worth of guts."

"Although that's the case, I still feel as uncomfortable as if I'd eaten a mosquito, thinking that a pair of eyes is taking furtive glances at me in the dark." Jiang Chen was still ticked off.

"Kill him if you find him an eyesore!" Dan Fei said noncommittally.

"What?" Jiang Chen started. "Wasn't it said that personal grudges can't be settled in the maze realm?"

Chapter 202: A Ye Dai Prepared to Kill His Own Brothers

"Rules are dead, life and death is alive." Dan Fei's tone was noncommittal and it suddenly turned faint. "The rules say that men shouldn't bully women, but didn't you still bully me?"

Jiang Chen smiled awkwardly and rubbed his nose, at a loss for words.

The atmosphere was a bit strange as an ugly silence prevailed. It was Dan Fei who broke this awkward atmosphere.

"Jiang Chen, I'm sorry."

"What for?" Jiang Chen frowned. "It seems that I should be the one saying that."

"I shouldn't have been willful and I shouldn't have drawn on your face." Jiang Chen hadn't thought that Dan Fei's tone would be like this.

"Alright, I admit that the pressure from last night's matters may have been a bit great and it got to me for a bit. It's never a right thing for a man to hit a woman."

In actuality, Jiang Chen hadn't really laid into her with those swats. It'd been like an adult lecturing a child and giving them a bit of punishment.

"You keep talking about it." Dan Fei admonished with a pout.

"Alright, I won't speak on. I just want to say... nice elasticity." Jiang Chen laughed heartily.

"Damned scoundrel!" Dan Fei cursed in her anxiety, and then sighed remotely. "Jiang Chen, you're really a little demon. I've never suffered so much in my entire life."

"You suffered? I'd think you probably wanted to laugh in your sleep after getting four baby spirit animals."

Dan Fei's emotions indeed changed immediately when the baby spirit animals were mentioned. She had a faint and proud smile as she lowered the bamboo basket on her back.

The four furry and fuzzy babies were obviously not familiar with the ways of the world. They gurgled and emitted all sorts of sounds, making various faces at Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen, would you say that they're hungry?"

"No sh\*t, don't you see that they're so hungry that their eyes are tinged green?" Jiang Chen threw a couple of fruits that he'd gotten from the cave in the basket.

The four babies started violently fighting each other for the food, as he had expected.

What Dan Fei hadn't expected was that although the four babies seemed to coexist in great harmony normally, the four of them became abnormally fierce when food appeared, and all that seemed to affect the posture of laying their lives down on the line in fighting for food.

"The world of the spirit creatures is indeed that of the weak becoming prey to the strong and survival of the fittest!"

"What do you mean?" Dan Fei didn't quite understand.

"It's simple. Although these four baby spirit apes are born of the same mother, only one will survive in the end. They must kill and eat their kind, with one emerging from the masses as the final winner in the end. You can tell from their posture in fighting for food. Perhaps, when they're fully grown, they might even fight the adult giant apes who gave birth to them to the death in a bid for territory. These are the rules of survival of spirit creatures. Survival of the fittest in natural selection. They were born into this cycle of life and no one can escape it."

Jiang Chen wasn't speaking in vain. His understanding of spirit creatures identified most spirit creatures as thus. The higher their intelligence was, the more they were so.

One mountain would not allow two tigers to exist on it. Such was the philosophy.

It was rather those lower beasts whose intelligence had yet to flower, or those spirit beasts who, by nature, liked to form packs, and gathered in large groups.

The Goldwing Swordbirds for instance.

Of course, it wasn't just limited to the Goldwing Swordbirds. There were too many spirit creatures species to count in this big, big world. The numbers of spirit creatures who liked to gather together were as many as the hairs on an ox. Some were in such large numbers that they became a disaster, such that kings of spirit creature that were stronger than them by tens or hundreds of times had to give way in front of them.

Dan Fei was deep in thought as her charming eyes rested briefly on Jiang Chen's face. She sighed, "Jiang Chen, is there anything you don't know?"

"Is there anything I don't know?" Jiang Chen chuckled as a tragic trace suddenly shot through his face. There really was something he didn't know.

He suddenly thought of his father, the Celestial Emperor, in his past life. How was he now? And how had he reincarnated into this world?

He really didn't know this. Even if he was unsurpassed in his knowledge and his learning from his past life crossed all planes of existence, he knew nothing when faced with this problem and he had no clues at all.

"Miss Dan Fei, take for instance, if we're in a circle right now. All that we know is what's in this circle. There are many more unknowns in the world outside the circle. It's only when we set foot outside of that circle that we know our original knowledge was much, much too little."

Jiang Chen's round of emotional reflection wasn't putting on a contemplative air, he was truly speaking from the heart.

A beam of surprise shot out from Dan Fei's beautiful eyes. She didn't think that Jiang Chen, with his openly humorous personality, would suddenly voice such deep words.

"Let's go." Jiang Chen called out to her, just as Dan Fei was slowly turning over Jiang Chen's words in her mind.

"Where are we going?" Dan Fei asked.

"Liu Can is part of Ye Dai's group. I keep thinking that his appearance was a bit odd. We should go take a look and see if that kid Ye Dai is up to something."

Dan Fei started. She didn't actually want to become involved in the struggles and politics between the princes. From her aloof perspective, it was all the same no matter who was Crown Prince or king.

Even if Ye Dai or Ye Rong was king, they wouldn't dare act atrociously in front of her, Dan Fei.

However, after last night's battle, Dan Fei seemed to have unknowingly accepted the fact that their roles had changed. She'd gone from keeping a death grip on the reins of power to naturally listening to Jiang Chen's orders.

Jiang Chen's speed was neither fast nor slow as his route didn't seem to have been decided by any particular scouting ahead or thought.

"Jiang Chen, can you find Liu Can and the others by blindly walking around like this?" Dan Fei couldn't help but ask.

“Heh heh, just follow me!”

Dan Fei had long since gotten used to Jiang Chen not playing by the book. She could only keep her head down and continue to follow him.

After two or three days, they’d still had no results. Dan Fei almost wanted to suspect that Jiang Chen had gotten things wrong somewhere? But seeing his look of complete confidence, Dan Fei still restrained the questions that almost bubbled up to her lips several times.

“Alright, it looks like we’re close. Sister Dan Fei, do you want to go with me or wait for me outside?”

“Are you sure they’re close by?” Dan Fei was still a bit suspicious.

“What am I doing here if I’m not?”

Jiang Chen was about to say something when he suddenly grabbed Dan Fei’s hand and dashed into the bushes by the side of the road. He said lowly, “Don’t make any sounds.”

The two of them hid for a while behind the bushes and they saw that two people quickly walked down from the mountain road ahead of them. One of them was first prince Ye Dai.

The other had an arrogant expression with his face tilted towards the heavens. His body shape was mediocre and he wore a uniform. He was a Precious Tree Sect disciple!

However, a sect disciple willing to participate in the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt most likely didn’t have any particularly high status either. At the very least, he wouldn’t be one of the top disciples within the sect.

“This is the place.” Ye Dai halted at the beginning of the road. “Brother Chen, let’s wait.”

The Precious Tree Sect disciple nodded and didn’t say anything. His gaze was like a hawk’s as it patrolled the surroundings, obviously on high alert.

However, Jiang Chen and Dan Fei had long since been prepared and they couldn’t be detected by him.

Ye Dai’s eyes lit up after a while, “They’re here.”

Indeed, a group of people were quickly approaching from the western side of the road. It was a small team with eight people. Third prince Ye Zheng was at their head.

“Number three.” Ye Dai called out.

Ye Zheng quickly walked up, smiling, “Big brother, I’ve finally met up with you.”

Ye Dai clapped Ye Zheng’s shoulder and said quite intimately, “Number three, their positions have been locked onto. My scouts can basically be certain that number four’s small team is in a mountain valley about fifty li in the southeastern direction. They seem to be hunting a spirit creature.”

“Heh heh, that kid Ye Rong has really thrown himself into this.” There was a trace of sarcasm in Ye Zheng’s tone.

“Number three, there’s nothing untoward about the people you brought with you, right?” Ye Dai’s gaze took a spin and looked at all of them.



“Big brother, do you still not trust me? Rest easy about the people I’ve brought, they’re all my confidantes. As long as we pull this matter off flawlessly, I promise that no one will be able to trace it back to us when we leave.”

A trace of ruthless bloodthirst seeped out from Ye Zheng’s mouth.

“Alright, we’ll get rid of number four first and then number two.” There were a resolute intent to kill in Ye Dai’s tone, as if he wasn’t killing his own brothers, but discussing on how to kill chickens.

“Big brother, we’ve discussed this. If you take the throne in the future, you can’t decrease the amount of fortune you give me.”

“Haha, number three, we’ve been close since we were small, would I mistreat you? Us two brothers are the same kind of people. When we pool our efforts together in the future and expand into new territories, perhaps the neighboring sixteen kingdoms will be unified because of us? At that time, I’ll definitely bestow the largest piece of land upon you and have you be in control of the borders of multiple kingdoms!”

Ye Zheng chuckled, “Alright, us two brothers will join hands and do this!”

“Come, rendezvous with my team first.” Ye Dai was quite intimate as he walked abreast with Ye Zheng, heading up the mountain.

When the group of people got far, Dan Fei sighed lightly, “The lordmaster didn’t form a wrong opinion of Ye Dai.”

“Let me guess what the lordmaster said? Hmm, grandiose ambition but puny talent is definitely part of the assessment, perhaps words like pretending to be sanctimonious but willing to do whatever it takes to reach his goals?”

“Mm? You did guess some of it correctly. But a great majority of the noble sons pose as a person of high morals, so the lordmaster wouldn’t have said that. ‘Great ambitions but little talent, extremely cruel and merciless’ was the lordmaster’s assessment of Ye Dai. Therefore, when Ye Dai fancied himself clever and asked that question about unifying the sixteen kingdoms, this actually greatly reduced the lordmaster’s impression of him.”

Jiang Chen firmly condemned Ye Dai, “Grandiose ambitions but puny talent, his abilities are insufficient but he harbors ambitions that his abilities cannot match. This isn’t a good thing, it will bring about disaster to the Skylareland Kingdom.”

Dan Fei was rather surprised by Jiang Chen’s powers of comprehension, to see that he understood that with the merest of hints. This made sense. Although Jiang Chen came from the Eastern Kingdom, when it came to the greater picture of any single kingdom, the matters were all mostly the same.

“Do you want to know what the lordmaster’s view of Ye Rong is?” Dan Fei suddenly asked with a smile.

“Oh? Let’s hear it.” Jiang Chen was close to Ye Rong after all, and so he was a bit curious.

“The lordmaster’s view of Ye Rong was only thus — if he can endure for this moment, he will be worthy of assuming the world.”

“His praise was that high?” Jiang Chen did indeed have a good impression of Ye Rong, but he’d never thought that the lordmaster would have such high praise for him. One had to know that Ye Rong had been exceedingly low key before. His existence amongst the princes was that of being ignored by everyone in all sorts of occasions.

“Yes. Ye Rong has the finesse of a royal son and the even rarer breadth of the mind of a monarch. He’s not blindly cruel and ruthless like Ye Dai, nor is his mind as narrow as Ye Dai’s as to be unable to hold the world.”

Chapter 203: The Mantis Stalks the Cicada, Unaware of the Oriole Behind

Dan Fei’s clever eyes looked at Jiang Chen, a faint smile on her face, “Do you think that just because you and the lordmaster think the same that all heroes think alike?”

Jiang Chen rubbed his nose, “You’ve already said it for me, what else can I say? Frankly speaking, I don’t really care who the Crown Prince is or who the king is. However, I’m a guest of the fourth prince after all, and should do something for him. Besides, from my perspective, him being Crown Prince is better than Ye Dai being in that position, no?”

Jiang Chen’s voice suddenly paused, “How come you’re not surprised by them killing each other? Did you guess it would happen a long time ago?”

Dan Fei displayed a smile full of wisdom, “It wasn’t that I guessed it a long time ago, but that the lordmaster guessed it a long time ago. The talk about deciding the Crown Prince’s position early next year was actually a purposeful leak authorized by the lordmaster. He wanted to make use of this in order to observe and study everyone’s reactions.”

“This examination seems to be a bit big, isn’t it a bit difficult to stop it now?” Jiang Chen smiled.

“Why would this be considered big? Everything is under control.” Dan Fei smiled in response.

“What makes you say that? They’re about to take action. Once the slaughter starts, who knows how many will make it out alive?”

“If only one makes it out, then he’s the Crown Prince. If everyone emerges unscathed, then Ye Rong is the Crown Prince. It’s that simple.”

“Does this mean that you decided that it would be Ye Rong long ago?” Jiang Chen was a bit surprised.

Dan Fei shook her head and smiled mysteriously, “It isn’t that we’ve long since decided on Ye Rong. This conclusion was only reached after the Skylareel Kingdom Medallion was given to you at the lordmaster’s birthday banquet.”

“Eh, I command that much face?” Jiang Chen was a bit ashamed. He hadn’t participated in the struggles between the princes at all. Could it be that he could sway who the Crown Prince was, merely by participating in a birthday banquet, carelessly giving out a random gift, and answering a difficult question? This... this was too ridiculous!

“Don’t be doubtful, the lordmaster is never wrong in his assessment of people. Although he hasn’t spoken clearly, his meaning is still quite clear. Whoever has Jiang Chen at their side will obtain the position of Crown Prince.”

“The king is able to agree to such terms? Can he sit idly by while his sons kill each other?”

Dan Fei sighed. “Jiang Chen, if I were to say that you’re naive, you’re actually slippery beyond belief. If I were to say that you’re sly and crafty, you’re sometimes quite naive as well. To make it to the position of monarch, who amongst them hasn’t killed their own siblings? You even know that the spirit apes will fight and kill each other such that only one is left alive in the end. Do you really think that the rules of survival in the homes of emperors are more gentle than those of the spirit creature world?”

Jiang Chen smiled dashingly. This was true.

Weren’t there rumors that the previous king of the Eastern Kingdom, Eastern Lu, had colluded against the previous Crown Prince Eastern Jun, only taking his throne after the latter’s death? Given that that existed already, it made sense that that similarly existed within the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Guo Jin’s father had been dragged into this matter, and the entire Guo family had suffered a precipitous decline as a result and had fallen into decay.

If Ye Rong were superior enough to walk out alive from this law of the jungle situation, that meant he could withstand trials, and that he had the potential to be king, no matter if it was strength, breadth of vision, or luck.

In contrast, if he died from this little bit of competition, then although his talents outshone those above him, he still hadn’t possessed enough fortune and luck to become a monarch.

They would then have no other choice than the second best. The law of the jungle would determine who walked out alive and who was king.

When his thoughts finally flowed smoothly, Jiang Chen smiled, “Sister Dan Fei, I can’t sit idly by since I’ve run into this. I’m still a guest of the fourth prince after all. When one’s master is humiliated, his subject seeks death.”

Dan Fei gave a winsome smile, “Don’t you put on that kind of act with me. Do you think I can’t tell that you aren’t one of those subjects with high principles?”

Jiang Chen strode forward quickly on the mountain path, with Dan Fei following quickly thereafter. “You’re making a scene with great fanfare. Aren’t you afraid of being discovered and silenced by them?”

“Don’t I have you, a great beauty? I believe that, even though they’ve lost all judgment, they won’t do anything to you!”

“You overestimate my allure. Women are but the decorations of life in the eyes of men. How many emperors from ancient times haven’t loved both land and women?”

Jiang Chen laughed heartily. “No wonder you speak so bluntly to those princes. You’ve long since seen right through them.”

Dan Fei said huffily, “Stop talking nonsense. Jiang Chen, tell me the truth, are you hiding something from me?”

“Do I really need to tell you that? Of course I am.” Jiang Chen smiled. “Don’t you worry, I’ll be able to find them one step before they’re able to discover me.”

He'd anticipate the enemy's movements, and discover traces of the other one step before they discovered him!

Although Dan Fei didn't know why Jiang Chen was so confident, she couldn't find it within herself to doubt him even the slightest bit when she looked at him brimming with confidence.

Jiang Chen didn't follow behind Ye Dai and the others. Rather, he speedily headed to the southeast.

Since he knew that Ye Rong and the others were around fifty li to the southeast, Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't tarry, and made for the mountain valley with full speed.

Ye Dai and the others would still have to make a round of preparations before meeting up. Jiang Chen was quite confident that he could make it to the mountain valley before them.

Indeed, Jiang Chen and Dan Fei made it to the mountain valley after only fifteen minutes.

There was a scout of the first prince's at the entrance the mountain valley. Jiang Chen took Dan Fei in a circle past the scout's eyes and ears, and snuck into the mountain valley.

"Jiang Chen, are we heading in to meet up with them or...?"

"Let's not find them first, in order to avoid acting rashly and alerting the enemy. If the fourth prince knew we were here, his formation would change, and it'd be easily picked up by the scouts."

Dan Fei was lost in thought as she nodded.

"How much of your Mind Enchantment Powder is left?" Jiang Chen asked with a smile.

"Just three bottles." Dan Fei took stock of her inventory.

Jiang Chen chuckled. "Looks like I'll have to use some of my equipment."

Jiang Chen had extraordinary potential in the area of pills, and was naturally quite adept at using poison. He'd made many preparations.

He had two or three choices for items similar to the Mind Enchantment Powder.

Dan Fei saw Jiang Chen almost put on a magic show as he continuously took out a variety of bottles and cans. They appeared to both his left and right as he set them up around him.

Jiang Chen quickly set up a perfect trap.

Dusting off his hands, Jiang Chen smiled. "They're almost here. Shall we take cover and wait, so we can watch the show?"

"Jiang Chen, does this count as helping Ye Rong cheat?" Dan Fei's laughter tinkled.

"This is called making our position impregnable. How could this be called cheating? If we were to really cheat, we'd kill Ye Dai outright. This is just called justified self defense, alright?"

...

There were seven people in total in Ye Rong's small team. Apart from Xue Tong, the remaining six were all his handpicked men.

However, Xue Tong had unexpectedly brought a lot of surprises to him during this Autumn Hunt, particularly throughout the course of hunting. Xue Tong's skill with the bow and arrow were unparalleled as he distinguished himself greatly with his contributions.

Xue Tong's age was young, yet his mind was very calm. He'd participated in the brainstorming before every hunt, and had always been able to find the holes in the plans. He'd been able to pick up on various clues, and been able to take down prey with one hit.

Ye Rong had originally felt that allowing Xue Tong into the team was only giving face to Jiang Chen. He hadn't thought that Xue Tong's abilities would be his unexpected gain.

In terms of absolute power, apart from Lin Qianli in Ye Rong's team, there were two other guards at the half-step spirit realm.

The other three, including Xue Tong, were all at the peak of true qi.

As for Ye Rong himself, his level of strength was also only at the peak of true qi.

In terms of absolute power, apart from Lin Qianli who could solidly overpower Xue Tong, if the other two half step spirit realm personal guards were to engage in a mutual hunt of each other with Xue Tong in this maze realm, it'd be difficult to determine who would come out on top in the end.

"Fourth prince, this spirit creature is heavily injured, and we've already trapped it within the area. Lin Qianli has already gone to search for it, we're certain it won't escape."

Ye Rong nodded, "We mustn't make any mistakes this time. One spirit creature is more valuable than a hundred violent beasts. The first prince has many spirit realm practitioners in his team this time. I'm worried that their haul will far outstrip us in this time's Autumn Hunt."

There were still traces of envy in Ye Rong's tone. The first prince had had a good birth, and had an impressive background. His network was broad, and he was easily able to call upon spirit realm practitioners—even disciples of the Precious Tree sect.

Although Ye Rong was also acquainted with the Precious Tree Sect disciples, it was impossible to expect them to toil on his behalf.

At the end of the day, his foundations were still inferior, and he didn't have enough of a background or enough connections.

Ye Rong sighed in his heart. If Jiang Chen hadn't been reassigned by sister Dan Fei this time, he would've absolutely had hope to make a play for the championship in this time's Autumn Hunt.

But now —

He could only try his best. Although there'd been intelligence that the Crown Prince would be finalized next January, Ye Rong didn't believe that a single Autumn Hunt was enough to determine everything.

However, he also couldn't rest on his laurels. He had to at least demonstrate a proactive attitude.

Xue Tong walked over at this moment. "Fourth prince, this mountain valley is narrow, and the entrance and exit are also quite cramped. This area is a bit bizarre."

“Xue Tong, are you worried about something?” Ye Rong’s greatest advantage was that he was adept at listening to his troop’s opinions, and that he was able to easily grasp his underlings’ meaning.

“Your underling is worried that someone is purposefully manipulating the spirit creature in order to lead us here. Otherwise, how would we have the luck to randomly meet an injured spirit creature? And, the plains are quite vast, why would it escape to a quiet valley with no exit?”

“You think that someone is purposefully manipulating it?”

“Yes. Your underling has just checked the terrain. There’s only one entrance to this mountain valley and one exit. We’ve darted in as if we were running headlong into a cloth bag.” Although Xue Tong wasn’t one of Ye Rong’s men, he was still willing to speak what was on his mind since they were on the same team.

Ye Rong mused silently for a bit. After spending a few days together, he actually didn’t hold any more doubts about Xue Tong’s analysis. He was actually rather superstitious about it.

In terms of power, Lin Qianli and the others in the spirit realm were naturally stronger than Xue Tong. However, in terms of observation, judgement, and skills of analysis, Xue Tong was absolutely top of his class.

“Fourth prince, there will still be opportunities later if we don’t succeed in hunting this spirit creature. However, our team can’t afford to gamble. If we’re surrounded in this valley, we’ll never make it out. And if a slaughter happens here, the outside world will never know.”

Xue Tong had already spoken very clearly.

Ye Rong’s face changed as he was finally moved. “Convey my orders, give up on the hunt. Leave the valley immediately!”

He was born from a king’s household after all. He knew the gravity of the situation after connecting the many dots together.

How was the Maze Realm Autumn Hunt not a struggle of scheming and plotting between the princes? Although it was clearly delineated that no killing was allowed, the rules were dead and only people were alive.

Xue Tong’s words woke Ye Rong up to this possibility.

Chapter 204: First Prince, We Meet Again

His two personal guards were just about to notify Lin Qianli after Ye Rong gave his order, when Xue Tong’s ears suddenly twitched, and his facial expression changed.

“Someone’s entered the valley!”

Ye Rong’s face turned frosty. His two personal guards were deathsworn who’d followed him since he was young. They took up positions on his left and right, protecting Ye Rong behind them.

The other members of the team also quickly gathered after hearing these words.

Lin Qianli, in the midst of hunting the spirit creature, also seemed to sense the danger. He dashed back to the team with a few bounds. Everyone within the team gathered on a patch of empty ground in the mountain valley.

“Hahaha, this maze realm is indeed small. Number four, who would’ve thought that us brothers would meet here in this place.” Ye Dai led the way and strode in with large strides through the entrance.

A large group of people followed behind him. He had nine people in his team to begin with, not to mention third prince Ye Zheng’s eight members.

The two teams combined numbered seventeen people in total.

Out of these seventeen people, there was one second level spirit realm practitioner and three at the first level on Ye Dai’s side, whereas Ye Zheng also had one first level spirit realm practitioner.

There were also four half step spirit realm practitioners in addition to that.

Spirit realm practitioners and half step spirit realm practitioners combined, there were nine practitioners in the spirit realm — more than half of their team.

The other eight, including Ye Dai and Ye Zheng, were all at the peak of true qi, and their battle capabilities weren’t weak.

When Ye Rong saw that Ye Dai and Ye Zheng were walking together, he was inwardly stern.

“Big brother, let’s not interact in the future. We’re hunting a spirit creature here, you’re not intent on flagrantly interfering are you?”

Ye Rong smiled. “This spirit creature has an exceedingly high level of training. Our team can’t handle it. You happen to have a lot of people and experts, perhaps you can try.”

Ye Dai looked at Ye Rong with a supercilious smile.

“Stop pretending number four. Do you really think we’ve come to this valley to steal a spirit creature from you?” Ye Zheng asked with a cold smile.

“Third brother, what do you mean?” Ye Rong’s face darkened.

“Don’t you think that this mountain valley is peaceful and quiet, and that the view is good? It should be a good place to serve as your final resting place, don’t you think?” Ye Zheng sneered.

“Big brother, is this what you’ve come for?” Ye Rong stared at Ye Dai.

Ye Dai smiled faintly, “Number four, if you were as honest and well-behaved as before, and didn’t incite trouble and cause confusion, I wouldn’t have oppressed you. However, you started acting up, and set yourself against me time and time again. You even hardened your heart in the capital to fight me for the limelight. Tell me, how should I view you?”

“Big brother, you and I are both of our royal father’s bloodline, and thus competition should be fair between us brothers. Or is it that, as the eldest brother, you don’t even have the tolerance to accept competition between brothers?”

“Fair competition? What right do you have to compete with me? I, Ye Dai, am the eldest son of the direct line of descent. My mother’s side have been officers for three generations, and our family’s power is second only to the king. Countless opportunities have awaited me since birth. I’ve been destined to take over our royal father’s position. Every single one of my steps has been premeditated and paved, taking me closer towards the dragon throne. You’re a bastard born of a minor concubine. What do you have, other than half of our royal father’s blood? What right do you have to compete with me?”

There were no outsiders here, and they weren’t in the capital. Ye Dai decided to lay it all out, and no longer keep up any pretenses.

“Big brother, this is your theory of qualification? If you were destined to take our royal father’s position since birth, then what need is there for us princes?”

“All of you exist just because he wanted to satisfy a momentary animalistic urge!” Ye Dai didn’t respect even his royal father in this moment.

When Ye Zheng heard these words, a shadow also briefly flashed across his face. However, he tucked it away neatly and concealed it.

“This is to say that you’ve made up your mind today to kill me?” Ye Rong said coldly.

“You’ve got that right. However, seeing that we’re brothers, I can give you the chance to take your own life.” Ye Dai smiled sinisterly. “If you wait for us to make a move, then you’ll be in for some pain. I promise you that I won’t give you an easy death.”

“Good, good. You’re our royal father’s son alright. You pose as a person of high morals alright. Ye Dai, I’ve seen through you!”

“Haha, so what if you’ve seen through me? What does it matter if you conceal your true identity well? All of your previous posing is useless in the face of absolute power. I merely need to wave my hand now in order to thoroughly crush you.”

Ye Rong’s gaze shot to Ye Zheng. “Number three, you’re his accomplice, but haven’t you thought that my circumstances today will be those of yours tomorrow? Do you think he’ll let you sleep soundly beside his bed?”

Ye Zheng laughed heartily, “Number four, do you think trying to play us off against each other will work at this time? I haven’t the slightest bit of interest in the position of Crown Prince. I also admit that I’m inferior to our big brother in many ways, what do I have to compete with? Since I can’t compete with him, I might as well behave properly in this situation, and play my role well. Those who suit their actions to the time are wise. You simply don’t recognize the times when you see them.”

Ye Dai nodded his head in great admiration, obviously very pleased with Ye Zheng’s declarations.

Ye Rong sighed lightly, looking at Lin Qianli, and then looking at his two personal guards.

Lin Qianli said faintly, “Don’t look at me, you valued me as one of the best in the kingdom, and this is how I’ll repay you. I won’t abandon you in your time of need.”

“We shall protect the fourth prince unto death!” His two personal guards also had resolute tones.



Xue Tong sighed and grasped Xue Sha's bow, striking a pose of fighting to the death.

Even though he understood that there was no hope in this battle, there was nothing called submitting to capture with folded arms in the world of practitioners.

"Ye Rong, are you really going to continue putting up a stiff resistance? Floundering desperately at death's door?" Ye Dai shouted.

"Ye Dai, I can die if you want me to die. However, these people don't have much of a connection with me, and have only temporarily formed a team with me. Why must you spare none?"

"Haha, number four, are you still playing the corny act of false benevolence at a time like this? Do you think I'd be touched by you and let them go?"

Ye Dai's face darkened. "Don't be naive. Following you was their original sin, a death sentence! I'll ask you one final time. Will you take your own life, or wait for me to slaughter you?"

Ye Rong's expression was full of ruefulness. "Everyone, to think that I've dragged you down with me this time... don't mind me when the battle begins, make it out if you can."

"Xue Tong, your mind is clear. If you can escape in the heat of battle, go find Jiang Chen. Find Miss Dan Fei!"

Xue Tong sighed lightly. It was apparent that it'd be impossible to escape, judging from the other side's posturing.

"Fourth prince, there's no use in saying anything now. We fight for our lives." A resolute look of fighting for his life appeared on Xue Tong's face.

Fight for their lives!

Ye Rong pulled out his longsword and called out in a hearty shout, "Ye Dai, you've always stylized yourself as the heaven's favored one, and praised yourself as being better than us. Do you have the guts to face off against me? Otherwise, even if you triumph over me with superior numbers, not only will I not accept this defeat, neither will the other princes."

"A one on one? Do you think you're worthy of one?" Ye Dai paid Ye Rong no heed, and gave orders in a clear voice, "Whoever kills him and takes his head will be made the lord of tens of thousand when I take the throne in the future!"

Ye Zheng also cried out, "Leave none alive, kill them all!"

Just at that moment —

Clapclapclap!

A sudden piercing round of applause traveled out from the bushes within the mountain valley.

"Who's there?" The battle had been about to commence when it was halted by this sudden ear piercing round of applause. All gazes looked in the direction of the sound.

Two figures dashed out of the bushes and landed amongst Ye Rong's team.

One of them had a jeering smile on his face — Jiang Chen. The other was expressionless, and wore a remote look, frost covering her features. Who was it but Dan Fei?

“Jiang Chen?” A look of disbelief shot out from Ye Dai’s eyes as he also sent an angry look towards Liu Can of the Northern Palace. “Didn’t you say you’d kept an eye on them, and that they weren’t nearby at all?”

Liu Can’s eyes were also filled with the look of having seen a ghost.

How... how was this possible? He’d definitely detected that they weren’t nearby. How had they appeared here, after disappearing for two, three days? And how had they found Ye Rong’s team?

“First prince, they truly weren’t with Ye Rong’s team before. Can it be that they ran into him by coincidence?” Liu Can explained with a wry expression.

“Useless trash!” Ye Dai cursed lowly.

If only Dan Fei had appeared, not only would Ye Dai not have been mad, but he’d actually have been quite happy. However, adding Jiang Chen into the mix along with Dan Fei’s appearance, made the situation completely different.

He’d be able to take out Jiang Chen as well if he appeared. This was a fantastic development that he could only hope for.

But with Dan Fei, although Ye Dai was ruthless, he’d always maintained an attitude of respect, fear, and one of currying favor with her. To kill Dan Fei as well... this was something that he couldn’t decide on immediately.

“Liu Can, stop pretending. You purposefully left a lot of clues behind along the way so that I could follow you. Didn’t you want me to find you lot?”

Liu Can’s expression changed drastically. “Jiang Chen, don’t you dare make unfounded accusations. When did I leave clues behind, and since when was I purposefully luring you here?”

Jiang Chen smiled without saying a word. He naturally hadn’t followed Liu Can’s clues, but had left a particular powder on Liu Can that enabled him to follow the scent and make his way here.

He’d purposefully said this obviously, in order to make things difficult for Liu Can, and to create trouble between Liu Can and Ye Dai.

Indeed, Ye Dai’s face turned frosty when he heard these words. “What do you mean by this Liu Can? Can it be that you purposefully lured them here?”

Liu Can panicked, “First prince, you believe his nonsense?”

“Liu Can, you dare commit your deeds, but don’t dare own up to them? Didn’t you lure me here so that there’d be a fight between evenly matched forces, resulting in you earning a profit without even working for it?”

Liu Can swore loudly, “Jiang Chen, you motherf\*cking shit! I’m not a freaking prince, what the hell is this about earning a profit without working for it?”

“Who knows? Perhaps you’ve thrown yourself under second prince Ye Qiao’s banner? Perhaps the scene today is something that second prince Ye Qiao crafted?” Jiang Chen chuckled.

Ye Dai’s expression became uglier and uglier as his look at Liu Can became colder and colder!

Chapter 205: First Level Spirit Realm? One Shot, One Second, One Kill!

Liu Can was in a panic, “First prince, do you not know what kind of person I, Liu Can, am? What kind of a thing is the second prince? He’s not even fit to carry your shoes. What kind of future would I have with him?”

“First prince, don’t listen to Jiang Chen’s blather. That person is devious and wily, he must be trying to drive a wedge between us.”

At this moment, the aloof Precious Tree Sect disciple in the second level of the spirit realm faintly gave voice to reason.

Ye Dai started and then immediately understood. “Yes, yes. My thanks to Brother Chen’s for his advice.”

“Jiang Chen, don’t you foment disunity. It’s good that you’ve come, all of our grudges from the capital will be resolved today!”

Jiang Chen chuckled. “Resolved? If you want to resolve things, then you should harden your heart to also slaughter your most respected sister Dan Fei. Otherwise, aren’t you worried that she’d expose your secret of killing your brothers? If a word of that gets out, how will you ever take the throne?”

This was actually what Ye Dai was most conflicted about right now. Jiang Chen had landed a hit on his Achilles’ heel with a single blow.

He did indeed have an almost wicked possessive desire when it came to Dan Fei.

However, he was unwilling to make sacrifices for Jiang Chen and the throne.

Except, he knew that Dan Fei was different than the others. If the others died, any investigations would go nowhere. But if Dan Fei died, then old tutor Ye would never simply give up his investigation.

Once the old tutor investigated and followed the trail all the way to him, Ye Dai, he wouldn’t be able to keep his head, much less the throne.

Dan Fei wasn’t merely an adopted daughter or disciple to the old tutor. She was the old tutor’s psychological sustenance and more precious than the old tutor’s own daughter!

Ye Dai truly didn’t have it in him to kill Dan Fei.

Emotions flickering through his face, his gaze on Dan Fei’s face, Ye Dai said hoarsely, “Sister Dan Fei, I know you’ve always been hoodwinked by number four and so favor him a bit more. Are you truly going to set foot in the struggle between us brothers and take Ye Rong’s side?”

Dan Fei’s gaze was remote as she flicked a glance at Ye Dai. “Ye Dai, I hadn’t thought of becoming involved in the struggle between you brothers before today, I hadn’t picked a side either. However, I’m truly disappointed in your actions today.”

“Sister Dan Fei, since ancient times, only the victors have been remembered. I have had no other choice since the very day I was born in the royal household. You follow the honored tutor and should also know that the heritage of the throne and the passing of power has never been without a bloodshed. I ask not of you to help me, I only beseech you remain neutral, pretend you witnessed none of today’s events. So long as you do, I, Ye Dai, will be grateful to you for the rest of my life. If I were to ascend the throne in the future, I’d gladly to offer up to share the lands with you.”

“Offer up to share the lands with me?” Dan Fei smiled disdainfully. “Ye Dai, do you believe all women beneath the heavens to care about that bit of power your family holds?”

“Sister Dan Fei, being a motherly model of a nation and the mother of a nation is naturally an incomparable wealth. In addition, if I were to cleave and form a ruling dynasty through the neighboring sixteen kingdoms in the future, is the dignity and awe of being the mother of a whole empire not one to bring glory to your ancestors? What other fortune and wealth could possibly measure up to this?”

One had to say, Ye Dai’s eloquence was amazing. His persuasion carried both a confession of his feelings, and a subtle temptation.

Jiang Chen almost wanted to burst out laughing as he listened. Ye Dai’s eloquence was really extraordinary.

As Ye Dai became more and more ardent with his words however, Dan Fei’s charming face darkened further and further.

“Ye Dai, shut your foul mouth. I don’t want to have your laughable comments dirty my ears.” Dan Fei’s face ice-cold as she spoke frostily.

“You... have you finally hardened your heart to stand on Ye Rong’s side?” Ye Dai’s eyes were filled with anguish. But that anguish quickly turned into raging fury. “What’s so good about him? His birth? His methods? Or his political games better than mine? Dan Fei, why must you always stand on his side and always help him out when he runs into trouble, yet always ignore me when I do? Dan Fei, I revere you as goddess, and yet you treat me as a pig or a dog?”

“You think too much. I’ve said that I have no interest in the struggles between you princes.”

“Alright, since you have no interest, leave immediately. I promise I won’t touch you if you swear an oath not to mention the things of today.”

Dan Fei’s shapely body remained where she was, not moving in the slightest. She didn’t say anything and only looked at Ye Dai with a noncommittal look.

“Are you leaving or are you not?!” Ye Dai growled.

“I don’t want to kill you. If you don’t leave and don’t swear, you’re forcing my hand. Dan Fei, don’t force me!” Ye Dai raged like a wild beast.

“I’m not forcing you to do anything. You’re forcing yourself.”

Ye Dai’s eyes suddenly shone with determination. “Alright, since this is the case, don’t fault me for being heartless Dan Fei. Carry forth my orders, kill everyone besides Dan Fei without exception. And if she bars you, kill her as well!”

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely, "After so much talk, are you finally revealing your true colors?"

Ye Dai's face darkened as he roared, "And I will richly reward whoever kills Jiang Chen for me!"

With Jiang Chen's appearance, Ye Dai discovered that the person he hated the most and ranked first among those he wanted to see dead wasn't Ye Rong, but Jiang Chen instead!

"I'll do it!" Liu Can grinned hideously and charged from his side, barreling towards Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen remained as unmoving as a mountain, flicking his wrist and displaying a throwing dagger in his hand —

The Flying Eagle Form!

A cold light flashed as the throwing dagger vanished into thin air. By the time everyone finally realized what was going on, they'd discovered that the throwing dagger had already sunk into Liu Can's throat.

Liu Can's body had just sprinted out less than ten meters when it abruptly stiffened, his hands forming a death grip around his neck, his eyeballs bugging out of his skull like a dead fish's.

Producing gurgling noises out of his throat as his hands clenched desperately, as if he wanted to grasp onto the life escaping his body and shove it back into himself.

However, it was all in vain.

Bam!

Liu Can's body slumped down with a thud and sent countless bits of dust flying.

This turn of events had taken place extremely quickly, as if lightning had flashed through the scene.

When everyone came to their senses, Liu Can had already turned into a corpse.

Even Ye Rong's side was flabbergasted, not to mention Ye Dai's side being utterly stunned. Apart from Dan Fei having a noncommittal expression and without any particular reaction, everyone else was insensate as wooden chickens.

"Jiang Chen, you... you killed Liu Can with one strike? At the first level of the spirit realm?" Lin Qianli made noises of astonishment and walked up to look at Liu Can's bedraggled body, his eyes full of awe and admiration.

Xue Tong also walked up, "Young master."

Jiang Chen clapped Xue Tong's shoulder, "Not bad, you were the only one in the entire team who observed the terrain of the mountain valley and identified the red flags."

Ye Rong's team all blushed deeply. However, Jiang Chen was right. No one had thought to observe the terrain apart from Xue Tong, and no one else had considered that this might be a trap.

Except, everyone was even more curious in just when had Jiang Chen arrived? How had he known that the first prince's team had designed such a trap?

Ye Dai looked at Liu Can's body and couldn't believe his eyes for a while. Jiang Chen had killed Liu Can of the first level spirit realm in one second with one strike?

"Brother Chen, this Jiang Chen is quite troublesome. It looks like it's time for you to take the field." Ye Dai's gaze looked towards the Precious Tree Sect disciple, the second level spirit realm practitioner.

"Huh. The potential of the disciples from the Northern Palace is limited alright. This so-called first level spirit realm is likely inferior to even that of the half-step spirit realm of my Sect. Prince Ye Dai, killing Jiang Chen doesn't seem to be part of our agreement. How will you compensate me taking action?"

The Precious Tree Sect disciple had a detached tone. It was obvious that he was only hired by Ye Dai and not one of his deathsworn.

Ye Dai clenched his teeth. "Your pay will be doubled. As long as you kill Jiang Chen, your pay will be doubled compared to what we previously agreed to."

"Triple!" The Precious Tree Sect disciple Chen Li extended three fingers. "No haggling allowed. This Jiang Chen is a true first level spirit realm practitioner. It will take a bit of effort to kill him. If it was something like Liu Can, I wouldn't have wanted three times. I would've wanted two times at most."

"Triple is triple then. Take action now!" Ye Dai was also quite decisive.

A hair raising smile surfaced on Chen Li's face as he nodded. "The first prince is indeed resolute. I will have Jiang Chen's head!"

Ye Rong hastily said from his side, "Honored sir is a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect, what need is there for you to become embroiled in the royal family's struggles? He offers three times the agreed upon fee, I'm willing to do five times as long as you're willing to not make a move and remain neutral. How about that?"

Chen Li chuckled and halted his footsteps as expected. He looked at Ye Dai, "First prince, your younger brother seems to be more generous than you."

Ye Zheng hastily said, "Brother Chen, don't listen to him. Ye Rong is a destitute pauper, how would he have that much money to give you? My big brother is offering three times, I offer three times as well. This makes six times in total. One final price, let's not haggle anymore. Kill Jiang Chen for six times the agreed upon price and we'll make good on our agreement when we leave!"

The smile on Chen Li's face grew broader and broader. What he wanted most right now was for the two sides to keep topping each other's bid so he could profit without working for it.

Ye Rong grit his teeth. "I'll do ten times!"

Jiang Chen smiled at this point, "Fourth prince, since when did you have so much money? Ten times? If you have ten times the agreed upon amount, give it to me and I'll take all their heads for you."

Chen Li had wanted to keep listening to Ye Rong's offers, but the smile on his face abruptly vanished when he heard Jiang Chen's words and he spoke frostily. "Ye Rong, you have no further chances."

"Even if you offer a hundred times now, you must all die!"

“Jiang Chen, you’re first!”

Killing intent exploded in Chen Li’s eyes.

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely. “I definitely wouldn’t be that optimistic if I were you.”

Chen Li laughed hideously. “Optimistic? I’m a genius of the sect and my training is at the second level of the spirit realm. You’re just at the first level spirit realm. Do you think you can take me on with your throwing dagger techniques?”

“Whatever, I’ll let you see what’s a true disciple of the sect today, and what’s a true genius!”

Chen Li’s aura suddenly expanded after he concluded his short speech and he drew upon his spirit ocean. Spirit power surged out of his body as his body was ensconced by a dense red light, as if a ball of fire blazing to the heavens.

However, Jiang Chen seemed to not see any of this as he smiled faintly, seeming to think Chen Li was a clown.

“You can still smile when death is staring you in the face!” Chen Li roared. “I wonder if something’s wrong with your head or if you can really back up your talk.”

Jiang Chen spoke easily with a smile, “Oh I can smile alright, but I think that you’ll be unable to soon enough. The more you draw upon your spirit ocean now and the more awesome you try to be, the faster you’ll discover how weak you’ve become.”

“What?” Chen Li’s heart suddenly sank as he seemed to discover that strands of a weird presence was seeping into his spirit ocean.

Chapter 206: After Joy Comes Sadness for Ye Dai

“Oh no, I can’t seem to gather my true qi!”

“Mm? Something’s wrong. My spirit ocean seems to have sucked in something!”

“Ah, my true qi can’t be gathered either!”

Everyone on Ye Dai’s side started yelling all of a sudden.

Ye Dai’s face also greatly changed, because he too discovered that he couldn’t summon his true qi. Not only his men, but even he himself had an empty dantian, as if his true qi was locked by something and he couldn’t gather the slightest bit of it.

Chen Li’s face had drastically changed. It was as if he was a duck whose throat was being clutched by a hunter as he emitted raspy sounds, “Jiang Chen, you used poison?”

“Congratulations, you’ve guessed correctly. Chen Li, is it? How many times the agreed upon rate do you think you can get now?” Jiang Chen had a shadow of smile on his face.

Chen Li’s disposition was ashen faced as his arrogant flames seemed to have been directly put out with a bucket of cold water. His face was filled with a terrified look, “Jiang Chen, if... if you dare kill me, the Precious Tree Sect will never let you go.”

Jiang Chen's face darkened, "Give me a reason not to kill you."

"I..." Chen Li's first notion was to say that 'I'm a genius of the Precious Tree Sect and a disciple of the Sect. You'd be making yourself out to be an enemy of the Sect if you killed me.'

However, he wasn't a complete idiot after all. Those sorts of weak threats weren't useful in a moment like this.

You wanted to kill the opponent first and now you were caught in their plot. Why would they not kill you now because of a few threats? How was that possible at all?

"Jiang Chen, tell me what you want. I will bring it out if I can. We have no enmity between us and we'd both be dying because of wealth. I kill you because I've been hired by another and because I seek wealth. If you kill me, there's nothing in it for you, so why bother? You can gain great benefits if you don't kill me. I can also swear to the heavens that I'll never seek revenge on you and cause trouble."

One had to say that Chen Li was a very practical person. When he saw that the circumstances weren't looking right, he would immediately beg for mercy and present his soft side. He wouldn't dither about at all.

"I can, not kill you. I don't need your ransom money and I don't need you to swear an oath to the heavens. I only have one request."

"Please tell me!" Chen Li was overjoyed and rushed Jiang Chen. "Tell me, I can agree to any request."

"Only one of you can leave this place alive. I'll let you go if you kill them all." Jiang Chen said with a faint smile.

"Do you mean that?"

"Do I look like someone who jokes?" Jiang Chen faintly asked.

Dan Fei walked up at this time. "Jiang Chen, please give me some face and let them go this time."

Jiang Chen was dumbfounded. "Why?"

Dan Fei said faintly, "Just tell me if you agree or not!"

Jiang Chen was momentarily struck speechless.

"If you kill them now, it'll be easily traced back to you when we leave. You'll be a public enemy of the Skylaurel Kingdom then. Even if you have the Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion, it wouldn't help you. That Chen Li is a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect. It'll be troublesome if you kill a disciple of the Sect."

Dan Fei looked at Ye Dai. "I'll be sure to report to the lordmaster the truth that Ye Dai wanted to kill his own brothers. His days as first prince are numbered. His enemies will naturally take care of him then, why dirty your hands?"

Jiang Chen was of a mind to turn her down, but Dan Fei was quite resolute in her request. He could only look at Ye Rong with resignation, "Fourth prince, I will no longer involve myself in this matter. You do as you see fit."



Ye Rong looked ruefully at Dan Fei and decided to make a friendly gesture at no extra cost to himself. "Sister Dan Fei, I'll listen to you. However, I'm afraid that Ye Dai is unwilling to give up and he will still make trouble for us when we leave this mountain valley."

Dan Fei didn't allow Ye Dai to be killed also because she was thinking of past history. Whether it was Ye Dai or Ye Zheng, they had both received tutelage from the lordmaster and they had grown up a step at a time in his care.

Although Dan Fei wasn't kindly disposed towards them, and she disliked them even, she still wasn't willing to see them die here.

Ye Rong was the same as Jiang Chen in that he was more than unwilling to see the situation develop thus. However, the greatest difference between him and Ye Dai was that he could contain his anger of the moment.

Since Dan Fei had promised that she would make a report to the lordmaster when they got out, Ye Dai was as good as nothing. As long as Ye Dai was stripped of his titles, he, Ye Rong's, greatest competitor was no more.

Since Ye Dai was no longer a threat to him making a play for the throne, there would be more than enough chances to kill him in the future even if Ye Rong didn't kill him today.

Ye Dai thought he was dead without a doubt and didn't hold any hope. When he suddenly heard that Dan Fei was begging for mercy on his behalf, he was overjoyed.

"Number four, don't kill me. Anything is yours if you don't kill me. I promise that I won't contest for the position of Crown Prince when we leave, and that I'll be a powerless royal who doesn't inquire after matters of politics in the future. I can also swear to the heavens that I will never seek revenge for what happened today and I will never cause trouble again."

Ye Rong's brow creased. "It's not that I'm not killing you, it is because sister Dan Fei is sparing your dog of a life."

Dan Fei also felt disgusted by Ye Dai's ugly display. "Ye Dai, conduct yourself well. You're being let off the hook this time because I'm begging for mercy for you on the lordmaster's behalf. You won't be that lucky next time."

"Yes yes, sister Dan Fei, it's all my fault. My mind was in a haze. I was blinded by power and I will absolutely turn over a new leaf when we leave."

Jiang Chen shook his head with resignation. Bad habits could never be changed, just like a stray dog that would always resort to eating sh\*t if it had nothing else to eat. Ye Dai was just that sort of dog.

It was actually allowing latent danger to exist if they let this kind of person go. According to Jiang Chen's intentions, killing him with one strike would be the cleanest way to handle this.

However, since Dan Fei's words had come to this point, Jiang Chen couldn't very well insist on still moving forward. After all, this was still nominally Ye Rong's decision.

If Ye Rong could bear to do so, then why wouldn't he, Jiang Chen, be able to?

Ye Dai was just a prancing clown at the end of the day. Jiang Chen wasn't afraid of him at all, and his vision didn't rest on the layout of the single city and pond that was the Skylarell Kingdom.

Honestly speaking, Jiang Chen didn't have to fear that Precious Tree Sect disciple even if he hadn't used poison.

Dan Fei looked a bit apologetically at Jiang Chen. She knew that her request was a bit out of bounds. She'd accomplished nothing in this battle. So logically speaking, she had no right to be making such a request of Jiang Chen.

"Thank you." Dan Fei walked close to Jiang Chen and spoke in a low voice.

"It's nothing." Jiang Chen wasn't a person who was mindful of personal gains and losses. The Northern Palace disciple he hated the most was dead, and so, the great majority of his anger had been dissipated.

"Let's go." Ye Rong also walked close to Jiang Chen. "Jiang Chen, it's all thank to you this time. Otherwise, the consequences would have been unbearable to contemplate."

Ye Rong's heart still fluttered a bit with fear when he thought about what had happened. He'd been in the throes of despair with what happened today already and hadn't dreamed that he'd be able to make it out alive. He was prepared to fight to the death.

He didn't think that matters would suddenly develop in this direction and that a one eighty turn would suddenly occur.

The first prince had been strutting with pride and he thought that victory was within his grasp when he'd been suddenly slapped down.

And Ye Rong, who'd been slated for a sure death, had turned into the final victor. However, Ye Rong didn't dare style himself as the victor as he knew that all of this was due to Jiang Chen.

Without Jiang Chen, they'd probably all be cold, hard corpses by now.

Although he spared their lives, Jiang Chen hadn't planned on curing their poison. It was a good thing that the poison wouldn't last long and it would automatically disperse after roughly two hours.

Lin Qianli and Ye Rong's two personal guards showed no mercy however, as they made off with all of Ye Dai and Ye Zheng's hunting trophies.

They'd spared the people, but they would have to still take some interest.

Even Ye Rong didn't stop them.

Ye Dai and the others had retained their lives, how would they dare erupt in hostilities with Ye Rong's men over a bit of personal belongings? They all felt indignant but they didn't dare voice it as they docilely handed over their goods.

When the group of people walked out of the valley, Ye Rong was in a fantastic mood. Misfortune had come as a blessing in disguise. He never would've thought that they'd come in chasing a spirit creature but would end up precipitating all those events to happen.

They'd truly reaped rich rewards this time, and he wasn't thinking about the hunting trophies that they had taken from Ye Dai. Ye Rong didn't care about those gains at all.

His greatest gain was that he'd defeated Ye Dai. Clearing the biggest obstacle in the war to be Crown Prince was the greatest gain of all.

The group of them walked forward when Xue Tong, scouting the road ahead, suddenly quickly dashed back. He was carrying something in his hand. It was an exceedingly small spirit creature and it'd seemed to be tortured by someone. There were countless numbers of injuries on its body and it dripped blood along the way. It appeared to be dead for a long while.

"Young master, we discovered this up ahead. The injuries of this spirit creature are quite bizarre. It looks like someone's purposefully tortured it to death."

...

About fifty or sixty meters from the mountain valley, second prince Ye Qiao looked in a carefree manner at the mountain valley.

"Ling Xuan, is there any new intelligence?"

"In response to the second prince, the latest intelligence is that the first prince and third prince have already met up and they are heading to the mountain valley. It looks like the two parties will meet up."

Ye Qiao's demeanor was leisurely. "Good, good. The heavens really are helping me, hahaha."

"Remember, infuriate that pack of Goldbiter Rats at all costs. You must spark a horde of rats to the greatest degree possible and lure them to that valley. We're going to clear out the lot of them without using a single soldier or pawn from our side."

A ruthless light shot out of second prince Ye Qiao's eyes.

"Ling Shi, go with Ling Feng. Particularly Ling Feng, he's well versed in the habits of spirit creatures and he knows how to madden them. He knows even more about how to incite a horde of beasts and he knows how to lead them to the mountain valley."

Ye Qiao nodded in satisfaction. "It's said that soldiers are expensive because they're elite and not because of their numbers. Ye Dai is an idiot because he always brings a huge pack of practitioners with him and he always spends money wrongly to hire those sect disciples, but he still ends up with a face full of dust every time. He has a good background and he is used to using great power to oppress his enemies, but he forgot that the true practitioners, the truly superior ones, find their brains more useful than force!"

"The second prince is wise!" Ling Xuan also smiled. "It was our luck that allowed us to discover the Goldbiter Rats' nest."

"Alright, it's about time for us to retreat. Once the horde of rats is set into motion, they'll be absolutely and incredibly destructive. It's likely that nothing within a radius of a hundred li will be safe. Notify Ling Shi and Ling Feng to be careful of their safety. Remember to leave methods of contact so they can reconvene with the team as fast as possible."

Ye Qiao retracted the smile on his face as he cast a final look in the southwestern direction with his sinister look. He laughed lightly as he said, "Ye Dai, Ye Rong, and you idiot Ye Zheng, I hope you aren't my brothers in your next life. Even if you reincarnated ten times, you're destined to lose if you fight me."

"I, Ye Qiao, am the true candidate for Crown Prince. The only candidate!"

Chapter 207: The Tide of Rats Is Coming!

When he saw the heavily injured spirit creature, Jiang Chen's brow creased vaguely and he asked, "Where did you discover it?"

Xue Tong pointed ahead, "Not too far ahead. There was a trail of blood along the way. I wonder who was so perverse as to kill a spirit creature by slowly torturing it to death."

Jiang Chen didn't answer, but looked at the spirit creature again and again. "This wound was purposefully inflicted. It looks like this wasn't done to kill it at all, but rather to torment it."

"Yes, could it be that Ye Dai and them who did this?" Ye Rong frowned. "Ye Dai doesn't seem like such a person to do this, it isn't his style."

"Let's take a look ahead." Jiang Chen didn't know what to say either, and couldn't offer any conclusions by just looking at this brutally injured spirit creature, which didn't have an inch of unmarked skin left.

When they arrived at the location where Xue Tong had found the spirit creature, they saw traces of blood all along the way, extending all along the path. There was blood everywhere. It seemed that the spirit creature had bled an unknown amount of distance.

"Did this spirit creature die from blood loss??" Lin Qianli was shocked.

Jiang Chen touched the traces of blood on the ground. "The blood hasn't dried yet, so it hasn't been long. Based on the amount of time that's elapsed, I would guess that Ye Dai and them didn't do this. Besides, Ye Dai's target is the fourth prince. They wouldn't leave these bloody traces without rhyme or reason, and create unnecessary openings for enemies."

"Could it be that someone else did this?"

"Meh. Who cares who did this? There are several thousand noble sons and disciples who participated in this Autumn Hunt. It'd be normal for a few twisted minds to crop up."

Everyone's goal was to hunt spirit creatures, the more the better. However, most wouldn't use such maltreatment when hunting. This truly was a bit brutal and perverted.

Jiang Chen nodded and left the body on the ground. "No matter who it was that did it, they were quite lucky to meet one out by itself. They'd be in great trouble if they met a pack of these spirit creatures."

Lin Qianli was quite curious, "What kind of spirit creature is this? Does Brother Jiang know of it?"

"This is a Goldbiter Rat, a branch of the ancient Goldbiter Kingrat bloodline. They may not be strong in ones and twos, but when these Goldbiter Rats mobilize, they number in the thousands and tens of thousands, sometimes even hundreds of thousands. This matter is quite strange, we should hurry and leave. If we're so unlucky as to really stir up a Goldbiter Rat nest, we'll be in a world of trouble."

Jiang Chen wasn't saying frightening things just to raise alarm. He'd heard some of the rumors of the Goldbiter Rats from ancient times. There were some ancient, great personages who'd adventured through all sorts of planes, and some had accidentally stirred up nests of the Goldbiter Rats, in turn causing incredible trouble in but an instant.

Ordinarily, in these kinds of circumstances, unless they had overwhelming divine arts, they'd basically be chased by the Goldbiter Rats to the despairing point of them finding no road to heaven, and no gate to hell.

In other words, it was a death sentence.

"Let's go, let's go." Lin Qianli felt goosebumps rise on him as he listened.

"Go, avoid the blood traces." Ye Rong gave the order.

They circled past the blood traces and walked roughly ten li, when the same strange thing happened again. There was another Goldbiter Rat corpse lying in the road, and its injuries were just as blood as before — too ghastly to look at.

Jiang Chen's face changed drastically this time. "Fourth prince, it looks like we have trouble."

"What do you mean?"

"Two Goldbiter Rats in a row definitely isn't a coincidence. One pervert is possible, but two at the same time isn't likely. And look, these Goldbiter Rats' corpses have appeared on paths that we would've had to take. If we circle past this one, we'd have to go back to the other one. If we'd chosen another direction just now, there would definitely have been Goldbiter Rat corpses along our way."

"Is the matter this odd?"

"We'll know if this is the case if we go back and take another direction, no?" Lin Qianli strode out and walked in front.

With Jiang Chen's judgment, everyone's feelings became complicated.

They actually hadn't made it far before they returned to the original intersection and walked off in another direction. Indeed, they hadn't walked twenty li when they saw another body of a Goldbiter Rat. It was the same awful wounds and the same trail of blood.

Jiang Chen's expression became graver and graver. It was apparent that he'd expected this corpse to appear.

"Jiang Chen, is something really afoot?"

Jiang Chen's expression was grave, when his ears suddenly twitched, and his body suddenly hit the ground. He put his ear to the ground and listened carefully, his facial expression suddenly changing greatly.

His first feeling when he saw the first corpse was a very weird one. An uneasy hunch had kept making him feel quite uncomfortable.

At this moment, he could absolutely be certain that this had been man-made, and that it was a very cruel and thorough plot to end them all!

“I think we’ve been surrounded by a Goldbiter Rat tide!”

“What?” Everyone was greatly shocked. “Jiang Chen, are you joking?”

Lin Qianli also laid flush to the ground, but didn’t hear anything. “Jiang Chen, are you mistaken?”

Jiang Chen didn’t say anything but called upon the Psychic’s Head divine art, sensing in all directions, a serious look on his face.

Dan Fei’s emotions also became heavy. She’d known Jiang Chen for a period of time, and had never seen him with such a solemn expression.

She’d never seen the attitude of being confronted by a formidable enemy in Jiang Chen. He hadn’t been this grave even when he’d confronted the giant ape.

“Jiang Chen, just what’ve you heard?” Ye Rong walked up to ask.

Dan Fei lightly admonished him, “Don’t disturb him.”

Dan Fei was well aware that Jiang Chen was weighing up countering strategies or analyzing the situation when he wasn’t speaking. To speak to him now would be disrupting his thoughts.

Ye Rong smiled and didn’t say anything more.

After a while, Jiang Chen said to Xue Tong, “Have a listen.”

Xue Tong nodded and crouched on the ground, like Jiang Chen he used the Ear of the Zephyr to listen. His expression also shifted drastically when he had a listen.

It was as if the land in all directions had been surrounded by this exact sound, and it extended to an unknown distance.

This sound was extremely sharp and ear-piercing. When all the sharp, ear-piercing sounds gathered together, it formed a storm that could swallow everything and was churning over the land!

This engulfing momentum was slowly tightening its radius and closing upon them, tighter and tighter.

“Young master, we’ve been caught like dumplings!” Xue Tong blurted out.

Being caught like dumplings meant that they’d been surrounded and had become the filling of dumplings.

Lin Qianli once again knelt on the ground and took a listen. He could make it out this time and his face changed drastically. Everyone else all knelt on the ground to listen as well.

This time, as long as one wasn’t deaf, everyone could hear the rolling tide of the rats as their great rat army advanced.

Although they couldn’t see them yet, this enormous momentum had so shocked some of those present so much that their faces were ashen, as if they were facing armageddon.

“Follow me.” Jiang Chen’s gaze went off in a certain direction.

Jiang Chen seemed to be a beacon of light at this time. Everyone quickly followed him and dashed, there was a large mountain in that direction. Plant growth wasn’t too thick on the mountain, and there was a large forest of boulders.

“Go to that patch of rocks. Pick the highest and biggest rocks and hide on it, the faster the better!” Jiang Chen directed as he took out all of the poison powder on his body and scattered layers upon layers of them around the rock forest. He circled left three times and then right three times.

Unfortunately, there was a very small amount of poison powder left at this moment. After scattering it three times in each direction, it was still far from the effect he had imagined.

Jiang Chen was resigned. He could only do so much now.

“It’s a pity that I couldn’t bring the Goldwing Swordbirds. Otherwise, with their speed in the air, we may have a chance.”

He could only say that there might be a chance because there were many forms of the Goldbiter Rats. Some of them had wings like bats.

Once the Goldbiter Rats grew wings, their agility would be incredibly frightening. Although their speed wasn’t particularly fast, they had strength in numbers. When the tide of rats surged up, covering the skies and the ground, even someone who possessed strength that was ten times, a hundred times greater than them, would fall easily.

It wasn’t that Jiang Chen didn’t want to flee, but that he’d already identified that there was no passage through the oncoming rat tide that covered a radius of more than ten li in this area in all directions. There wasn’t a gap at all. Even if a gap slightly formed, countless Goldbiter Rats would immediately fill it.

Standing on top of the giant rocks, everyone’s expression was extremely grave.

Despite the fact that they managed to flee to this high ground, no one dared to be optimistic. Although they didn’t know how powerful the Goldbiter Rats were, they’d at least heard of beast tides. Even the strongest amongst practitioners never makes it out after encountering a tide of beasts.

Since ancient times, practitioners that could get away after being surrounded by a tide of beasts were few and far between.

“They’re coming!” Jiang Chen’s God’s Eye was the first to discover the rat tide covering the skies and ground, rolling over everything in their wake.

As far as the eye could see, in all directions, a golden colored ocean was moving even faster than waves that moved across the ocean. The speed of their forward movement was truly like a surging tide.

There was no extraneous color as countless numbers of golden colored entities formed a golden colored ocean, densely concentrated and covering almost all the earth.

It didn’t whether it was large trees or shrubbery, wherever the tide passed, everything was drowned by the boundless horde of rats.

“This many?!” Lin Qianli also cried out in astonishment.

As the tide surged forward, everyone else saw it as well.

In the beginning, they’d been hoping that it would be just a small rat tide. But when it finally entered their vision, that was when they knew just how frightening and how awe inspiring the rat tide was.

Apart from the color gold meeting the eye, there was only golden color no matter where they cast their eyes. The entire vast plains had been completely covered by the golden colored rat tide. The unbounded golden ocean and the currents formed by the advance of the Goldbiter Rats gave off dazzling splendor beneath the sun’s rays, as eye-piercing as the ripples on the ocean.

Squeak, squeak!

Squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak!

The rat tide emitted excited calls as it converged into a surging ocean.

Everyone could already feel a suffocating sense of oppression before the tide had even arrived in front of them.

Those ear-piercing cries gathered into creeks and rivers and continuously churned into their ears, churned into their brains, and churned into their souls.

The gathered flow of their ear-piercing cries had almost drowned them all before the rat tide had even advanced to those who were present.

#### Chapter 208: Thoroughly Surrounded by the Rat Tide

Jiang Chen sat cross legged, deploying the divine art of Psychic’s Head to the extreme. His eyes were like a hawk’s as he sent the God’s Eye into the tide of rats.

Jiang Chen had no other methods at this time either. This wasn’t something that human strength could stand against. Even a spirit king practitioner would be as miniscule as a grain of corn in the wild sea in this boundless tide of rats. They wouldn’t be able to raise much of a ripple at all.

The light of wisdom had dawned on Dan Fei’s face at this time. She sat on a stone slab and was less than five to six meters away from Jiang Chen.

She also knew that if even Jiang Chen couldn’t find a way out, then the only thing they could do was the silently await the arrival of death.

Perhaps the line of defense that Jiang Chen had laid down could delay the advancement of the rats, but beneath the oppression of the endless hordes of rats, there wasn’t much difference between having that small radius and having no boundary at all.

It was like using a ladle to empty a river of its waters. It was an absolutely futile gesture and completely not on the same footing.

“Jiang Chen, just what is he thinking about right now?” Dan Fei wasn’t the slightest bit afraid in this moment. She only possessed a sort of unperturbed calm.



As she watched Jiang Chen sit there cross legged, with a demeanor that would be noncommittal even if Mt. Tai collapsed in front of him, Dan Fei had to admit that Jiang Chen wasn't a simple person alright.

Even prince Ye Rong, someone who'd seen countless large and varied occasions, wore a rueful smile on his face under the circumstances.

He had chuckled to himself when he triumphed over his political enemy Ye Dai. Who would've thought that destiny would change so drastically in the next second?

A tide of rats...

Ye Rong gazed as this boundless ocean continuously churned forward with extreme speed. It would slowly spread to their area in less than fifteen minutes and then take over this area, swallowing them whole, and devouring them so that not even the bones were left.

"Is this to be my fate?" Ye Rong felt extremely pained. In the moment, what difference was there in success and failure, win and loss?

He could imagine that Ye Dai's crowd was in an even lower mountain valley. They had surely been overrun by the tide of rats by now and devoured cleanly.

Ye Dai and the others were definitely already within the stomachs of the tide of rats by now.

However, the current Ye Rong couldn't find it within himself to be happy at all, because this irresistible and undeniable fate would soon befall him..

When his thoughts traveled there, Ye Rong couldn't help but become a bit melancholy. When his gaze looked at Jiang Chen, a sudden thought struck his mind as a luxurious strand of hope suddenly blossomed in the depths of his despair.

"Jiang Chen! Right, we still have Jiang Chen! Jiang Chen has yet to give up, so I, Ye Rong, still have the chance to make a comeback! Perhaps, perhaps Jiang Chen has a way out?"

Ye Rong strived hard to find a bit of hope to comfort himself with, as if he was trying with all his might to protect a flickering, feeble flame in the boundless darkness.

This was the last trace of hope.

No one wanted to disturb Jiang Chen at this time and no one dared to.

If it was said that everyone still held out for one last bit of hope in their hearts, then Jiang Chen was the source of that hope. It was only because of Jiang Chen that they hadn't been filled with so much despair to the point of committing suicide.

"Ah!"

"Save me, don't kill me!"

"No, I don't want to die!"

Rounds of ghastly screams came from the road beneath them.

A thought struck Ye Rong. How could he not make out the horrified screams coming from Ye Dai's team?

Dan Fei also heard them as her delicate brows knit slightly. She couldn't help but look downwards. There were a few figures making their final struggles within the boundless golden sea.

It was indeed Ye Dai, Chen Li, and the others.

Although the poison within their bodies had dissipated by now, even if their strength was ten times or a hundred times greater, it was still futile in the face of this immense tide of rats.

Their death struggles would only continuously provoke the violence from the rats and incite their bloodlust.

Ye Dai cried out in despair, "Ye Rong, don't you feel proud of yourself at my death. You're going to become their next meal soon! Hahaha, we fought each other back and forth but still end up doomed to the same fate!"

"Number three's already been eaten, and I'm about to as well. Ah! My thigh... number four, it's going to be your turn soon. Tell me, wouldn't you say that number two is feeling quite smug at this moment? Perhaps he's the one who set this tide of rats in motion and he's at someplace right now, watching our downfall and waiting for the message of our deaths! We fought each other and let him pick up the spoils!"

"Number two?" Ye Rong's heart sank. One makes pretty speeches on his deathbed. Perhaps there truly was a bit of truth in words that Ye Dai was speaking in his death struggles.

When he thought of the Goldbiter Rat corpses along the way, it was apparent that this tide of rats had been artificially triggered. Then, who would have done so?

There was definitely manmade factors behind this, and it was obvious that the other had grasped his movements and the movements of first prince Ye Dai.

Who else would have been interested in his and Ye Dai's movements?

Second prince, Ye Qiao!

Ye Qiao's figure floated the surface of Ye Rong's mind. His mouth full of bitterness, he said, "Number two, it appears that you're the final winner in the end!"

The figure of second prince Ye Qiao also flashed through Dan Fei's mind. That person had always been intangible and undefinable through the years. He had fought with first prince Ye Dai for so many years, and although he'd always been firmly suppressed, he'd never fallen.

Had he really set these events into motion?

Dan Fei smiled with resignation. It wouldn't change things if they knew that Ye Qiao was the one who'd done so in this moment.

There was no point in knowing if he'd been the one.

The boundless tide of rats had pushed its way to the foot of the mountain and started continuously pushing up the slope. Although their speed wasn't as fast when going uphill, it would only be a span of a few breaths with the tide's current speed before it reached everyone.

Squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak!

Squeak, squeak!

The sharp sounds of the Goldbiter Rats grinding their teeth, the chewing sounds of them swallowing all that blocked their path, the sounds of them tearing and swallowing all traveled into their ears.

The closer they were, the clearer the sounds became.

Finally, the endless tide of rats surged to their feet from all directions.

If it wasn't for the three rings of defensive poison powder that Jiang Chen had scattered, the tide of rats would've likely already climbed onto them and started ruthlessly tearing away at them.

As for Ye Dai, Chen Li, and the others below, there was utter silence from them.

It was obvious that they'd already been so consumed that there weren't even any bones left.

Clang!

Lin Qianli drew his sword and shouted, "Die if we must! Since we're going to die, I'll take some of these Goldbiter Rats down with me! You want to eat me? You'll pave the road for me first with some of your lives!"

"Don't move!" Jiang Chen suddenly roared lowly.

Lin Qianli had raised his sword and was about to attack when Jiang Chen's shout stopped his momentum in his tracks.

"Jiang Chen, given how things are, will their mouths show us mercy if we don't do anything?" Anguish was written all over Lin Qianli's face.

"Don't rush, they have an innate fear of this poison powder. Don't provoke them. They're still probing and may not have the courage to charge over."

"Sitting here and waiting to die is harder to bear than the feeling of being killed immediately by them." Lin Qianli's words resonated with a lot of those present.

Ye Rong spread out his hands, "Everyone, let's listen to Jiang Chen and sit down. We really can't stop them. There's no point in killing a few of them."

Ye Rong had rather reasoned through things at this moment.

If this was fate and couldn't be reversed, then what was the difference in killing a few more or a few less at this time?

This wasn't the Goldbiter Rats' fault at all. If they were to blame someone, they should blame the person behind all this. If it hadn't been for someone tormenting the Goldbiter Rats and leaving a trail of blood behind on purpose, making a show of aggression towards the rats, the tide of rats wouldn't be this fierce and destructive either!

Dan Fei also sighed lightly in her heart at this moment as she looked at the unending tide of rats. "I only thought of catching baby spirit animals, but what use is any of that now that there are Goldbiter Rats

wherever we look? Heh heh, come to think about it, I really was crazed. As for Jiang Chen, he seems to be..."

She couldn't help but look over again when she thought of Jiang Chen.

As for the hordes of Goldbiter Rats below, it was obvious that they'd become impatient as they started making an assault on the defensive rings of poison powder. The first ring was breached in a short amount of time.

Although large swathes of Goldbiter Rats fell to the poison and lost the ability to fight, reinforcements from behind immediately filled the gap like waters rushing into to fill a hole.

When they saw one ring of defenses being broken through, everyone's emotions became even more downcast.

"Going to die. We're definitely going to die this time!"

Jiang Chen suddenly stood up at this moment as stunning beams of light shot out from his God's Eye. His Psychic's Head was also deployed to the extreme.

His gaze suddenly locked onto a far distance to the south.

His mouth opened as he voiced a series of bizarre characters and tones.

What people could be certain of was that Jiang Chen was speaking, but no one understood what he was saying. Even someone as widely read as Dan Fei couldn't understand a single word of what he was saying.

"What's he doing?" A strange thought flashed through Dan Fei's mind.

"Jiang Chen? What are you doing?" Ye Rong was also baffled.

Some of Ye Rong's personal followers even thought that Jiang Chen had cracked under the pressure and had gone completely crazy.

Xue Tong also looked at Jiang Chen with some surprise. He'd followed Jiang Chen for a long time and knew that Jiang Chen would often have surprising moves.

However, even Xue Tong didn't know what the young master was up to this time. Was he speaking or chanting some incantation?

An unexpected scene took place at this moment.

A ripple suddenly cleaved through the boundless tide of rats from the south. This ripple actually churned through with the momentum of a tornado, bringing with it golden colored light.

The aura of this light was incredibly domineering. The Goldbiter Rats around it were greatly startled as it charged over and they all voluntarily made way, allowing the golden colored light to make its way through.

The golden colored light landed on a nearby forest of rocks. It was actually an enormous Rat King that was ten times bigger than the Goldbiter Rats!

The Goldbiter Rat King's body was like a wolf's as its golden colored fur sparkled, sending out a dazzling light.

Its golden colored gems for eyes were as resplendent, giving onlookers an indescribable feeling of wooziness that they couldn't define when they looked at it.

"Human... did you summon me?"

The enormous Goldbiter Rat King asked in the beast language.

Jiang Chen used the ancient language of the beasts to communicate, "You're their king?"

"Yes, but, human, you understand the ancient language of the beasts? Who are you?"

"I'm an innocent bystander! You triggered the tide of rats to obtain revenge for your descendents. However, we definitely weren't the ones to kill those Goldbiter Rats. Accurately speaking, we were framed!"

"Don't give me the bullshit of being framed! You entered this place in order to hunt. To come here with that intention is already an original sin! You must die for killing my descendents. There are no exceptions even if you understand the ancient language!"

The tone of this Goldbiter Rat was quite resolute.

Chapter 209: Jiang Chen as Beautifully Eloquent as a Lotus

"What a pity, what a pity. What a pity that the bloodline of the ancient Goldbiter Kingrats tribe has decayed so much that as they lived on, the word 'king' present in their ancient ancestors' names has disappeared entirely. Remember, you're the descendents of the Goldbiter Kingrats. Being called the Goldbiter Rats now is indubitably the greatest insult to your ancestors."

"What do you mean?" The Goldbiter Rat King's gaze was cold and sinister.

"What do I mean? The race of the Goldbiter Kingrat was the smartest and most ancient tribe with the most magniloquent speech. To think that their descendents have become so unreasonable and are unable to communicate at all!"

"Communicate? You humans slaughter us spirit creatures, and yet you want speak of communication?" The Goldbiter Rat King laughed coldly.

"Every injustice has its perpetrator, every debt – its debtor. Don't prattle as though you spirit creatures don't brutally kill one another. Natural selection, law of the jungle, these are the rules of survival. Spirit creatures hunted by humans, humans devoured by spirit creatures. This is the rhythm of life that's remained unwavering for millennias."

"You're correct, and as such we're going to devour you!" The Goldbiter Rat King sneered.

"Devouring me is of no difficulty, all of you can accomplish it. However, you'd be unable to evolve to the Goldbiter Kingrat bloodline, and will forever remain an ignoble race, forever deposed of becoming kings of the spirit creature world. To think that the ancient Goldbiter Kingrat once dominated the heavens, now that was a stupendous race! What a pity, what a shame."

“Huh, will we be able to evolve to the Goldbiter Kingrat if we don’t devour you? Human, this king knows of your wily and crafty ways, please do not insult the intelligence of the Goldbiter Rats’ tribe! You think a few words in the ancient beast language will be enough to convince me? Dream on!”

“Haha, indeed, indeed. But I still have to say, as a king of the Goldbiter Rats, you’re just a bit taller in this mass of dunces. You’re still the Goldbiter Rat King, just the king of some Goldbiter Rats. You shall never be a Goldbiter Kingrat. Remember, although there’s the word ‘king’ in both names, the difference in the order of these words is tantamount to the difference between heaven and earth. No matter how you send a call for a tide of rats, it will never change the fact that you’re just the king of Goldbiter Rats, and not a true ruler of the ancient and noble Goldbiter Kingrats!”

The Goldbiter Rat King was a bit anxious and angry from embarrassment, but it still contained its anger, “Human, just what are you playing at? I have no interest in only recounting my ancestors’ history with you. Our Goldbiter Rat race has an innate heritage of memories and knows well the origins of our bloodlines. Our bloodline is inferior and we can’t evolve to the Goldbiter Kingrat, that much is true. However, as inferior as our bloodlines are, we’re still not prey that you humans can hunt at will! If you want to hunt us, you must pay the price!”

“It looks like you are indeed a race of inferior intellect. As a king, are your eyes also only filled with hate and not the slightest bit of consideration for the future of your race?”

“Future of my race? You, a human, want to talk to me about the future of the Goldbiter Rats? Do you not find that laughable?”

“Not at all.”

“And what gives you the right to say that?” The Goldbiter Rat laughed coldly.

“Because, perhaps I can help you evolve into an ancient bloodline and evolve into the Goldbiter Kingrat.”

“Preposterous!” The Goldbiter Rat King didn’t believe him at all. “We can’t evolve into an ancient bloodline even with the heritage of memories. How dare you, a human with no relation to my tribe, speak so brashly?”

“I have my ways. You have the heritage of memories, that much is true, but you know not how to call upon your memories. You know none of how to select superior bloodlines nor how to cultivate them. Only the combination of both superior bloodlines and the heritage of memories will give rise to the chance of evolving a true Goldbiter Kingrat! Only when the Goldbiter Kingrat appears will your race have the chance to become the true rulers of the spirit creature world!”

“How... how do you know all this?” The Goldbiter Rat King wavered. It had been firmly resolved to not trust any humans at all.

Even though Jiang Chen understood the ancient language of the beasts, it hadn’t planned on trusting Jiang Chen either.

However, it vacillated in this moment.

Because, Jiang Chen's words were indeed all of the Goldbiter Rats' deeply held secrets. If one wasn't familiar with the deeply held secrets of the Goldbiter Rats, one wouldn't be able to talk of superior bloodlines, heritage of memories, and all that.

"I said that I happen to understand a few of the secrets with regards to evolving bloodlines. Perhaps, I can help you!"

"Do you think I'd believe you?" The Goldbiter Rat King was on its guard.

"Why not take this gamble? Besides, devouring the lot of us just means a meal of flesh and blood. Having us isn't too much, not having us isn't missing out. This kind of gamble is a lossless proposition for you. If you win, the payout will be enormous. If you lose, then you just lose out on eating a few humans."

Jiang Chen wore a faint and relaxed smile on his face as he continued, "I'm not looking down on you, but the level of your bloodline is really too low. I don't see even a single flying Goldbiter Rat amongst you. This is enough to prove just how low your bloodline is. If you don't proactively try to evolve yourselves, there will be no difference between you and ordinary rats in the future. You'll become meals for other spirit creatures sooner or later and have absolutely no future to speak of!"

These words hit the Goldbiter Rat King where it hurt the most.

The Goldbiter Rat King unexpectedly didn't retort back because he understood that the human was actually correct in his words. The quality of the bloodline of his race was becoming poorer and poorer. Although they looked quite awe inspiring in the tide of rats, it was merely because they had superior numbers.

The aura emitted by a truly fierce spirit creature would be enough to suppress a tide of rats!

In the world of the spirit creatures, bloodlines were very important. A low level bloodline meant potential was low and that strength would be low. Without strength and status, one would be oppressed, hunted, and devoured.

These were the rules of nature.

"Human, are you really speaking truly?"

"I said that I know a few things about the evolution of bloodlines, but I don't guarantee anything either. Therefore, I say that you can take a gamble. I too am gambling."

The Goldbiter Rat King's thin eyes looked at Jiang Chen, "Human, if you hadn't known the ancient beast language, I wouldn't have appeared just now. If you hadn't spoken of the secrets of my Goldbiter Rat tribe, I wouldn't have spoken that much to you. You're right, if I lose, that just means I miss out on feasting on your flesh and blood. If I win, the entire race benefits. Regardless of anything, I'll take this gamble!"

Jiang Chen's words just now had greatly impacted it psychologically. Jiang Chen had said that it was just a Goldbiter Rat King, and not a Goldbiter Kingrat.

Jiang Chen had been too right about the difference between the two.

He said that as a king, it only knew hatred and vengeance, and possessed none of the vision to consider the future of its tribe. Those words had a huge impact on the Goldbiter Rat King.

When a race was at their level, they were actually already at an extremely low level. In the spirit creature world, they were almost the lowest level of existence. They could only exist beneath the ground and couldn't fight any spirit creature for territory. They also didn't have any right to demarcate a zone of their sphere of influence.

They were bound to only live beneath the ground and scurry and skitter to any place they could find.

This was the tragedy of their race. They only felt the slightest bit of self pride when facing humans.

When the tide of rats had churned over the land just now, they only felt a vague pleasure in surviving when they saw the humans' death struggles when being swallowed.

However, they were very aware that the humans that came here mostly possessed ordinary levels of training. They too were the lowest level in the true world of martial dao.

A true person with power at the apex of existence would be able to destroy them all with a single divine art.

Dan Fei was completely flabbergasted by Jiang Chen and the Goldbiter Rat King's communication. She'd never thought that a human could actually speak to a Goldbiter Rat King.

And they'd carried on their conversation for such a long period of time!

Although she couldn't understand it at all, but she could feel that the Goldbiter Rat King's attitude was slowly softening and compromising.

"Just how many more secrets does Jiang Chen have? No wonder he could identify the problem with the Five Winged Phoenix Dragon, and do it so carelessly. Judging from his conversation with the Goldbiter Rat King, it's obvious that the knowledge that Jiang Chen possesses isn't as simple as he's described. If he really did receive tutelage from a mysterious expert when he was young, just how frightening would the level of existence of this expert be?"

Dan Fei's mind was in complete disarray. She'd been a bit unaccepting of Jiang Chen in the Tutor's Manor, and although the lordmaster had a high opinion of Jiang Chen, Dan Fei was still a bit reluctant to accept that.

She'd always felt that the lordmaster valued Jiang Chen as a talent because the young of the Skylareel Kingdom were simply too good-for-naught, and not because Jiang Chen was that special.

However, the matters that'd happened over and over again had destroyed Dan Fei's suspicions and conquered her mulishness.

She seemed to understand now why those mortal rank spirit creatures had circled around them whenever they saw Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen actually knew how to communicate with them!



One could only imagine the level of shock within Dan Fei's heart. She and the lordmaster both raised spirit creatures and knew how hard it was to communicate with them.

In Dan Fei's eyes, it was almost impossible for humans and spirit creatures to communicate with no barrier at all. Even the lordmaster thought it impossible.

The spirit creatures they raised could at most crudely communicate through gestures and understand a few orders.

At many times, it was just a type of accordance and not true communication through language.

At the end of the day, humans and beasts were of two completely different worlds and cultures. Their languages and thoughts were far too different. Unless one learned the other's language or understood the other's thought, it would be impossible to communicate with one another.

However, no one had ever heard of the existence of a beast language within the Skylaurel Kingdom, not even within any of the neighboring sixteen kingdoms.

"Has Jiang Chen really learned the beast language before? Otherwise, how can he communicate with them?" Dan Fei's mind was filled with all sorts of doubts as her curiosity towards Jiang Chen subtly increased by a lot.

If even Dan Fei was thus, Ye Rong and the others found it even harder to believe. It was a good thing that they were tactful and stayed within the corner quite timidly.

They couldn't help at all in this moment. The only thing they could do was not add to the mess and not infuriate the tide of rats, giving them a reason to attack.

And then —

The only thing they could do was to silently pray that Jiang Chen could convince the Goldbiter Rat King.

#### Chapter 210: The Goldbiter Rat King Compromises

The Goldbiter Rat King had actually been persuaded by Jiang Chen.

"Human, I admire you. You're the first human to make me voluntarily call for a retreat. However, I hope that you can fulfill your promise."

After saying this, the Goldbiter Rat King emitted three short, hasty whistles to the boundless sea of rats. This was the signal to retreat.

The Goldbiter Rats who received the signal all turned their heads and began to retreat.

Within the span of a few breaths, all the Rats that had been occupying the peak of the mountain had fully cleared out. When the humans looked again at this mountain slope again, there was no upright tree apart in the expanse of brown dirt across the slope.

"I only have a month here and now, there's only less than half a month left. Either all of you leave with us, or I'll pass all I know on to you within the span of this half month!"

The Goldbiter Rat King creased its brow. It understood a slight bit about the maze realm and knew that no humans survived here.

It was impossible for these humans who all came from the outside world to live here in the long run.

“Perhaps leaving this place is a good decision?” The Goldbiter Rat King thought. “I’ve long since heard that this is a closed off world that’s completely separated from the world outside. I’ve also heard that the world outside is very exciting with boundless resources, countless numbers of strong lifeforms, and all sorts of races. Perhaps, when I arrive in the outside world, I’ll find more clues related to the evolution of our bloodline?”

“I choose to leave this place.” The Goldbiter Rat King decided.

“I obviously can’t take this many of you with me. What plans do you have?”

“This isn’t a problem. Our Goldbiter Rat race has a unique survival space called the Millionditch Stonenest. Each Stonenest can contain millions of our descendents. This Stonenest has to do with the secret arts of space and it’s one of our hereditary skills. Just like a beehive, those not of our race will be unable to comprehend it.”

“The Millionditch Stonenest? How big is one?” Jiang Chen seemed to remember that the Goldbiter Kingrat indeed possessed something called the Millionditch Stone, but he’d never paid attention to what that was. So it was a nest for the Goldbiter Rats?

“It can be big or it can be small. The smallest are the size of a fist, and the largest are the size of this rock.”

“The size of this rock?” Jiang Chen could not help but be rather impressed. Any race would have their own unique abilities. Something like this Millionditch Stonenest would be quite astonishing to humans.

Although these large rocks were the size of a large buffalo, in the end they weren’t very big at all. To be able to contain millions of Goldbiter Rats, this was quite rare.

“This Millionditch Stonenest has to do with the secret arts of space. There must be layers of interspaced levels within that use the secret arts of space to an incredible and exquisitely fine level. It looks like each race has their own admirable intelligence and incredible divine arts.”

But humans actually had this sort of divine arts as well. Take a space ring for instance, a small ring could be deployed for a great use to hide the heavens and hold the earth or be deployed for smaller reasons like storing people and items. Wasn’t this utilizing the secret arts of space as well?

At the end of the day, the actual theory behind the Stonenest was similar to the storage items that humans used.

It was just a different race, intellect, and method.

This tribe of Goldbiter Rats had roughly two to three billion members. Even if they were contained in Stonenests, several hundred would be needed. It was a good thing Jiang Chen’s space ring was spacious enough to hold them all.

However, no one could tell if it was a good thing or bad to take this nest of Goldbiter Rats away with him.

Jiang Chen and the Goldbiter Rat King discussed to have his tribe prepare themselves first before he picked them up. It was better to stay out of sight for something like this.

Otherwise, if his companions know that he'd brought two to three billion Goldbiter Rats out with him, it'd absolutely terrify everyone!

If word of this got out, it was likely that all the kings of all sixteen neighboring kingdoms would find it difficult to eat and sleep.

This was definitely more frightening than the Goldwing Swordbird army.

Although there were great numbers of Goldwing Swordbirds, they weren't to this terrifying level.

In addition, the raw destructive power of the Goldbiter Rats exceeded that of the Swordbird army. The Goldbiter Rat King in particular was equivalent to the later portion of the human spirit realm, which made it part of the sky spirit realm. That also meant that its cultivation was not too far away from spirit king.

However, when had the race of the Goldbiter Rats fought solo battles?

When they saw the tides of Goldbiter Rats actually retreat in front of their eyes, Ye Rong and the others all had a dazed sense of surrealism. They almost suspected that what had happened earlier was just a bad dream.

However, when they looked at the ground where the Goldbiter Rats had rolled over, where every inch had been completely devastated, they had to believe that the tide of Goldbiter Rats had indeed passed by just now.

Hoo!

It felt good to escape from the jaws of death!

When Dan Fei saw a shadow of a smile appear on Jiang Chen's face, she walked over in curiosity, "Jiang Chen, you actually convinced the Goldbiter Rat King to retreat?"

"How did you do it?" Dan Fei was truly curious.

Jiang Chen smiled, "I happened to understand a bit of the beast language and randomly chatted with it a bit. We got to know each other after some back and forth. It's looking for the enemies who killed its descendents so I said it had nothing to do with us. They seemed to use a special method to investigate that we really weren't the ones, and so they left."

These words were half true and half false making Dan Fei unsure whether or not to believe them.

She suddenly remembered something and rebutted, "If they knew how to investigate, then they should've figured out that it wasn't Ye Dai and the others. Why were they swallowed whole?"

“Too bad they didn’t understand the beast language? This is the disadvantage of not being cultured.” Jiang Chen was in a great mood. Although he hadn’t killed Ye Dai and the others, their crimes were inexcusable and they were destined to be unable to escape this disaster.

Ye Rong was in an equally good mood.

It was a good feeling to be able to escape from death, but because Ye Dai was well and truly dead this time, he naturally had reason to be happy.

When brothers had progressed to this point, there was no brotherly affection left. Only unceasing conflict to death remained.

Ye Dai was so, as was Ye Rong.

“Fourth prince, wait here a moment for me. I’m going to make a trip to that mountain valley. I seem to remember that there were some spirit ingredients there. We left in such a hurry that I didn’t pick them.”

Jiang Chen found an excuse and quickly left Ye Rong and the others behind.

He naturally left to pick up the Goldbiter Rats. He’d be able to take them out of here as soon as they entered the Millionditch Stonenests and were stored in his space ring.

When he arrived at the mountain valley they had agreed upon, the Goldbiter Rat King had already been waiting there for a long while.

“Ready?”

“Ready!” The Goldbiter Rat King sighed. “Human, I’m handing over the fate of the entire tribe to you. I don’t know if this is the right decision or a stupid mistake. I hope you haven’t lied to me!”

“If you don’t want to go with us, I can pass on my secrets to you. Of course, I don’t understand much and I can’t guarantee that it’ll be useful for you guys.”

“Say no more, I’ve already decided to go with you. This world is sealed off and has no future at all. I’ve heard that the outside world is vast and endless. Now that’s heaven.”

“Where there’s heaven, there’s also hell. Don’t glorify the outside world.” Jiang Chen smiled.

“As long as you haven’t lied to us, I won’t blame you even if my tribe is destroyed by a superior power after we leave. This is my choice, and also a decision that I’ve had to make for the tribe.”

Having said that, the Goldbiter Rat King also entered the Stonenest.

Jiang Chen put away the Stonenest with the fastest speed possible and also took the opportunity to walk around the valley and collect a few spirit ingredients to convince the others before finally turning back afterwards.

“Let’s go!” Jiang Chen called out when he saw Dan Fei and the others. The group set off again.

When they passed by the bones of Ye Dai and the others, Ye Rong stopped and said to the two personal guards, “We came in empty handed, but we can’t very well leave that way. Ye Dai has oppressed me since small, but he’s dead now and should still be buried someplace. Find a place and bury them.”

Even though the word he used was bury, there really wasn't much to bury at all. There were only a few bits of bone remaining that were difficult to identify.

The two personal guards collected them all and just buried them all together.

At this moment, even the bones had been nibbled away at so that only shards were left. There was naturally no personal belongings left. Taking a step back, even if there were personal belongings remaining, the group wouldn't pick them up either.

The group walked out of this area and arrived in a vast expanse of space. There was no destruction from the tide of rats in this area.

As soon as they walked into the safe zone, they saw that there was another team in front of them. When the team in front of them saw Jiang Chen and the others walk out, their faces all filled with shock.

"Ye Qiao!" Fourth prince Ye Rong was the first to discover that this team did indeed belong to Ye Qiao's men.

"Number four?" Ye Qiao was sitting on a piece of green rock. When he saw Ye Rong's team from a distance, his face displayed an interesting interplay of expressions.

His jaw was so agape that one could shove a large egg into it. He would never have thought that someone would be able to make it out alive from a place where the Goldbiter Rats had rampaged over!

"Second brother, this is a bit of a coincidence." Ye Rong quickly suppressed the fires of anger within his heart and made a greeting with a small smile.

Ye Qiao was also wreathed in forced smiles as he quickly walked up, his pair of eyes looking Ye Rong up and down. When he saw that Ye Rong was absolutely clean and didn't look as though he'd been in a fight. He was completely befuddled.

One wouldn't be this clean even if they went on vacation!

Had Ye Rong not run into Ye Dai's team? That wasn't right. The scouts had reported back that Ye Dai's group had entered the mountain valley, just a step behind Ye Rong's team.

There was no exit from the valley. The two teams were bound to meet in unavoidable confrontation.

Even if they hadn't erupted in conflict and settled things peacefully, how could the boundless tide of rats let them go?

It was completely impossible for Ye Qiao to believe that they escaped from the tide of rats. The power and momentum of the rats would have killed even a team ten times stronger, not to mention these guys!

"Second brother, what are you looking at me this way for? Why do I feel like you think it's odd to see me? Should I not be appearing here?" Ye Rong asked, his words full of double entendre.

"Haha, how can that be? why would that be so?" Ye Qiao laughed heartily. "It's just that I see that you look so clean. Those who didn't know better would think you've come here on vacation. Have you not killed any spirit creatures?"

“Mm, second brother, you look quite carefree as well. Are you sitting here admiring the scenery? Or are you waiting for some news?” Ye Rong asked with a faint smile.

Ye Qiao started. Does this kid know something?

However, Ye Qiao immediately rejected this notion. He’d conducted things in complete secrecy this time. Ye Rong was in the mountain valley and couldn’t possibly have known.

“I happened to be passing by and was reorganizing my team. To think that I would run into you, number four. Oh right, have you seen our big brother after you’ve come here?”

“Second brother, haven’t you never gotten along with our big brother? Why are you asking after him?”

Ye Qiao smiled lamely, “What kind of overnight grudge exists between brothers? Oh right, number four, when I was about to enter, I heard the people inside say that there was a frightening tide of rats that had erupted inside. Were the rumors false?”

Ye Qiao still couldn’t help but probe Ye Rong. He didn’t suspect at all that Ye Rong already knew of the connection between him and the tide of rats and so he kept asking him.

Ye Rong decided to play dumb to the end, “Tide of rats? What tide of rats? There were just a few golden colored rats. Second brother, you exaggerate.”

“Oh, then it’s second brother who’s gotten it wrong.” Ye Qiao didn’t want to accept it, but given how Ye Rong was acting, he knew that he likely wouldn’t be able to get anything of use out of the latter.