

Villain 1041

Chapter 1041: The Longer You Live, the More You Cherish Your Life, Elder Zhuowu's Apprenticeship Ceremony

One option is to surrender to me, though I doubt you're interested in running the family. In the future, I could let you oversee the immortal civilization and even show you a broader world.

Gu Changge's figure materialized in the empty, seemingly non-existent space, his tone remaining unchanged.

The second option is to stand against me like this, trying to stop me, in which case I will personally wipe you and your family out.

These two choices were quite straightforward—one meant choosing life, the other meant choosing death.

“Do we have any other options?”

Both Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun smiled bitterly. After living for countless years, they fully understood what Gu Changge was implying.

Surrendering to him meant they could live, but it also meant they would have to follow his orders from then on, with him being their only master. If they chose to stand in his way, the outcome was clear and inevitable.

Even if the Zhuo clan and the Hun clan fought against Gu Changge, shaking the entire immortal civilization, it would be futile. With Gu Changge's power, he could easily escape. Moreover, in such a scenario, they would most likely be killed by him.

As this thought crossed their minds, both Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun felt conflicted and torn. Beings like them, who only appeared once in countless ages, had hearts higher than the sky and talents that surpassed the past and present. Few could rival them. Submitting to someone else was almost more unbearable than death itself.

Yet, sometimes, the choice was not theirs to make. In the face of life and death, dignity and pride seemed insignificant. Especially when Hun Yuan Jun recalled the black-robed old man he had fought against the day before.

That old man had been a formidable figure, with terrifying strength that allowed him to act freely across the boundless world. Yet now, wasn't he also submitting to Gu Changge, becoming nothing more than a tool in his hands?

Thinking of it this way, Hun Yuan Jun didn't feel as uncomfortable anymore. If it had been during the early days of their enlightenment, when they were young and full of pride, like an unyielding pine, they would have rather died than surrender to anyone.

But they had lived far too long, seen and experienced countless things, and their mindset had changed over time. The road ahead was endless, and if they sought to ascend to greater heights, survival was the key.

What was the point of being unyielding and proud if it meant they wouldn't live to see the light of tomorrow?

"It seems the two of you have already made your decision," Gu Changge said with a faint smile, noticing the changes in Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun's expressions. It wasn't surprising to him.

At their stage of cultivation, the only things that truly mattered were realm and power. But the foundation of all that was survival. In most cases, no one was willing to risk everything unless absolutely necessary. The longer one lived, the more they cherished life.

Of course, there were exceptions. Gu Changge had anticipated that they might choose to fight him to the death. If that happened, he had already planned to refine them into puppets, even if it meant wasting time and energy. However, the immortal civilization's unique cultivation methods made refining them into puppets more difficult.

"The two of us have made up our minds. From now on, we are willing to serve Mr. Gu as our master and look forward to a future under his leadership," Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun said in unison after exchanging glances.

In the pavilion, Ling Huang and the Bone Ancestor, following Changge's instructions, were taking steps to conceal any trace of aura in the area. At this moment, unless someone of equal power arrived, it would be impossible to detect anything unusual.

Hun Yuan Jun and Zhuo Fengxie stood dazed, their expressions vacant and sluggish, with glazed eyes. If not for the strong life force still emanating from them, anyone who saw them might think their souls had been lost.

But soon, they snapped out of this state, shaking their heads and exchanging looks filled with lingering fear. They knew that relying on their own strength, they would never have been able to break free from that space of thought. Even if Gu Changge had spared their lives, he could have easily trapped them there for countless years.

The sheer terror of this realization struck them deeply—it was like being exiled to an endless realm of time and space. This overwhelming power stirred a sense of awe within them, leaving them yearning for such strength. ૠૠૠૠૠૠ

“My lord...”

Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun, having regained their composure, now addressed Gu Changge with much greater respect than before.

Gu Changge’s expression remained unchanged, though he smiled slightly and said, “With the help of you two, this trip will save me a lot of trouble.”

Ling Huang and the Bone Ancestor watched the scene with some surprise, unsure of what had just transpired. Moments ago, Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun had been filled with wariness and hostility, yet now, they appeared eager to serve Gu Changge. However, they wisely refrained from asking questions—Gu Changge’s methods were far beyond their comprehension.

“Young Master, you jest. It is our honor to be able to assist you in any way we can,” Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun responded, cupping their hands as they spoke, as if fully aligned with Gu Changge’s will.

Within the space of consciousness, they had sworn by their true souls to submit to Gu Changge willingly. Breaking this oath would mean the complete destruction of their souls, vanishing into nothingness.

Let’s go. By now, it should be time for Elder Zhuowu’s apprenticeship ceremony. She had someone send an invitation, and I suspect this one will be quite interesting.

Gu Changge smiled but said nothing more. As his words faded, the space before him blurred, and he took the lead, stepping out of the pavilion.

Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun followed closely behind, both somewhat surprised by this revelation. While Elder Zhuowu was indeed a Heavenly Elder of the Zhuo Clan, holding great status and authority, they couldn't understand why her apprenticeship ceremony would intrigue Gu Changge.

Typically, ceremonies of this kind wouldn't warrant their personal attendance; at most, they would send gifts on behalf of their clans. Yet Gu Changge seemed genuinely interested this time, leaving them both curious about what might unfold.

In the oasis where Elder Zhuowu held the apprenticeship ceremony, numerous pavilions and temples dotted the landscape, with a majestic sacred mountain looming in the background. The lotus pond, enveloped in white mist and fragrance, served as a picturesque setting, while beautiful fairies danced gracefully in the distance, their movements captivating and enchanting.

Guests mingled, softly discussing the events they had witnessed and heard about during this period. Many ethnic groups and forces from the major universes of the immortal civilization had sent powerful representatives, all eager to honor Elder Zhuowu.

Among the various forces, the most prominent was the Eternal Protoss. Although the Wu Clan and the Gou Clan also sent some strong individuals, their presence seemed somewhat detached. Elders from the other lineages of the Zhuo Clan had only sent their juniors to offer gifts, while only those closer to Elder Zhuowu attended the ceremony in person to present their congratulations.

The atmosphere was lively, but Elder Zhuowu, the host, had yet to make an appearance; she had simply instructed her clansmen to prepare a banquet. At that moment, the topic on everyone's lips was Elder Zhuowu's mysterious apprentice, sparking excited discussions among the younger generation of geniuses from various ethnic groups and forces.

Some speculated that Elder Zhuowu might have accepted her apprentice long ago, but for reasons unknown, this had not been made public. Following the death of her most valued junior, she chose

to reveal her apprentice, showcasing her courage and resolve. This bold move left many feeling envious.

Elder Zhuowu's tactics are truly formidable. By announcing her apprentice's identity to the world, she demonstrates genuine fearlessness, unafraid of attracting the attention of hidden adversaries.

Elder Zhuowu's apprentice must possess extraordinary strength. I fear there will be significant upheaval among the younger generation.

Many cultivators and beings murmured amongst themselves, their voices filled with admiration.

When Wang He heard these comments, he couldn't help but chuckle. The animosity between Elder Zhuowu and her apprentice was beyond what most could imagine. It was precisely this situation that sparked an idea in Wang He's mind to get closer to the future Empress Pingtian.

After arriving, Wang He didn't remain with Hong Gui; the two separated almost immediately. Wang He chose to stay in the outer area, where he appeared extremely inconspicuous among the group of cultivators. Although he had one foot in the Dao realm, few people paid him any attention.

Additionally, this was Elder Zhuowu's territory, a stronghold she had built over a long time, which meant that no one dared to act presumptuously. As a result, there were not many patrolling cultivators around.

With this in mind, Wang He's eyes shifted slightly as he planned to seize the opportunity to venture deeper and find the future Empress Pingtian first. He had once acquired an ancient aura restraint technique, which allowed him to effectively conceal his aura and fluctuations. It would be challenging for anyone to detect him unless they actively sought out his presence.

Moreover, since Elder Zhuowu was not currently there, Wang He felt no concern about being discovered by others.

Soon, a subtle fluctuation rippled through Wang He's body, rendering his appearance even more unremarkable. His figure flickered as if merging with the void around him, and he vanished from the outermost area.

The cultivators nearby were all at the level of the Immortal Realm, with the strongest among them no more than an Immortal King in cultivation. Naturally, they couldn't detect anything unusual.

However, at the moment Wang He disappeared, the Eternal Saintess, who had been quietly sipping wine in a magnificent palace enveloped in immortal mist, sensed a shift. A strange expression crossed her face, hidden beneath the haze that shrouded her features, as she turned her gaze toward the direction he had just occupied.

"Interesting..." A flicker of curiosity appeared on her face.

"Xiang Jun, what did you just say?"

Li Yang, the Eternal Son of God, inquired during the banquet not far away, where they were drinking wine and awaiting Elder Zhuowu's disciple acceptance ceremony.

Miss Luo Xiang glanced at him briefly before turning her gaze away, showing no intention of responding as she continued to sip the immortal wine before her.

Li Yang hadn't anticipated that Luo Xiangjun would ignore him again. His expression faltered, and he felt a bit embarrassed, choosing not to press the matter further. Instead, he took a dull gulp from his glass.

Nearby, some powerful cultivators and beings noticed this exchange, pausing in surprise before shifting to a more attentive stance. The dynamic between the Son of God of the Eternal Protoss and the Saintess appeared less harmonious than it had seemed at first. Moreover, the several elders of the Eternal Protoss who accompanied them seemed aware of the tension, accepting it without question.

"Elder Zhuowu hasn't shown up yet? How long are you planning to make me wait here?"

An elder of the Eternal Protoss, under the scrutiny of various powerful beings, felt a bit embarrassed. He coughed dryly and attempted to change the subject.

It was difficult for them to intervene in the matter between the Saintess and the Son of God. Even the patriarch was troubled by this situation. If Li Yang were to adopt a firmer stance in front of the Saintess, they could step in to offer support. However, no one could blame Li Yang for his shortcomings.

He was clearly hoped for by many within the clan, seen as someone who could lead the Eternal Protoss into a more glorious era. Yet, time and again, he faced setbacks in front of the Saintess, leaving him unable to hold his head high.

In the depths of the oasis, a greater number of pavilions and palaces stood, each more magnificent than the last. At that moment, beside a clear lake, a stunning woman sat on a large bluestone. Her jade boots had been discarded, and beneath her skirt, a pair of crystal-clear jade feet dangled, occasionally splashing in the water as she appeared bored.

Even though this filthy old thing has left this place, people are still watching me, and I'm not allowed to leave this area.

I wonder if she has other means to keep track of my every move.

This woman was naturally Mu Yan. Compared to before, her face looked noticeably thinner. Her hair was simply coiled, and her neck was slender and fair, flawless as snow. While speaking to herself, her gaze was heavy with gloom and disinterest.

After idly splashing in the water for a while, Mu Yan eventually stood up, slipped on her jade boots, and sat cross-legged on the bluestone, obediently absorbing the spiritual mist as she practiced. She knew that Zhuowu's insistence on her cultivation was not driven by good intentions.

Not long ago, Mu Yan had been lazy and unwilling to pursue her cultivation seriously. However, she did not expect Zhuowu to discover her neglect so quickly. As punishment for her lack of diligence, Zhuowu subjected her to a method of torture that was excruciatingly painful, claiming it was meant to encourage her to take her cultivation seriously.

As a result, Mu Yan had no choice but to cultivate diligently, following Zhuowu's instructions step by step. Zhuowu would periodically check on her progress, and if she was found to be slacking, the spell she had previously endured would be activated.

The torment felt like thousands of ants gnawing at her heart, soul, flesh, and bones—an unimaginable agony. Even Mu Yan, who had always prided herself on her determination and perseverance, would break out in a cold sweat from the pain, nearly losing consciousness. It was a million times more torturous than anything she had experienced in the hell of ice and fire.

Chapter 1042: Is it actually an old friend of the empress? A disgrace to the eternal protoss clan

Wisps of spiritual mist enveloped Mu Yan's figure as she sat cross-legged on the bluestone, her five hearts turned skyward. She practiced quietly, adhering to the key points of the exercises given by the old Zhuowu. Her face appeared even more flawless and crystal clear, resembling a female immortal carved from jade.

Although she suspected there might be issues with this exercise, she dared not disobey Zhuowu's orders, so she cultivated diligently. Surrounding the serene green lake, hidden among the pavilions and palaces, several powerful beings left by Zhuowu stood guard, monitoring her every move.

Just as Mu Yan became absorbed in her thoughts, focusing intently on her cultivation, Wang He's figure emerged nearby, concealed among several old trees with lush branches and large crowns. He looked youthful, but his true age exceeded tens of thousands of years.

At that moment, Wang He wore a simple Daoist robe, a purple star crown perched on his head, and held a dust whisk in his hand, giving him an ethereal appearance. As he gazed at the beautiful woman with closed eyes not far away, a look of amazement flashed in his eyes, quickly replaced by a smile.

"I finally found you, the future Empress Pingtian," he said, grinning as he approached without attempting to conceal his presence.

The instant Wang He appeared, Mu Yan, who had been deeply immersed in her practice, suddenly sensed him. She opened her eyes, her expression freezing for a moment before shifting to one of vigilance.

"You found my trace so quickly. You're worthy of being the future Empress Pingtian. Although you haven't truly risen yet, you are already extraordinary," Wang He remarked, slightly taken aback. He hadn't anticipated Mu Yan's perception to be so keen, especially considering he had used a secret method to mask his aura.

At that moment, none of the powerhouses guarding the area noticed Wang He's arrival, as he had already dealt with that aspect. However, the more remarkable Mu Yan's response was, the broader the smile on his face grew.

"It's really like..." he began, walking closer. Before Mu Yan could speak, he took the initiative and sighed slightly, looking genuinely emotional.

Mu Yan frowned slightly, a strange look crossing her eyes. A Daoist, appearing suddenly in the courtyard where she was being held and expressing such sentiments, raised her suspicions. Moreover, this Daoist had gone undetected by the individuals assigned by Zhuowu. Did he eliminate them, or were they simply unable to perceive him?

"Who are you? Why are you here?"

Mu Yan asked, maintaining her vigilance. Many thoughts raced through her mind as she spoke calmly.

Wang He smiled slightly, making a polite gesture, and replied, "I've seen the young miss." Scavenger was his alias from the time he wandered the world before his rise to prominence.

"Scavenger?"

Mu Yan echoed, feeling something was amiss with the peculiar title. Moreover, she questioned the audacity of this Daoist. How dare he trespass here? Did he not realize this was the Zhou clan's territory?

"I wonder why the Daoist has come here," she said, her tone firm yet tinged with concern.

“If you entered by mistake, I advise you to leave as soon as possible to avoid being discovered and causing trouble.” Mu Yan shook her head, genuinely trying to persuade him. ㄹᄡᆞᆫ

She had always been kind-hearted, and her intentions were good. After all, if this strange Daoist were discovered by Zhuowu, the consequences would be disastrous.

Hearing her words, Wang He maintained his amiable smile. "This Daoist came here because of the young miss," he replied.

Mu Yan was taken aback. Did he really come here for her? A flicker of anxiety crossed her mind. Could he be connected to the family that had sent people after her?

But Mu Yan wasn't naïve. Though she kept her expression calm, her vigilance deepened inwardly.

"It seems that the miss doesn't quite believe the words of this poor Daoist," Wang He observed, a knowing smile on his lips.

“When I traveled throughout the world, I formed a close friendship with a fellow Daoist named Mu Xingkong. Our bond was inseparable.”

His tone turned somber as he continued, “However, due to some circumstances, I had to journey to a distant universe. Upon my return, I was devastated to hear the unfortunate news of Fellow Daoist Mu Xingkong’s passing.”

Wang He paused for a moment, allowing the weight of his words to settle in the air. “Fortunately, this poor Daoist is skilled in deduction and divination. I can decipher yin and yang and navigate the

five elements, understanding the universe across past and present. After some careful deduction, I discovered that Fellow Daoist Mu Xingkong still has a child left in the world...”

His voice carried a hint of emotion and regret, as if he genuinely mourned the loss of his friend and felt compelled to find her.

“That is why I have sought you out.”

Moreover, as Wang He spoke, he detailed his experiences with the fellow Daoist named Mu Xingkong. His stories were so vivid and engaging that even those unfamiliar with the events would be inclined to believe them. He recounted tales of their adventures, such as the time they captured ancient star beasts in a forbidden sea of stars, a harrowing experience that nearly cost them their lives.

Wang He’s narration was so compelling that it blurred the line between reality and fabrication. Of course, he had honed this technique when establishing the Scavengers Sect, using similar methods to persuade many disciples and elders of his credibility. With the powers of the Book of Scavengers, which could probe into the lives of others, he effortlessly crafted an image of himself as a mysterious figure who knew both the past and present.

When Mu Yan heard Wang He mention the name Mu Xingkong, her expression shifted to one of surprise. That was her father’s name. Aside from her, very few people would know of him, making the revelation all the more striking.

Although she didn’t have many memories of her father, she had never heard him mention any close friends, let alone someone as peculiar as this Daoist. However, Wang He’s words felt convincing, especially when he had said earlier, “It really looks like...” which had momentarily shaken her suspicion.

Yet, despite this flicker of doubt, she remained cautious. If her father had truly had such a life-and-death friend, it seemed unlikely that he wouldn't have shared that information with her. The only explanation she could consider was that there might be something hidden beneath the surface.

"I don't have much memory of my father, and I didn't know he had such a friend as the Daoist," Mu Yan said, glancing at Wang He and shaking her head.

Yet, as she contemplated the possibility, a glimmer of hope emerged: if Wang He's claims were genuine, could this Daoist potentially help her escape the peril she currently faced?

Moreover, there seemed to be no reason for this Daoist to lie to her. After all, what could she possibly offer that was worth deceiving?

Then she remembered the Eternal Divine Furnace, something her mother had entrusted to her before she died. Her mother had instructed her to retrieve it from a specific location after leaving the Eternal Protoss and to guard it closely, warning her never to disclose any information about it. If this Daoist was truly who he claimed to be, he might be able to deduce that the Eternal Divine Furnace was in her possession.

As these thoughts crossed her mind, Mu Yan's worries intensified, making her even more alert.

Wang He, on the other hand, hadn't expected to fully dispel Mu Yan's concerns with his words. After all, this was the future Empress Pingtian. Though she was still young, her courage and cunning were beyond what ordinary people possessed.

"The poor Daoist understands that you might not believe what I'm saying right now, but that's alright. I came here to ease your worries," Wang He continued.

“I will do my utmost to help you out of your current dangerous situation. However, Elder Zhuowu is indeed powerful. I am no match for her at this moment, and I cannot directly take you away or confront the vast Zhuo clan... But since you are an old friend, I will certainly do everything I can to assist you.”

Wang He concluded his words with a reassuring smile. Before Mu Yan could respond, his figure abruptly vanished from her sight.

Initially, he had intended to elaborate further on Mu Yan’s experiences to make her more convinced, but he sensed a terrifying aura approaching—Elder Zhuowu was returning. Recognizing the urgency, he decided against lingering too long.

Wang He believed that what he had shared would plant seeds of doubt in Mu Yan’s mind. The future was long, and he felt no need to rush.

After Wang He’s figure disappeared, Mu Yan remained stunned for a moment, her thoughts swirling as she slowly regained her composure.

Could what this Daoist said be true? If so, wouldn’t he be my uncle or something?

Mu Yan pondered, shaking her head to clear her thoughts. After all, Wang He hadn’t inquired too deeply about her current predicament; he had simply stated that he would find a way to extricate her from danger. This sparked a glimmer of hope in Mu Yan, who had been feeling despondent about her situation. She genuinely wished that what Wang He had claimed was true.

Not long after Wang He had disappeared, a beam of golden light descended from the horizon, transforming into Elder Zhuowu. “You girl, are you being lazy again? Haven’t you had enough of the suffering from the past few days?” she chided, her calm gaze landing on Mu Yan.

Noticing that Mu Yan was dazed and not practicing, a flicker of anger flashed across Elder Zhuowu's face.

If Mu Yan didn't cultivate diligently, her current strength wouldn't be enough to contain Zhuowu's immense spiritual power, let alone serve as a vessel. Snapped back to reality, Mu Yan pursed her lips and fixed her dark eyes on Zhuowu, remaining silent, as if she were a dead pig unbothered by boiling water.

"Forget it, today is your acceptance ceremony, so I will spare you this once," Zhuowu declared, her tone softening slightly.

"But in front of all the guests, you are not allowed to embarrass me."

With a cold snort, she flicked her sleeves, and in an instant, both she and Mu Yan vanished from the spot.

Meanwhile, above the banquet, silk and bamboo instruments intertwined, filling the air with soft melodies from the harp. Guests mingled freely among the pavilions and buildings, laughing and drinking. The green lake mirrored the sky, dotted with lotus leaves, while a veil of immortal mist enveloped the scene, creating a divine ambiance. Figures moved gracefully among the mountains and ancient trees, surrounded by swirling purple clouds, adding to the enchanting atmosphere.

In some open areas farther away, many younger cultivators were engaged in lively discussions about the Dao. The entire space could accommodate at least tens of thousands of cultivators, all prominent figures from across the immortal civilization.

“Calculating the time, Elder Zhuowu should be here soon...” remarked an elder from an ancient force named Hun Tianya, a smile playing on his lips.

“She’s wrapping up some matters at Zhuowu, and it should be nearly finished by now.” His familiarity with Elder Zhuowu was evident, suggesting a good personal relationship.

At his words, many guests paused, placing their cups down as they turned their attention toward the distance, anticipation evident in their expressions.

Swish! A ray of golden light descended from the sky, quickly illuminating the area as Elder Zhuowu emerged within it.

“For today’s disciple acceptance ceremony, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all fellow Daoists for traveling here from hundreds of millions of miles away. Zhuowu is deeply thankful,” she proclaimed, her voice resonating with authority.

Dressed in a dark golden cloak, every movement of hers seemed to command the natural order of the world, reflecting her profound and extraordinary cultivation.

As she spoke, Zhuowu smiled and raised her glass, inviting everyone to join her in a toast. Many guests reciprocated, raising their glasses in respect. In terms of strength and status, only a few present could compare to her.

Yet, despite the ceremonial grandeur, the eyes of many cultivators remained fixed behind Elder Zhuowu. There stood a woman with a calm demeanor, clad in a moon-white long dress and a white outer cedar jacket. Her hair was lightly coiled, and her figure was strikingly graceful. Among the younger generations, expressions of astonishment were evident as they took in her presence.

“As expected of Elder Zhuowu’s disciple; this face is truly rare in the world,” some elders remarked, their voices filled with admiration.

“From both age and cultivation perspectives, she’s not inferior to any young genius...” another added, nodding in agreement.

“It’s clear that with this disciple, Elder Zhuowu will become a peerless figure in the future,” more guests chimed in, their flattery growing with each passing moment.

Since Elder Zhuowu had publicly acknowledged her disciple and organized this acceptance ceremony, it was evident that she placed great importance on Mu Yan.

Amid the crowd, Wang He observed Mu Yan, who radiated like a moon surrounded by stars. A smile formed in his heart, pleased that events were unfolding according to his expectations and plans, without a hitch.

However, in the banquet area designated for the Eternal Protoss and their entourage, Li Yang, the son of the Eternal Protoss, was astonished. His eyes widened as he stared at Mu Yan in disbelief, and soon his expression shifted, becoming increasingly stormy.

The other elders of the Eternal Protoss wore similarly grim expressions, clearly taken aback by Mu Yan’s unexpected appearance. They were particularly shocked to see her transformed into the disciple of Elder Zhuowu from the Zhuo clan. This development felt like a betrayal, a humiliation to those clansmen who had been expelled by the Eternal Protoss in the past.

Things are getting interesting.

Luo Xiang Jun mused, a faint smile playing at the corners of her mouth. She had not anticipated such a strong reaction from Li Yang and the others. Although she had never encountered Mu Yan before, she could easily deduce her identity now.

Meanwhile, Mu Yan herself was filled with astonishment as she scanned the crowd, her gaze landing on a familiar figure. Surprise flickered in her eyes when she spotted her younger brother.

Little Yang!

She murmured, not expecting to see him there.

After being expelled from the Eternal Protoss, Mu Yan had worried deeply about her brother's safety and had longed to visit him in secret, but circumstances had made that impossible. It was only later that she learned Li Yang had become the son of the Eternal Protoss, which brought her a measure of relief.

During their mother's pregnancy with Li Yang, Mu Yan had been quite young herself. Despite the age difference, she felt a profound concern for her half-brother. She knew that her own actions had contributed to Li Yang being overlooked by their father, and this guilt weighed heavily on her. She had always wanted to make it up to him.

At that time, Mu Yan and her mother lived in a neglected courtyard, their situation dire. Her mother's cultivation had suffered greatly due to previous injuries, leaving her weak and shivering from the cold in winter. They received no assistance, not even a stove to keep warm. To survive the harsh winters, Mu Yan had taken the initiative to help servants and handymen with their tasks in exchange for a few pieces of coal.

Despite the mockery they faced from some servants, most were kind-hearted and would occasionally give her some coal to help them endure the cold. This was how she and her mother survived one severe winter after another. Yet, Li Yang rarely visited his biological mother, seemingly indifferent to their plight.

Chapter 1043: The group of guests shook, you look much prettier than before

As for the latter, many events unfolded. Mu Yan's mother passed away from illness, and she was subsequently expelled from the Eternal Protoss. However, Mu Yan always remembered her mother's dying wish for her to take care of her younger brother, a promise she dared not forget. After her expulsion from the Eternal Protoss, she diligently sought information about her brother's well-being and often wondered how he was faring.

Fortunately, she discovered that since their mother's death, the patriarch of the Eternal Protoss—Li Yang's biological father—had changed his attitude toward him and began to train him. Later, when Mu Yan heard news of Li Yang again, it was to learn that he was being established as the Son of the Eternal Protoss. This brought her a sense of relief.

Though she knew Li Yang would likely harbor resentment toward her, she felt indifferent about it, aware that during their childhood, her presence had subjected him to ridicule from many members of the Eternal Protoss. Even the handymen and servants regarded him with disdainful looks. This treatment caused Li Yang to endure a long period of embarrassment and humiliation.

"It seems that Xiao Yang has been doing well for a while..." Mu Yan thought, looking at the group of Eternal Protoss not far away. She felt a sense of relief. The eldest sister had always been like a mother to her. Although Li Yang harbored a deep hatred for her, she held no complaints or concerns about it.

When she was first captured by the Zhuo clan, she had overheard them mentioning that there might be powerful allies helping her. In her heart, Mu Yan nurtured a small hope that her younger brother, Li Yang, might be secretly aiding her. However, that hope was soon dashed as she came to realize she was simply being naive.

At that moment, noticing Mu Yan's gaze, Li Yang's expression grew increasingly dark, and the fists hidden beneath his robe tightened, making a creaking sound. "How could she be here and become Elder Zhuowu's disciple?" he growled inwardly, consumed by a sense of gloom.

For this half-sister, he harbored an intense hatred, wishing she would die outside. He hadn't heard any news about her in recent years, which brought him a sense of relief, as if a stain on his otherwise bright life had been wiped away. He never imagined he would see her again in such a situation, especially as the direct disciple of an elder from the Zhuo Clan. This revelation made Li Yang feel as if he had swallowed a dead mouse.

At that moment, his eyes turned cold as he sent a voice transmission to the elder beside him, determined not to let Mu Yan appear before him. "I nearly forgot to introduce her. The apprentice I received was met by me during my travels some time ago. Now she goes by Zhuo Yan..."

Zhuowu, noticing the unusual expressions on the faces of the Eternal Protoss, began to suspect she might have made a mistake.

However, she quickly regained her composure and introduced Mu Yan to everyone. She forgot the faint trace of the eternal divine bloodline that had manifested when she first met Mu Yan. Although that trace was weak and could only be described as thin, it confirmed her status as a genuine member of the Eternal Protoss. Did the elders of the Eternal Protoss still recognize Mu Yan?

From Zhuowu's perspective, Mu Yan was merely an ordinary member of the Eternal Protoss and should not have been remembered by these elder-level figures. "Hehe, it is a great honor for her to be accepted as an apprentice by Elder Zhuowu, but who would have thought that an abandoned member of our clan would end up with such fortune in the future? Truly, it is her luck..."

However, Zhuowu's introduction was cut short by a cold snort from one of the elders of the Eternal Protoss. The other elders who had attended the banquet wore equally grim expressions. An abandoned and seemingly useless member of the Eternal Protoss had suddenly become a disciple of Zhuowu. They couldn't believe that Zhuowu was unaware of Mu Yan's identity prior to this moment. It felt intentional, like a deliberate slap in the face of the Eternal Protoss.

The other guests had initially been praising and admiring Elder Zhuowu's newly accepted apprentice. However, no one expected the reaction from the group of Eternal Protoss to be so intense. For a moment, many cultivators and beings stood frozen in place, unable to react.

Those who had been showering compliments also found themselves embarrassed, their words abruptly halted. A palpable tension filled the air, creating a strong sense of animosity that was hard to ignore.

Everyone in the Eternal Protoss wore expressions of hostility, demanding an explanation from Elder Zhuowu. They had come with good intentions, believing they were extending a courtesy, yet Elder Zhuowu had humiliated them in front of all. Wasn't this a slap in the face of the Eternal Protoss?

"Fellow Daoists, what do you mean by these words?" Zhuowu asked, astonished by the sudden shift in the atmosphere.

"Hehe, fellow Daoist Zhuowu, are you pretending to be unaware?" replied the elder of the Eternal Protoss, his expression dark. "You accepted a useless person expelled from my Eternal Protoss as your apprentice and even invited me to witness the ceremony. Do you think my Eternal Protoss is easy to bully?"

At this remark, many guests finally grasped the situation and looked at Mu Yan in shock. This stunningly beautiful woman was, in fact, a member expelled by the Eternal Protoss. Mu Yan, too, was taken aback, never expecting the Eternal Protoss to recognize her. Yet, she could hardly believe they would go so far as to voice such accusations in front of everyone.

A wry smile and a sense of self-deprecation crossed Mu Yan's face. She had once imagined that the Eternal Protoss might come to her aid, but now it seemed that not adding insult to injury was the best outcome she could hope for. ʀANÖBES

Meanwhile, Li Yang remained indifferent, as if he didn't even notice her presence, sipping his drink in solitude. In the distance, Wang He watched the scene unfold, not surprised at all; instead, a confident smile played on his lips, knowing everything was under control.

It was these experiences that would later shape the Pingtian Empress, who was so talented yet so ruthless. Many cultivators who had studied the life of Empress Pingtian often remarked that if she hadn't endured such a dark period and undergone a transformation in the depths of despair, there would be no future Pingtian Empress.

It could be said that the future Empress Pingtian was a person of remarkable perseverance. She truly severed ties with her past life, cutting off everyone who had once been part of her experience.

"My Fellow Daoists, you have misunderstood. This deity has no such intentions. I was unaware of the history between Zhuo Yan and the Eternal Protoss until now," Zhuowu said, frowning as she spoke. "Had I known, no matter what, I would not have held the disciple acceptance ceremony so rashly."

Zhuowu felt that the situation had become tricky, exceeding her expectations. From the perspective of the Eternal Protoss, it seemed as if she had acted deliberately to humiliate them. However, before this moment, she had no idea that Mu Yan was a member expelled from the Eternal Protoss. She hadn't considered this at all when accepting Mu Yan as her apprentice.

Yet, if this misunderstanding was not clarified, it could easily incite the ire of the Eternal Protoss. Zhuowu had no desire to offend them without cause.

"Knowing Elder Zhuowu as I do, it is impossible for her to have intentionally accepted her as a disciple, aware that she is an expelled member of the Eternal Protoss," an elder who had a good personal relationship with Zhuowu interjected, trying to ease the tension. "Let's not be hasty; I believe this may truly be a misunderstanding."

Throughout this ordeal, Mu Yan watched everything unfold with a blank expression. She witnessed the changing attitudes of those around her—flattery and amazement turning into embarrassment, indifference, and even resentment. Yet, none of it truly bothered her.

However, after experiencing it firsthand, she couldn't help but laugh quietly to herself. This was the truest display of human nature. People's reactions shifted so easily, driven by circumstance.

Several elders had spoken up on Zhuowu's behalf, leaving the elders of the Eternal Protoss with little to say, though their expressions remained sour. Meanwhile, Li Yang appeared indifferent, as if he had nothing to do with the situation, content to drink and eat in silence. But in his heart, he sneered, knowing that all of this had happened because of his orders.

No matter how Mu Yan attempted to repay the many humiliations she had caused Li Yang in the past, it would never be enough.

"In that case, Elder Zhuowu, please provide an explanation," the elder of the Eternal Protoss who had spoken earlier said, casting a neutral glance at Mu Yan. Zhuowu felt conflicted; she didn't want to offend the Eternal Protoss, but she also didn't want to give up on a suitable apprentice.

"If I had known this, I would never have held this so-called disciple acceptance ceremony. In the end, I've only shot myself in the foot..." she thought, feeling an overwhelming dissatisfaction with Mu Yan.

At that moment, she slightly cupped her hands and addressed the group. "I will certainly provide a reasonable explanation to my fellow Daoists. Before this, Mu Yan told me that she had no parents and had been wandering since childhood. Out of compassion, I accepted her as an apprentice, never realizing she would hide her past from me."

“If you think about it, you can’t blame Elder Zhuowu for this. This woman has always been scheming; knowing that Elder Zhuowu has a noble status, she deceived her and presented herself as an orphan seeking mentorship,” another elder added. “In a sense, Elder Zhuowu was also kept in the dark by her...”

Hearing these words, the elders of the Eternal Protoss understood the difficult position in which Elder Zhuowu found herself.

Their attitudes softened as they nodded in agreement. “Yes, it’s true that Elder Zhuowu cannot be blamed for this matter. She had good intentions from the beginning.”

Seeing this, others joined in, their voices filled with condemnation and blame directed at Mu Yan. Observing the crowd’s shifting expressions, Mu Yan remained expressionless, though she felt a desire to laugh inside. However, that smile gradually faded, giving way to indifference.

Elder Zhuowu’s complexion darkened as she contemplated ordering someone to imprison Mu Yan. But just then, outside the oasis, a multitude of divine lights suddenly descended, shining brilliantly and illuminating the sky. A magnificent golden Dao extended down from a distance, reaching toward the heavens.

This breathtaking spectacle left everyone in shock.

Many guests couldn’t help but express their surprise, turning to look in that direction. Elder Zhuowu was momentarily taken aback, but realization quickly replaced her shock, and a look of delight appeared on her face. “It must be the mysterious lord who has arrived...”

“I only sent the invitation out of respect, never expecting him to actually come here.” At that moment, even Elder Zhuowu felt somewhat flattered. The old servant accompanying this mysterious lord was an individual whose strength rivaled that of the ancestor of the Hun clan.

She quickly set aside her concerns about the other guests, smiling as she stood to greet them. The remaining guests, still a bit dazed, wondered why Elder Zhuowu was acting in such a manner.

“That’s Zhuo Fengxie of the Zhuo Clan and Hun Yuan Jun, the ancestor of the Hun Clan...”

“They’ve come here in person and are giving Elder Zhuowu such a significant honor. It’s no wonder she wants to greet them personally.”

“Huh? No, they are merely companions; the real guests are still to come...”

A group of guests gazed over, first spotting Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun standing at the forefront. They were amazed at Elder Zhuowu’s ability to invite these two esteemed figures to attend in person.

However, the guests soon realized they were mistaken; Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun were merely accompanying figures at the front. Given their statuses, they shouldn’t have been positioned at the side.

All the guests were left stunned, their minds buzzing in disbelief. “How... how is this possible?”

At that moment, Mu Yan, who was equally taken aback, widened her eyes in astonishment. She had only glanced curiously in that direction, but that single look captivated her, filling her with astonishment, confusion, doubt, and a deep sense of bewilderment.

“What’s... what’s going on?” she murmured almost to herself. “Is this the mysterious young man who has been making waves in Gufeng Ancient City recently?”

Nearby, at the banquet, Lord Luo Xiang, the saint of the Eternal Protoss, also shifted his gaze, revealing a hint of interest. “Greetings, Mr. Gu. It’s truly an honor for this old man that Young Master Gu could attend my acceptance ceremony.”

Before the golden pathway, Elder Zhuowu approached to greet him in person, her face radiating respect and warmth.

In fact, she never imagined that Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun would be by Gu Changge’s side. This realization brightened her mood and completely erased her earlier depression.

As the other guests gazed at Gu Changge, shock and curiosity filled their expressions. They looked at him one after another, but some hesitated to be too presumptuous, recalling Hun Yuan Jun’s formidable reputation. Instead, they dared to steal glances, and the many descriptions of Gu Changge circulating in rumors were continuously validated before their eyes.

“Elder Zhuowu sincerely invited me; how could I not come?” Gu Changge said with a faint smile, brushing aside Elder Zhuowu, who seemed eager to speak. He made his way toward the banquet on his own, with Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun trailing behind, paying little attention to Elder Zhuowu.

Given their statuses, it was unlikely they would attend her disciple acceptance ceremony in person. As this scene unfolded, all the guests couldn’t help but feel a bit stunned. It appeared that this mysterious Mr. Gu hadn’t come here specifically because of Elder Zhuowu.

What followed was even more astonishing and unbelievable. Some guests widened their eyes in disbelief and stood up abruptly from the banquet table. They watched as Mr. Gu, who had seemed

so enigmatic to them, walked straight toward the beautiful woman in the white skirt. She had been expressionless moments ago but now looked a mix of shock and disbelief.

“I haven’t seen Miss Mu in a long time,” Gu Changge said with a slight smile. “You’ve lost quite a bit of weight, but you look much prettier than before.” He greeted Mu Yan casually, his tone light and friendly.

Chapter 1044: Do you have anything else to say? I came to take her away

“You...”

“Gu... silly Gu...”

Mu Yan was completely stunned at that moment. Of course, she recognized Gu Changge—after all, they had spent more than half a month together.

With such a strikingly handsome and ethereal appearance, he was unforgettable. As long as she wasn’t blind, she’d remember him instantly. Not to mention that during that time, they were practically “together day and night.” How could she forget what Gu Changge looked like?

What she never expected, however, was that this “naive, innocent” nobleman she used to find so irritating—fearing he’d be tricked out of his pants the moment he stepped outside—would now reappear before her with an entirely new and astonishing identity.

The Zhuo Clan’s Zhuo Fengxie and the Hun Clan’s ancestor, Hun Yuan Jun, were both personally at his side. Wasn’t he the mysterious young man in white who had caused such a stir in Gufeng Ancient City recently?

Why hadn't she connected the two sooner?

However, although Mu Yan recognized Gu Changge, she herself no longer looked the same as she did when they were together. Yet, Gu Changge recognized her instantly and walked straight toward her.

This was what astonished and baffled Mu Yan the most. But soon, she realized that with Gu Changge's background and identity, he must have seen through her disguise back then and simply chose not to expose her.

Mu Yan had no idea what was going through his mind at the time, but thinking about it now made her grit her teeth in frustration.

What's more, in the beginning, she had put on such an old-fashioned act, lecturing Gu Changge left and right, as if worried he would be deceived or lose his life due to his lack of experience in the outside world.

"You... how did you get here?"

Mu Yan quickly snapped out of her tangled thoughts, ignoring Gu Changge's teasing greeting. She closed her eyes and asked him directly.

However, the moment the question left her lips, she immediately regretted it, mentally scolding herself for being so foolish. Why couldn't she think clearly in a moment like this? Why would she ask such an obvious question?

Wasn't it the old Zhuowu who had hosted the apprentice ceremony and sincerely invited Gu Changge to attend?

Seeing her regretful and flustered expression, Gu Changge's amusement only seemed to grow.

Gu Changge shook his head with a faint smile and said, "I came here just to see Miss Mu. Could it be that Miss Mu isn't happy to reunite with an old friend?" ~~AN~~ ~~06~~ ~~E~~ ~~S~~

"Eh?"

"To see me?"

Mu Yan was once again taken aback by his words, almost doubting if she had heard him correctly.

"Did he come here specifically for her? Wasn't he invited by Zhuowu? And how did he even know she was here?"

One question after another swirled in Mu Yan's mind as her beautiful eyes widened slightly. However, the answers to those questions didn't seem to matter at the moment. Gu Changge's sudden appearance, along with his words, gave her an overwhelming sense of security.

Moments ago, she had been accused, insulted, and ridiculed by everyone. Although she hadn't let it affect her deeply, she still felt a bit aggrieved and uncomfortable. But now, with Gu Changge standing in front of her, it was as if all of that had vanished in an instant.

The people who had taunted and ridiculed her earlier were now completely dumbfounded, standing there as if frozen in shock. Their expressions were as ugly as if they had swallowed something vile, their faces turning blue and white with embarrassment.

Even Zhuo Wu, in disbelief, could only stare wide-eyed at the unfolding scene.

Zhuo Wu's expression was a sight to behold—filled with awkwardness, as if she wanted to speak but didn't dare. All she could do was stand there, caught in her own embarrassment.

Seeing this, Mu Yan felt an indescribable sense of comfort and relief wash over her.

Wang He, who stood in the distance, was equally dumbfounded, as if he couldn't fully comprehend what was happening. The moment Gu Changge arrived, Wang He had sensed that something was off. He recalled Gu Changge taking away the gray-haired girl at the Ten Thousand Clans Arena, which had left an impression on him.

Even so, he clung to a sliver of doubt, convincing himself that he was overthinking it and that there couldn't possibly be so many coincidences.

But when Gu Changge walked directly toward Mu Yan, Wang He was completely stunned. He simply couldn't believe it.

When had Mu Yan crossed paths with Gu Changge?

If Gu Changge had appeared here, it would certainly disrupt many of Wang He's future plans. There was no way Mu Yan could rely on him to escape her current predicament now.

"How could this happen..." Wang He's face darkened.

At that moment, the entire banquet seemed to fall into a sudden, uneasy silence. No one had expected that Gu Changge's arrival wasn't due to Elder Zhuowu, but rather for the woman everyone had ridiculed just moments before.

It quickly became clear that this woman knew Gu Changge and that the two likely shared a close friendship.

The cultivators and creatures who had just spoken against her were now filled with regret, wishing they could slap themselves for their foolishness.

The expressions of the Eternal Protoss members were equally remarkable. After realizing who Gu Changge truly was, the elders who had been eager to approach and show goodwill suddenly found their smiles frozen. They were left standing there awkwardly, unsure whether to stay or leave.

Click...

A sharp cracking sound broke the tense silence in the room. The Eternal Saintess, Luo Xiangjun, glanced at Li Yang before casually looking away, a hint of mockery flickering at the corner of her mouth.

It was only then that Li Yang snapped back to reality, realizing his expression was inappropriate. He hurriedly composed himself, though his eyes remained dark and brooding. In his shock, he had crushed the bronze wine glass in his hand.

It was difficult for him to accept that Mu Yan, who had just been ridiculed by everyone, was now suddenly linked to this mysterious young man in white.

“How is this possible? What merit or talent does Mu Yan possess that she should be so fortunate?” Li Yang seethed inwardly, feeling increasingly grim.

“It seems Miss Mu is in quite the predicament now. Perhaps if I had come later, I would have seen a real spectacle,” Gu Changge remarked, seemingly unfazed by the reactions of those around him. He smiled lightly and continued to engage in conversation.

Mu Yan couldn’t quite explain why, but Gu Changge’s smile filled her with an overwhelming sense of ease.

“I can’t say it’s bad; I can only say it’s very bad...”

She reverted to her previous demeanor in front of Gu Changge, smiling as the atmosphere around her seemed to brighten. As she spoke, it was clear that Mu Yan had regained a significant amount of confidence.

With a determined stride, she swept past Elder Zhuowu, the members of the Eternal Protoss, and all those who had mocked and ridiculed her just moments ago.

Their expressions shifted dramatically. Elder Zhuowu felt a tingling sensation at the back of his neck and instinctively took a few steps back.

“Gu... Young Master Gu, is there some misunderstanding here...” she stammered. “Zhuoyan is an apprentice I personally accepted; how could I really harm her? Those words just now...”

She spoke bravely, clearly aware that Gu Changge had come to support Mu Yan.

After all, she had lived for so long; if she couldn't see through this situation, she might as well find a place to end it all. Gu Changge continued to smile lightly and said, "I haven't even mentioned what it is, so why is Elder Zhuowu so flustered?"

His words only deepened Zhuowu's uncertainty. After all, Mu Yan had been forcibly captured by someone she had sent, and Zhuowu had intended to use her as a vessel in the future. Mu Yan must have harbored a deep hatred for her. If she revealed this to Gu Changge, how would she possibly resolve it?

As these thoughts raced through her mind, Zhuowu cast a desperate glance at Zhuo Fengxie, silently pleading for him to say something on her behalf, considering they were both members of the Zhuo clan.

However, at that moment, Zhuo Fengxie seemed oblivious to her distress, standing behind Gu Changge with an impassive expression. This only made Zhuowu's heart sink further.

Moreover, at that moment, Zhuowu recalled something else. When she had first tracked down Mu Yan's whereabouts, her killing intent had inexplicably vanished. Back then, she had wondered if there was a mysterious strong figure assisting Mu Yan.

Now, reflecting on it, could that mysterious ally have been the very Gu Changge standing in front of her?

...

At the banquet, the expressions of all the guests were a mix of confusion, embarrassment, regret, and disbelief. Even Zhuowu, the host, stood there with her hands clasped, unable to utter a word.

Gu Changge and Mu Yan engaged in casual conversation, seemingly unaware of the turmoil surrounding them. He asked her about her recent experiences, treating everyone else in the vicinity as if they were invisible.

Mu Yan wasn't sure if Gu Changge was doing this intentionally, but after pondering for a moment, she decided to openly recount the hardships she had faced since their separation.

She spoke of being hunted down and captured by the Zhuo clan, imprisoned in the hell of ice and fire, and then being coerced by Zhuowu to accept her as an apprentice.

As she shared this string of bizarre events, the guests around her listened in shock, struggling to believe what they were hearing.

No one had expected that Mu Yan was the one who had killed Zhuo Wu's most important junior. Instead of holding her accountable, Elder Zhuowu had accepted her as a disciple. This revelation left everyone with a buzzing sensation in their heads.

Even the members of the Eternal Protoss couldn't believe it, feeling as if they were caught in a surreal dream. If Mu Yan hadn't stated it herself, few would have been inclined to accept such a claim.

Zhuowu was aware of these circumstances, and at that moment, there was no way to conceal the truth. Her expression was far from pleasant, yet she didn't deny anything. Her demeanor could only be interpreted as an acquiescence to everything Mu Yan had said.

“It seems that Elder Zhuowu still values her talent...” Gu Changge remarked after listening, his expression remaining largely unchanged as he smiled lightly.

However, everyone present was no fool. It was clear that Zhuowu had taken Mu Yan as her apprentice for reasons beyond mere talent; she certainly had ulterior motives in mind.

Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun exchanged glances at Mu Yan, sensing her current fluctuations in aura, and began to surmise her intentions. However, they chose not to comment further.

“This matter is my fault. If Mr. Gu wishes to seek justice for her, then so be it. I know I can’t stand in your way,” Zhuowu said boldly. “But she killed my junior first, so it’s impossible for me not to seek revenge...”

She recognized that if she didn’t clarify her stance at this moment, no one in the Zhuo Clan would be able to shield her. Given the current circumstances, it was evident that Gu Changge had come to support Mu Yan.

Deep down, Zhuowu loathed the situation; she never anticipated that Mu Yan would be so fortunate. Yet, she was clever enough to frame her response by stating that Mu Yan had killed her junior first, justifying her actions as a means of avenging her fallen kin.

If Gu Changge proved to be unreasonable, then Zhuowu knew she would have no choice but to fight to the death.

“But as far as I know, Miss Mu killed your junior in self-defense. If it hadn’t been for the other party coveting the treasure on her person and acting out of greed, would this have happened?” she argued. “Of course, I am not unreasonable. Miss Mu and I share a good friendship; it’s impossible for me to stand by while she’s in danger.”

“If there are any grievances between you and Miss Mu, I won’t intervene for the sake of the Zhuo clan, but today, I will take Miss Mu away. Do you have anything to say about that?”

Gu Changge interrupted her calmly before Zhuowu could finish.

When everyone heard this, their expressions shifted, feeling a palpable tension in the air. Despite his flat tone, his words carried an undeniable authority that left them trembling.

Zhuowu’s heart skipped a beat, realizing she had no other option. She nodded immediately in agreement.

“Thank you, Mr. Gu. I have no objections.”

In truth, she breathed a sigh of relief; as long as Gu Changge didn’t involve himself further in the matter, things would be manageable. Although Mu Yan viewed her as an enemy, revenge could be dealt with later. No matter how much time Mu Yan was given, she would never pose a real threat to her.

The other elders of the Zhuo clan also bowed their hands and expressed their gratitude, saying, “Thank you, Mr. Gu.”

“Young Master Gu, all the members of my family are very grateful,” one elder added.

After all, what Gu Changge had just stated was for the sake of the Zhuo clan's reputation; he chose not to intervene in this matter. Otherwise, given the current situation, with even Zhuo Fengxie standing silent, who else could ensure Zhuowu's safety?

Mu Yan never expected that Gu Changge had come solely to take her away. She stared at him in a daze, as if she hadn't fully grasped what was happening yet.

But in the next moment, Gu Changge suddenly reached out and touched her face.

"Eh?"

Mu Yan was momentarily stunned, her gaze drifting to the corner of Gu Changge's mouth, which held a slight smile. She felt a bit lost. While she certainly had feelings for Gu Changge, she wondered what he was doing in such a public setting.

A buzzing sound filled her head, and her thoughts became a jumbled mess. Her face flushed, and a haze of confusion enveloped her. She instinctively clenched the corner of her skirt, standing frozen in place. After a moment's hesitation, she even closed her eyes completely.

"There is no need to keep this kind of spell," Gu Changge's voice broke through her swirling thoughts, bringing her back to reality.

At the same time, Mu Yan felt her body lighten, as if a force that had been suppressing her had vanished. She opened her eyes, confusion still lingering, and then noticed the spell in Gu Changge's hand, surrounded by black mist.

Bang!

With a swift motion, he crushed the talisman, reducing it to dust that scattered through the air.

Chapter 1045: Intentionally supporting a new owner, are you crazy and let him deal with Gu Changge?

Mu Yan stared at the scene before her, still somewhat in shock. The talisman was the very one Elder Zhuowu had forcibly implanted in her after capturing her, capable of controlling her life and death at any moment. Yet now, Gu Changge had extracted it and destroyed it himself.

It suddenly dawned on her that his earlier action had meant this; she had been overthinking! Her beautiful eyes widened slightly, and her face felt even hotter than before. What had been the point of her closing her eyes?

Especially with so many people watching, she wished for nothing more than to find a crack in the ground to bury herself. It felt as if Gu Changge had done this on purpose. The faint smile on his lips seemed designed to provoke her thoughts and lead her astray.

Mu Yan struggled to suppress the tumult of emotions she had just experienced. Her teeth ground together in irritation as she shot him a sidelong glance.

Everyone present noticed Mu Yan's subtle reaction, but no one dared to comment; they could only pretend not to see it. After all, no one knew the true extent of the friendship between Mu Yan and Gu Changge. If it were merely an ordinary friendship, would Gu Changge have gone out of his way to support her in such a manner?

The banquet continued, despite the earlier incident. Zhuowu could only grit her teeth and order the clansmen to proceed as planned. Though she understood that news of this event would significantly tarnish her reputation, she no longer cared.

She had already devised a plan: once today's affairs concluded, she would return to the clan's territory, find a secluded cave mansion to retreat to, and wait for several epochs before reemerging. By that time, the repercussions of this incident should have largely faded.

After Gu Changge helped Mu Yan eliminate the threat of the spell, he chose not to play any more tricks on her. Since the banquet was still ongoing, he had no intention of leaving just yet. Mu Yan carried a significant amount of luck from the immortal civilization, and he believed she would go far in the future.

His assistance stemmed not merely from friendship, but from the understanding that Mu Yan could be instrumental in his efforts to control the fairy civilization. Additionally, Gu Changge sensed some unexpected twists in her fate, hinting at her potential.

The Eternal Protoss was a deeper well of intrigue than any other group in the immortal civilization, and Gu Changge aimed to support a new leader for it. From his perspective, Mu Yan was a suitable candidate, though her reliance on him was not yet profound enough.

He reflected that both Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun could facilitate her growth. While Mu Tong was not particularly young, he could still provide valuable assistance as she developed.

Many thoughts raced through Gu Changge's mind, yet he maintained a carefree smile on his face. He surveyed the guests around him; aside from some cultivators and creatures who retained their human forms, many others displayed diverse and exotic appearances.

Speaking of which, when Gu Changge first encountered the immortal civilization, he had thought it leaned more toward a multicultural model, showcasing a blend of various styles. However, he soon realized that many of the ancient and established ethnic groups preferred to maintain their human forms, believing this to be the simplest path. The human race was seen as the group closest to the Dao in this world.

“It was a complete miscalculation,” he mused. “We expelled Mu Yan from our ranks back then; who could have imagined she would experience such fortune in the future? Having a good appearance certainly has its advantages.”

Not far away, several elders of the Eternal Protoss exchanged glances, resuming their original seats as they communicated through voice transmission. They wished for the banquet to conclude as quickly as possible. If today’s incident were to spread, the Eternal Protoss would likely become a source of ridicule.

The situation had taken unexpected turns, and no one had foreseen that it would conclude in this manner. Moreover, Mu Yan’s close association with the enigmatic Mr. Gu raised further concerns. Who could say whether Mu Yan would harbor resentment toward the Eternal Protoss?

At this moment, Li Yang sat nearby, pretending not to notice Mu Yan as he sipped his drink. In reality, his other hand was clenched tightly, the bones and fingers turning white with tension. Although he harbored intense hatred for Mu Yan, he understood that the best course of action was to feign ignorance. There was no chance the elders would willingly bring up the scandal involving the Eternal Protoss, allowing him to keep his sister’s identity a secret.

Meanwhile, Miss Luo Xiang held her cup delicately in her slender, porcelain-like hands. Her face was obscured by mist, and she gazed thoughtfully at the unfolding scene, her expression betraying a hint of interest that left others guessing about her true thoughts.

The remaining guests at the banquet wore similarly complex expressions, their surprise palpable. No one had anticipated that events would take such a turn. Nonetheless, the incidents of the day would undoubtedly spread, creating a ripple effect that could not be underestimated. Curiosity surrounding Mu Yan would surely intensify, with many eager to learn about her origins, especially given that even the enigmatic Mr. Gu had come to her defense.

Of course, some individuals noticed that among those who had appeared together today were Zhuo Fengxie of the Zhuo Clan and Hun Yuan Jun, the ancestor of the Hun Clan. Just yesterday, Hun

Yuan Jun had engaged in a fierce battle against the old man in the black robe under Gu Changge's command, yet here he was, standing by Gu Changge's side. What could that possibly signify?

As this realization sank in, many felt a whirlwind of emotions, sensing that the entire immortal civilization was on the brink of significant change in the near future.

Wang He, who had been a silent observer throughout the events, was not in a better mood than Elder Zhuowu. He had originally planned for Mu Yan to experience the world's harsh realities today, intending for her to feel utterly disheartened by the Eternal Protoss. Instead, he found that Gu Changge had stepped in and gradually pulled her out of her dire circumstances. Wang He never imagined that Gu Changge's unexpected appearance would completely overshadow his role in the unfolding drama.

Moreover, Gu Changge didn't need to scheme as meticulously as others might. With his formidable strength and distinguished identity, no one present dared to oppose him. If he wanted to take Mu Yan away, who would have the audacity to stop him? Wang He even had an unsettling intuition that Gu Changge's appearance was no mere coincidence.

"Once Mu Yan is taken away by Mr. Gu, it will be nearly impossible for me to see her again..." he mused, a knot of frustration tightening in his chest. "Not to mention integrating her into my family for future plans—that feels even more unrealistic."

He glanced over at Mu Yan, who was engaged in a soft conversation with Gu Changge, his brows furrowing deeper with each passing moment. Various thoughts raced through his mind as he pondered his next move. Giving up now was not an option; the very idea felt unbearable. He was far too familiar with Empress Pingtian's life and had almost become obsessed with her legacy. How could he possibly accept losing someone as talented and remarkable as Mu Yan?

"You originally planned to take that woman away?"

At that moment, the voice of the artifact spirit from the book, which had remained silent and largely ignored until now, suddenly pierced through his thoughts, echoing in Wang He's ears. ʔADôBES

He looked pleased, quickly masking his excitement with a calm demeanor. "What? Are you going to help me?"

At that moment, the artifact spirit awakened, and Wang He felt a flicker of hope. As a treasure of civilization, the Book of Scavengers boasted a mysterious origin and an array of incredible powers.

"I can indeed help you."

"However, this assistance isn't free."

The artifact spirit's voice remained indifferent, devoid of any emotional fluctuations.

"You mean, you want to make a deal with me?" Wang He asked, realization dawning on him.

"You can think of it that way," the artifact spirit replied coolly.

Although Wang He longed for her to comply with his wishes, he understood that persuading her wouldn't be easy. So, he refrained from agreeing outright and instead inquired, "Then tell me first, how can you help me?"

The artifact spirit sneered with disdain and said, "You just want to take that woman away, have her be grateful to you, and use her for your own ends. Do you think I can't see through that?"

“There is a mysterious power hidden within her body, and when I awakened some time ago, I noticed another aura that shares the same source as the power in her.”

“I can tell you where this aura originates, allowing you to get closer to her.”

Hearing this, Wang He was taken aback, his expression shifting as realization dawned. He recalled some records about Empress Pingtian’s life that mentioned the eventual destruction of the Eternal Protoss, which was linked to the involvement of an artifact.

“Could it be that the aura mentioned by the artifact spirit in the Book of Scavengers is the divine weapon controlled by Empress Pingtian?” he wondered, unable to suppress the thought.

According to various accounts, that artifact had a profound connection with the Eternal Protoss, and all the animosity between Empress Pingtian and the Eternal Protoss stemmed from it. However, he remained in the dark about the true nature of that artifact.

“What do you want me to do?” Wang He pondered for a moment, ultimately deciding to make this deal with the artifact spirit of the Book of Scavengers. He knew he couldn’t afford to let this opportunity slip away right before his eyes.

“It’s actually very simple; I want you to deal with one person,” the artifact spirit replied indifferently, as if discussing something trivial. “He possesses the energy matter needed to restore the Book of Scavengers.”

“Who is it?” Wang He asked, startled. This was the first time the artifact spirit had mentioned something like this to him. If it could genuinely aid in the recovery of the Book of Scavengers, it would be a significant benefit.

“It’s the mysterious Mr. Gu in your eyes...” the artifact spirit stated, still with a detached tone.

Wang He’s expression shifted dramatically. “Are you crazy? You want me to deal with Gu Changge?”

He suppressed the disbelief in his heart and replied in a deep voice, “Don’t you know the strength of the black-robed old man next to him? You still want me to deal with him? Isn’t that asking me to die?”

“Besides, who knows what kind of strength Gu Changge truly possesses?” He wasn’t foolish; he had endured numerous challenges to reach his current position. Yet, he never anticipated that the artifact spirit of the Book of Scavengers would instigate him to confront Gu Changge. With his current power, this would be akin to sending himself to his demise.

The spirit of the Book of Scavengers let out a cold, disdainful laugh. “You only have the bravado. They say wealth is found in danger, and that man possesses energy substances capable of restoring the Book of Scavengers.”

“If the Book of Scavengers were to be fully restored, the power and magical effects contained within it would be beyond your imagination. What you’ve seen so far is merely the tip of the iceberg.”

“If you don’t dare, then you can disregard the deal I proposed just now. It’s ridiculous that you lack the courage to even attempt to make me surrender.” Her voice dripped with mockery and disdain as she spoke.

Wang He's face turned a bit grim as he tried to decipher the words of the artifact spirit from the Book of Scavengers. The disparity in strength was overwhelming, leaving him feeling hopeless. However, a sudden thought crossed his mind, and a flicker of surprise lit up his eyes.

"It's rare for you to engage with me like this. You must have mentioned that because you actually have a way to deal with Mr. Gu, right? Was what you just said merely a test?" Wang He responded, probing for clarity. He struggled to find any other explanation; after all, confronting Gu Changge would yield no benefit for the artifact spirit.

Alternatively, he considered that perhaps the spirit was using this opportunity to instigate him into confronting Gu Changge in an attempt to rid itself of his control over the Book of Scavengers and achieve true freedom. Wang He paid close attention to this possibility.

"Looks like you're not hopelessly foolish," the artifact spirit sneered. "Mr. Gu is quite young, so it's unlikely that he possesses great strength. He probably relies on a peculiar treasure to conceal his aura. You just need to find a way to separate him from his subordinates. The fluctuation of the aura I mentioned earlier presents the best opportunity for you."

Wang He felt a stirring of interest at these words, his expression shifting as he considered the potential plan.

If what the artifact spirit of the Book of Scavengers said was true, then Wang He could not only acquire the energy substance needed to restore the Book of Scavengers but also get close to Mu Yan, earning her trust in the process. This truly was a way to kill two birds with one stone.

"However, we still need to consider this carefully and remain wary of that guy..." Wang He thought to himself, weighing the potential risks and rewards.

As he contemplated this matter seriously, in the empty space within the Book of Scavengers, a fuzzy and distorted misty figure seemed to sneer at his deliberations, as if it found his thoughts amusing.

Elder Zhuowu's apprentice acceptance ceremony concluded, but it did not unfold as she had anticipated. Instead, it was fraught with unexpected twists, leaving her a laughingstock among all parties. After the banquet, the guests departed quickly, unable to linger in the aftermath of the day's events.

However, the incidents from the grand ceremony spread rapidly, carried by the many eyes and ears of various tribes. News of the surprising developments reached every corner of the Zhuo tribe's territory and swiftly extended throughout the universe.

No one could have predicted such a tortuous turn of events, sparking shock and discussion across the realms. The woman named Mu Yan found herself in the spotlight, drawing the attention of numerous powerful factions eager to investigate her origins.

Elder Zhuowu publicly announced her intention to go into seclusion following the incident, a decision that sent shockwaves throughout the realms. The Eternal Protoss, instead of returning to their clan land, opted to stay in the nearby Gufeng Ancient City. They had another matter to attend to—seeking the whereabouts of another eternal artifact.

The events surrounding Mu Yan had become a source of secret shame for the Eternal Protoss, one that they wished to keep hidden from outsiders. There was a lingering concern that Mu Yan might inadvertently mention the incident, which could tarnish the clan's reputation even further.

At this time, Gu Changge brought Mu Yan back to Gufeng Ancient City, where he requested her to reside temporarily. Mu Yan, still processing the recent events, found herself listening to Gu Changge intently, displaying a growing sense of dependence on him.

Chapter 1046: The So-Called Slaying Her Brother To Prove The Dao, A Kind Girl On The Road To Darkness

It was the first time Mu Yan had ever felt this kind of surprise. She realized that she could truly rely on someone else without having to worry about intrigues or schemes. This was something she had never experienced in all her years of cultivation.

However, she remained very clear-headed. She and Gu Changge had only known each other for just over half a month, and during that time, they hadn't really become that familiar. She knew nothing about Gu Changge's identity, and he likely knew little about her past either.

Even now, after Gu Changge had appeared at Zhuowu's acceptance ceremony, rescued her from a dire situation, and taken her away, Mu Yan still felt somewhat dizzy and confused. Naturally, there were many questions she wanted to ask Gu Changge, but he hadn't shown any interest in inquiring about her affairs. It seemed as though his only intention was to take her away and get her out of danger.

This left Mu Yan feeling a bit lost, unsure of Gu Changge's true motives. Meanwhile, her old enemy, Zhuowu, had already retreated into seclusion, hidden away from the world.

In other words, from now on, she basically didn't have to worry about her safety. Her situation was secure. But... after Gu Changge brought her back, he began to ignore her.

This left Mu Yan feeling strange, though she couldn't quite pinpoint why. After returning to Gufeng Ancient City, Gu Changge resumed his leisurely routine. Every day, he drank tea and listened to music, while Ling Huang would occasionally sing and dance for him in the courtyard, flaunting her graceful figure.

Ling Huang was skilled in piano, chess, calligraphy, and painting, with her piano skills being especially noteworthy. In the past, as the queen of the spiritual royal family, she had never displayed her talents in front of others. Yet now, she had decided to support Mu Yan in becoming the master of the immortal civilization in the future.

Gu Changge had instructed Mo Tong to become the disciple of the Bone Ancestor, intending for her to assist Mu Yan in the future. So far, this little “dead one” had been very obedient. After leaving the Arena of Ten Thousand Clans, she regained her freedom and acquired a status that was unmatched by ordinary people. She also understood the importance of repaying kindness.

There were many things Gu Changge didn’t need to explicitly tell her—she could grasp them on her own. Especially in recent times, she learned that the owner of the Ten Thousand Clans Arena, Hong Gui, had given special orders to protect her original clan. From then on, her people were no longer ravaged by the horrors of war, and their lives gradually became peaceful.

Feeling truly at ease, Mo Tong stayed by Gu Changge’s side with a sense of peace, determined to repay his kindness. As for the Bone Ancestor, he certainly had no desire to accept an apprentice out of the blue, but how could he dare refuse Gu Changge’s command? Reluctantly, he was forced to take Mo Tong as his disciple.

Considering the Bone Ancestor’s grand stature and the fact that he was on the verge of attaining the Ancestral Dao realm, the situation was certainly not what he had anticipated.

The Bone Ancestor’s fearsome reputation had once terrified many, but now he found himself accepting a young apprentice, which felt like a strange turn of events. Yet, there was nothing he could do about it. If Gu Changge were to learn of any reluctance, it would be difficult for him to handle the situation casually.

So, after some thought, the Bone Ancestor decided to take Mo Tong along and throw her into a chaotic region within the immortal civilization, where she could be taught the true art of killing. This chaotic area was far from the borders of any ethnic groups, a lawless zone filled with vile individuals who reveled in destruction, looting, and all manner of evil.

The first task the Bone Ancestor assigned to Mo Tong was to kill. Through this process, she would begin to grasp the essence of true killing intent.

In the wilderness, a faint gray aura began to swirl around Mo Tong's body. The more villains she slew, the denser the gray aura became, eventually manifesting almost tangibly. Mo Tong had a natural fervor for combat, embracing the challenge wholeheartedly.

Although Mo Tong appeared as cold and rigid as an ice sculpture, when she truly fought, she was filled with a wild frenzy. Her gray hair fluttered in the wind, and her eyes were icy, as if she were a reaper harvesting the lives of all beings.

"She is indeed a good seedling," the Bone Ancestor observed from a distance, nodding slightly, something he rarely did. It wasn't that he was entirely satisfied, but Mo Tong hadn't disappointed him.

Mo Tong was well aware of the Bone Ancestor's immense power. If not for Gu Changge's command, she would have never been qualified to apprentice under someone like the Bone Ancestor. Thus, she was doing everything she could to prove herself, showcasing her terrifying talent for the art of killing.

"No wonder she is favored by the young master. If given enough time to mature, she might truly be able to reach this king's level," the Bone Ancestor thought. Initially, he had reservations about taking her on, but those doubts had nearly vanished by now. He even began considering seriously cultivating Mo Tong.

"The essence of true killing lies in striking without detection—like the wind passing through the leaves, silent and unseen..." His figure suddenly blurred, and in an instant, he appeared in front of Mo Tong.

Mo Tong was momentarily startled, then quickly bowed and greeted, “Master.”

“Right now, you are merely the beginning of what killing can be...” the Bone Ancestor said, waving his hand. His expression was obscured beneath his black robe.

Mo Tong listened intently, not daring to miss a single word.

As the Bone Ancestor gazed at the determined Mo Tong before him, his thoughts drifted for a moment. It seemed as if, long ago, he had also taught other young faces with the same earnestness. They had once called him “Master” with respect and affection...

“Forgotten, forgotten... long ago forgotten,” the Bone Ancestor muttered to himself. Shaking his head, he pushed these memories out of his mind, but a faint bitterness tugged at the corners of his mouth.

The matter of Zhuo Clan Elder Zhuowu’s apprentice acceptance ceremony had been widely discussed throughout the universe during this period. Many cultivators and creatures were talking about it. However, as Zhuowu went into seclusion and withdrew from the world, the fervor surrounding the event gradually waned.

Instead, attention began shifting to the growing closeness between Zhuo Fengxie of the Zhuo Clan and Hun Yuan Jun of the Hun Clan. These two had long been sworn enemies, competing fiercely for many years and harboring mutual dissatisfaction. It was rare to see them coexisting so peacefully, walking side by side without clashing. R&NÖĐÊ

Moreover, not long ago, at Zhuowu’s apprentice acceptance ceremony, the two had accompanied Gu Changge and appeared together. This caused many factions within the immortal civilization to become more alert. They sensed that this could be a signal of something significant.

There was a growing belief that the Zhuo and Hun Clans might be putting aside their old grievances and forming an alliance once again. After all, the ancestors of these two clans shared the same origin. However, within both the Zhuo and Hun Clans, opinions on this matter were deeply divided. Many clan members were baffled by the intentions and attitudes of Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun, leading to ongoing speculation.

As these two figures walked outside, they increasingly came to represent certain opinions and directions within their respective clans.

The events of this period inevitably raised concerns among many, particularly among the other major factions within the immortal civilization. The Wu Clan and Gou Clan were also on high alert, suspecting that the Zhuo Clan and Hun Clan might temporarily form an alliance due to their connection with Gu Changge. If this were to happen, it could have an unimaginable impact on the entire landscape of the immortal civilization.

During this time, numerous speculations about Gu Changge circulated throughout the vast universes of the immortal civilization. Many ethnic groups felt that his arrival was not merely a casual visit but held deeper significance. Yet, throughout this period, Gu Changge seemed to remain in Gufeng Ancient City, making no public appearances. As a result, no one could decipher his true intentions or thoughts.

Within the Zhuo Clan, many elders hurried to question Zhuo Fengxie, eager to understand his intentions. However, Zhuo Fengxie revealed little, only instructing the elders to stay within the clan for the time being. Simultaneously, he began summoning many powerful figures from his lineage to return for discussions.

A similar situation was unfolding within the Hun Clan. After the apprentice acceptance ceremony ended, both Zhuo Fengxie and Hun Yuan Jun returned to their respective clan lands, awaiting Gu Changge's next command.

Meanwhile, in Gufeng Ancient City, Mu Yan, who had recently been freed from her previous sense of crisis, still felt somewhat uneasy. Over the past few days, she had shared some of her past experiences with Gu Changge. Of course, she chose not to mention the early conflicts between her and the Eternal Protoss.

On the day of the apprentice acceptance ceremony, Li Yang hadn't recognized her, and Mu Yan understood why. She figured that she wouldn't have any further connection with the Eternal Protoss in the future, so she didn't dwell on it.

Gu Changge listened to her story casually, without showing any signs of impatience. But later, as he reflected, he decided it was still necessary to help Mu Yan sever ties with her past herself. This would mark the first step in her complete transformation.

Gu Changge wanted to support Mu Yan as the new master of the immortal civilization, and to do so, he needed her to sever the last emotional ties she had. It wasn't about proving the Dao through killing a brother—rather, how could the future master of the immortal civilization be indecisive over such trivial matters?

"I'm curious, how those elders of the Eternal Protoss came to despise you so deeply," he mused. He picked up his teacup, blew on the rising steam, and took a sip.

At first, Mu Yan viewed Gu Changge as merely a listener. But when he asked about the Eternal Protoss, she hesitated briefly before softly explaining. In front of Gu Changge, she always felt a sense of calm.

"Because they see me as a disgrace and wish I would disappear from this world," she said quietly.

“Oh? Then what is your relationship with the Son of the Eternal Protoss?” Gu Changge’s smile was light, but his tone carried a hint of something more. “When I saw you, it seemed that you cared about him a great deal.”

Hearing his question, Mu Yan was momentarily stunned, then an inexplicable sense of panic rose within her, as if she feared Gu Changge might misunderstand.

She quickly opened her mouth and explained in a low voice, “Don’t think too much into it; he is actually my half-brother...”

She had never shared these past experiences with anyone. Her childhood had been fraught with hardship. From as far back as she could remember, she had been following her parents as they fled, all because her mother possessed an eternal artifact. Moreover, her mother had violated the rules of the Eternal Protoss by marrying Mu Yan’s father outside the clan and giving birth to her. This was considered a disgrace to the Eternal Protoss, and it was something they intended to erase.

In addition to that, as a treasure of the Eternal Protoss, the eternal artifact could not be allowed to remain outside their control; they were determined to retrieve it. As a result, the Eternal Protoss dispatched numerous powerful figures to hunt them down. Alongside them, various strong individuals and factions that had received news of the artifact also sought to seize it for themselves, leading to a flurry of activity.

Among all the forces and powerful figures pursuing them, the only one Mu Yan distinctly remembered was Zhuo Wu from the Zhuo Clan. Back then, she was merely an incarnation, and with a single strike, Zhuo Wu had severely injured her father. This attack had caused her father to suffer a relapse of old injuries during the ensuing pursuit by many enemies, ultimately leading to his death.

After her father died, Mu Yan continued to flee with her mother. However, due to her own serious injuries, her mother could not escape for long and ultimately decided to let the Eternal Protoss capture her. Naturally, Mu Yan was taken along as well.

During that time, she was imprisoned in the Blackwater Prison of the Eternal Protoss. The prison was devoid of sunlight or moonlight, shrouded in perpetual darkness. Around her, she could hear faint sneers and the unsettling sound of bones being chewed, which left a lasting psychological scar on her during her childhood.

Fortunately, the patriarch of the Eternal Protoss, once the Son of Eternal God, was magnanimous. After discussions with many elders, her mother was not held accountable for her actions, but her status as a saintess was revoked. Moreover, according to the rules of the Eternal Protoss, the Son was required to marry the Saintess, as the union of their bloodlines could produce more powerful offspring.

As a last resort, Mu Yan's mother married a member of the Eternal Protoss and gave birth to Li Yang. Unfortunately, due to her mother's weakened origin, Li Yang was born with incomplete blood. Even the talent typically associated with the Eternal Protoss, the will of the Eternal God, was so diminished that it was nearly nonexistent.

The Eternal Protoss searched high and low for many gods, but their efforts proved futile. "Mother still hoped that Li Yang would become the divine son of the Eternal Protoss in the future, but that hope was ultimately shattered." As she spoke, a bitter expression crossed Mu Yan's face.

"And he can become the divine son in the end, and achieve his current cultivation level, it should all depend on you in the end." Gu Changge listened quietly, his expression reflecting a timely sense of sympathy as he regarded Mu Yan.

Mu Yan glanced at him, surprised by how Gu Changge had guessed her story. Nevertheless, she nodded and said, "Later, my mother begged me to transplant my blood talent to him. After all, I only carry half the blood of the Eternal Protoss, so that talent is of no use to me..."

Although she spoke lightly, the reality of talent transplantation was far from simple. Especially when she was still quite young at the time; the procedure had nearly cost her life. The clansmen of the Eternal Protoss had not anticipated her tenacity in surviving despite the odds stacked against her. However, after losing her bloodline talent, Mu Yan found herself no different from an ordinary person. Even sensing the aura and energy in the world became extremely difficult for her.

After being expelled from the Eternal Protoss, she encountered a fortuitous event that allowed her bloodline to undergo a transformation, ultimately evolving into the eternal divine will once more.

“What a lucky, foolish girl,” Gu Changge remarked, shaking his head slightly. “Talent transplantation is a gamble between life and death. I’m surprised it was your mother who begged you for it.”

Hearing Gu Changge call her foolish, Mu Yan felt a surge of indignation and wanted to refute him, though the words caught in her throat.

But Gu Changge’s latter comment left her speechless.

“Mother must have had a hard time...” Mu Yan’s voice lowered, uncertain if she was trying to comfort herself.

Gu Changge glanced at her but said nothing further. It was not without reason that this kind-hearted girl would ultimately find herself on a path of darkness and emotional turmoil.

Chapter 1047: Painting a tiger’s skin is difficult to paint its bones, a useful tip for her

It was the first time Mu Yan had shared these tragic experiences with anyone. She didn’t know why, but she felt remarkably relieved in Gu Changge’s presence. After expressing herself, her mood seemed to brighten considerably, as if the long-standing heaviness in her heart had been lifted.

“The past is behind me. I actually know that my mother didn’t care for me very much at the beginning,” she reflected. “But she raised me after all and didn’t abandon me in the end.”

Mu Yan smiled, her brows lifting, and she returned to her usual lively and cheerful demeanor. Gu Changge glanced at her, contemplating for a moment before reaching out to gently rub her head. “You’re really a distressed silly girl,” he said softly.

Mu Yan stared at him blankly, her eyes lowered, as if many stars were twinkling in that moment. However, she quickly realized this was the second time she had been so close to Gu Changge. A faint blush crept onto her face as she lowered her head and whispered, “Can I think... that you care about me?”

Gu Changge withdrew his hand, smiled, and chose to remain silent.

“You’re probably wondering why I’ve chosen to help you,” Gu Changge said, shifting the topic.

Seeing that he didn’t answer her directly, Mu Yan puffed up her cheeks but quickly regained her spirits at his sudden mention of the subject. “I guess it’s because I’m pitiful, and you can’t bear to see me suffer...” she said tentatively.

Gu Changge shook his head, smiling as he replied, “There are countless unfortunate people in the world; I don’t have the time to care for all of them. I just don’t want to see you being bullied.”

Mu Yan paused, momentarily taken aback. She fixed her gaze on him, hardly blinking. “You... you’re not lying to me... Why did you say that all of a sudden?” she stuttered, unsure how to respond.

“Why? Don’t you believe me?” Gu Changge maintained his smile.

Looking at Gu Changge's handsome face, which was almost within reach, Mu Yan felt her cheeks grow hot, and her heartbeat quicken beyond its usual pace. She didn't respond to his question but panicked and ran away. It was the first time someone had said such words to her since she grew up, leaving her feeling both warm and flustered, unsure of how to react.

After Mu Yan fled, the smile on Gu Changge's face faded. He stepped outside the hall and gazed at the world beyond, his expression becoming thoughtful. "It stands to reason that the sudden surge of aura that day shouldn't have happened for no reason," he mused. "Or was it merely to capture my attention... It seems the coming events will be more intriguing." He chuckled softly.

In the following days, Mu Yan appeared to be deliberately avoiding him. It seemed that because of his words, she felt embarrassed to face Gu Changge. In her heart, those words took on a deeper meaning.

Although Gu Changge had only spoken those words in a casual and simple tone, they left Mu Yan in a whirlwind of thoughts for several days. Just a few days later, a man in a Daoist robe arrived with his disciples and stated directly that he intended to visit Mu Yan. The complex of mansion buildings had been exquisitely renovated, yet no cultivators or beings dared to approach on ordinary days. Knowing that Gu Changge resided there, they refrained from disturbing him.

Mu Yan was quite surprised when she learned that someone had come to see her. She had her own independent courtyard and pavilion, and the servants who came to report stood by after delivering their message. "I'm in Gufeng Ancient City, and I don't have any acquaintances. Who could be here for me?" she wondered aloud. After a moment's contemplation, she decided to go and find out.

Soon, she arrived at the gate of the building complex, where she saw a group of people from the Scavengers Sect. The leader was Wang He, who had claimed to have been close to her father for many years.

Wang He, dressed in a Daoist robe with the Scavengers Sect's emblem embroidered on the cuffs, greeted her with a smile. "We meet again," he said, cupping his hands in a gesture of respect.

Mu Yan was taken aback; she hadn't expected him to seek her out. If Wang He hadn't shown up so unexpectedly, she might have nearly forgotten about what transpired at the apprentice acceptance ceremony. "Daoist, you've come to find me. May I ask why?" she inquired politely.

Though she remained somewhat skeptical about Wang He's intentions, she remembered the kindness he had shown when he offered to rescue her from what she felt was a dire situation. With his usual calm demeanor, Wang He led several elders and disciples of the Scavengers Sect as they followed Mu Yan to her pavilion.

Despite his composed exterior, Wang He's heart raced. After careful consideration and the encouragement of the Book of Scavengers, he had decided to take this risk. The elders and disciples of the Scavengers Sect were unaware of their leader's current circumstances, but they were surprised and intrigued to see him interacting with Mu Yan, suggesting a prior connection between them.

The area before them was not one that ordinary people would dare to tread. Even if given a hundred times more courage, they wouldn't take a single step closer. Today, they found themselves following their sect leader, stepping into a world that felt both thrilling and daunting.

"I'm truly glad to see you out of that pit of fire," Wang He said, his voice tinged with emotion. "If your father knew about this, he would surely rest in peace."

"Thank you for your kindness that day," Mu Yan replied, grateful for his concern. "Please wait a moment; I'll prepare some tea."

As she led them to the courtyard, she intended to make a gesture of hospitality. However, Wang He waved his hand with a gentle smile, interrupting her. “No need for that. I only came to sit for a while and see how you’re doing. I’m relieved to find that your life is not in danger.”

His kind smile and youthful appearance belied the maturity and steadiness in his demeanor. Mu Yan felt a warmth spread through her at his words, realizing that Wang He genuinely cared about her well-being. This sentiment made her feel a bit embarrassed, as she sensed his sincere concern for her safety.

After all, ordinary people didn’t have the courage to venture into this area, let alone walk in. Mu Yan couldn’t help but wonder if Wang He had other intentions for his visit.

“Actually, you don’t need to worry too much. This poor Daoist merely wants to help an old friend, and there is no malice in my heart,” Wang He explained, his tone reassuring. “Last time I visited, I was in a hurry and didn’t prepare any greetings.

“I’ve been deducing for the past few days and discovered that something may be very suitable for you, though it has yet to be born. There’s news about it in this box. If you’re interested, you can open it and take a look; if not, feel free to discard it.”

He placed a small box on the stone table beside him, maintaining a smile as he spoke. “I won’t trouble you any longer, but I do want to remind you of something: the so-called painting a tiger’s skin is easier than painting its bones. Knowing someone’s face doesn’t mean you know their heart. Sometimes, what you see isn’t necessarily the truth.”

With that, Wang He prepared to leave, accompanied by the elders and disciples of the Scavengers Sect. Mu Yan felt a bit dazed, trying to comprehend Wang He’s cryptic words and the significance of the box he left behind. Had he come all this way just to deliver this message?

However, she didn't try to keep him from leaving; instead, she stared at the box left on the stone table, feeling a bit dazed. Was Wang He's warning meant for her? **"Know people, face but not heart?"** Did this imply she should be cautious of Gu Changge and not be deceived by his charming appearance?

Mu Yan furrowed her brows. Furthermore, Wang He had taken a significant risk to come here and deliver this message; wouldn't he be worried about being overheard by Gu Changge?

At that moment, Wang He, who had just exited the complex with a group of elders and disciples, let out a sigh of relief.

"Look at your guts. I didn't lie to you. It's not a dragon's pond or a tiger's lair. There's no reason for you to hesitate about coming here," a slightly indifferent and mocking voice echoed in Wang He's ears.

Hearing this, Wang He felt less anxious. "It seems that your method is still effective," he replied. The artifact spirit had promised him assistance in masking his presence, so Wang He wasn't overly concerned about the implications of what he had just said; the others would likely take it at face value.

Initially, he hadn't intended to provoke any discord between Mu Yan and Gu Changge. However, the idea had been suggested by the artifact spirit of the Book of Scavengers. After some consideration, Wang He found it quite feasible.

In terms of status, Mu Yan and Gu Changge were worlds apart. So, why was Gu Changge willing to help her? Was it her beauty, cultivation, or background that drew his interest? Wang He believed that as the future Empress Pingtian, Mu Yan was certainly no fool. She would start to question and contemplate these words. As long as she harbored some suspicion about Gu Changge, she would undoubtedly consider what Wang He had said.

In this way, even if Gu Changge had no ulterior motives toward Mu Yan, a rift would gradually form between them due to Wang He's interference. "As long as there's a gap, things will be easy to handle, and at that point, the seeds I've sown will take root," Wang He mused to himself.

Meanwhile, in the pavilion, Gu Changge observed Wang He and his entourage as they departed but chose not to intervene.

"That Daoist seems a bit mysterious," Ling Huang remarked, slightly surprised.

"It's just a facade. This provocative scheme is truly laughable," Gu Changge replied, shaking his head with a chuckle that hinted at deeper intentions. He couldn't fathom where Wang He had mustered the audacity to come here.

However, given his connection to Mu Yan, Gu Changge had no immediate plans to take action against him. He was well aware that Mu Yan harbored a hidden treasure, and this Daoist named Wang He was either scheming against her or attempting to seize that treasure for himself. Yet, for the time being, none of this truly concerned Gu Changge.

On the contrary, Wang He's actions aligned perfectly with Gu Changge's intentions. After Mu Yan had truly experienced everything, she would come to realize that he was the only one in this world who genuinely deserved her trust.

Meanwhile, Mu Yan pondered for a moment before deciding to take the box and find Gu Changge to inform him about Wang He's visit. She understood that even if she chose not to mention it, Gu Changge would inevitably learn of it. Someone had already reported Wang He's visit, but Gu Changge had opted not to interfere in her personal matters.

As Gu Changge listened to the music in the pavilion, he appeared quite relaxed. When Mu Yan approached him to explain the situation, she was somewhat surprised by his reaction.

“I didn’t know you were acquainted with someone like him,” he smiled, showing no concern over the warning Mu Yan relayed.

Feeling a bit distressed by the situation, Mu Yan elaborated on her previous encounter with Wang He before the acceptance ceremony. Even now, she found it hard to believe that her father had such a friend. It was not something she could easily dismiss as an invisible secret.

So, she didn’t hold anything back and shared what Wang He had said earlier.

“I see, but aren’t you curious about what’s in this box?” Gu Changge asked, seeming a bit dazed after hearing her.

Mu Yan felt a flicker of curiosity as well. At that moment, she contemplated for a moment before opening the box directly in front of him. It would be wise to be cautious in case it contained something unexpected.

“Blue Heavenly Realm?”

However, when she examined the contents of the box, Mu Yan was taken aback. Inside lay a small piece of paper with the words “Blue Heavenly Realm” inscribed on it; otherwise, there was nothing else.

She felt a vague sense of familiarity but couldn’t quite place it. She recalled that the Blue Heavenly Realm was a mysterious secret place said to float outside the world, existing without a defined timeline. It appeared only infrequently, seemingly at random, and was rumored to be connected to the outside world, harboring many rare techniques that might manifest within it.

What could Wang He have meant by leaving her this box containing only a reference to the Blue Heavenly Realm?

The last time the Blue Heavenly Realm had manifested seemed to be many epochs ago. Moreover, Wang He had claimed that there was something useful for her within it. His words were ambiguous, leaving Mu Yan unable to piece it all together at first.

But then, a sudden thought struck her: the Eternal Divine Furnace. She felt a jolt of realization. Could it be that Wang He knew she possessed the Eternal Divine Furnace? This was her most closely guarded secret, one her mother had specifically instructed her not to share with anyone.

...

Meanwhile, in Gufeng Ancient City, where the Eternal Protoss resided, several elders gathered with Li Yang, the Divine Son, and the Saintess, Luo Xiang Jun. They were deep in discussion about the lost Eternal Divine Furnace. Although the conversation was framed as a strategic analysis, it was clear that Li Yang and the elders were more focused on speculating about where the Eternal Divine Furnace might reappear.

Mr. Luo Xiang observed from a distance, choosing not to interfere as the elders deliberated. The scene around them was serene and picturesque, a world apart from the chaos beyond.

“There is a mutual induction between eternal artifacts,” one of the elders remarked, frowning. “If it hadn’t been for the earlier incident, we would have had the Eternal Divine Sword closely examined and brought it out. Otherwise, the connection between the Eternal Divine Sword and the Eternal Furnace could have greatly aided us in locating its whereabouts.”

“Not long ago, the Eternal Sword stirred in the depths of the ancestral hall, and the location it indicated was indeed here,” another elder added, his tone grave.

“If the Eternal Divine Furnace falls into the wrong hands, it will be even more challenging for us to find it,” the first elder continued, his worry palpable.

The members of the Eternal Protoss wore expressions of concern. Despite their considerable abilities, pinpointing the location of the Eternal Divine Furnace proved elusive. This was no ordinary artifact; it possessed the magical power to conceal the secrets of the heavens.

Li Yang, the Divine Son, had long sought the lost Eternal Divine Furnace, but with no leads to follow, he felt increasingly frustrated. Almost no one aside from the saints of past generations had ever controlled the Eternal Divine Furnace, leaving him at a loss for how to proceed.

“Mother used to control the Eternal Divine Furnace, so she should know a lot...” Li Yang mused, his brow furrowed as he absentmindedly rubbed the simple round jade pendant he always carried.

“Um?”

At that moment, Mr. Luo Xiang seemed to sense something, and her gaze suddenly fixed on the jade pendant Li Yang was holding.

“Xiang Jun, what’s the matter?” Li Yang asked, noticing her intense focus.

He quickly removed the pendant and explained, “This is my mother’s. Before she died, she told me to keep it safe. I’ve carried it with me all these years.”

A slight smile graced Luo Xiang Jun's lips as she replied, "It seems the saintess of the previous generation treated you very well, which is quite unexpected."

Li Yang felt puzzled by her words, not entirely understanding what she meant.

But before he could inquire further, Luo Xiang had already averted her gaze and, with a graceful movement, disappeared from sight.

The suddenness of her departure left Li Yang and the elders momentarily stunned. They exchanged glances, each one wondering what Lord Luo Xiang's intent had been.

Chapter 1048: Miss Luo Xiang has a mysterious origin, I am only following orders

"I didn't expect the change in the Eternal Divine Orb to be related to his jade pendant..."

Luo Xiang thought to herself, realizing the significance of the pendant Li Yang held. "It seems the saintesses of the previous generation anticipated today and left this jade pendant for Li Yang. If I want to acquire the Eternal Divine Furnace, it appears I'll have to start from him."

With that, Luo Xiang's figure became ethereal, and in just a few steps, she vanished from the scene.

Li Yang and the others could only watch her disappear, too late to pursue her.

"The Saintess has a mysterious origin; she never interacts with her clansmen and prefers to walk alone and independently. I wonder what she meant by her words just now?" an elder remarked, frowning slightly.

Most of them were not well-acquainted with this generation's saintess, and her enigmatic demeanor left many questions lingering in the air.

Moreover, there were times when they felt restrained in front of Lord Luo Xiang, intimidated by her majesty.

"Miss Xiang must have had her reasons for saying those words," Li Yang said, shaking his head as he gazed in the direction where Luo Xiang had disappeared. Admiration was evident in his eyes.

Several elders exchanged glances, shaking their heads quietly, choosing not to comment further. They were unaware of the circumstances surrounding Luo Xiang's long seal, nor could they fully grasp her true strength.

Although Li Yang was exceptionally talented and hailed as the hope of the Eternal Protoss for this generation, he had faced repeated setbacks when confronting Lord Luo Xiang. Their past encounters had shown her superiority; she had easily suppressed him with a single hand, leaving no room for him to retaliate.

In blunt terms, the current Li Yang was simply unqualified to compete with Miss Luo Xiang.

"Father once said that if I can win over Miss Xiang, then the position of the patriarch of the Eternal Protoss will be secured in the future. Miss Xiang seems to be very interested in the Eternal Divine Furnace..." Li Yang thought to himself, stroking the simple, round jade pendant, unaware of the elders' thoughts as he contemplated how to impress the beautiful woman.

Meanwhile, Miss Luo Xiang, who had vanished from the Eternal Protoss residence, appeared in a more open area, surrounded by majestic, ancient mountains. She had no intention of mingling with the elders of the Eternal Protoss, as she believed that the clues regarding the Eternal Divine Furnace lay with another person.

“Unfortunately, that sister of Li Yang was taken away by that surnamed Gu, so I can’t find her yet. If my prediction is correct, the Eternal Divine Furnace is actually on her body,” she mused, her expression thoughtful.

With a graceful movement, she vanished again, reappearing deep in the sky above the area.

At this moment, the center of Miss Luo Xiang’s brows glowed, and a crystal-clear orb the size of a fist emerged. This orb radiated chaotic light, imbued with powerful auras, including the innate five elements and the Yin-Yang Dao. If any elders of the Eternal Protoss were present, they would be astonished to recognize that the aura emanating from this mysterious bead shared the same origin as the Eternal Sword enshrined in the ancestral hall.

The five eternal artifacts comprised the Eternal Divine Sword, the Eternal Divine Furnace, the Eternal Divine Map, the Eternal Divine Seal, and the Eternal Divine Orb. The orb before her was the Eternal Divine Bead, an artifact that even the Eternal Protoss had never seen before. Its sudden appearance in Miss Luo Xiang’s hands would have left the elders of the Eternal Protoss utterly speechless.

“According to the records, the original Divine Treasury of the Eternal Protoss was lost, taking with it the Eternal Divine Map. The Eternal God’s Divine Treasury drifted through vast space and time, eventually falling into this civilization. Countless relics of immortal civilization exist, but the only one most likely to be the original Divine Treasury of the Eternal Protoss is the Blue Heavenly Realm,” she murmured to herself.

“I’ve been waiting for so long; it’s almost time for the Blue Heavenly Realm to appear...” As Luo Xiang whispered, the Eternal Divine Orb slipped from her grasp, rising slowly like an ancient sun, casting a dazzling brilliance around her.

The entire pitch-black star field was illuminated as if it were daylight, bathed in the radiant glow of the Eternal Divine Orb. All galaxies and matter paled in comparison, their light dimming under the orb's overwhelming brilliance.

Luo Xiang's eyes scanned the vast expanse reflected by the Eternal Divine Bead, and within them flickered a strange, sharp light as if perceiving something beyond the visible.

"Not in this area..." she murmured.

The void rippled as Luo Xiang gracefully retrieved the Eternal Divine Orb with a wave of her jade hand. In the next moment, she vanished and reappeared at the very edge of the galaxy. The orb ascended once again, shining even brighter than before, its radiance outshining the distant universe, casting everything in an eerie, dreamlike pallor. ½NOBĚ S

Luo Xiang focused on a seemingly illusory portion of the universe, her eyes narrowing as she recognized something within the blurred expanse. The reality there seemed to waver between the real and the unreal, and the corner of her mouth lifted into a subtle, knowing smile.

Time passed quickly, and several months had gone by since Elder Zhuowu of the Zhuo Clan held the apprentice acceptance ceremony. Since Zhuowu announced her decision to enter seclusion and retreat from the world, discussions about her had notably diminished.

However, during this period, conversations regarding the Zhuo and Hun clans remained rampant in various circles. In contrast to previous eras, the Zhuo and Hun clans now appeared remarkably unified. Many elders from both clans engaged in numerous secret talks and discussions, signaling a deeper alliance.

Cultivators and beings from across the realm observed that the younger generations of these two races frequently gathered to discuss the Dao, cultivate together, and share knowledge. This clearly

indicated that the Zhuo and Hun clans were sending a message to the outside world about their strengthened bond.

The developments had stirred the nerves of other clans, particularly the Wu and Gou clans, who grew increasingly anxious and wary, fearing that the future landscape of power and influence might undergo unimaginable changes.

Once the Zhuo and Hun clans united, it would undoubtedly disrupt the stable situation that had been maintained by the immortal civilization since ancient times. At that point, the Wu and Gou clans would likely find ways to confront these two powers. For the Wu and Gou clans, this was a scenario they were eager to avoid. It could even lead to another war over contentious issues like resources and territory.

The other factions within the immortal civilization were equally apprehensive about such an outcome, as they would inevitably be caught in the crossfire. This was a matter that affected everyone, and no one could expect to emerge unscathed.

Due to these tensions, many groups began to speculate that Gu Changge was the one orchestrating the alliance between the Zhuo and Hun clans behind the scenes. They believed that without his intervention, the dynamics of the immortal civilization would not have shifted so dramatically. Although many feared to confront him directly, they resorted to various means to vent their frustrations, blaming Gu Changge for shattering the peace and tranquility of the immortal civilization.

However, there were also numerous cultivators who believed that Gu Changge was not to blame. After all, the Zhuo and Hun clans shared a common ancestry, and their conflicts in recent years stemmed from a desire to annex one another and reclaim the glory of their forebears.

The annexation had never been successful, resulting in a stalemate that had persisted for countless years. However, regardless of the past, the unification of the Zhuo and Hun clans seemed inevitable; it was merely a matter of time. Gu Changge's arrival appeared to have provided the Zhuo and Hun

clans with a renewed opportunity, prompting them to set aside their longstanding enmity and begin to approach one another.

In contrast to the Zhuo and Hun clans, the Wu and Gou clans did not share such a complex ancestral relationship. Their animosity was simply the result of various grudges accumulated over the years, leading to an openly hostile dynamic.

Amidst all the discussions and speculations circulating in the outside world, many members of the Zhuo clan found themselves equally perplexed, unaware of the reasons behind these shifts in behavior. Many clansmen were merely following orders, drawn closer to the Hun clan without understanding the underlying motivations for their actions. Typically, if there were significant movements within the clan, they would be informed in advance, but this time felt different, leaving them in a state of uncertainty.

Even those clansmen whose cultivation was comparable to that of a Quasi-Immortal Emperor were left in the dark, forced to follow the orders of the clan without question.

“Zhuo Fengxie, you are so courageous! You’re attempting to overthrow our Zhuo clan and bring about its demise!”

“If the first ancestors were to awaken, would you still dare to act in such a way? Do you really think you can cover the sky with one hand for the current Zhuo clan?”

At that moment, deep within the Zhuo clan, in the Elder’s Temple, dozens of elders shouted and cursed, their faces twisted in anger. The palace was grand and ancient, a self-contained structure where chaos subtly lingered in the air, its boundaries indistinguishable and capable of accommodating countless individuals.

Previously, the elders were only allowed to enter during significant events, as this was where major decrees and instructions for the Zhuo clan were discussed. Only after thorough deliberation would their decisions be finalized and promulgated to the outside world. In essence, the Elder's Temple was the true core lifeline of the Zhuo clan.

Today, all the notable elders of the Zhuo Clan had gathered in the Elder's Temple, totaling more than twenty individuals. This assembly represented the true backbone of the Zhuo Clan, with every elder possessing strength comparable to the Dao Realm. Among them were several heavenly elders whose power was on par with Dao Realm existences, having survived two Heavenly Declines or three Void Dao Realms.

In the past, an elders' meeting typically attracted a maximum of a dozen attendees. However, the gathering of over twenty elders today underscored the significance the Zhuo Clan placed on this matter.

"This matter, the old man does not agree with. If you proceed down this path, you will lead my Zhuo Clan to ruin," one elder declared vehemently.

"I cannot stand by and watch the eternal foundation of the Zhuo Clan be destroyed by your hands. Furthermore, just because you have a good personal relationship with Hun Yuan Jun does not justify your intentions to unite with outsiders and seize control of our Zhuo Clan's power."

The speaker, an elder of slender build and foreign appearance, projected his real body from a distant universe. He stood firm within the palace, his gaze cold as he reprimanded Zhuo Fengxie for his recent actions.

The group of elders who had previously spoken stood firmly beside Zhuo Shixuan, clearly united against Zhuo Fengxie. Meanwhile, the other elders remained silent, observing the exchange from a distance, their expressions a mix of confusion, intrigue, and surprise.

“Elder Zhuo Shixuan, you speak gravely. I am only looking out for the Zhuo Clan. Soon, the entire immortal civilization will face a terrible catastrophe,” Zhuo Fengxie replied, his voice steady.

“What I am doing now is merely preparing for that impending disaster.”

Dressed in a flowing golden robe, Zhuo Fengxie stood with his hands clasped behind his back. The depths of his eyes seemed to reflect the vastness of the universe, as if they contained the starry sky, mountains, rivers, sun, and moon in an intricate dance. He exuded an aura of extraordinary charisma.

Zhuo Shixuan, the elder before him, was an ancient figure with a deep well of wisdom. Unlike Zhuo Wu, Zhuo You, and others, his cultivation was unfathomable, having undergone four spiritual transformations many years ago. Except for Zhuo Fengxie, Zhuo Shixuan was regarded as one of the strongest existences within the Zhuo Clan today.

Of course, there were still several ancestor-level figures within the Zhuo Clan, who remained in seclusion, diligently cultivating and condensing the original substance of the Dao. However, it was uncertain if those ancestral beings were indeed stronger than Zhuo Fengxie. This uncertainty was why the Zhuo Clan had refrained from opposing Zhuo Fengxie’s orders to draw closer to the Hun Clan during this period.

Previously, Zhuo Shixuan had been immersed in his own cultivation in the depths of time and space, completely cut off from any communication with the Hun Clan, leaving him unaware of the ongoing developments. The figure standing before them was not his true self but a projected Dharma body.

The elders hesitated to disturb the ancestors over such matters; for them, nothing held greater importance than their cultivation. Moreover, locating their ancestors was not a feasible option. Thus, they had opted to contact Zhuo Shixuan to inform him of the situation. Upon learning the full extent of the events, Zhuo Shixuan projected his Dharma body with the intent of stopping Zhuo Fengxie’s actions.

“There will be a catastrophe in the future?” At this moment, upon hearing Zhuo Fengxie’s words, Zhuo Shixuan sneered and retorted, “Why can’t the old man perceive that my Zhuo Clan possesses enduring luck, and the destiny of the immortal civilization is smooth sailing, without any significant upheavals?”

“Your alarmist rhetoric will not hold here. You think the old man is unaware of your desire to monopolize the power of the Zhuo Clan? With Hun Yuan Jun’s recent emergence, you’ve merely aligned yourself with his faction to seize control of the Zhuo Clan...”

“If you continue down this path, you’ll only provide the Wu Clan and the Gou Clan with opportunities to attack my Zhuo Clan. Do you really believe that our current strength is sufficient to withstand an assault from those two clans?”

His words caused the expressions of the other Zhuo Clan elders to shift, as they recognized the validity in his reasoning. This was precisely what they feared; they doubted whether the current strength of the Zhuo Clan could match that of the Wu and Gou Clans. Would they truly be able to rely on the Hun Clan for assistance in such a scenario?

Zhuo Fengxie insisted on pursuing his path, and the ultimate consequence could lead to the destruction of the Zhuo Clan and the ruin of the foundation of the eternal era.

“Elder Zhuo Shixuan, you are worrying too much. The catastrophe I mentioned has nothing to do with the Wu Clan and the Gou Clan. Also, I’m merely following orders...”

Despite this, Zhuo Fengxie’s expression remained impassive. He simply shook his head slightly and spoke these words.

Upon hearing this, Zhuo Shixuan frowned, sensing that something was amiss. “Zhuo Fengxie, what do you mean by that? Are you implying you’re just following orders?”

The elders present, seasoned individuals who had weathered many storms, instantly felt a sense of unease as Zhuo Fengxie’s words sank in.

“Not good...”

Someone’s complexion shifted dramatically as they observed a sudden mist enveloping the entire elder temple. The sky and earth darkened in an instant, and the original palace gate vanished, swallowed by the billowing fog.

Chapter 1049: It’s just to wipe out everything in one go, the Zhuo Clan must listen to my orders

The billowing fog was boundless, covering the sky and sun, sweeping in from nowhere and instantly enveloping the temple of the elders. This place seemed to transform into an unknown realm, devoid of boundaries and latitudes. The door of the main hall, which had once been closed, suddenly vanished, completely submerged by the thick mist. In all directions, only the oppressive fog swept across the landscape. The elders of the Eternal Protoss felt no trace of any laws, as if they had been pulled here from the world by a terrifying hand.

“Zhou Fengxie, what do you mean?”

“What do you want to do?”

Yet, they were seasoned individuals who had weathered many storms; they had witnessed countless scenes throughout their years of cultivation.

Many people instantly steadied their hearts and sternly questioned Zhuo Fengxie. From their perspective, it was clear that Zhuo Fengxie had either acted in secret or had arranged some means in advance within the Elder Temple to trap them there.

“Zhuo Fengxie, what did you mean by that just now? Do you really think you can trap us here with your own strength?”

“Do you truly intend to ally with outsiders and betray the Zhuo clan?”

Zhuo Shixuan remained completely unfazed; his expression was icy as he stared directly at Zhuo Fengxie. The terrifying fluctuations of the Dao surged around him, seeming capable of annihilating the universe and bending space-time to his will. He believed that Zhuo Fengxie must have conspired with Hun Yuan Jun of the Hun clan. What Zhuo Fengxie had just claimed about acting according to orders was nothing more than a pretext stemming from their discussion.

However, Zhuo Shixuan was not genuinely worried. After all, they were all invincible beings who had dominated several eras, and they didn't believe that Zhuo Fengxie could truly pose a threat to them. It was merely their anger and fury at Zhuo Fengxie's actions that prompted them to confront him.

“Elder Zhuo Fengxie, you plan to subvert the entire Zhuo clan!” Many of the previously neutral elders also stepped forward, their faces filled with anger and deep dissatisfaction with Zhuo Fengxie's behavior.

“Do you still not understand?” Zhuo Fengxie stood there calmly, shaking his head, unfazed by their words. His statement caused many elders to shift in their expressions, their brows furrowing in concern.

Suddenly, their expressions changed drastically, as if they had come to a realization, their faces shifting between uncertainty and dread. “Could it be that you did this on purpose? Everything you have done during this time was to draw all the elders here for today... and then capture them all?”

Someone suddenly connected the dots and trembled, unable to believe the implications of their thoughts.

However, Zhuo Fengxie didn't respond; instead, his expression turned respectful. "Hehe, it seems there are still some clever ones among you, but unfortunately, it's a bit late for your understanding now."

In the next moment, the void beside Zhuo Fengxie suddenly grew blurred, accompanied by a soft chuckle. Then, a slender figure emerged unhurriedly from the haze. It was Gu Changge, clad in white garments as pristine as snow.

He surveyed the elders of the Zhuo clan before him, a faint smile playing on his lips. Many among the elders recognized him, and as he stepped forward, their faces shifted drastically, a mix of disbelief and horror washing over them.

"Gu... Young Master Gu..."

"How can this be?"

"Could it be...?"

Their voices trembled with fear, struggling to comprehend what they were witnessing. How could Gu Changge, who had been devastating the ancient city all this time, suddenly appear before them?

Looking at the situation now, it was clear that Gu Changge was not merely acting without purpose; he wanted them to see this only now. This realization angered many of the elders, particularly because Zhuo Fengxie had teamed up with an outsider to conspire against the Zhuo clan.

“Sure enough, you’ve been playing tricks behind our backs. I should have suspected it earlier,” Zhuo Shixuan declared, his gaze fixed on Gu Changge. “My Zhuo clan has no enmity with you. Why do you want to scheme against us?”

Though Zhuo Shixuan’s real body was not present in this time and space, he was aware of everything happening in Gufeng Ancient City during this period. Naturally, many rumors and speculations about Gu Changge had reached him, leading him to guess the outsider’s purpose and plans. However, he had not anticipated that Gu Changge would actually intervene in the affairs of the Zhuo clan and appear here. The supposed journey was merely a cover, not his true intent at all.

“It’s not a matter of plotting or scheming; I’ve simply integrated myself into this situation, using the power available to me,” Gu Changge replied. “I believe that in the future, your family may still come to appreciate my actions.” He glanced at Zhuo Shixuan, his smile remaining light and carefree, showing little concern for the elders’ fury.

Gu Changge merely glanced at the rest of the elders, disregarding them entirely.

“My lord...” Zhou Fengxie greeted him respectfully.

Gu Changge nodded slightly and remarked casually, “Things are pretty much as I expected, but you have played an indispensable role in bringing down the Zhuo clan so swiftly.”

His nonchalant tone, as if he already had the Zhuo clan in his grasp, only intensified the anger of many elders. Did he really think they were insignificant? Or did he truly believe that with Zhou Fengxie’s power alone, he could handle all of them?

“Zhou Fengxie, you are an eternal sinner of the Zhuo clan! If you unite with outsiders and betray your own people, what right do you have to honor the ancestors of the Zhuo clan?” one elder shouted, his voice echoing with fury.

“I don’t know how you will face the people of my Zhuo clan in the future.”

At that moment, many elders were shouting and cursing at Zhou Fengxie, their expressions filled with outrage.

In their eyes, Zhuo Fengxie clearly aimed to monopolize the power of the Zhuo clan. It was only after meeting Gu Changge that he had plotted with him, seeking to unite the forces behind Gu Changge to scheme against the Zhuo clan.

“I said I was preparing for the catastrophe to come; you just don’t understand it yet,” Zhuo Fengxie replied, dismissing the elders’ shouts and curses with a calm expression. His life was in Gu Changge’s hands, and he could not defy his orders.

Moreover, given the current situation, it was evident that Gu Changge intended to strike at the immortal civilization. If the Zhuo clan insisted on standing against him, even if they managed to survive in the end, it would be at a great cost. Instead of resisting, it was far better to align with Gu Changge.

“It seems that even now, you remain stubborn,” one elder declared. “Since this is the case, don’t blame me for disregarding the feelings of the same clan. It’s useless to say more; I’ll wait to see what kind of abilities you and this Mr. Gu possess to treat us like nothing and do as you please.”

Many elders shouted, their eyes cold and filled with murderous intent. Billowing fog flooded the hall, distorting the space around them, which no longer resembled its original time and place.

However, all the elders present were truly invincible beings, with few opponents able to match them. They could easily traverse many universes and were confident in their own strength. After all, they had reached this advanced stage in their cultivation, with their understanding and mastery of the Dao reaching a terrifying level. In their separate universe, the long river of time had become a mere toy in their hands.

At this moment, many of them had already taken action, aiming to shatter the space-time around them, blast through the ages, rediscover the original time-space coordinates, and return to the current world.

Boom!!!

Endless energy exploded in an instant, resembling a terrifying sun falling in waves, trying to penetrate the fabric of time and space. This was an unprecedented spectacle; if it were to occur in the outside world, it would undoubtedly shock the heavens and shake the earth forever. Even Zhou Fengxie had never witnessed so many beings comparable to the Dao realm unleashing their power together.

This display of strength stirred something within him, though it was only a fleeting sensation. The gap between each level of the Dao Realm was beyond description. While it appeared to be a clash of Daoism, it was, in fact, an instantaneous impact of various energies, driven by one's perception of the realm and mastery over matter.

At that moment, Zhuo Shixuan also made his move, and the brilliant light he emitted reflected both the past and present. Endless energy and matter surged and evolved into ancient realms, mountains and rivers, and the sun and moon within his grasp. Although his strength was inferior to Zhuo Fengxie's, it was not to be underestimated. At this level, the abilities of the deity and the reflection body were hardly distinguishable.

“You can’t even reach me. It’s just a waste of effort. Be wise and save your strength,” Gu Changge said calmly, looking down at them as if separated by an insurmountable river.

The thick fog grew denser, sweeping in from a deeper realm and enveloping everything. He had no intention of killing the elders of the Zhuo clan; after all, they would serve as useful assets in the future.

“The old man doesn’t believe in this evil!” An elder of the Zhuo clan declared, his eyes serious. With a sweeping motion of his hand, wrapped in thick fog, he attempted to strike down in front of Gu Changge.

However, before his hand could get close, the terrifying force of the fog transformed into a massive, simple millstone, directly obliterating his hand. In an instant, this piece of time and space descended into chaos.

Many areas collapsed and distorted, annihilating in an instant only to reorganize moments later. After all, this was a separate time and space created by Gu Changge, capable of accommodating power far beyond the Dao realm.

In the broader realm of time and space, even an Immortal Emperor possessed the ability to destroy heaven and earth with a single finger. Yet within the realm Gu Changge had crafted, the Immortal Emperor might not even be able to shatter a mountain with all his strength.

“Back then, Hun Yuan Jun and I couldn’t break free from that mental space...” Zhuo Fengxie thought to himself, trying to gauge Gu Changge’s true strength.

“How can this be...?” The faces of the Zhuo clan elders shifted continually as they began to grasp that something was terribly wrong. No matter how fiercely they attacked, there was no sign of shaking this side of time and space, let alone harming Gu Changge. Even Zhuo Shixuan found

himself powerless against this, his brute-force methods akin to a mud cow sinking into the sea, unable to stir a single wave.

“Could it be that this is the inner space of some strange treasure, which is why it feels so bizarre?” someone speculated, their voice tinged with trepidation.

Between their palms and fingers, all kinds of visions materialized, including the shattering of immortal emperors, the collapse of the sun and moon, the eternal silence of mountains and rivers, and the disintegration of the vast universe piece by piece. However, none of it proved effective; all their Daoism was collapsing and vanishing. It was as if some supreme power in this space-time was obliterating all forces that did not belong to it.

Gu Changge stood not far away, watching them calmly, not even lifting a finger. Zhuo Fengxie observed everything unfolding and felt an even deeper sense of awe.

“Everyone underestimated his strength, believing that his reliance was solely on the old man in the black robe,” he thought. “I didn’t expect his own power to reach such an incredible level...”

In the distance, Zhuo Shixuan’s expression shifted as he felt a jolt of shock in his heart, struggling to comprehend the situation.

He began to understand that it wasn’t the strangeness of this time and space, but rather that Gu Changge’s strength was simply too terrifying. With this realization, his mind raced, and many thoughts flashed through him as he made a swift decision. His figure became increasingly faint, as if he were about to vanish from this world, time, and space. He intended to sever the connection to his Dharma body and escape, after all, this was not his true self.

“Hehe, it’s too late to think about cutting off the connection between the Dharma body and the deity now,” Gu Changge suddenly chuckled, interrupting his escape.

Boom!!!

Gu Changge slapped his hand toward the spot where Zhuo Shixuan was located. In that instant, a massive crack opened up, stretching across boundless space, as if it were slicing through layers of time and dimensions both vertically and horizontally.

In the depths of an ancient time and space, a figure sitting cross-legged suddenly opened his eyes, trembling as he gazed into the distance. A colossal hand, vast enough to cover the sky, reached over, shattering the very rules of Daoism. Large swaths of the universe, along with time and space, collapsed and were obliterated in an instant.

This was Zhuo Shixuan's true body, positioned countless latitudes away from the time and space of the immortal civilization. He attempted to resist, but it was futile; he was captured in that enormous palm.

"How can this be...?" All the elders of the Zhuo clan stared in shock at the unfolding scene. Their hair stood on end, as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over them, leaving them utterly chilled.

"So that's the case; no wonder Zhuo Fengxie chose this path..." In an instant, many people lost the will to resist; their complexions turned pale, and all thoughts faded away. Zhuo Shixuan had not anticipated that Gu Changge's methods would be so terrifying, as he had found his true body directly through the endless expanse of time and space.

The connection between the deity and the Dharma body allowed him to instantly grasp the situation, and his face reflected extreme fear. Such power was beyond anything they could contend with. For a time, all the elders of the Zhuo clan stood in bitter silence, choosing to cease their struggle.

“I should have realized it earlier. An existence comparable to Hun Yuan Jun could never truly submit to a young man... No matter how extraordinary his origins, it would be futile.” At that moment, many of the Zhuo clan elders came to this bitter understanding. Perhaps Zhuo Fengxie had no choice but to act as he did.

“It seems that you are all intelligent people, and there are many things I need not explain,” Gu Changge said with a light smile. His expression remained largely unchanged, as if he had merely performed an insignificant act. “From today onward, the Zhuo clan must heed my commands. Do you have any objections?”

Chapter 1050: 100,000 years of freedom, I noticed you a long time ago

“Young Master Gu won’t embarrass the Zhuo Clan. In fact, there’s no need for such vigilance.”

“From a certain perspective, what follows might even be a rare opportunity for the Zhuo Clan.”

Zhuo Fengxie stood respectfully beside Gu Changge, seemingly following his lead as he persuaded the elders of the Zhuo Clan in front of him.

Upon hearing this, all the elders of the Zhuo Clan wore expressions of bitterness. Many had ashen, pale faces, finally realizing the terrifying gap between themselves and Gu Changge.

If it weren’t for Zhuo Fengxie’s secret betrayal, which led Gu Changge to them and allowed him to wipe them out, the Zhuo Clan would still have had a substantial chance to resist.

But now, there was no hope left. Gu Changge could eliminate them all, having even captured Zhuo Shixuan’s real body from a distant time and space. Such a method was nothing short of sensational, leaving them shocked and in despair.

Even someone as powerful as Zhuo Fengxie, capable of competing with the ancestors of the Zhuo Clan, remained respectful, obeying Gu Changge's commands.

At this moment, any resistance would likely lead to their deaths.

"Wait, I am willing to obey Mr. Gu's orders, and I hope Mr. Gu can remember our friendship from the past few days and allow us to go free."

The elders of the Zhuo Clan, who had visited Gu Changge some time ago, exchanged bitter glances and chose to submit.

In the past era, they had been proud and arrogant, feeling invincible across numerous timelines and universes.

Yet, in the presence of a true powerhouse, life and death were merely arbitrary decisions. This realization left them feeling powerless and bitter, engulfed in a sense of helplessness.

In the eyes of the cultivators and beings of the immortal civilization, they were considered the pinnacle of existence. Yet, what difference was there between them and fish on a chopping board?

They had come this far, still believing in a bright future, and they didn't want to die so easily.

Moreover, even Zhuo Fengxie had chosen to surrender.

"That's only natural," Gu Changge replied with a light smile. "I never intended to attack the Zhuo Clan. If you are wise, you can avoid unnecessary casualties."

“It’s not easy for anyone to reach this point in their cultivation. Those who understand the current situation are true heroes; why bring disaster upon your own people for the sake of the Xi Yuan civilization?”

The Zhuo Clan had a deep heritage, with no fewer than twenty individuals comparable to the Dao realm. This was a terrifying power, far beyond what the Spiritual civilization could hope to achieve.

Every Dao realm existence was a rare resource, and Gu Changge did not wish to waste them unnecessarily.

At this time, Zhuo Fengxie continued to persuade them, saying, “Young Master is right. My Zhuo Clan’s surrender to the Xi Yuan Civilization is also a surrender to you. There’s no difference between the two. Why sacrifice your lives for the sake of the Xi Yuan civilization? Rest assured, he is benevolent and will not harm the Zhuo people.”

His words left the other elders of the Zhuo Clan momentarily confused. Zhuo Shixuan, a person who had lived for countless years, understood the importance of making a timely decision. He did not hesitate for long and, like the other elders of the Zhuo Clan, chose to surrender.

Seeing this, even the representative elders among the hardliners of the Zhuo Clan fell silent. Gu Changge did not embarrass them; after all, he planned to utilize the Zhuo Clan for his purposes. While he couldn’t win over everyone, it was also not in his interest to humiliate them unnecessarily.

Those who had cultivated to this stage had endured numerous catastrophes and tribulations, and they would not easily accept humiliation.

Those who were more conceited and resolute in character might choose to abandon their Dao fruit in an instant, unwilling to pursue perfection.

Zhuo Fengxie felt relieved to see that none of the elders acted foolishly. Deep down, he truly wished to avoid any casualties for the Zhuo Clan. It would be ideal if they could return peacefully.

“Everyone can rest assured,” Gu Changge said with a smile. “As I mentioned before, I will not embarrass the Zhuo Clan. I will keep my promise and will not humiliate you.”

“All I ask is that you work hard for me for 100,000 years. After that, you can choose to stay or leave as you wish. I won’t force anyone.”

“If you don’t believe me, I can swear with my heart.”

Gu Changge’s words, spoken with a smile, caused all the elders, who appeared somewhat gloomy and defeated, to suddenly perk up in surprise.

Many of them appeared somewhat incredulous. One hundred thousand years might sound like a long time, but to beings like them, it was merely a flick of a finger.

In many cases, they had gone into seclusion for millions of years; these 100,000 years truly felt insignificant.

Zhuo Fengxie was also taken aback; he hadn’t expected Gu Changge to only require the Zhuo people to serve him for 100,000 years.

At that moment, many elders of the Zhuo Clan looked hopeful. It seemed that as long as they survived these 100,000 years, they would regain their freedom.

“I hope... Mr. Gu’s words are true and that he isn’t just deceiving us.”

Although Zhuo Shixuan was shocked and terrified by Gu Changge’s overwhelming strength, it didn’t mean he would endure humiliation without resistance. He chose to surrender to protect himself for the time being, planning to think of a way to escape later.

However, Gu Changge’s statement at this moment shook his earlier thoughts. After all, one hundred thousand years was just a flick of a finger for him.

He secluded himself deep in time and space to comprehend the Dao, often spending millions or even tens of millions of years in solitude.

“That’s only natural,” Gu Changge replied with a light smile.

For him, 100,000 years was more than sufficient; what would happen after that time was no longer his concern. Even after 100,000 years, the future was not solely within his contemplation.

A Dao oath? Gu Changge never took such things seriously. There was no grand oath in this world that could truly restrain him.

For the Zhuo Clan, the 100,000-year time frame provided them with hope. This arrangement also alleviated some of Gu Changge’s concerns. At least during these 100,000 years, the Zhuo Clan was less likely to cause trouble and would be considerably more compliant.

There was violent turmoil at the top of the Zhuo Clan, but this matter only spread within a small circle. For the ordinary members of the Zhuo Clan, life continued as usual, unaffected by the upheaval.

Several ancestor-level beings of the Zhuo Clan remained in seclusion, and even the elders had lost track of their whereabouts. Among them was the ancestor who founded the Zhuo Clan.

While the Zhuo Clan chose to submit to Gu Changge, the ancestors were unaware of this decision. Many elders felt a twinge of anxiety, concerned that if the ancestors discovered the situation, it could lead to turmoil and war.

However, Zhuo Fengxie reassured them, knowing the ancestors well. In their eyes, the life and death of the Zhuo Clan were far less significant than their own cultivation. This was why they had not shown themselves for hundreds of epochs.

If the Zhuo Clan faced a catastrophe within their ability to resolve, the ancestors might intervene. But if the threat exceeded their capacity, their primary concern would always be self-preservation.

In the long process of cultivation, even the direct descendants were largely absent, let alone those with thinner bloodlines. To the ancestors, the bloodline was merely a symbol. Moreover, Gu Changge's terrifying strength was far beyond what the Zhuo Clan's ancestors could contend with. At that point, they would most likely choose to surrender.

Meanwhile, within the Hun Clan, similar events were unfolding. Hun Yuan Jun stepped forward to unite the power of the Hun Clan. He was extremely old and one of the first ancestors of the clan. The other elders of the Hun Clan did not dare to defy his orders at all.

Compared to the Zhuo Clan, the situation on the Hun Clan's side was much smoother. However, in the end, Gu Changge still made an appearance and required the Hun Clan to serve him for one hundred thousand years. After that period, he promised to set everyone free.

Initially, the entire Hun Clan resisted, but once Gu Changge demonstrated his terrifying strength, they ultimately chose to accept the reality of their situation.

In the past few days, turmoil had erupted between the Zhuo and Hun Clans, and the outside world was equally turbulent. The Blue Heaven Realm, which had been missing for many epochs, suddenly reappeared, and a brilliant beam of light seemed to blast open an ancient gate of heaven.

This radiant light reflected across many great universes, with divine rays raining down and illuminating countless times and spaces with brilliance and crystal clarity. The Blue Heaven Realm was an extremely mysterious secret realm, said to be a treasure house beyond the ordinary world.

Within it lay countless hidden resources, including techniques, elixirs, divine powers, natural materials, earthly treasures, and ancient crystals from divine mines—an endless bounty. The realm appeared full of splendor, as if an ancient and magnificent world was glowing.

Vaguely visible were majestic mountains, towering ancient trees, and an incomparably rich essence of life permeating the air. The news of the Blue Heaven Realm's reappearance sent shockwaves through many great universes of the immortal civilization. Numerous ethnic groups and forces began sending their clansmen and powerful individuals to compete for the opportunities it offered.

However, there was a terrifying restriction in the Blue Heaven Realm: if one's cultivation base was too strong, it became difficult to enter, as they would be suppressed by an overwhelming force. Involvement at the Dao Realm level could even lead to spatial disorder within the Blue Heaven Realm, causing uncontrollable disasters.

This limitation made it challenging for elder-level figures from many forces to participate; they could only linger outside. However, it created an excellent opportunity for the younger and middle-aged generations. Many cultivators and beings sought ways to get close to the Blue Heaven Realm, hoping to sneak inside and seize their chances.

In the vicinity of the Blue Heaven Realm, numerous immortal king-level existences emerged during this period, resulting in fierce battles erupting in the outer domain. Many star fields were pierced, and some cultivators witnessed several adjacent universes being shattered.

At one point, an encounter with several immortal kings disturbed a nearby terrifying star beast, which opened its mouth and directly swallowed that universe. As a result, many cultivators recognized that the area surrounding the Blue Heaven Realm had become a chaotic and uninhabited place, well-known throughout the immortal civilization.

In that place, many terrifying star beasts existed since ancient times, making even immortal kings hesitant to act recklessly. Countless other dangers lurked within. The appearance of the Blue Heaven Realm indeed presented an opportunity for many cultivators, but it also came with significant risks.

In Gufeng Ancient City, Wang He awaited news of the Blue Heaven Realm's emergence alongside the members of the Scavengers Sect, who had not left. He was cautious, yet he couldn't help but feel a twinge of worry about the spirit of the Book of Scavengers. Despite having advised it many times, seeing the Blue Heaven Realm truly come into being finally eased his last trace of vigilance.

"What Mu Yan wants is in the Blue Heaven Realm..." he mused. "Although the Blue Heaven Realm does not permit those whose cultivation surpasses the Dao Realm to enter, I happen to be only halfway to the Dao Realm. This makes it truly tailor-made for me."

"It seems that the artifact spirit of the Book of Scavengers really didn't deceive me. That Mr. Gu—if he truly cared for Mu Yan, he wouldn't let her go alone; he would definitely accompany her."

“Without the protection of his black-robed old servant, he shouldn’t pose a threat to me.”

Wang He reflected on the words he had shared with Mu Yan some time ago, believing they should have influenced her perspective, making her suspect Gu Changge’s intentions. Many thoughts raced through his mind.

What Wang He valued was not the treasures within the Blue Heaven Realm; after all, he possessed the Book of Scavengers and did not lack natural materials, earthly treasures, or divine weapons. According to the artifact spirit of the Book of Scavengers, Gu Changge held within him the energy substance that she needed. Once the Book of Scavengers regained some of its former power, it would greatly benefit Wang He.

With this thought in mind, Wang He did not linger for long and instructed the members of the Scavengers Sect to return to their headquarters first. He then set off alone, making his way to the location of the Blue Heaven Realm. His plan was to wait there for Mu Yan, Gu Changge, and others.

However, as Wang He approached the Blue Heaven Realm, he suddenly felt a chill run down his spine. A beautiful woman appeared before him, her face obscured by mist, clad in a golden dress that made her resemble a sun goddess. She stopped him in his tracks.

This woman was undeniably stunning, yet he could not discern her true features clearly. A faint smile played on her lips, giving her an aura of power, as if she were capable of controlling the heavens and worlds.

“The Eternal Saintess...” Wang He felt a surge of terror, disbelief washing over him. He had glimpsed this woman from a distance during the Zhouwu acceptance ceremony. At that time, her strength had seemed comparable to that of the current younger generation, at most matching the Son of the Eternal Protoss, approaching the level of the Immortal King.

However, he never expected her power to be so terrifying; it would not be an exaggeration to call it unfathomable. As someone at the half-step Dao Realm, he couldn't entertain even the slightest thought of resistance in front of the Eternal Saintess.

"Sure enough, I found you. I noticed you during the grand ceremony," Luo Xiang said, her tone casual and exuding a calm sense of control over everything.

Wang He hadn't anticipated that she had already spotted him, so he could only brace himself and reply, "I wonder why the Eternal Saintess is looking for me?"

"I don't know what method you used to confirm the news of the Blue Heaven Realm's impending birth. However, that's of no concern to me. I simply want you to do something for me."

"Once the task is completed, I will grant you a benefit. If not..." Luo Xiang's smile widened at the corners of her lips, but she left the rest unsaid.

With a flick of her slender jade hand, a stream of light suddenly shot into Wang He's body.

"This is the mantra of rebirth. No one can unravel it except me. Don't even think about resisting; not only are you merely a half-step Daoist, but even a true Daoist would find themselves at my mercy. With just a thought, I can decide their life or death."