

A Snake 651

Chapter 651: Must Not Go Back

The passenger trembled with fear, his hands shaking as he held the medicine powder, "Thank... Thank you..."

"Ah, beauty fades, she has actually become this old. Initially, Long Xiangkui was the first beauty of the Mystic Arts Realm," lamented Zhang Zidao after Granny Long had turned and left.

I touched my chin, "Master, why do I feel... that you have a crush on Granny Long?"

"How could that be? Long Xiangkui is over two hundred years younger than me, I am... not that perverted." Zhang Zidao flatly denied it yet bit his tongue and hastily changed the subject, "This car is probably going to break down for the night, every second is crucial for you, we should walk."

I looked at the situation inside the car, nodded, "If you don't mind me being a burden, I don't mind; after all, you're the one who will suffer."

Anyone who has achieved a certain level in their practice will have special walking techniques.

These make their pace exceptionally fast.

I, as a half-baked Yin Yang Embroidery Master... do not have this skill...

The two of us got off the car together.

The strange corpse water that had been falling from the sky had stopped.

The ground was wet and filled with a foul smell.

Nearby, several plants and mosses had been corroded by the corpse water, turning into a charred black.

Just after taking a few steps, a figure appeared in front of us.

The person was exceptionally tall, his authoritative gaze looking down upon me and Zhang Zidao, "Are you two from the Ten Thousand Poison Hall?"

Zhang Zidao kept his head down silently and covered his face with his Taoist robe's sleeve, lowering his voice to disguise it, "We are just ordinary passengers, you must be mistaken."

"Ordinary passengers? Encountering corpse water without contracting Copper Coin Sores, and sneaking off the bus??" Granny Long suddenly pulled out the fierce Demon-Subduing Pestle from her waist and pressed it against Zhang Zidao's neck threateningly.

Yet Zhang Zidao, as if guilty of something, stubbornly refused to show his face.

Seeing that the old Taoist priest was afraid to meet Long Xiangkui and soon getting struck by Granny Long after a huge flush towards the Dragon King Temple, I quickly said, "Granny Long is... it's me, me! Do you remember?"

"You... you..." Granny Long, upon hearing my voice, was bewildered for a moment, then her eyes fixed, "Wanwan!! Is your Blood-weeping Syndrome acting up?"

Granny Long had presumably had a close private relationship with my maternal grandfather, Lin Huan, and must have been quite familiar with the Lin Family's hereditary illness, the Blood-weeping Syndrome.

At that moment, she instantly deduced the fact that I was afflicted with Blood-weeping Syndrome.

"Didn't mean to scare you. I really look too sorry; if it weren't for fearing misunderstandings, I wouldn't have... revealed my identity."

I shyly chuckled at Long Xiangkui, concurrently out of filial piety as a disciple, I made up a false identity for Zhang Zidao, "This elderly gentleman is my master, a recluse from the mountains, his modest name isn't worth mentioning. He has social anxiety, allergic to people, please don't blame him, Granny."

"I see, sorry, fellow Taoist, Long Xiangkui apologizes for the offense," Long Xiangkui gracefully expressed his apologies to Zhang Zidao afterward without further suspicion or attention.

His gaze returned to me, his rough fingers trembling as they touched my face, "Your nice face, to become like Ah Huan's brother back then."

"It's okay, ugly... ugliness has its benefits, it's at least very safe for ugly women." I optimistically said, "Those three from Ten Thousand Poison Hall were holding a photo looking for me, yet my appearance made them cry from ugliness, and they just couldn't recognize me."

But that was just lip service; no girl doesn't cherish beauty.

My mental state was a mess, completely devastated.

If I am going to be this ugly forever, how am I supposed to live my life? Will Yu Longting, a man of incomparable beauty and grace, really be matched with me... someone so ugly that I can't even swallow my food?

Isn't love between people supposed to start with appearance, respect talent, bond over personality, sustain through kindness, and lastly end with character?

This face of mine was disqualified from the start.

I am not just ordinarily ugly; I have reached a realm of ugliness, a new height.

Absolutely short, ugly, and poor!

Ah... such worries...

"You appearing here, are you planning to go to Tianying Village??" Granny Long, thinking of something, warned with a very serious expression, "Tianying Village is currently in turmoil, you must not go back!!"

Chapter 652: Vajra Eye

"Internal strife? What's there to fight over for a mere Stronghold Master?" Before I could speak, Zhang Zidao, who kept his head down to hide his face, said in a deep voice, "Could it be... the stronghold has been infiltrated by the Ten Thousand Poison Hall?"

Granny Long looked Zhang Zidao up and down, then sheathed her Demon-Subduing Pestle at her waist, "Your insight is profound. The infiltrated person's identity is not simple; it's from Chief Yan's direct lineage."

"Oh, a son rebelling against the stronghold?" Zhang Zidao's tone was indifferent, as if he had understood it all along.

From the sudden flash of clarity in Granny Long's eyes, one could tell that the old man had definitely guessed correctly.

To conceal one's identity and yet seek to stand out.

Isn't that just trying to have one's cake and eat it, too? Things aren't that easy.

Granny Long's expression gradually turned chilly and sharp, "Who exactly are you? How do you know so much about a stronghold that is isolated from the outside world?"

"You misunderstand, Granny. My master is acquainted with my maternal grandmother, so I know a few... trivial matters... about Tianying Village." I hurriedly tried to smooth things over, embarrassed, to prevent Granny Long from becoming suspicious and possibly aggressive again, "Actually... I went to Tianying Village to treat Blood-weeping Syndrome, a disease that can be fatal if not cured."

"How could I forget, you child... this child's fate has been too full of hardship." Upon mentioning this, Granny Long became sad, her softened gaze resting on me, her eyes even moist with tears, "Then you must be careful when you go to Tianying Village, leave right after soaking in the Cold Moon Spring."

Why did it feel like Granny Long was too concerned about me?

The affection in her eyes when she looked at me was more like that of my maternal grandmother than Yan Hua.

And yet we had met only twice.

"What is Cold Moon Spring?" I asked, puzzled.

Granny Long's rough palm brushed the top of my head, "Didn't your grandfather tell you? Soaking in the stronghold's Medicinal Spring can slowly heal Blood-weeping Syndrome. It's just that you... this... face... I'm afraid..."

"Afraid it won't recover? It's fine, I'm mentally prepared," I said with an outward appearance of nonchalance, while inside, the tips of my nails were nearly piercing through the flesh of my palms.

Hell no, am I doomed to bear this ugly face for life?

That's too miserable!!

While others beautify themselves for the one who pleases them, I'm doomed to uglify myself for the same reason.

Granny Long sighed, "What a positive child you are. If it were not for pressing matters, this old woman would definitely accompany you to Tianying Village."

"I'll be enough!" Zhang Zidao interjected again.

I grasped Granny Long's hand, giving her a warm smile, "It's the thought that counts, Granny Long. Go attend to your own business, and I must hurry and head to the stronghold with my master."

"We'll meet again, Wanwan. Be sure to stay safe inside the stronghold," Granny Long said, placing a brilliantly pure red and gold bead in my palm before her black-clad figure disappeared into the night mist.

Zhang Zidao scratched his white-haired head, "This girl... Ah, pah! Long Xiangkui... What did she give you a Wind-Setting Pearl for?"

This Old Taoist Priest must have lusted after Granny Long when he was young—I heard it loud and clear!

He just misspoke, calling Granny Long a young girl.

"I have a Centipede Gu that's been badly wounded and is unconscious; I didn't expect..." I took out the Matchbox and placed the fiery red bead Granny Long gave me inside, "I didn't expect Granny Long to actually sense it, this Wind-Setting Pearl, taken from a thousand-year-old centipede, is more than enough to heal my Xiao Honghong."

"Are you making a joke? She is the top Gu Witch of the Miao Border, with the eyes of Vajra!" Zhang Zidao grabbed my wrist, and with one step we covered a distance of a hundred meters, "What gu can she not see through?"

Chapter 653: Poisonous Wasps

"So that's how it is." I responded to Zhang Zidao's words, my mind sinking into thought, "Master, just now Granny Long said that the Ten Thousand Poison Hall has infiltrated Chief Yan's son, turning him into one of their own."

"The Ten Thousand Poison Hall is skilled at brainwashing; it's nothing surprising." Zhang Zidao, unconcerned, failed to grasp my implication, "Didn't the entire Zhuji Village get brainwashed?"

"If that person becomes the Stronghold Master, the Immortal Gu will become an object in the Ten Thousand Poison Hall's pocket." I scrutinized my thoughts step by step, "The Ancestor of Ten Thousand Poisons is already an Immortal; he wouldn't need the gu of Tianying Village, right?"

"That's the logic, but still, the Ten Thousand Poison Hall has come out in full force to search for it, not knowing what strength they seek." With every step Zhang Zidao took, a deep blue Taoist Heart lotus bloomed beneath his feet.

I looked down at the emerging lotuses and said out loud, "That's exactly what I was thinking. If the Ten Thousand Poison Hall knew that Zhao Zheng was dead, would they still go through so much trouble to find the Immortal Gu?"

Somehow, I suddenly managed to multitask, pondering the affairs of the Ten Thousand Poison Hall on one side.

On the other hand, I was able to unravel the essence of Zhang Zidao's step technique,

This step technique seemed simple, but in reality, it encompassed the profound mysteries of the Five Elements and Eight Trigrams.

Every seven steps made a complete cycle, appearing to repeat endlessly yet possessed infinite variations.

One simply couldn't learn it by rote memorization...

If one could comprehend the realm within, it wouldn't require Spiritual Power—only a Taoist Heart.

Then one could follow the Fuxi Eight Trigrams understood in their heart, to thus develop their own stepping technique.

"I...go!" Zhang Zidao halted in his tracks upon hearing my words.

He took a step that shattered the lotus just conjured, stopping dead, "You mean to say, nobody has discovered Zhao Zheng's death yet, everything is just us worrying needlessly?"

"Moreover, the Ancestor of Ten Thousand Poisons is most likely still in seclusion." I nodded vigorously, "We got nervous just now, thought too much and believed we were being targeted."

"Ah, a guilty conscience leads to self-imposed confusion," Zhang Zidao slapped his forehead, realizing his mistake.

The only people in the world who knew of Zhao Zheng's death were me, Zhang Zidao, and Yu Longting.

Zhao Zheng's ashes were even taken by Yu Longting; even with the Ten Thousand Poison Hall's extraordinary abilities, it wouldn't be possible for them to find out so quickly.

I knew we still had to prepare for a rainy day, "The truth will out eventually; it will be discovered sooner or later. We need to think of a way to deal with the future."

"Well said, the old teacher's mind has its limits, I entrust everything to you, my student!"

"..."

Tianying Village is an isolated ancient Miao stronghold, located very remotely.

Even if one took a long bus ride like earlier, one would still need to cross several mountains and traverse dangerous cableways after getting off the bus.

Next, Zhang Zidao led me away from the national highway.

And we entered a vast expanse of mountainous area.

The air between the mountain forests seemed to congeal, bone-chillingly cold.

It was as if we had entered the Netherworld, devoid of any warmth that the human world should possess.

Fortunately, the tree trunks and bushes were home to many snakes, providing me a sense of safety.

"Disciple, be careful, Poisonous Wasps." Zhang Zidao's fire charm ignited without an open flame.

With a single throw, he set ablaze a sudden, dense curtain of black, engulfing it in a raging inferno.

The fire illuminated half of the thicket, and the dark web was visible as being composed of countless black wasps.

These wasps had poisonous stingers on their tails and had enveloped all the nearby snakes.

The snakes coiled on the trees, long paralyzed and dead from the wasp venom, hung there with only their lifeless husks, appearing as if they were merely asleep.

I felt a dull pain in my heart and was about to pull out a talisman paper from my body.

But I was stopped by the raised hand of Zhang Zidao, who said, "You can't use Spiritual Power, disciple."

Now that my Spiritual Power was greatly reduced, it mattered less.

The little Spiritual Power I retained was all used to protect myself and prevent the onset of Blood-weeping Syndrome for the time being.

Just now, seeing so many snakes killed, I almost lost control in my haste.

"I'm sorry, Master, I was reckless." I clenched my hand into a fist in secret, suppressing the frustration and pain in my heart.

I didn't know when it started, but slowly, in my heart, I began to regard the Snake Tribe as my own kind, developing an inexplicable sense of belonging and protective instinct.

Then I saw Zhang Zidao suddenly pull out his sharp Bronze Sword, grabbed me, and swiftly turned around.

His sword pierced directly into the heart of the man in the long robe behind us, "You wish to launch a sneak attack, you scoundrel! You're still too green to play tricks on the Old Taoist Priest!"

"Where did you come from... scruffy old Taoist, you dare meddle in the affairs of the Ten Thousand Poison Hall..."

Chapter 654: Master... Is He a Tough Guy?

The man pierced by the sword on the chest clearly didn't know Zhang Zidao's identity as he cursed the scruffy old Daoist.

Blood poured from his mouth as he swayed and collapsed, "Killed... the Gu Speaker. We must absolutely not let... her enter Tianying Village to inherit..."

"Kill!!!" In the darkness of the night, a piercing scream shattered the sky.

Torches moved all around, and countless people dressed in long robes and carrying Miao Knives surrounded Zhang Zidao and me.

My heart felt as if it was suddenly seized, and my legs uncontrollably went weak.

So many people, each with a knife.

They could chop Zhang Zidao and me into mincemeat.

No matter how good martial arts might be, it still feared kitchen knives.

"Heh~" Just then, Zhang Zidao let out a cold laugh and drew the gourd from his waist.

He spat on the Bronze Sword, and as its edge slashed through his palm, he said, "Disciple, with your master here, why do you tremble?"

"With so many people, not... trembling would be strange!!" I was naturally timid; though I had gained a bit of psychological quality over time.

At this moment, the air, eroded by the ominous gu energy.

Turned as cold and gloomy as Yama Hall, capable of freezing one's bones.

After absorbing blood, the surface of Zhang Zidao's long sword suddenly gleamed brilliantly with a copper light.

With a gentle lift, he cleared the toxic black mist in the air created by poison bees.

Then, the gaze of this elder, who looked like a deity, lightly touched the ground with the tip of his foot.

His raised long sword reflected the celestial Qiong Hua, sweeping 360 degrees, sending blood flying everywhere.

Gurgling heads rolled across the ground, but the bodies whose heads had been severed still managed to stand in place.

Unexpectedly, this frail old man who seemed to have the strength of a chicken, managed to instantly kill dozens of muscular men.

"Is the master... fierce or not?" Zhang Zidao's sword tip dripped with blood as he turned to ask me.

My mind went blank, and only one word escaped my lips, "Fierce!!"

Unexpected, indeed... Zhang Zidao, with his celestial appearance and gentle temperament.

When killing, he was even fiercer than Yu Longting.

That Bronze Sword, like death's scythe, cut them down as easily as mowing the grass.

With one sweep, all were dead.

After those strong men fell, countless black worms poured out of their skulls and swarmed toward us like a tide.

"Master, how can horseshoe crabs crawl out of people's heads?" As I heard the rustling sounds of the bugs moving in the air, my scalp felt like it was about to explode.

Zhang Zidao grabbed my wrist, pulling me several hundred meters away, distancing us from the horse crabs that surged like a tide, "These are brain horseshoe crabs, their eggs can only survive when parasitic in the human brain. Once the host dies and becomes a corpse, they reproduce wildly.

How the hell does Ten Thousand Poison Hall have worm eggs in their brains?"

"To prevent judgment, perhaps! They are catching up, master... why aren't you moving?" I turned back to see hordes of brain horseshoe crabs approaching, leaving me almost breathless.

Zhang Zidao stood frozen, his face looking extremely dreadful.

He spat out a mouthful of blood and walked another hundred meters, carrying me.

His face was as pale as gold paper, and his body swayed in the wind like a falling leaf, always on the verge of collapsing, "Killing... damages Yin Virtue, especially at my level... the backlash is a thousand times over... karma..."

"You're being backlashed." Without hesitation, I immediately began transferring Spiritual Power into Zhang Zidao's body.

But, the backlash inside him was too severe.

No matter how much Spiritual Power I infused him with, it disappeared like a stone into the sea.

I knew not to waste more Spiritual Power, otherwise, both of us would get eaten by the brain crabs, so I decisively supported the staggering Zhang Zidao and ran, "If you knew killing would backlash this terribly, why the hell did you kill, and kill so many? To not drop dead on the spot, you're already lucky!! Are you out of your mind?"

Chapter 655: Survival in a Tree Hole

"Disciple, don't be angry, urgh~ If the old Taoist doesn't kill them... they will kill us..." Zhang Zidao, while sprinting along with me, painfully vomited blood, his body suddenly became heavy and he collapsed, "Otherwise, you throw your master away to distract those horseshoe crabs and escape on your own..."

Seeing that the horseshoe crabs were about to catch up to our heels, I couldn't hesitate.

I hoisted Zhang Zidao onto my back and started to run as fast as I could, "Hey, you know I couldn't possibly leave you behind, so was there any need to say that I should escape on my own?"

"In a life-and-death situation, who doesn't prioritize themselves first..." Zhang Zidao coughed a few times and vomited blood again.

This time, he spewed it right into my collar.

Really, what a pitfall of an old man.

While running, I had to endure the stench of the old Taoist priest's blood invading my collar, "Honestly, master, don't tell me you're just testing me with this act."

"No way, how could that be, your character is absolutely trustworthy," Zhang Zidao vehemently denied, "there's no need for any test."

"I wish it were just an act, so that..."

So that when I'm about to die,

he could suddenly come back to full strength and save me from this dire situation.

But such thoughts are just wishful thinking.

I touched the bracelet on my wrist, "Shenshen, can you let the Ice Silkworm help out?"

"Young Madam, have you encountered danger?"

Xiao Shenshen sounded anxious, "But alas... the little silkworm baby is too tired, it's asleep."

"Is it because... it expended too much while exchanging the Life Lamp for me?" I asked.

Xiao Shenshen: "Yes."

The last flicker of hope in my heart extinguished. Could it be... that heaven wants to end Zhang Zidao and me?

Suddenly.

Not far away, a large tree hollow that could fit a person appeared, next to which was covered with light blue mushrooms.

Those light blue mushrooms are local poison mushrooms of Miao Border, whose smell can ward off insects.

In a moment of desperate ingenuity, I stuffed Zhang Zidao, who had a look of impending doom, into the tree hollow.

Kneeling on the ground, I couldn't care less about the damage Spiritual Power could do to my body.

I cast several protective talismans in succession, turning the tree hollow into a solid and independent space with a Seal.

I even tied a camouflaging cloth strip on the trunk to hide Zhang Zidao's presence, "Master, if I'm still alive, I'll come back for you."

"What are you going to do? Wanwan, you can't outrun those horseshoe crabs!!" Zhang Zidao, once inside the tree hollow, became instantly anxious.

He tried to rush out but was bounced back by the Seal of the talisman.

Overwhelmed by anger and frustration, he vomited another mouthful of blood, "Foolish, let me out. I can lure them, gather them all in one place, and burn them all to death with a fire charm. You are not capable right now..."

"You've been rebounded by the charm, using talismans now would be suicidal; just stay put." I had only used a little bit of Spiritual Power to lay down Spirit Talismans to protect Zhang Zidao.

Doing this on a normal day would just be using a trivial amount of power.

Yet at this moment, I could faintly feel the depletion and dryness of Spiritual Power in my veins.

Well aware, I knew I definitely could not use any talismans in this state.

I could only keep running with all my might, hoping to find plants that could repel those horseshoe crabs along the way, and I had just noticed the footwork Zhang Zidao used.

Deep inside, I already had a realization but hadn't tried it yet.

After running through the dense forest for a while, my steps began without any pattern.

But gradually, a blue lotus flower appeared beneath my feet, and with just this one petal, I was able to leap forward ten meters.

With the next step, there were two petals of lotus below me.

That one was fifteen or sixteen meters long, and although I couldn't produce a whole lotus, my strides were getting larger, and the rustling, dreadful sound of the insects chasing me was completely gone.

It meant I had shaken off the group of horseshoe crabs.

Before I could even feel relieved, something suddenly caught my foot.

When I looked down, to my surprise, it was a vine covered in moss, which was firmly wrapped around my ankle.

And next to it, there was a cave, from which the root tendrils were dragging me down forcefully.

I managed to grab the edge of the hole in time and pulled out the Swiss Small Knife I carried with me, hacking fiercely at the vine!

Chapter 656 Falling into the Cave

The sharp knife had cut the vines halfway through.

There was only half left attached, requiring another cut before it might be possible to sever it completely.

But I had already been dragged into the cave.

I fell from the pitch-black cavern, filled with immense regret in my heart.

Why hadn't I picked up a Miao Knife from the ground for self-defense? These knives are sharp and powerful.

If I had used a Miao Knife to cut the vines earlier, I could have severed them and escaped.

Now, I was probably going to fall to my death.

In the moment I hit the ground, I adjusted my position.

Protecting my belly, I faced the ground.

Fortunately, there was all mud beneath me, which cushioned my fall.

The mud was filled with a terrible stench of decay, and bubbles continuously formed on its surface.

Four tall statues stood embedded in the mud, towering and erect.

At a glance, the four statues in the dark...

They were all of Liu Bang slaying the White Snake.

Legend had it that Emperor Gaozu of Han,—Liu Bang—slayed a White Snake, causing a marvel,

and thereby rallied the rebel army to become emperor.

Thus, since antiquity, the image of Liu Bang slaying the White Snake has been a sacred object to drive away snakes.

The Dumpling in my belly, in front of these four statues, hadn't even the strength to cry anymore.

Frightened, it curled up, and then...

Passed out from fear.

I touched my slightly swollen belly, struggling to get out of the mud.

The cavern below was quite large; once out of the mud, there was a grassy hillside, "Where am I? It's so eerie and frightening."

"Young Madam, do not fear, Shenshen is here." The ginseng bracelet on my wrist emitted a faint fragrance, dispelling the gloom in my heart.

The bracelet fell to the ground and transformed into a little beauty.

But as the black air rose from the quagmire, it attacked her.

Xiao Shenshen was forced to change back into a bracelet, "There's a strong putrid air here, the plants... will be eroded."

Just then, I watched as the two small red flowers on the bracelet began to wither away.

"Xiao Shenshen, how are you? Are you alright?"

No matter how I called out to Xiao Shenshen, there was no response.

I ran my fingers over the bracelet, my heart filled with agitation. Why had it transformed back into a bracelet and even the ginseng flowers were wilting...

Xiao Shenshen mustn't have been hurt...

"Young girl, do you know... how to get to Tianying Village?"

There came a cheerful voice from a young man behind me, like warm sunshine penetrating the desolate darkness.

But my back tensed, and without hesitation, I turned around, "You... who are you?"

The young man in front of me looked to be seventeen or eighteen years old, exceptionally handsome.

He held a hand-drawn map in his hands, with latitude and longitude lines marked, as well as the heights and distances of different mountain peaks, the kind of standard surveying map.

Seeing my shock, he too was startled, "Do I look terrifying? I'm an exorcist, not a bad person."

"An exorcist? There is... an exorcistic power about you, are you from the Lin Family?" I asked.

The young man was exceptionally delighted, "Yes, I am from the Lin Family. You recognized me at a glance. Are you a Geomancer, too?"

"That Ganoderma Wooden Hairpin on your head... is it a Magic Artifact?" I noticed a wooden hairpin in the young man's long hair.

His hairstyle was very ancient, but his clothes were modern, short-sleeved and short-legged.

Not only very modern but also quite out of sync with the current season.

The young man nodded, "I made it myself, it's rather crude; I'm afraid I've made you laugh."

"From your... map, Tianying Village should be to the north. If I continue on and cross these two mountains, I just happen to be going to Tianying Village as well. I'll go with you," I said, covered in mud and feeling miserable.

In the woods, there was still Zhang Zidao, whom I had trapped in a tree hollow.

For now, I didn't know how to get back to that dense forest.

I had to first get to Tianying Village to find my Maternal Granduncle, whom I had never met.

Then I needed to hurry back to check on Zhang Zidao's condition.

Seeing the young man nod, I followed him.

Suddenly, the young man said, "I have yet to learn the esteemed name of my fellow Daoist."

"Chen Yuanyuan," I replied with an alias.

The young man beamed with a smile, very cheerful and talkative, "I am Lin Huan. Pleased to meet you; I hope you will look after me, Chen... I've never heard of... a Chen family in the Mystic Sect..."

Chapter 657 Azarhan Sutra

"What did you say? Your name... Lin Huan??" I felt a surge of wariness, suspecting he might be a spy from the Ten Thousand Poison Hall.

I scrutinized the youth who claimed to be Lin Huan; his features bore some resemblance to Lin Gang.

But those eyes were exactly like my mother's.

And my eyes look the same.

While climbing the mountain, the youth scratched his head, "Yes, I am a direct descendant of the Lin Family. I rarely left home in my early years and have little exposure to the outside world, so not many should know me. Why... are you so surprised?"

"I..." I was at a loss for words, unable to think of any excuse.

The youth's eyes suddenly lit up, "Hey, Miss Chen, the Begonia Hairpin on your head... how does it also have the power to repel demons?"

A sense of irritation rose within me, and I wanted to confront the youth before me outright.

Clearly, he was a spy from the Ten Thousand Poison Hall, disgustingly exploiting my grandfather's reputation.

But if I were to rashly make a move, using the scarce Spiritual Power,

It could harm the Life Lamp of Yu Longting within my body...

It would be better to just wait and see what happened.

"Ouch, my leg~" The youth suddenly fell onto the sprawling roots underfoot as cold sweat broke on his forehead.

I looked down at his leg, and in the darkness, a colorfully patterned snake had bitten into the youth's calf, causing him severe pain and continuous sharp inhales.

The snake, with malevolent eyes, clung firmly to the youth's calf without releasing.

The long fangs injected blood-sealing venom into the youth's skin.

I reacted instinctively, grabbing the snake by its vital spot.

Then hurled it far away, "Are you okay, how is it?"

"Leg... my leg... This snake is a century old, its venom has matured into something fierce." The youth's entire exposed calf turned purplish-black instantaneously.

I hesitated no further, fumbling around on my person.

Found the bottle containing Silkworm Feces and poured one out for the youth, urging him to swallow it.

I ingested a Silkworm Feces myself and took one of the healing elixirs Yu Longting had given me.

After consuming both items, I started to feel slightly better and turned my attention back to the youth, "Are you feeling any better?"

"I... I... It seems I can't... The poison is spreading too fast, it has already reached my heart..." The youth's entire skin turned pitch black, his body shivered with spasms, and dark red venomous blood dripped from his mouth.

I was at a loss, looking helplessly at the deep bite marks on the youth's fair calf, "The elixir you took should neutralize many types of snake venom, it shouldn't be like this!"

As Yu Longting's woman, the Snake Tribe usually shows deep respect to me and shouldn't strike without cause.

Unless, it's some renegade from the Snake Tribe who opposes Yu Longting.

Glaring at the thrown snake, I suddenly realized, "How... can this be? The snake that bit you has Demonic Qi; can such a small snake cultivate demonic powers?"

"Monster with cultivated Demonic Qi... the brain can dissolve Demonic Qi, help... me." The youth struggled to breathe, speaking in broken gasps as he pleaded for help.

Although I doubted the youth's identity, he shared my grandfather's name,

Which prevented me from disregarding his life and death.

My eyes darkened, and I reached out to grab the snake.

The snake slipped away from my grasp, swift as a mudskipper, and burrowed into the mud, disappearing.

I immediately dug through the soil with a knife but found nothing; the demon-infused snake had vanished into thin air!!

And the youth's life would only last for a moment longer...

What should I do??

What should I do next...

"Allow this humble monk to assist," suddenly, a bald monk appeared.

The monk squatted down, setting his Zen Staff on the ground beside him, "Benefactor, I shall recite a passage from the 'Azarhan Sutra' for you."

"You must be a high monk, the Snake-Repelling Scroll within the 'Azarhan Sutra'... is difficult for ordinary monks... to be effective..." The youth convulsed in pain, struggling to articulate each word.

At that moment, fresh red blood began to slowly stream from his eyes.

The monk did not reply, placing a single palm against his lips, "Ever compassionate toward him, steadfast rely on Corporis Christi Vedra, compassionate Ira Compass, Corpus Christi Vedra... Buddha breaks all poisons, your snake venom is now broken."

The lengthy scripture was recited extremely quickly.

The blackened areas on the youth's skin began to visibly return to normal starting from the bitten spot.

However, as I listened to the segment from the 'Azarhan Sutra', extreme pain surged through my head and abdomen.

Large beads of sweat rolled down my forehead. I looked up.

The youth's facial features suddenly became grotesquely deformed, gaining many wrinkles and shifting from a fine shape to an inverted triangle, looking...

Like a bitter gourd.

As my abdomen pain worsened, I could no longer care about anything else.

I clutched my belly and started to run, distancing myself from this monk, yet the resounding sound of the monk's Demon-Breaking chant followed me, "Demoness, where will you go? You forsake proper cultivation to flirt and harm passersby, today is the day you die."

Chapter 658: Ah Man, I Have Given You Many Opportunities

"I am not a witch, you've got the wrong person, Lin Huan being bitten by a snake has nothing to do with me." I glanced back to see the barefoot monk steadily pursuing me, my feet moving even faster.

There seemed to be a gleam in his eyes as it shot towards me.

Suddenly, I felt a chill in both body and mind, with a foreboding sense of inevitability.

Even using Zhang Zidao's Blue Lotus Footwork, the monk was able to catch up without any pressure.

All at once, I stumbled over a rock and fell hard to the ground.

Just as I was about to get up and continue running, I saw that the rock that tripped me was actually a snake-swallowing statue.

A snake-swallowing statue is not a specific object; it's a large mouth that burrows out of the ground and swallows a vividly lifelike White Snake into its belly.

For ordinary people, the statue is almost useless.

But for someone like me, pregnant with a snake fetus, its effects are more terrifying than sulfur.

It's even more dreadful than a statue of Liu Bang slaying a snake.

I tried to get up, but I was pinned to the spot by the statue's power, immobile.

With no other option, I bit my tongue.

A spray of blood from the tip of my tongue onto the statue slightly weakened the oppressive feeling.

I didn't care about anything else, I just needed to get away.

Suddenly, four statues of Liu Bang slaying the snake rose from the soil all around me, the ancient emperor majestically wielding his sword to kill the White Snake.

The terrifying and icy gaze, however, was directed straight at me.

I was held down by an invisible force, and I sat back down with a thump.

Intense pain wracked my abdomen, and the breathing of the unconscious Dumpling inside me grew fainter, tearing my heart to pieces, "Dumpling... Dumpling... are you okay? I'm sorry... Mom didn't protect you."

"Young Madam, I am here to protect... our little master." A sweet girlish voice came from my bracelet, and green leaves sprouted from it.

Pure green specks of light floated out from the leaf, gently surrounding my belly.

The pain in my abdomen eased slightly, but my forehead was soaked with cold sweat, and I heard a voice that sounded holy yet cruel, "Witch, you cannot escape! Fallen into evil, and even bitten the Lin Family heir! Only... through death... can your sins be wiped clean!"

The Zen Staff came at me, but missed its mark.

However, the terrifying Vajra Qi from the staff scattered the green lights of protection Shenshen had placed around Dumpling, and the leaves on the bracelet promptly wilted.

"If I'm a witch, then you're a Demon Monk, blindly attacking people without discernment." I felt an intense coldness in my lower abdomen, and a chill coursed through me, freezing me to the point where I could hardly breathe.

Clenching my teeth, I resolutely pulled the hairpin from my hair and faced the oncoming Zen Staff and statues, "You push people too far; if I have to die, we'll all die together."

"Ah Man, I have given you many chances, but you refused to treasure them! The young snake in your womb was innocent... it was you... who brought this upon it!" The monk chanted the Azarhan Sutra, his eyes shining with a piercing gold, "Those who adhere to the water and the land, have compassion for all beings, both measurable and immeasurable."

Ah Man?

Who is Ah Man?

Why is he calling me Ah Man?

There was a brief moment of bewilderment in my mind, and when I looked up again.

Lin Huan, cured of snake venom by the Azarhan Sutra, stood beside the monk, chanting the Azarhan Sutra with him.

The pain was like countless arrows piercing my stomach, causing all the veins in my forehead to bulge out in agony.

My body finally couldn't bear the immense pressure, and I fell to my knees.

The force from above pressing down on the statues and incantations was excruciating, but I'm not of the Snake Tribe, it was my Dumpling who suffered the intense pain.

I made several attempts to muster my Spiritual Power to fight back, but each was brutally suppressed.

"Don't... Mommy... Dumpling doesn't want to leave you..."

In the cold air, a painful, faint baby's voice sounded, and my Dumpling inside me lost its heartbeat and breath.

Chapter 659: Slaying Big Mouth

At this moment, my heart felt as if it were being crushed by sharp claws.

My vision was a bloody red, that unprecedented murderous intent occupying my mind.

Kill... those two people... Kill them!!

The Begonia hairpin in my hand was raised, I channeled all my strength into the hairpin, aiming for the brow of that cold-faced monk.

First kill that damn monk, then kill Lin Huan!

"Master, let's spare her life and give her a chance to reform," the young man suddenly ceased fighting and pleaded for mercy.

The monk paused and said, "She refuses to mend her ways, and has fallen into evil, there's no turning back for her."

My heart trembled slightly, and I was momentarily lost in thought.

From that big mouth swallowing the White Snake, I heard a woman's crying, "You hypocrites, you... murdered my son, I must... avenge him..."

It flashed through my mind that the young man and the monk wanted to kill Ah Man, not me!

I had simply been caught up in this!!

It led to a mixture and entanglement of the two people's memories.

Otherwise, there was no way to explain why I was in this place, why I had encountered Lin Huan in his youth.

That young man was Lin Huan, in his youth, he was bitten by a demon-possessed poisonous snake.

It triggered the Blood-weeping Syndrome in his veins to flare up, fortunately, a high monk happened by to detoxify Lin Huan and utilized the Beheading Snake Statue and Swallowing Snake Statue to kill the demon-possessed White Snake.

Although I don't know why I accidentally entered this strange Illusion Realm while fleeing from poisonous bees.

But I knew one thing in my heart!!

Only by getting out of here could I save Dumpling!!

If I waited for the entire Azarhan Sutra to be recited, I would never get out.

That Ah Man was the poisonous snake that burrowed into the ground, and also the White Snake that Big Mouth wanted to devour.

"Wake up!!" In my desperation, I used all my strength to stab the Begonia hairpin into the fearsome yet bodiless gaping maw at my feet.

The crimson light splashed out like red ink, surging towards my face, then spreading further and further.

Suddenly, it was as if heavy shackles had been lifted off me.

I felt relieved, the terrible pain in my abdomen and the cold sensation vanished without a trace, and I was once again surrounded by dense forest.

My body was moving forward, it was Master Zhang Zidao holding my hand, stepping along.

I touched my belly, Little Dumpling was sleeping quietly.

The fetal heartbeat and breathing were both very stable, everything just now was like a dream I'd had in the blink of an eye.

From the scenery passing by, it seemed we had just left the national road and entered the forest.

Could even my encounter with horseshoe crabs have been an illusion?

Zhang Zidao did not kill anyone, nor was he backfired upon.

And there were no horseshoe crabs emerging from the brains of people he had killed.

Could it be that I've been following Zhang Zidao all this way, felt too relaxed without expending much energy, and thus fell asleep??

And then had a strange dream??

No, it can't be that simple!!

Everything was progressing too smoothly, Ten Thousand Poison Hall had laid a trap to catch me in order to stop me from getting to Tianying Village.

"Master, don't go any further," I quickly grabbed Zhang Zidao's hand that was gripping my wrist, and preemptively unhooked the Bronze Sword from his waist, "There's an ambush ahead."

"So there's an ambush, so what? Why are you taking my sword, are you in cahoots with them?" Zhang Zidao stopped walking, his face humorous, looking at me as if I had a short circuit in my brain.

His words had just fallen when countless torches began to move around us.

This scene overlaid directly with the one in the illusion, occurring again in exactly the same way.

I was chilled to the bone, covered in a cold sweat.

Zhang Zidao extended his hand towards me, "You little clever ghost, truly smart. There really is an ambush, give the sword to your master, the Old Taoist Priest will give them a lesson."

Chapter 660: Dead Loop

"Master, you're not planning to reprimand them, are you actually planning to kill them all? Aren't you?" I gripped the sheath of the Bronze Sword tightly, biting my lip, refusing to hand over the Bronze Sword.

Zhang Zidao's face flashed with a hint of surprise, his eyebrows furrowing, "You seem to have guessed your master's thoughts quite accurately."

If I were to hand over the sword to Zhang Zidao, wouldn't I fall back into the same scenarios that just occurred?

Being chased by countless horseshoe crabs, then falling into those strange black pits again.

Trapped in an endless cycle!!

I've considered changing directions when escaping, but intuition tells me.

Unless I find a way to change the situation, no matter which direction I run, I'll end up falling into the black pits.

If I enter again, I might never come out.

A surge of tidal-cold dread swept over me, as I saw something even darker than the night flying towards us.

"Poisonous Wasps are coming! Master, use fire to burn them," I shouted harshly, reminding Zhang Zidao.

Zhang Zidao cocked his head, pulled out two fire charms, and threw them at the dense swarm of wasps, "Disciple, you recognize this thing, huh? This is the secret of the Ten Thousand Poison Hall that is not passed on lightly."

"Because I'm such a jinx, I've seen Poisonous Wasps harm someone before," I watched as the wasps were burnt to death, their bodies turning into charred corpses that fell to the ground, covering my nose and mouth, "The smell of burning is so strange, could these venomous wasps cause hallucinations?"

"Don't know, but the burnt smell is indeed quite strange," Zhang Zidao, watching a man in a black robe step out of the jungle, also covered his nose and mouth, "Even if it can cause hallucinations, it won't affect me since I've attained Physical Sanctification. My obedient disciple, if you don't return the sword to me soon, we both are going to be hacked to death by the chaos of blades."

"I'll handle this, they're just a few minions, no need for Master to make a move."

I dared not let Zhang Zidao take action, so I reached into my pocket for the Matchbox, "Xiao Honghong, maybe you haven't fully recovered yet, but... can you... help me?"

Given Xiao Honghong's injuries, she definitely wouldn't come around in less than half a year.

But with the Wind-Setting Pearl that Granny Long had given me, there was a glimmer of hope that Xiao Honghong could be woken up early; let's treat a dead horse as if it's alive.

One second, two seconds, three seconds...

A full ten seconds had passed. It was short,

but unable to compete with the ever-changing situation before me, where the man in the robe wielding a Miao Knife was already upon us.

"Woman, have you... missed me? It must have been tough without me around, huh?" A proudly nonchalant voice came just as the Matchbox popped open.

All I could see was a flash of red light, and nothing else, "Take control of all of them, leave survivors, and let none die."

"Can't kill, what a pity, when will you satisfy me, so I can... indulge in a massacre..."

As the wicked words of Xiao Honghong fell, a Miao Knife chopped down less than a centimeter from my face.

But the person holding the Miao Knife suddenly had a little centipede burrow into his brow.

His facial muscles instantly stiffened, and deep red bloodlines crawled all over his face.

Then, in an instant, all the others too.

Were immobilized by the offspring gu that Xiao Honghong had split off into their brows.

I exhaled a breath, my fingers slowly pushing away the sharp Miao Knife that was almost touching my face, "I'm glad you showed up just in time, otherwise... I would really be cooling under the moonlight, my Xiao Honghong."

With a clink, the Miao Knife fell to the ground.

"Woman, let me be your Life-bound Gu."

A streak of red light flashed before my eyes, and Xiao Honghong plunged headfirst onto my face, all its centipede legs striving to embrace me tightly.