

Immortality: My cultivation Has No Bottleneck

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Chapter 31: When Should One "Die"?

Jinzhou City.

By this time, it has been eight years since the Lifeless Sect's rebellion, and the people in the city seem to have forgotten that terrible uprising.

After the County Government Office cracked down on the rebellion, the people received compensation from the Office, and those who had participated in the rebellion were pardoned.

The County Master even apologized deeply to the people, handing out compensation one by one, and the people continuously praised the Green Sky Lord for his kindness.

It seemed as if everything had been instigated by the No-Life Evil Cult, which was the main cause of the misery in Jinzhou City.

Fortunately, the County Government Office officials were discerning and purged the No-Life Evil Cult, giving the people a peaceful world.

On the night the rebellion was suppressed, the heads of Yang Laifa and other core members of the Lifeless Sect were hung high at the entrance of the market.

"Death to the rebellious evil cult!"

Thus, the biggest crisis in Jinzhou City in recent decades came to an end, and none of the common people knew that the situation in Jinzhou City had fundamentally changed since then.

Although the Liang and Wu families still seemed to be in a high position, they were actually helpless, and without the deterrence of the ancestor, they had become servants of the government office.

The generous compensation promised by the County Government Office to the common people was actually borne by their two families, with Xia Zhiqiu merely giving orders, while they had to bite the bullet and drain their family assets.

Since then, Liang Ping, the former Patriarch of the Liang family who had followed the ancestor in closed-door cultivation to breakthrough to the Post-Natal “Ninth” Level, began to handle official duties at the government office and had no free time.

Liang and Wu families knew that this was actually a temporary solution, but what could they do when the executioner’s knife was in Xia Zhiqiu’s hands?

After all, it was better to linger on than to be exterminated, and the only one to blame was their own insatiable greed, which was seduced by Xia Zhiqiu.

If the Gao family was still there, it wouldn’t have come to this. After all, they were a family with two Post-Natal “Ninth” Level masters, and even Xia Zhiqiu wouldn’t dare to mess with them.

When they wiped out the Gao family, it was not only the ancestors of the Liang and Wu families who took action, Xia Zhiqiu also participated, killing the two Post-Natal “Ninth” Level masters of the Gao family.

It was precisely because of this that the ancestors of the Liang and Wu families chose to cooperate with the County Government Office in the face of the rebellion of the Lifeless Sect, full of confidence.

After all, if a mighty family like the Gao family with two Post-Natal “Ninth” Level masters could be destroyed, how could a mere branch of the Lifeless Sect cause any major turmoil?

As it turned out, the Liang and Wu families also declined from this point on, and both their ancestors perished, becoming servants of the County Government Office.

However, all this had nothing to do with Liang Sheng, whose life has become more leisurely than before, probably because Sheriff Zheng sees him as an old friend.

The Liang family had fallen, and because of Zheng Wanchun’s influence, their attitudes towards Liang Sheng also changed, but luckily, Liang Sheng still treated people as warmly as before, with no changes to his behavior.

Sometimes, Liang Sheng couldn’t help but mock himself, wondering if this was considered riding on someone else’s coattails, as having Zheng Wanchun around made his “later years” much smoother than he had imagined.

Now, looking at the energetic Zheng Wanchun, who would think that he had already passed the age of sixty, while Liang Sheng, only 55 years old, already appeared to be in the twilight of his life.

“Sheriff Zheng, I truly envy you martial artists who achieve success and have a long lifespan. Unlike me, who is like a decayed piece of wood, I don’t even know if I can make it past the age of sixty.”

Over the past few years, Zheng Wanchun had often visited Shengde Building, and perhaps because Liang Sheng was a “waste,” their interaction had become less utilitarian.

As Liang Sheng watched himself grow older step by step, he couldn’t help but feel a sense of melancholy.

After all, they had been friends for decades, so how could there be no feelings between them? However, he wasn’t coy, “Brother Sheng, who said that achieving martial arts success means having a long life?”

Zheng Wanchun still used his old address for Liang Sheng, who was taken aback, as the words he had just spoken were not meant to flatter Zheng Wanchun.

After all, those who reach the Post-Natal “Ninth” Level had a lifespan of up to 120 years, which was recorded by the Liang and Wu families. Seeing Liang Sheng so confused, Zheng Wanchun could easily figure out what he was thinking.

“It seems you really don’t know that breaking through the Post-Natal realm in martial arts does not increase one’s lifespan. It simply allows you to maintain a decent appearance before you die a natural death.”

As for why the lifespan of a top-level martial artist in the postnatal ninth realm can reach 120 years, it’s because they have no hope of breaking through, and they practice the Health Cultivation Method afterwards.

However, before reaching the end of their lifespan and losing hope for the future, who would be willing to practice such a useless Health Cultivation Method?

The path of martial arts is extremely difficult, it’s just that your martial arts talent, Brother Sheng, is really...”

Zheng Wanchun didn’t finish his sentence, but Liang Sheng naturally understood the implicit meaning. In the past, he had collected health cultivation techniques, but now he still looked like this, which could only mean his talent was extremely mediocre. He couldn’t even master the health cultivation methods, otherwise, why would he be in this situation?

Zheng Wanchun’s words also cleared up Liang Sheng’s confusion since his lifespan hadn’t increased when he broke through the postnatal eighth level. So that was the reason.

At this time, Zheng Wanchun seemed to be in the mood for talking, partly because Liang Sheng was his close friend, and partly because Liang Sheng seemed to have little time left, so there wasn't much need for restraint in his words.

"However, if one can break through to the innate realm, achieve the status of a martial arts grandmaster, their lifespan can break through the limit of 120 years, even more. In addition to practicing health cultivation techniques, they can live at least 150 years.

It's because of the existence of innate realm protectors that the Dayan Dynasty has been able to endure to this day and remain prosperous. If it wasn't for the slippery No-Life Evil Cult, they would have been destroyed long ago."

Innate!

Liang Sheng narrowed his eyes when he heard this; this was the first time he had heard specific information about martial arts innate realm from someone other than in a storybook collection.

He laughed at this moment, "Then I wish Sheriff Zheng good luck in reaching the innate realm. If that really happens, you have to come to my grave to tell me, so I can brag in the underworld."

Hearing Liang Sheng's amusing words, Zheng Wanchun laughed out loud first, but then shook his head, "I have no hope for the innate realm. I'm not yet sixty years old, and I haven't reached the postnatal ninth level. There's no hope for the innate realm!

On the contrary, the Liang Family Master has hope for breaking through to the innate realm. I didn't expect that despite his busy official duties, he could still break through the postnatal eighth level. He truly deserves to be a martial arts prodigy."

Zheng Wanchun was talking about Liang Ying, who broke through the postnatal eighth level at the age of forty. If it weren't for Xia Zhiqiu pointing it out, no one might have noticed.

Therefore, Liang Ying's talent makes breaking through the postnatal ninth level before the age of sixty not entirely impossible.

Zheng Wanchun and Liang Sheng chatted and laughed for a while, then said goodbye and left. However, there was some uncertainty in Liang Sheng's eyes.

Just now, Zheng Wanchun's words seemed to praise Liang Ying highly, but the county government office probably already considered him a major hidden threat.

With Xia Zhiqiu's character, Liang Ying's attempt to break through to the postnatal ninth level might lead to his downfall. But what does all this have to do with Liang Sheng?

In a few years, he would find an opportunity to “die of natural causes” and be free from the constraints of Jinzhou City. What did Jinzhou City have to do with him?

In recent years, Liang Sheng has become increasingly wary of Xia Zhiqiu. With his intelligence and cultivation, how could he be content with just being the Jinzhou City County Master?

However, he has stayed in Jinzhou City all these years, and the reason must be extraordinary. Liang Sheng didn’t dare to investigate it carefully.

“Master.”

Just as Liang Sheng got up and left Shengde Building, a clever young man appeared in front of him, looking somewhat similar to Ma San.

Ma San had passed away a few years ago, and Liang Sheng, in memory of his many years of loyalty, took Ma San’s son Ma Xiaoliu under his wing.

“Xiaoliu, let’s go home.”

“Yes.”

The horse carriage moved leisurely towards Liang Sheng’s mansion. In recent years, Liang Sheng had gradually reduced his visits to Yichun Building, fearing that he would draw attention from others.

Of course, it was also possible that no one would pay attention to him, as he was just a wastrel. Nonetheless, being cautious wouldn’t do any harm.

However, he should start thinking about when the time to “die” should come..

Chapter 32: Old Friends Reunite

Considering how one should die might be a fools’ idea to others, but for Liang Sheng, it was indeed a real problem.

After all, his lifespan was extremely long, and even an Innate Grandmaster of Martial Arts merely had 150 years. His lifespan, on the other hand, was many times that.

In the past eight years, although Liang Sheng had not made any breakthroughs in his realm, his Health Cultivation Method had finally broken through to the twelfth layer.

Name: Liang Sheng

Age: 55

Talent: Innocent Foolishness (Top grade)

Techniques: Golden Dragon Technique (Eighth Layer), Ten Methods of Health Cultivation (Twelfth Layer), Unmoving Ming King Seal (Third Layer)

Realm: Martial Artist Postnatal Eighth Layer (33%)

Each breakthrough in the Health Cultivation Method granted him an additional sixty years to his lifespan, adding up to a total of 600 years. So by now, his lifespan had already exceeded that of a king in a thousand years.

If he remained careful and prudent, he could live up to 1,400 years, and genuinely be considered an antique.

However, at his “advanced age” of fifty-five, it was time for him to think about his own future. He couldn’t wait longer than seventy years at the latest.

After all, even his Second Uncle Liang Qiang only lived until sixty-seven. He was indulgent in wine and lust, and if he lived too long, there might be some trouble.

So it was better for him to die earlier. In this way, nobody would care about him anymore. Whether his feigned death would be discovered by others was not even a concern for him.

Among the Health Cultivation Methods he practiced, one was called the Turtle Breath Technique, which was best at controlling breath and internal energy in order to prolong life.

With his current unprecedented twelfth layer of the Turtle Breath Technique, feigning death and stopping his breath and internal energy for a few days was easier than ever.

So he was just troubled by when he should choose to die, and there were no other difficulties. And according to his estimation, if there were no accidents, he would need more than ten years to make a breakthrough to the Postnatal Nine-Realm.

Anyway, even if he could make a breakthrough to the Postnatal Nine-Realm, by then he would have exceeded the age at which he had estimated he should fake his death. This was why he hesitated about when to die.

Liang Sheng was quietly calculating in his heart, while the horse carriage he was riding gradually entered the Liang Family Main Mansion area. From time to time, some of the Liang Family’s younger generation saw his carriage and actively gave way to let him pass first.

Ma Xiaoliu had long been used to this situation. If his father, Ma San, were still alive, he would probably be shocked by it.

After all, when had their young master ever held such a position in the Liang Family?

Times had changed, the Liang Family was no longer the tycoon of Jinzhou as it once was. Liang Sheng had a relationship with Zheng Wanchun, so even if the Liang Family's younger generation didn't respect him, they didn't dare to say a word at this time.

After returning home, Liang Sheng drank a bowl of porridge with some pickles and stopped eating. He went back to his room, as the older one gets, the worse their appetite becomes.

Then, as usual, he began practicing the Zhou Tian cultivation technique. He didn't know when the Unmoving Ming King Seal Technique would break through to the fourth layer.

If that happened, the time it would take for him to break through to the Postnatal Nine-Realm would be greatly reduced. However, he didn't think too much about it and let nature take its course, gradually entering deep meditation during his cultivation.

There was nothing to say about the following night.

Early the next day, Liang Sheng set out for the Shengde Building. As an "elder," he required less sleep, unlike young people who never seemed to get enough.

However, just as he stepped into the Shengde Building, a surprised voice suddenly rang out from behind him, "Brother Sheng!"

Upon hearing this, Liang Sheng was slightly startled. He turned around and looked outside the tavern, only to see a young man supporting an old man with white hair and beard, looking at him with surprise in their eyes.

Just by giving it a little thought, Liang Sheng matched the other party with someone from his memory, and a flash of surprise passed through his eyes. "Brother Rong! When did you return to Jinzhou?"

It turned out that the person who arrived was none other than Zhang Rongjun, who had left home to take over the family business many years ago. Unexpectedly, after so many years, they could still meet again.

At this moment, Zhang Rongjun pushed away the young man who was helping him, quickened his pace, and walked to Liang Sheng with excitement.

"Sheng, it's been a long time. You look even older than me. You were no match for me when we were young," he said.

After saying that, he seemed to remember something and quickly turned to the young man next to him and said, "You little brat, hurry up and pay your respects to your Uncle Liang!"

Then, he introduced the young man to Liang Sheng, "This is my useless son, Yuntai. From now on, I will retire in Jinzhou City, and the family business will be handed over to him."

Zhang Yuntai solemnly saluted Liang Sheng at this moment, his bow almost reaching 90 degrees. Liang Sheng took a look and couldn't help but joke, "Brother Rong, your son is much more handsome than you."

"Of course, how could my seed be bad?"

At this point, the two men had calmed down a bit. Liang Sheng took Zhang Rongjun and his son to sit down in a private room, as there were not many people he could talk to like this after so many years.

Zhang Yuntai carefully accompanied them on the side, feeling very unfamiliar with everything after returning to Jinzhou City with his father.

After all, Zhang Rongjun had been traveling for business outside for many years, getting married and having children all in other places, and never had the time to come back.

Now that Zhang Rongjun had returned to his hometown, Zhang Yuntai was able to visit the Zhang Family's ancestral home for the first time, but it was still somewhat dilapidated despite having servants to take care of it.

This situation made Zhang Rongjun somewhat sentimental, but today he was full of excitement, which was also the first time Zhang Yuntai had seen his father so emotional.

At this moment, Zhang Rongjun seemed to return to his youth, and even began to talk about their past embarrassing moments, such as when he was in Yichun Building, got drunk, and fell into the pool, looking utterly awkward.

Liang Sheng and Zhang Rongjun became more and more excited as they talked, and then burst into laughter. When the laughter stopped, Zhang Rongjun looked at the aged Liang Sheng and couldn't help feeling a bit sentimental.

"Sheng, how did you become so old-looking? Weren't you always practicing the Lifespan Cultivation Technique?"

Liang Sheng didn't care, "Stay calm. We're all old now. My old servant Ma San has been dead for six years. We need to be content with what we have."

Life and death is a topic no one can avoid. Zhang Rongjun nodded, "That's true; life is short. Why did I struggle so hard initially?"

Sheng, I don't plan to leave this time, and I don't want Yun Tai to travel for business anymore. It's too bitter and rootless. What's the use of earning so much money? It's better to be contented and happy, so this time I plan to take over a teahouse, and Yun Tai can make a living from it in the future."

Upon hearing this, Liang Sheng agreed, "That's a good thing. After all, you can now live a stable life in Jinzhou City and won't starve to death."

"Of course not, after all, this is your nephew. I just need you to take care of this young man more in the future."

With that, Zhang Rongjun kicked Zhang Yuntai, who quickly followed suit without any hesitation, kowtowing to Liang Sheng once more.

At first, Liang Sheng was surprised, but then pretended not to care and didn't avoid it, "Get up, my nephew. Your father and I are old friends, so it's no wonder he's been so cooperative today."

When your teahouse opens, I will bring all the regular customers from the tavern to support your business, and you will establish yourself in Jinzhou City."

"Aren't you going to toast to thank your Uncle Liang?"

Although Liang Sheng was considered a waste in the Liang Family, he was still a member of the family. Zhang Rongjun only wanted to peacefully run his business, and with Liang Sheng's help, there would be a lot less trouble.

Liang Sheng naturally understood Zhang Rongjun's intentions but didn't care. This was human nature, and all he had to do was help.

Just then, there was a knock on the door of the private room, and Zhang

Rongjun's servant rushed in, "Boss, there's trouble at the teahouse."

"What?"

Chapter 33: Burning Incense and Worshiping Buddha

Shengde Building.

Zhang Rongjun and his father hastily said their goodbyes. Zhang Rongjun glanced at Liang Sheng and saw that he had no intention of following them, so he left directly.

So many years have passed, and Liang Sheng hasn't changed a bit.

The reason Liang Sheng hasn't followed is simple enough: if the other party can't solve the problem, they will naturally come looking for him.

As for whether he would help or not, that would depend on the situation. Liang Sheng has always been clear-headed these years. He could talk about emotions but not let himself fall into danger.

Later, Liang Sheng returned to the private room, fetched a pot of wine, and asked the kitchen to cook a few more dishes. Then he drank alone.

Just then, the manager Old Duan hurriedly arrived, "Boss, the Liang Family has requested that we prepare some vegetarian food. The Patriarch plans to go to Jinshan Temple to worship and pray for blessings."

"Huh? Why go to worship again? Didn't he go there half a month ago? Forget it, do as the family instructs."

"Yes, Boss, we'll go prepare now."

Once Old Duan left, Liang Sheng's eyes flashed with a sharp light. Ever since two months ago, Liang Ying has been frequently visiting Jinshan Temple to offer incense.

He didn't think much about it the first time since the Liang Family had many businesses, and occasionally burning incense and praying to Buddha was nothing unusual. Nothing to be surprised about.

But this is already the second time this month that Liang Ying has gone to Jinshan Temple to burn incense and pray. Such frequency is somewhat abnormal.

Although Liang Ying has become a puppet of the County Government Office, he is still an official of the County Government on the surface. How could he be so free to visit Jinshan Temple frequently?

Moreover, Liang Sheng has lived in Jinshan Temple for a while in the past and knows some details about the temple, not to mention their connection with the No-Life Evil Cult in Jinzhou City eight years ago.

Jinshan Temple is full of skilled masters. The more so, the more Liang Sheng respects and keeps his distance from them. He is also somewhat relieved that when he took refuge at Jinshan Temple years ago, he didn't have too much entanglement with the temple.

But now Liang Ying is actively approaching Jinshan Temple, and there must be some schemes behind it. Thinking about it, Liang Sheng can't help but feel uneasy in his heart.

He just hopes that Liang Ying won't make any big commotion, or else he may have to find a coffin for himself and then fake his death to escape.

After all, in Liang Sheng's view, Jinshan Temple is much more terrifying than the No-Life Evil Cult and Yang Laifa before.

Just as Liang Sheng had made up his mind to avoid provoking trouble, he saw Zheng Wanchun actually accompanying Liang Ying walking past the Shengde Building, heading towards Jinshan Temple together. This made him somewhat puzzled.

He didn't expect that Liang Ying would be acting together with Zheng Wanchun, which meant that the outcome might be different from what he had thought.

However, in the next moment, Liang Sheng put away all his curiosity. Too much curiosity could be dangerous.

...

Jinshan Temple.

At this moment, Master Xuan Nan, the chief of the Reception Hall, was standing at the entrance of the temple, gazing at the mountain road halfway up the mountain gate, as if waiting for someone.

It wasn't long before a group of people appeared before his eyes. The leaders were Liang Ying and Zheng Wanchun. Seeing this, Xuan Nan couldn't help but feel a chill in his heart.

However, he still went up to greet them immediately, his hands clasped together, "Amitabha, how have you been lately, Liang Jushi? I don't know who this other Jushi is?"

Feigning ignorance of Zheng Wanchun, Liang Ying introduced him with a smile, "This is my friend, surnamed Zheng, who has come to accompany me in offering incense today."

"So, it's Zheng Jushi."

Master Xuan Nan chanted a Buddhist mantra with a smile and then led the way. Liang Ying signaled the Liang Family's servant to carry the vegetarian food, offerings, and incense money behind them.

Soon, they arrived at the Daxiong Treasure Hall, and the Liang Family's servant quickly placed the vegetarian food and offerings on the altar, then threw the incense money into the merit incense burner.

Then, Liang Ying knelt on the cushion, closing his eyes in silent prayer, while Xuan Nan read the Buddhist scriptures beside her. The smoke from the incense in front of the Buddha statue swirled, accompanied by the chanting, making people feel inexplicably calm.

Although Xuan Nan had been reciting the scriptures, he was watching Zheng Wanchun out of the corner of his eye, as her behavior was a bit strange at this moment.

After praying to the Buddha, Zheng Wanchun seemed to be casually looking at the murals in the room, but he was actually staring intently at the little novice monk next to him.

Wondering what he intended to do, Xuan Nan, who was already feeling guilty, could not help but become even more cautious, especially since Jinshan Temple had its secrets and he was most afraid of people like Zheng Wanchun coming.

However, under normal circumstances, there should be no major problems, as the general monks in Jinshan Temple did not know the internal situation.

At this time, Zheng Wanchun finally stopped looking at the little novice monk beside him. His face was a bit ugly, and disappointment was evident in his eyes, but it was still noticed by Xuan Nan.

What was going on?

Just then, a sramanera bhikkhu monk entered with his hands clasped, "Chief, the vegetarian meal in the dining hall is ready, Brother Hongshan asked when the guests will have their meal?"

Upon hearing this, Zheng Wanchun's eyes lit up, "Little Master, I wonder if all the monks in the temple will be having vegetarian meals in the dining hall?"

The bhikkhu monk hesitated, but seeing that Xuan Nan did not stop him from answering, he nodded.

"Yes, benefactor, every once in a while, some monks in the temple share a vegetarian meal together."

"We'd like to try the temple's vegetarian meals now. I've heard from Lord Liang that the taste is unique."

At this moment, Xuan Nan glanced at Liang Ying, who was just getting up from the cushion. He smiled and said, "Then let me, an old monk, lead the way. Both of you laymen, please follow me!"

After they arrived at the dining hall, Zheng Wanchun sat down and quickly finished the vegetarian meal in his bowl, praising it for its deliciousness. He then said that he wanted to take a walk outside to digest the food.

Zheng Wanchun left without waiting for Xuan Nan's response, pacing back and forth in the courtyard outside the dining hall as if he was indeed digesting his meal.

However, Xuan Nan had been watching him from the corner of his eye and noticed his unusual behavior. Every time a novice monk or bhikkhu monk left the dining hall after their meal, Zheng Wanchun instantly became attentive and observed the monks.

Hmm? Was he looking for someone?

Xuan Nan found this a bit strange, but he couldn't help feeling relieved, as there should be no major problems with these little novice monks.

At this time, Liang Ying occasionally conversed with Xuan Nan. Xuan Nan had already let his guard down and actually enjoyed talking with Liang Ying for a short while.

As they continued to chat, Xuan Nan eventually brought up the topic of Liang Sheng, as he had left a deep impression on Xuan Nan years ago.

"Huh? So Brother Sheng had copied Buddhist scriptures in the temple for peace of mind. Unfortunately, I didn't know; otherwise, I would've come earlier."

Xuan Nan smiled and didn't say anything, but Liang Ying's next words caught him off guard.

"In that case, Master Xuan Nan, may I stay in the temple for some time? I've been having trouble sleeping recently."

Xuan Nan hesitated before regaining his composure, "Liang Jushi is the secretary of the County Government Office, and his public duties are heavy. The county office can hardly do without Liang Jushi."

At this moment, Zheng Wanchun entered and immediately spoke, "There is nothing important in the County Government Office recently; there shouldn't be any major problems. Besides, the County Lord is very considerate of his subordinates, so it's good for him to let Lord Liang rest."

Hearing this, Xuan Nan couldn't refuse. He immediately asked a novice monk to prepare a guest room, and personally took Liang Ying to the room to rest.

As for Zheng Wanchun, he gave Liang Ying a deep look before excusing himself and leading Liang Family's servants down the mountain.

Only after Zheng Wanchun had disappeared completely from sight did Xuan Nan leave and go straight to meet Abbot Xuankong.

Today's events were highly suspicious.

Chapter 34: Will There be a Day When I Can Rely on My Own Mountain?

J inzhou City.

After the Liang Family's servants returned, they returned the vegetarian meal utensils to Shengde Building, and the content of their casual chat was heard clearly by Liang Sheng.

Hmm?

On this trip, Zheng Wanchun went down the mountain alone, but Liang Ying stayed behind at Jinshan Temple, involving himself and even claiming that he wanted to transcribe Buddhist scriptures for peace of mind?

Who would believe such words? Is he trying to deceive a ghost?

The people of Jinshan Temple must be full of suspicions by now, and the strange attitude of the County Government Office towards Jinshan Temple made Liang Sheng feel a bit uncertain.

Will there be another major incident?

Is it because his fate does not match with Jinzhou City that he has encountered so many major events in the short time since his arrival?

What's infuriating is that every time he tries to stay away, someone still wants to mess with him, an honest person. It's infuriating to think about it!

Thinking of this, Liang Sheng became increasingly depressed and wanted to go to Yichun Building to listen to music at the brothels to dispel his melancholy. Still, he turned back home as soon as he stepped outside the door.

He is now an "old immortal," and there is no point in going to Yichun Building.

County Government Office.

After returning to the County Government Office, Zheng Wanchun went straight to the Inner Hall to find Xia Zhiqiu and report the results of his trip to Jinshan Temple.

“County Lord, today my subordinate briefly inspected the novice monks and Bhikkhu monks in the temple, but did not find anyone who might be that person.

However, Liang Ying has already found an excuse to stay at Jinshan Temple for a long time. Shall we send someone to take care of his daily life?”

After hearing Zheng Wanchun’s account, Xia Zhiqiu shook his hand and said, “No need, Liang Ying is a smart man; he knows what he should do.

Unless he thinks that he already has the ability to escape my control, he might have ulterior motives. There is no need to worry about this now.”

However, at this time, Xia Zhiqiu could tell that there was something wrong with Zheng Wanchun’s expression, which seemed a bit strange, “What, do you have any other questions?”

Zheng Wanchun nodded directly, “County Lord, I didn’t notice it before, but during this visit to Jinshan Temple, I found that they are not simple.

Though Master Xuan Nan tried his best to hide it, he couldn’t conceal it from my perception; he is already a high-level martial artist at the Post-Natal “Eighth” Level.”

“Oh?”

“Such a master has never been heard of in Jinzhou City. I’m afraid there might be some issues here. Moreover, since there might be someone related to that person who has taken refuge in Jinshan Temple, I’m afraid something unexpected might happen.”

When Xia Zhiqiu heard this, he finally became serious, as it was related to that person, “Indeed, we should look into this carefully. I heard that there are several Xuan Generation high monks in Jinshan Temple.

Wanchun, find an opportunity to go to Jinshan Temple and test the other Xuan Generation high monks to see if they are high-level martial arts masters as well.”

“Yes, sir.”

When Zheng Wanchun obeyed the order and left, Xia Zhiqiu laid out a sheet of paper on the desk, dipped his brush in ink and wrote down the character for ‘stillness’. After that, he finally let out a long breath.

In the end, he was still restless.

Originally, after dealing with the Gao Family, Xia Zhiqiu could have already left Jinzhou City. His performance was already an impeccable report card.

However, Xia Zhiqiu ended up staying in Jinzhou City again for more than twenty years, which was actually a last resort.

Since he was destined to stay in Jinzhou City for many years, Xia Zhiqiu was no longer satisfied with the balance of power between the three forces within Jinzhou City.

His original plan was to gradually weaken both the Liang and Wu Families. However, the unexpected involvement of the No-Life Evil Cult turned into a chess piece in his hand in the middle of the game.

Xia Zhiqiu's move could be described as turning his hand for clouds and covering his hand for rain, making people marvel at the wisdom of Lord Xia.

But now, there is finally a clue about leaving Jinzhou City, as they have finally found a lead on that person. As long as they find that person, they can return to the capital and report to the nobleman.

At that time, he will truly have achieved fame and status, and there will be a place for him in the capital. With the support of the nobleman, it is not impossible for him to step into the realm of innate talent.”

At this thought, Xia Zhiqiu's eyes became scorching hot. No matter if Jinshan Temple was hiding dragons and crouching tigers, as long as the news was confirmed, he would have only one path to choose.

Jinshan Temple would either bow down to him, or leave behind a legend of its existence. Xia Zhiqiu wouldn't have the thought that there were people he could not kill.

Thinking of this, Xia Zhiqiu took a deep breath and glanced outside the window. The setting sun cast a golden hue upon Jinzhou City, living up to its name, sparkling with golden light.

Yet, this place was not his ultimate destination. Dayan Capital was where a real man could achieve great ambitions. How could he be content with playing in the shallow waters of Jinzhou City?

It was getting close. He finally saw the hope of leaving this place.

Liang Sheng's Mansion.

At dusk, Zhang Rongjun and his son suddenly appeared with generous gifts to visit Liang Sheng, who naturally welcomed them with open doors.

However, Liang Sheng wondered if they were really in big trouble and depending on the situation, he would decide how to handle it.

If the trouble was too great, he might be unable to help and could only apologize. He could not compromise his own principles for Zhang Rongjun.

It was best to stay out of trouble and stay alive – that was the ultimate truth in life.

But after Zhang Rongjun and his son sat down and continuously thanked him, Liang Sheng felt confused.

He didn't know what had happened and why they suddenly thanked him.

However, after listening to Zhang Rongjun's description, Liang Sheng could only smile bitterly. He never expected that the lifelong "useless" person he had been would one day become someone's support.

The matter was quite simple. Zhang Rongjun had been in business for many years and chose the teahouse location with great vision. It was bound to be a lucrative business due to its prime location.

However, such a good place would naturally attract attention. As soon as the news of the teahouse being up for sale spread, people in Jinzhou City had their eyes set on it.

Being cautious, the other party investigated Zhang Rongjun's background and discovered that they were ordinary merchants who had returned to Jinzhou to enjoy their remaining years. This detail encouraged the other party to try to force the sale of the teahouse from Zhang Rongjun.

Therefore, today's situation arose with the Zhang Family's steward hurriedly calling Zhang Rongjun back to take control of the situation. From the very beginning, the other party had been aggressive.

Zhang Rongjun and his son were infuriated, but they had been wandering outside Jinzhou City for many years. Faced with this unreasonable situation, Zhang Rongjun decided to swallow his anger and was willing to pay some money to resolve the issue.

However, the other party was relentless, insisting on having the teahouse which Zhang Rongjun could not accept.

Zhang's family had decided to permanently settle in Jinzhou and the teahouse was to be the foundation of their future. How could they just give it up?

The other party sneered and outright refused to reason, while a group of local ruffians appeared behind them.

Upon seeing this, Zhang Rongjun and his son instantly turned pale. The other party had come prepared, and never intended to reason with them.

At this moment, two constables happened to pass by. Zhang Rongjun and his son regarded them as their last straw, but they were even more devastated when the constables ignored them and went straight past.

Seeing this, how could Zhang Rongjun not understand the situation? Heartbroken, he couldn't help but sigh to the heavens.

"Heaven is not on our side! It seems we have no hope of settling in Jinzhou!"

The man on the other side sneered at this, and Zhang Rongjun, disheartened, turned to the manager and said, "Old Zhang, prepare some generous gifts. Tomorrow, we will bid farewell to Brother Sheng and give up on our previous hopes of enjoying our remaining years with him."

At this moment, the two constables who had been ready to leave and were nearby heard Zhang Rongjun's words and suddenly stopped.

Brother Sheng?

Driven by an inexplicable force, one of the constables turned back and asked, "Are you talking about Liang Jiasheng from Shengde Building?"

Zhang Rongjun was stunned but then nodded repeatedly, "Yes, the two constables, Liang Jiasheng and I are old friends. We just had a reunion at Shengde Building earlier."

As soon as his words fell, the two constables suddenly smiled and turned back.

Zhang Rongjun was both surprised and thankful.

Could there still be a chance for a turnaround?

Chapter 35: Cause and Effect

Jinzhou City, in front of the teahouse.

Two constables suddenly turned back and walked directly to the arrogant merchant they'd interacted with earlier, "Niu Ben, were you trying to forcefully seize someone else's teahouse just now?"

Niu Ben's expression changed instantly, well aware that something had gone amiss. He hastily replied in a low voice, "Official, I had notified Sheriff Zhao from the County Government Office beforehand. I didn't resort to illicit means. I was merely repossessing what was originally..."

But before Niu Ben could finish speaking, one of the constables drew his knife and used the blunt end to hit Niu Ben's hand.

"I caution you to be careful with your words. Master Liang Jiasheng is a close friend of Sheriff Zheng. Would a friend of Master Jiasheng forcibly seize someone else's property?"

Upon hearing Zheng Wanchun's name from the constable, Niu Ben's face turned pale instantly.

Zheng Wanchun?

He was an untouchable figure!

Niu Ben was quite influential in Jinzhou City and was well aware of who the real power brokers were. The Liang and Wu Families might still hold considerable sway, but they were essentially servants of the government office.

This was why he had been so deferential and respectful to the two constables, careful not to offend them in the least, and even more so to the Chief Constable of the County Government Office, Zheng Wanchun.

Immediately, they bowed and apologized to Zhang Rongjun and his son, offering several silver notes, then quickly turned and left without a word, not daring to linger.

Zhang Rongjun didn't have the audacity to accept the silver notes. Just as he was about to chase after them, the two constables stopped him and gave Zhang Rongjun and his son a meaningful glance.

"Both of you can rest assured. Jinzhou City is a place of complete social order. No illegal activities will occur here.

When your business opens, we brothers will definitely come for a cup of tea.

We have patrol duties to attend to, so we'll take our leave now."

With that, they prepared to leave but Zhang Rongjun reacted and quickly followed them, offering the silver notes again, but the two constables adamantly refused to accept them.

Zhang Rongjun had no choice but to express his gratitude, "May I know your honorable names? Underlying gratitude will surely be shown in the future."

The two constables responded with radiant smiles at his words. This was exactly the acknowledgement they had been waiting for.

"Wang Chao."

"Ma Han."

Liang Sheng's Mansion.

Zhang Rongjun looked at Liang Sheng with admiration in his eyes. Liang Sheng couldn't help but find it amusing that his reputation had proven useful.

He could only attribute this to his years of being kind and approachable to others, which had finally paid off.

However, he was genuinely a good person.

Therefore, Liang Sheng didn't refuse Zhang Rongjun's gratitude, nor did he probe deeper into the matter. With a laugh, he said:

"Solving problems is always a good thing. I wish Brother Rong prosperity and will visit the teahouse for a cup of tea when time permits."

"Of course. Today I am indebted to Brother Sheng. Otherwise, my wish to settle back home would have been wishful thinking."

As he spoke, the atmosphere turned sentimental. The desire to return home signified the limited time left, and the many regrets in life.

Liang Sheng didn't want to indulge in sorrow, so he quickly broke the gloomy mood and had the servants prepare food and drinks to enjoy with Zhang Rongjun and his son.

Perhaps due to the day's ups and downs, Zhang Rongjun and his son drank liberally. In no time at all, both were somewhat intoxicated.

"In my life, the best decision I made was to befriend you, Brother Sheng. Everything else is but fleeting clouds on the wind."

"Brother Rong, you've had too much to drink. Someone, bring Brother Rong's servants in to take him home."

Once the inebriated father and son of the Zhang Family were sent away, Liang Sheng returned to his room. His eyes were clear, showing no signs of intoxication.

Today's events felt rather fresh to him, somewhat out of the ordinary, but they also served as a reminder to him—that no matter how discreet he attempted to remain, he was inevitably drawn into the disputes of human relations.

Only if he ceased to “exist”, could he possibly break free from the cause and effect linked to the name, Liang Sheng. With such thoughts in mind, his gaze grew distant.

It seems he still has much to plan for.

Jinshan Temple.

At the same time as Liang Sheng was reflecting upon himself, Liang Ying had settled into a guest room at Jinshan Temple. Perhaps it was due to chanting the Buddhist Scripture, but he genuinely felt like his mind had quietened down.

In the eight consecutive years, he had been treading on thin ice, every day feeling like a year had passed. The closer he got to Xia Zhiqiu, the more fear he felt.

He couldn't comprehend how a person of such stature could simply stay put in Jinzhou City as a mere county magistrate?

Years had passed and in many occasions, he reflected on that year's circumstances, but the conclusion he came to made him wryly smile.

Their ancestor deserved his fate, and it was destined that the Liang and Wu families would face defeat. After all, what is there to do if one becomes a pawn without knowing?

The more truths he realized, the more fear he felt. But being in Jinshan Temple today, he felt as if he was finally free of shackles, allowing him to experience a moment of tranquility.

However, he still had to carry out the task given to him earnestly by Zheng Wanchun. Even though he only knew some basic details, he was still prepared to give his all.

Liang Ying took a moment to ponder on his plans for the next day, confirmed there were no mistakes, before going to bed hoping for a good outcome.

Early the next morning, Liang Ying got up, hearing a faint sound of chanting scriptures, he couldn't help but stretch his arms.

Last night had been the soundest sleep he had in a while.

As if aimlessly wandering around, he left his room, greeted by Sramanera Bhikkhu monks praising him as a layman from time to time.

Before long he heard the distant sounds of people practicing martial arts, stirring his curiosity, he decided to follow the sounds.

Unconsciously he had arrived at the Discipline Hall, but before he could go in to investigate, someone called out to him.

“Excuse me, layman, please stop. This location is a crucial Buddhist site. Outsiders are not permitted to enter. Please understand,” a voice insisted.

Liang Ying, of course, did not force his way in and followed the other person’s wishes. But upon turning his head, he felt that the voice was strangely familiar. Surprised, he uttered lightly, “Brother Qi!?”

The person was none other than Liang Qi. When the Liang and Wu families had their marital alliance, Liang Ying got married to the prime daughter of the Wu family, while Liang Qi was also chosen to marry into the Wu family.

Later on, due to a dalliance with a prostitute, Liang Qi renounced worldly life. After the incident of annihilating the Gao family occurred, Liang Qi was gradually forgotten by the Liang family.

He never anticipated a reunion here, which reminded Liang Ying about Liang Qi, who had sadly lost to him and in turn, lost the chance to become the patriarch.

What delighted Liang Ying was that Liang Qi had made a breakthrough to the Postnatal Sevenfold realm, successfully stepping into the high-level martial arts.

If he could get him to rejoin the Liang Family, it will undoubtedly increase the strength of the family. Thinking of this, he couldn’t help but feel even more delighted.

Yet, the next words out of Liang Qi’s mouth felt equivalent to a bucket of cold water dousing him. The Liang family was the one that had wronged Liang Qi; how could he easily let go of his grudges?

“Layman, there is no Liang Qi in this world anymore, just a faithful monk named Hongzhi, who respectfully greets you. This place is an important part of the Discipline Hall, please do not intrude without permission,” he said.

Upon finishing, Hongzhi walked straight past Liang Ying, directly entering the Discipline Hall without affording Liang Ying a chance to speak.

Liang Ying opened his mouth, but ultimately said nothing. Was this retribution for the Liang family? To have such a master but not be able to make use of him.

Thinking of this, all Liang Ying could do was wryly smile.

They were all unfortunate predestinations!

Chapter 36: Nobleman

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Jinshan Temple.

Liang Ying didn't have to sulk for long, as Zheng Wanchun had returned to the temple and appeared before him again.

"Sheriff Zheng."

Liang Ying greeted him proactively. Zheng Wanchun took a look at him, let out a light sigh, and laughed, "It seems that Lord Liang slept extremely well last night. You look much more spirited than before."

Before Liang Ying could even answer, Zheng Wanchun leaned in and whispered, "Have you found anything after a day here?"

Liang Ying shook his head slightly. Zheng Wanchun didn't seem disappointed, because if they could find people that easily, they wouldn't have spent so much time finding the clues up to this point.

"It doesn't matter; we were always prepared for a long battle. Lord Liang, you don't have to be too anxious. The County Lord still has great trust in you.

However, yesterday we only met the Chief of Reception Xuan Nan and none of the other high monks. It is a bit of a pity.

I wonder if there is any particular monk that Lord Liang wants to meet; today we can visit them and hope to be as refreshed as Lord Liang?"

Just as Liang Ying wanted to shake his head to say that he had no one in mind, he thought of Liang Qi he saw today and nodded his head.

"Sheriff Zheng, today as I was passing by Discipline Hall, I heard sounds of martial arts practice. We are all martial artists; how about going to the Discipline Hall first?"

Since Zheng Wanchun had come to Jinshan Temple to investigate the strengths of the monks, he agreed to this suggestion without hesitation. The Abbot of Discipline Hall should be responsible for martial matters, so his cultivation level shouldn't be lower than Master Xuan Nan.

Both agreed without further ado. They first visited Master Xuan Nan at Reception Hall, because Liang Ying had been turned away before, and they were worried they wouldn't meet the Abbot of Discipline Hall if they went straight there.

Xuan Nan, who had just finished his morning class, hurried out upon learning of the arrival of Liang Ying and Zheng Wanchun from his novice monk.

After listening to Liang Ying's intentions, he thought of Abbot Xuankong's instructions from yesterday and agreed readily.

"If you two gentlemen are interested in the disciples of Discipline Hall, please follow me."

This time, thanks to Xuan Nan leading the way, the martial monks in front of the Discipline Hall didn't block their entrance, and Liang Ying met the Abbot Xuanji of the Discipline Hall.

At this moment, Zheng Wanchun was secretly awed. Jinshan Temple indeed possessed formidable monks, as Xuan Ji had actually reached the Post-Natal "Eighth" Level.

But just as Liang Ying looked around and couldn't help but ask, "Venerable Monk Xuan Ji, where is Master Hongzhi?"

Xuan Ji looked up at Liang Ying, and with a meaningful tone, he said, "Hongzhi went down the mountain to visit friends in Jinzhou City today; he will only be back in the evening."

"Oh? How unfortunate! Master Hongzhi went to Jinzhou City?"

Hearing this, Liang Ying couldn't help but frown. Seeing his expression, Xuan Ji asked him what he needed from Hongzhi.

Liang Ying could only shake his head, stating that he was only asking because Hongzhi wasn't there. Then they followed Xuan Ji and watched the practice of martial arts by the monks of the Discipline Hall.

Jinshan Temple was generous in showing them everything without concealing anything. After that, the two of them took leave and went back to their guest room.

Only then did Zheng Wanchun inquire about who Master Hongzhi was. Liang Ying naturally didn't hide anything. After finding out it was Liang Qi from the Liang Family, his eyes flashed with excitement.

However, Zheng Wanchun didn't say much and prepared to leave. "It's a bother for Lord Liang to stay at the temple for a few more days. Once the County Lord has other orders, I will inform Lord Liang."

Then Zheng Wanchun left the mountain, realizing that Jinshan Temple was indeed extraordinary, filled with many masters. He feared the County Lord should be prepared in advance.

But where was the person they were looking for?

Jinzhou City.

At this moment, Liang Sheng wasn't at the Shengde Building but had been dragged to Zhang Rongjun's not-yet-open teahouse.

"Brother Sheng, I invited you here today for two reasons: first, to show you the location of my teahouse, and second, to borrow your name to boost its reputation."

Zhang Rongjun didn't hide his intentions at all. People can't be too cunning, especially between old friends. Sincerity is key, as it moves people the most.

Liang Sheng wasn't angry when he heard this, as he would probably do the same if he were in Zhang Rongjun's shoes. It wasn't too much to ask.

"Brother Rong, in that case, when the teahouse opens, I must be served the best tea."

"Hahaha, Yuntai, did you hear that? Remember to save the best tea leaves for my Uncle Liang separately."

"You rascal!"

At this moment, Liang Sheng couldn't help but pat Zhang Rongjun's shoulder. To this day, the only one left who could still tease and argue with him like the old days was Zhang Rongjun.

At this moment, some people around were dodging their eyes, but Liang Sheng didn't care, knowing that they were Niu Ben's subordinates who wanted to take over the teahouse.

However, after today, their opponent probably won't ever think about taking over the teahouse again. No matter how much a "waste" he is, he's still a Liang.

Moreover, he could rely on Sheriff Zheng Wanchun's deterrence to keep the troublemakers in Jinzhou City at bay.

Seeing that his goal was accomplished, Zhang Rongjun didn't waste any more time and invited Liang Sheng to go drink wine together.

But they had barely walked a few steps when they were stopped by someone. Liang Sheng was somewhat surprised when he saw who it was.

However, Zhang Rongjun was the first to speak, showing first a hint of confusion before realizing something and blurting out.

“Liang Qi?”

The person who had stopped them was Master Hongzhi, who had come down the mountain and entered the city. Naturally, he also knew Zhang Rongjun and immediately brought his hands together in a gesture of respect.

“Liang Jushi,” he said to Zhang Rongjun before continuing, “Zhang Jushi, it’s been a long time./”

“You, you, you...”

Because of his great surprise, Zhang Rongjun stammered a bit before Liang Sheng whispered, “Master Hongzhi has entered the Buddhist path. I’ll explain the details to you later.”

After saying this, Liang Sheng laughed and said, “Master Hongzhi, this morning magpies were chirping, and I thought some good fortune is coming my way. It turns out it is bumping into you.”

Hongzhi just smiled without saying anything, but Zhang Rongjun was still somewhat taken aback. However, they were old acquaintances, and they had once had a relationship at Yichun Building.

Since they met here by chance, it was fate. Zhang Rongjun immediately said, “Brother Sheng, as we bumped into each other today, why not have a meal together?”

Liang Sheng naturally wouldn’t refuse such an offer, but it ultimately depended on Hongzhi’s intention. To his surprise, Hongzhi agreed without hesitation.

Well, then what are they waiting for?

When everyone returned to Shengde Building, because of Hongzhi’s presence, they didn’t drink wine, and most of the dishes served were vegetarian.

Fortunately, the chefs at Shengde Building were experienced in preparing vegetarian meals, so they handled it skillfully.

Zhang Yuntai acted as the waiter, pouring tea and water for everyone. At this moment, a remark by Hongzhi caught Liang Sheng’s attention.

Liang Ying had not descended the mountain yesterday but planned to stay longer. According to Hongzhi’s description, the one accompanying Liang Ying to Jinshan Temple should be Zheng Wanchun. This made Liang Sheng wonder a bit.

However, Liang Sheng was always cautious and had already noticed during the conversation that Hongzhi was also probing for information from him.

But the subject of Hongzhi's inquiry was the recent situation in Jinzhou City and the Liang Family. This confirmed to Liang Sheng that encountering Hongzhi was no coincidence, but on purpose.

However, Liang Sheng did not reveal any of his thoughts. Instead, he related the recent situation in Jinzhou City, and in return, Hongzhi unknowingly revealed quite a bit of information about Jinshan Temple.

When the meal was over, Hongzhi excused himself to leave and return to Jinshan Temple. As soon as he left, Zhang Rongjun immediately asked about Hongzhi becoming a monk.

Liang Sheng simply said a few words before dismissing him. Sitting alone in the room, he analyzed and summarized all the information he had gathered.

It seemed that the County Government Office and Jinshan Temple had suddenly become entwined for some reason. Both sides were probing each other's situations, making the situation even more complex.

Could something be about to happen?

Afterward, he heard the news that County Lord Xia Zhiqiu had hurried to the city gate as if to receive a distinguished guest. People only saw Xia Zhiqiu dismounting his horse and personally leading the horse carriage into the County Government Office.

Most frightening was the large number of Dragon Suppression Guards from the provincial government escorting them.

This news immediately made Liang Sheng think of the entanglement between the County Government Office and Jinshan Temple, making him feel that something was wrong with the situation.

Meeting Liang Qi today was also uncertain whether it was good or bad. In his heart, he silently recited a few words as a lesson.

Don't meddle in others' affairs, focus on cultivation!

Chapter 37: Surrounding Jinshan Temple

Jinzhou City, County Government Office.

Just before Liang Sheng acted cautiously, Xia Zhiqiu in the County Government Office received a secret letter that greatly changed his expression. He then hurriedly gathered everyone and headed straight out of the city.

Soon after, news of a noble coming to Jinzhou City spread, and the situation in the County Government Office was even more magical than the common people had imagined.

If Liang Ying were here, he would probably be in shock, as Xia Zhiqiu was kneeling on the ground, like a mere servant.

On the upper seat, the curtain had already been drawn, and the guards on both sides seemed to be hiding their breaths, like ferocious beasts waiting quietly for their prey.

Behind the curtain, one could only vaguely see the figure of a graceful woman lying leisurely on a couch with her maidservant gently fanning her.

Xia Zhiqiu knelt on the ground, not even daring to glance sideways. His whole being, even his breathing, seemed cautious.

Finally, a languid voice came from above, full of enchantment.

“Xia Zhiqiu, I remember you have been under the royal palace for fifty years, haven’t you?”

“The Princess is right; I didn’t expect you to remember such a trivial matter. Zhiqiu has been grateful for the palace’s grace for fifty years.”

“I knew of your talent, so I sent you to Jinzhou. It was actually my idea. His Lordship originally wanted to send you to the Imperial Counselor Platform. I wonder if you hold a grudge in your heart?”

“Zhiqiu has never had such thoughts. If not for his lordship, Zhiqiu would probably have become a pile of bones in the Sky Prison by now.

His Lordship has done a great favor to Zhiqiu, and Zhiqiu is unable to repay him, but can only serve him like a loyal dog.”

As he said this, Xia Zhiqiu’s voice seemed to choke, and the Princess behind the curtain appeared somewhat moved. After a while, she spoke again.

“You’ve suffered over the years, but now you’ve finally delivered what I entrusted to you. Only you could have found these clues.

However, why did you hide it from me? Had it not been for some loyal servants, I might not have known about your progress.”

At this point, the Princess's voice was deep and soft. Hearing this, Xia Zhiqiu did not argue, only bowing his head. This made the Princess lose her interest in pursuing the matter further.

"Alright, I know you've been working hard, but as a mother, how could I sit in the royal palace waiting for news?"

I promise that if this matter is resolved, I'll make it up to you. You won't have to endure on the Imperial Counselor Platform any longer. I'll have his Lordship pull strings to get you directly into the Secretary Platform!

Xia Zhiqiu, now I can only rely on you. You won't disappoint me, will you? I hope you can understand the concerns of a mother; otherwise, I wouldn't have blocked your official career and let you wallow in Jinzhou City for decades.

I don't know how my son is faring, whether he's had to suffer hardships. I blame that damn bitch. Why was I blind back then?"

At the last sentence, the Princess suddenly gritted her teeth in rage. Xia Zhiqiu could only pretend not to hear. When the Princess's breathing finally calmed down above, he began to report.

"Princess, rest assured, I have already found clues. I will deal with this matter slowly and meticulously, and I won't disappoint you."

At this time, the Princess suddenly interrupted him, "I am out of patience. It's just a temple; can they still have objections if you find someone directly?"

Upon hearing this, Xia Zhiqiu suddenly looked up, wanting to persuade her, but in the end, he bowed his head again, "I will abide by the Princess's command, and I will arrange it now."

"Zhang Da, give the Dragon Suppression Guard command token to Xia Zhiqiu."

At this moment, a solemn guard beside the curtain approached and handed the token to Xia Zhiqiu personally.

"Xia Zhiqiu, don't disappoint me again. I've been waiting for this day for too long."

Upon hearing this, Xia Zhiqiu could only accept his orders. As he left the room and saw the evening glow in the sky, he then took on a resolute expression, stepping firmly out of the backyard.

"Summon everyone from the County Government Office, and be sure to invite Wu Xiancheng and Liang Dianshi as well."

Jinshan Temple.

As soon as Master Hongzhi returned from Jinzhou City, he was immediately summoned by Xuan Ji. Hongzhi's trip down the mountain today was arranged by him.

Xuan Ji glanced at Hongzhi, who directly shook his head, "The Liang Family has not made any moves, and the County Government Office can't find any news.

I observed and tried to probe from Liang Sheng, but I did not obtain any clues." Master, are we overthinking? After all, the Liang and Wu families haven't been living comfortably these past few years. As the patriarch, it's inevitable for him to be depressed. Are we making a mountain out of a molehill?"

However, Xuan Ji shook his head, "If it were only Liang Ying, it wouldn't matter much. But that Zheng Jushi is a County Ya Catcher. The fact that he came up the mountain while concealing his identity is intriguing.

As for the methods used by the honorable County Lord, we have already experienced them. He is not ordinary and should not be underestimated.

Now is the most critical moment; we must be careful and not allow any accidents to happen.

Since you couldn't find any information going down the mountain, you might as well try to get some news from Liang Ying by creating an opportunity.

I noticed that Liang Ying seems to care about you a lot today. After all, your cultivation level is indeed an unexpected surprise for the Liang Family's current situation."

Hongzhi couldn't help but frown at these words. He truly had no good feelings about the Liang Family people.

However, for the sake of Jinshan Temple at this moment, he didn't consider long before agreeing with a nod.

Just then, a flustered novice monk rushed in, "Chief, something terrible has happened."

By now, Jinshan Temple was already surrounded by the county constables, and the disciples of the Liang and Wu families could be seen everywhere. The Dragon Suppression Guard was also lurking in the outer perimeter.

Xia Zhiqiu stood outside Jinshan Temple, with Zheng Wanchun beside him. As he came down the mountain, he happened to encounter Xia Zhiqiu.

"Sir, the situation is not clear yet. Are we being too hasty?"

Xia Zhiqiu did not explain, “Wanchun, have someone relay the message. Today, not even a fly can leave Jinshan Temple.”

Zheng Wanchun immediately straightened up, “Yes!”

Inside Jinshan Temple, there was already chaos. The several chiefs who witnessed this were caught off guard. How could it have come to this?

Jinzhou City.

Liang Sheng’s Mansion.

With the sudden turn of events in Jinshan Temple and the wide-spread disturbances, Liang Sheng naturally learned about the situation through Shengde Building, which was known for its well-informed news.

Moreover, this time, the Dragon Suppression Guard from the Mansion showed up in Jinzhou City again after eight years, brazenly surrounding Jinshan Temple. How could this news possibly be kept hidden?

Liang Sheng never expected such a situation to happen. Even though he had anticipated something big was about to happen, he didn’t think the situation would take such a drastic turn so quickly.

Without a doubt, it must be related to the distinguished person Xia Zhiqiu welcomed today. However, Liang Sheng didn’t have much curiosity at this time.

The Dragon Suppression Guard from the Mansion is an elite force that can suppress high-level martial artists with just fifty members. In the past, the No-Life Evil Cult had suffered a significant loss at their hands.

Without any hesitation, Liang Sheng immediately returned to his own mansion and had Ma Xiaoliu close the door and refuse guests.

He decided not to go out again until the situation settled, and there must be something wrong with Jinzhou City’s feng shui. How could there be so many frequent incidents in one place?

He wasn’t that unlucky student from his previous life, possessed by a calamity. So he couldn’t hesitate any longer.

He had to find an appropriate time to “die a natural death..” Otherwise, when would this kind of life come to an end?

Chapter 38: The Reappearance of the Lifeless Sect

Jinshan Temple.

At this moment in the Daxiong Treasure Hall, apart from Abbot Xuankong who had not appeared, all the Xuan Generation High Monks were gathered together.

Even Monk Xuan Nian, who hadn't left the Scripture Repository for decades, appeared here, looking grief-stricken.

Jinshan Temple might not be at peace after this.

"Senior Brother, what exactly happened? Have we already been exposed? But we have kept ourselves in line, except for that incident eight years ago, we haven't done anything outrageous since."

As the head of the Discipline Hall, Xuan Ji has a more fiery temper, and his face looks somewhat ugly at this moment. After hearing this, Xuan Nan shook his head.

"The situation is still unclear, and our random guessing is of no use at this point. However, since things have come to this, we can only prepare for the worst."

As the Chief of Reception, Xuan Nan is in charge of external affairs and is most familiar with the situation in Jinzhou City. He is also somewhat puzzled as to why the County Government Office is doing this.

"However, we can't all go out. Elder Brother Xuan Ku, I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to guard Abbot Elder Brother. No matter what happens, don't let anyone disturb our elder brother.

We'll try to buy as much time as possible, but we don't know when our elder brother will make a breakthrough to the innate realm. If he does, everything will no longer be a problem.

An Innate Master can stabilize a country all by himself. Even if our true identities are revealed, not to mention Jinzhou City, I'm afraid the entire state capital will be reluctant to act."

For martial artists in the world, breaking through the Postnatal Nine-Realm is already difficult, let alone becoming an Innate Grandmaster, where only one in a thousand succeeds.

The gap between the Postnatal Nine-Realm and the Innate may seem like only a step apart, but they are as different as the sky and the earth, not to be mentioned in the same breath.

No matter how talented a martial artist is in the world, reaching the Postnatal Nine-Realm before the age of sixty can only mean that they have a chance to reach the Innate level. However, how many people have tried all their lives without success?

Take the Dayan Dynasty, for example, there are only seven Innate Grandmasters on the surface, each of whom has a prestigious reputation and suppresses the martial world of the present age.

Of course, the Dayan Dynasty would not be able to maintain its rule over the Nine Provinces if it only relied on its openly displayed powers. Now, facing the sudden siege of Jinshan Temple by Jinzhou City, their foremost priority is ensuring Xuankong's safety.

As long as he survives, the line of inheritance at Jinshan Temple will not be extinguished. The other high monks affirm their determination upon hearing this.

At this moment, only one thought remains in their hearts: at any cost, even if it means all of them dying, they must protect Abbot Elder Brother from harm. Of course, their greatest hope is still that nothing will happen.

The monks from the Discipline Hall are already gathered, and Xuan Ji holds his hands together in a prayer, "Amitabha."

Although the other monks and novice monks look frightened, they all sit in silence, as the Buddha once said that all the suffering in the world is a calamity, and only by overcoming the calamity can one achieve great freedom.

The Xuan Generation High Monks are prepared to die generously, and at this moment Liang Ying is sitting somewhat stiffly in the guest room, as Hongzhi is guarding the door with a face full of hatred.

With Hongzhi only at the Postnatal Seven-Realm, it would be effortless for Liang Ying to leave, but he doesn't want to cause further misunderstanding.

If this were ten years earlier, Liang Ying might have kicked Hongzhi away if he dared to be so rude.

But now, every member of the Liang Family with a high-level martial arts bloodline is someone Liang Ying needs to protect, as things are different now.

With the current situation, as long as Xia Zhiqiu is in Jinzhou City, the Liang Family may have to cling to life for one more day.

And the duty of Liang Ying and the others is to protect the future. Their generation has no chance against Xia Zhiqiu, but they must withstand the pressure, and give the next

generation time to grow. Therefore, Liang Qi, with the Liang Family bloodline, is the person he wants to win over.

Hongzhi stared at the grief-stricken look on Liang Ying's face, feeling that the other party was hypocritical, and said coldly, "Today's disaster is all because of you. I left the Liang Family for your sake many years ago, and I never thought I'd still cause the temple to suffer because of you today."

"Brother Qi, oh, no, Master Hongzhi, you really misunderstood. This time, there won't be any danger to Jinshan Temple. County Lord Xia is just here to look for someone.

Of course, I don't know why he suddenly changed his mind and went on a high-profile search for someone. I'm afraid something must have happened, but I've been on the mountain all the time and don't know the reason.

But I can guarantee that the County Lord has absolutely no intention of targeting Jinshan Temple. Otherwise, why would I stay here?"

"Really?"

Seeing that Liang Ying's expression didn't seem to be fake, Liang Qi thought of the decisive expressions he had seen on the faces of the Xuan Generation High Monks just before and couldn't help but change his face.

Not good!

If their masters and uncles misunderstood the reason for the other party's visit and chose to go all-in, something disastrous might really happen.

After all, Jinshan Temple itself has a great secret that cannot be known by others. It's normal for uncles to think in this way if they might suspect something.

Thinking of this, he didn't have time to care about Liang Ying. He exerted all his effort to run towards the temple gate.

I hope it's not too late!

At this moment, Xuan Ji and others had just reached an agreement, so when they arrived at the gate, they saw the layers of encirclement outside and felt a chill in their hearts.

There were even Dragon Suppression Guards!

Was Jinshan Temple really exposed? The Xuan Generation High Monks couldn't help but show a look of sorrow on their faces. Just as they were about to speak, they heard a loud shout.

“Master, don’t be impulsive! They are just here to find someone, and they have no other intentions!”

Then Hongzhi appeared, panting heavily. Considering that even he, who was in the Postnatal Seven-Realm, was breathing so heavily, one could imagine how fast he had been running.

Fortunately, he made it in time!

Jinzhou City.

When Jinshan Temple was making such a big commotion, gossip was flying all over Jinzhou City.

Some people said Jinshan Temple was harboring a criminal, some said it wasn’t a criminal, but rather someone important in the temple to pray for blessings. That’s why there was a heavy guard. Anyway, there were all kinds of rumors.

Meanwhile, in a residential house in Jinzhou City, a few people were sitting together with smiles on their faces. When talking about Jinshan Temple, a flash of fierceness appeared in their eyes.

“Elder, today the imperial hounds and the bald donkeys of Jinshan Temple are biting each other. Our help for Protector Yang has finally paid off.”

“Yes, if it wasn’t for Jinshan Temple going too far and offering a little help in a rescue operation, how could Yang Protector possibly have failed to escape?”

They are just useless people, otherwise with the foundation of the Seven Great Sects, Jinshan Temple wouldn’t have declined so much.

If they were like this all the time, we wouldn’t mind, but at the last moment, they still didn’t save Yang Protector, letting him die with open eyes.

In that case, we can’t be blamed. Since Jinshan Temple is so useless, they might as well contribute to our great cause.”

At this time, one of them flattered the elder of the No-Life Sect, “But it is still the deep foresight of the elder. If it wasn’t for your planning years ago to have us sneak Prince of Ping’an out, there wouldn’t be such a commotion now.

Perhaps Jinshan Temple will never know the real reason for all this, but they don’t know that we secretly sent Prince Ping’an’s heir to the temple more than ten years ago.”

Although the person called Elder was wearing a mask and his expression was not visible, his smugness was obvious.

“That was just something I did on a whim back then. It’s just a pity that I originally wanted to use Prince Ping’an’s heir as a bargaining chip, waiting for the big event to come before making plans.

Now I can only expose it early, but it’s also good to let Jinshan Temple know right from wrong, consider it a lesson.”

“Elder has a devilish wisdom. I’m afraid today Jinshan Temple will have a river of blood. By then, those bald donkeys will have no choice but to join our Holy Sect. Only we can save them.”

“This move is indeed a stroke of genius, killing two birds with one stone.”

It turned out that all of this was a conspiracy by the No-Life Sect. Xia Zhiqiu might never know that the hard-won clue was deliberately leaked to them by the sect leader of the No-Life Sect.

“Alright, no more flattery. Recently, the Holy Sect has been chased hard by the hounds of the Dayan Dynasty, and the funding of many branches is tight. This time we came to Jinzhou City not only for revenge but also to raise funds for the Holy Sect.”

“Elder, don’t worry. We already have a plan. Back then, Flower Mother didn’t get Liang Qiang’s wealth. Now there is an opportunity to get a huge amount of money.”

“Oh? You mean that useless man from the Liang family? But he seems to be on the verge of death now, which indeed is a good opportunity.”

At this time, Liang Sheng, who was hiding at home, sneezed several times in succession. Perhaps he didn’t know that although he had never provoked anyone, someone was actively targeting him, and misfortune was coming from the heavens.

If he had known the situation, he would have made up his mind to enjoy an early “death” and the ensuing freedom, so why be so miserable in Jinzhou City?

Chapter 39: Compromise

Jinzhou City.

At this moment, the Lifeless Sect was plotting how to seize Liang Sheng’s assets when a silvery and bell-like laughter rang out, followed by a plump figure entering the scene.

Her sultry eyes and voluptuous figure were as though they could squeeze out water, fully displaying the charm of a young married woman. If Liang Sheng were here, he would have surely recognized her.

It was none other than Second Uncle's "Second Aunt" who had not yet married into the family, Flower Mother. However, at this moment, compared to the past, she exuded a more mature beauty, like a delicate and dripping peach.

Flower Mother then smiled slightly, "Elder, rest assured, dealing with an old and useless man like him who's about to die soon is what I do best.

When I find an opportunity to check out this waste, if their wealth can indeed benefit the Holy Sect, then let them enjoy some good days."

"Haha, we will naturally be at ease when Flower Mother takes action. But Princess Ping'an has already arrived in Jinzhou City, so be careful in everything."

"Yes, Flower Mother understands. Elder, you can rest assured. If Second Uncle fell into my hands, how can he be any exception?"

At this moment, a glint flashed in Flower Mother's eyes, and her gaze was filled with a playful expression as if she were hunting prey. She did not expect to return to Jinzhou City and her prey would once again be a member of the Liang Family.

However, this time, she would not fail again.

Jinshan Temple.

Hongzhi suddenly rushed out, his voice arriving before his figure did. Upon hearing this, Xuan Nan's heart filled with joy.

At this moment of surprise and joy, he couldn't help but directly ask Xia Zhiqiu outside, "County Lord, are you really just here to search for someone at Jinshan Temple today?"

Xia Zhiqiu, on the other hand, looked at the Xuan Generation High Monks with astonishment in his heart. Thinking back to Zheng Wanchun's words, he no longer had any doubts.

Jinshan Temple indeed held hidden dragons and crouching tigers. The Xuan Generation High Monks all turned out to have reached the Post-Natal "Eighth" Level!

Seeing Xia Zhiqiu's astonished expression, Zheng Wanchun hurriedly whispered into his ear, "My Lord, I wanted to report it earlier, but..."

Xia Zhiqiu shook his hand to interrupt him, indicating that he didn't mind. After hearing Xuan Nan's words, he quickly suppressed the amazement in his heart.

After all, there are priorities. It is indeed not advisable to create more problems right now. Being able to search Jinshan Temple without bloodshed would be the best outcome.

So, Xia Zhiqiu pushed away the constables in front of him and walked to the entrance of Jinshan Temple, laughing, "There is no need for the masters to be nervous. This is indeed our county's fault. We should have informed you in advance, but the matter was urgent, and I had no other choice.

However, as this high monk said, I am here today just to search for someone. In order not to cause any accidents, that's why I ordered my men to surround Jinshan Temple. I hope the masters can understand my recklessness."

Upon hearing this, Xuan Nan and the others exchanged glances, also unsure whether this was really just a delaying tactic by the other party.

However, in the current situation, they could only choose to believe the other side. Otherwise, were they going to continue confronting each other?

Looking at the large force lurking behind the other side and thinking about their Abbot Elder Brother who was still in closed-door cultivation, Xuan Nan gritted his teeth.

"County Lord, please do as you wish. Jinshan Temple is under Jinzhou City jurisdiction, and there's no inconvenience. Just tell us how we can cooperate with you, and we will follow your instructions completely."

"Elder Brother Xuan Nan..."

Just as Xuan Ji was about to speak, he was pulled back by Xuan Nian beside him, who shook his head at him. Reluctantly, he let go of his doubts.

Upon hearing Xuan Nan's cooperation, Xia Zhiqiu immediately shouted, "Thank you, Master, for your understanding. County constables, listen up!

After entering the temple, you must not damage anything, understood?"

"We obey your orders!"

Xia Zhiqiu had his own considerations for saying this. With so many high monks present, if a conflict broke out, although the advantage lay with them, injuring that person in the chaos would be an unforgivable sin.

Thus, being able to conduct a peaceful search now was already fortunate. Subsequently, both sides restrained themselves and cooperated, and the situation was quickly resolved.

The Reception Hall was originally responsible for managing temple affairs, and Hongzhi immediately cooperated with the Xuan Generation High Monks to convey Xuan Nan's order to each of the other halls. Before long, all the Sramanera Bhikkhu monks were gathered in the courtyard in front of the Daxiong Treasure Hall.

At this time, the County Ya Catcher and others had confirmed that no one was hiding, and even Liang Ying had returned to Xia Zhiqiu's side.

Xia Zhiqiu respectfully took out an old woman from the horse carriage behind the guards at this time. She was the old wet nurse to Wang Fei.

The old nurse nodded slightly, and then she walked to the Sramanera Bhikkhu and began to check them one by one.

Xia Zhiqiu couldn't help but hold his breath, praying in his heart that they would find her so that he wouldn't have to stay in Jinzhou City forever.

This was not his world. The place where he could truly demonstrate his ambitions was in the Capital, at the Dayan Imperial Court!

Jinzhou City.

Outside Liang Sheng's Mansion.

Liang Sheng didn't know that someone was targeting him and decided to stay home until he heard some good news.

After all, safety comes first!

Outside the mansion, Flower Mother was watching for a long time and couldn't help but feel angry. How could she have a chance encounter with this useless man if he didn't leave the house, let alone embrace him!

Because Liang Sheng was worried about the uncontrollable situation in Jinzhou City, he hid at home as soon as he got the news.

Flower Mother couldn't help but grind her teeth in hatred, thinking that the men of the Liang Family were all spineless. She had deliberately captured a baby, claiming it was Liang Qiang's child.

In the end, all Liang Qiang left her was Twenty Thousand Liang's worth of Silver Notes, and nothing else. If Liang Qiang had only been a little braver and welcomed her and the girl into his Mansion, wouldn't all his property have belonged to her?

If that were the case, there would be no need for the Holy Sect to be so tight on funds now.

Flower Mother became more and more angry, but now was not the time to complain. The most important thing now was to figure out how to meet Liang Shing, the waste.

But before she could come up with a good idea, she was suddenly called back by the No-Life Sect followers. As soon as she entered the base, she saw that everyone's faces were ugly.

"What's wrong? What happened?"

As soon as she spoke, it finally broke the oppressive atmosphere at that moment. One person couldn't help but slap the table, instantly shattering it.

"Sit down. If you lose your temper over a little problem, how can you achieve great things?"

The Elder's voice showed no emotion, and the person who slapped the table just now quickly knelt down. "Elder, I was too excited."

But he still couldn't help the anger in his heart. "But the monks of Jinshan Temple are really infuriating."

"The Elder's perfect plan was ruined by them. No one expected them to completely abandon the glory of the Seven Great Sects and submit to the Court hounds. It's really hateful."

With that, Flower Mother understood from their narration what had happened, and no wonder they were so agitated.

The monks of Jinshan Temple had their doors wide open without any resistance, allowing the government hounds to enter the temple and search.

As a result, the Elder of the Lifeless Sect's one-stone two-bird plan completely failed. How could they accept this outcome?

The monks of Jinshan Temple were truly hateful!

If the Court hounds really found the Prince of Ping'an, wouldn't that be like lifting a rock only to drop it on one's own foot?

Just then, there was a knock on the door. After checking the secret signal, a church member of the No-Life Sect entered and knelt on the ground.

"Elder, something has happened!"

Chapter 40: Meeting Flower Mother Again

J inzhou City.

Liang Sheng's Mansion.

Liang Sheng thought he was in for big trouble this time but it turned out to be a false alarm; one could say that Jinshan Temple had mastered the art of muddling through, managing to escape unscathed despite the County Government Office's grand preparations. At this point, Liang Sheng had already learned the whole story, as everyone in Jinzhou City already knew about it. He had never expected such a bizarre tale to unfold in Jinzhou City.

However, he quickly decided that the story, though melodramatic, was logical. If it weren't for such circumstances, there would be no reason for Xia Zhiqiu, a cunning and wicked character with a cultivation level of nine realms in the Postnatal realm, to linger in small Jinzhou City for decades.

But who could have imagined such a melodramatic twist, like the legitimate heir to the royal palace disappearing for more than 20 years without a trace after being taken away by a wet nurse?

Who could believe it? Who would dare to believe it?

Even with the most outrageous, fantastical narratives of the past, it would be difficult to come up with such a plot. Otherwise, would it not discount the intelligence of the readers?

It can only be said that reality is always stranger than fiction. But now Jinzhou City won't have any conflicts, and he no longer has to worry about any unexpected trouble coming their way.

However, Liang Sheng never expected that he had already become a sought-after person by the Lifeless Sect, and that a woman was already acting on their behalf.

At this moment, there was a knock on the door of the mansion. Ma Xiaoliu hurriedly went to open the door, ready to declare that they were not receiving guests.

Soon after, Ma Xiaoliu came back to report that Zhang Rongjun had arrived. With the crisis averted, Liang Sheng decided to meet his old friend.

As soon as Zhang Rongjun appeared in front of Liang Sheng, he exclaimed, "Sheng, how can you be so calm? Princess Ping'an has personally come to Jinzhou City. Aren't you going to see the excitement? I've lived so many years and never seen a royal princess before. I think it's worth it to see her in person even if I die afterward."

Zhang Rongjun was extremely excited, but Liang Sheng just shook his head.

Excluding the fact that there would definitely be masters guarding Princess Ping'an at this time, he didn't want to get involved with Jinshan Temple at all.

He could even imagine how anxious Xuannan and the others must have been when they were surrounded by the County Government Office before. After all, their sect is an offshoot of the Dharma Sect and wouldn't withstand investigation.

If the truth got out, it wouldn't be just Jinzhou City besieging them, but the entire government launching an attack on them. The mere thought was thrilling.

Zhang Rongjun, seeing that he could not persuade Liang Sheng, could only go to see the excitement on his own. After all, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to see Princess Ping'an.

After Zhang Rongjun's departure, Liang Sheng's eyes were somewhat mysterious. He naturally had some understanding of why Princess Ping'an would make such a grand fuss about going to Jinshan Temple.

This was nothing more than her way of declaring on a broad scale the return of the son of Prince Ping'an. She must want to make up for her sense of guilt and give him the greatest honor. Surely, the return to the Capital's royal palace would be even more spectacular.

Of course, there must have been some unrest in the royal palace lately which led Princess Ping'an to make such a grand self-exposure. But what did any of this have to do with him?

The real matter at hand was to live a life of leisure and wealth and find a suitable time to "die peacefully in his sleep"!

Although Liang Sheng had no interest in joining the excitement, he was relieved now that the crisis had passed. He decided to go to Shengde Building to have a few drinks in celebration.

However, the horse carriage suddenly stopped midway. Surprised, Liang Sheng asked, "What happened, Xiaoliu?"

"Master, it seems that we accidentally bumped into someone."

Hearing this, Liang Sheng did not leave the carriage but slightly lifted the curtain, catching a glimpse of a plump young woman on the ground, holding her foot and frowning in pain.

But when Liang Sheng saw her face, his heart tightened, because he recognized her as his own step-aunt, Flower Mother.

At this moment, Flower Mother watched the carriage stop out of the corner of her eye and secretly rejoiced, thinking that her beauty had captured Liang Sheng's attention.

But in the next moment, Liang Sheng had Ma Xiaoliu throw a silver note at her and told him rather impatiently, "Xiaoliu, let's go."

Ma Xiaoliu was also taken aback but had long formed a reflexive response. Upon hearing Liang Sheng's command, he immediately drove the carriage away, passing right by Flower Mother.

By the time Flower Mother realized what had happened, she couldn't help but glance at her own exquisite figure. She had spent years cultivating the Hehuan Skill, and her appearance was comparable to that of a young girl. Why did Liang Sheng react like that?

Could it be that she had become so ugly without realizing it? Why else would he run at the sight of her?

But in the next moment, Flower Mother regained her confidence, because the men around were staring at her with lust in their eyes.

However, some people were staring at her maliciously, no, they were staring at the silver notes dumped on her by Liang Sheng.

Damn it!

Flower Mother could only hastily get up and then duck into an alley. Two thugs glanced at each other without hesitation and followed her with a cold smirk.

The others who saw this changed their expressions but eventually sighed; the two were not good people, how could they dare to offend them?

The onlookers on the street sighed secretly and then went about their own business, feeling sympathetically for the beautiful young woman, who had been a victim of the allure of wealth.

In the alley, the two thugs hurried in, fearing that Flower Mother would get away, but as soon as they turned the corner, they saw her standing there, beaming with a big smile on her face.

The two couldn't help but feel their hearts skip a beat; what a beautiful woman!

"Am I beautiful?"

Less than a quarter of an hour later, Flower Mother came out the other side refreshed, her confidence that had been shattered by Liang Sheng was fully restored.

As for that useless old man, she would have to think of another way to deal with him.

By the time the sun set, a passerby went through the alley on his way home and discovered two withered corpses, seemingly drained of all their essence blood.

“Murder!”

Soon after, constables arrived on the scene, leaving a gruesome unsolved murder case that fueled superstitious rumors. Few people dared to pass by this alley at night afterward.

Jinshan Temple.

At this moment, Jinshan Temple was completely surrounded. A young novice monk in his twenties was panicking, as he was being escorted by the Dragon Suppression Guards in the center of the temple.

Xuan Ji and the others had also completely let down their guard at this point. It seemed that Jinshan Temple had not been exposed, and Xia Zhiqiu and the others were indeed here to find the person they were looking for.

However, what was so special about this little novice monk? How could he attract such a big reaction from Xia Zhiqiu?

As the Chief of Reception, Xuan Nan quickly recalled the origin of the little novice monk, who had been found as an abandoned child on a winter night over twenty years ago.

Until now, he had only been a little novice monk in charge of guiding pilgrims to their lodgings in the Reception Hall. At this thought, Xuan Nan couldn't help but sigh at the impermanence of the world.

Who could have imagined that a little novice monk would cause such a commotion? Xia Zhiqiu was extremely cautious, only after repeatedly confirming with an old palace maid from the royal palace did he finally breathe a sigh of relief.

Once the guards from the royal palace had found the little novice monk, they left in a rush to return to the city to report the news. How to proceed now depended on the orders of Wang Fei [Princess Ping'an].

However, although the County Government Office's constables were still surrounding Jinshan Temple at this moment, the tense atmosphere from before had dissipated.

Xia Zhiqiu even went to chat jovially among the Xuan Generation High Monks. “I didn't expect to have such a splendid place like Jinshan Temple within my jurisdiction. Today, I finally got the chance to visit you esteemed monks. It is my dereliction of duty not to have visited earlier.

I wonder which esteemed monk is the abbot of the temple? In the future, I would like to visit the temple to taste your tea and discuss Buddhism.”

At this time, Xuan Nan hurriedly clasped his hands together, “County Lord, you are too kind. We are just humble monks living away from the world. Our Abbot Elder Brother is currently in closed-door cultivation to understand Buddhism, so he could not come to meet you in person. I hope you won’t take offense.”

At this point, Xia Zhiqiu naturally would not bear any resentment. The discovery of the one they were looking for today can be considered a perfect ending. If everything goes smoothly, he will finally be able to escape the quagmire of Jinzhou City and go to the capital for a brighter future.

Just then, a rider on a fast horse came in a hurry, and the knight directly shouted: “Princess Ping’an is coming to Jinshan Temple, kneel down and receive her!”

Xia Zhiqiu’s complexion changed.

Huh?

The princess was coming to Jinshan Temple in person?