

Doctor 111

Chapter 111: You've Angered Me!

Screech—

The sharp, grating sound of brakes abruptly resounded on the road across the stone bridge.

Though the noise was quickly drowned out by the "whoosh" of the rain, Fang Bai's keen senses, far superior to ordinary people, allowed him to hear it clearly.

Fang Bai narrowed his eyes to see two white vans rushing out from the woods on either side of the stone bridge.

The two white vans, as if purposefully, blocked the middle of the national road, cutting off the route of the convoy.

Almost simultaneously, at the other end of the stone bridge, another two white vans sped towards them, stopping 50 meters behind the convoy.

Four white vans, two at the front and two at the rear, had the convoy tightly trapped on the stone bridge.

Also caught on the stone bridge was Fang Bai, walking slowly with a black umbrella in hand.

In the convoy's four black sedans sat sixteen well-trained black-clad bodyguards, who, the instant the road was blocked, knew something was wrong. They quickly drew their pistols and dashed out of the cars.

The bodyguards had reacted swiftly, yet the individuals from the four white vans were even quicker.

More than twenty men in camouflage gear, armed with guns, rushed out of the white vans. Their feet hadn't even touched the ground before they pulled the triggers of the firearms in their hands.

Bang—

Tat-tat—

Ratatata—

A torrent of bullets, from various handguns and submachine guns, poured out, piercing the rain curtain and wildly strafing the sixteen black-clad bodyguards trapped in the middle.

A salvo of bullets, like the Grim Reaper's scythe, mercilessly reaped the lives of the sixteen black-clad bodyguards.

Although the convoy's bodyguards fought back valiantly, they were caught off guard and outgunned by their attackers. Within minutes, more than half of them had been hit and either killed or injured.

The remaining bodyguards took cover behind the vehicles and returned fire. One of them crouched down, quickly dialed a number, and started shouting loudly, seemingly calling for reinforcements.

As the gunfight ensued, there was no sign of panic on Fang Bai's face. He continued to walk alongside the bridge's edge, holding his black umbrella as if he were not the least bit concerned about being struck by a stray bullet.

Fang Bai had lived for tens of thousands of years across two lifetimes. He was accustomed to such grudges and killings, hence unfazed.

As far as Fang Bai was concerned, as long as neither side of the gunfight intentionally provoked him, he would not interfere.

"Boss, what about that kid passing by?"

"Do you even have to ask me about something so trivial? Kill him, silence him!"

"Understood."

Fang Bai suddenly heard such a conversation with his ears.

The conversers were those attackers in camouflage gear.

At the scene, the "passing kid" seemed to be none other than Fang Bai. Thus, without a doubt, the target the camouflaged men intended to silence was Fang Bai himself.

Fang Bai let out a resigned chuckle. He hadn't intended to provoke anyone, yet trouble had found him nonetheless.

Thwap—

A bullet whizzed past Fang Bai's head, piercing the top of his black umbrella.

The intended target of this shot was clearly Fang Bai, but it seemed the shooter had missed.

The bullet came from in front of Fang Bai to his left. The shooter was a camouflage-clad man hiding beside a white van.

The camouflage-clad man had a buzz cut, a robust build, and a scar of about an inch length on his left cheek, giving him a ferocious look.

Fang Bai glanced up at the scar-faced man, then looked at the bullet hole in his umbrella and frowned slightly.

"Damn it, you've angered me!"

Though unrelated to this gunfight, Fang Bai was merely a bystander. Yet this scar-faced man had decided to kill him, an innocent passerby.

Fang Bai always despised such reckless murderers who took lives without reason or inquiry.

And so, Fang Bai was furious.

His anger naturally led him to strike.

"You want to kill me, I'll take your life!"

Fang Bai's gaze was sharp as a sword, fixed intently on the man with the scarred face. Without waiting for him to fire a second shot, he instantly folded up his Black Rain Umbrella, pushed off powerfully with his feet, and shot out like a cannonball.

In an instant, he crossed a distance of tens of meters, appearing before the scarred man like a ghost.

The scarred man thought his eyes were playing tricks on him, but when he confirmed that the person standing before him was indeed the young man in black, he couldn't help but be greatly startled.

The scarred man had also practiced martial arts for some time, and his reaction speed was much faster than that of an ordinary person.

His body immediately retreated explosively. During the retreat, he aimed his gun at Fang Bai and pulled the trigger without hesitation.

In his mind, at such close range, this shot was enough to seal Fang Bai's fate.

Bang—

The gunshot rang out, but Fang Bai had vanished from in front of him.

Hmm?

The scarred man paused, a bad feeling creeping up on him.

He turned around sharply, only to see a fist expanding rapidly in front of his eyes, smashing viciously into his face.

Crack—

Ah—

The slight sound of breaking bones, accompanied by a scream, indicated that the man's nasal bones were shattered, and he was sent flying through the air.

After tracing a long arc in the air, he "plopped" into the rolling river below the stone bridge, struggled for a moment, and was then engulfed by the turbulent currents.

From the moment Fang Bai ghostly appeared before the scarred man to when the latter was blasted into the river, everything happened in the blink of an eye, incredibly fast.

It wasn't until the desperate cries for help from the scarred man echoed from beneath the stone bridge that his companions came to their senses.

"Take him down!"

Amid the furious shouts, several gun barrels swung in direction, spraying bullets frantically at Fang Bai.

Fang Bai, as if possessing the ability to see into the future, turned into a faint shadow, dodging the bullets aimed at him and closed in on the men in camouflage with inconceivable speed, unleashing punch after lightning-fast punch.

Ah—

Ah—

Plop—

Plop—

Screams of agony and the sounds of bodies hitting the water followed one after another at the scene.

In a matter of seconds, more than twenty men in camouflage had been knocked into the water by Fang Bai and were swiftly swept away by the raging river, their fates unknown.

On the side where the cars were parked, a few surviving black-clad bodyguards stared dumbfounded at Fang Bai, their eyes betraying indescribable shock.

"Come quickly and save grandpa! His heart condition has flared up again!"

The door of the silver bulletproof car suddenly opened, and a girl with twin ponytails crawled out from the car, crying loudly, her voice filled with panic and unease.

The rain continued to pour heavily, instantly soaking the pink dress of the twin-ponytailed girl.

The thin pink dress clung to the body of the girl, outlining the somewhat green but already developing curves of her body.

The few black-clad bodyguards who had narrowly escaped death heard the girl's cries and their expressions changed, they rushed quickly to the side of the silver car.

The door of the silver car was open, revealing a red Tang suit-clad elder slumped over in the back seat, seemingly unconscious.

The tang-clad elder was in pain, his left hand clutching tightly at the area over his heart, and at his feet was a bottle of emergency heart medication.

The situation was clear, the elder had fallen ill too abruptly to take his medication before losing consciousness.

Chapter 112: The Pretty Girl

The team of expertly trained bodyguards, though startled, quickly established clear divisions of labor.

Some were responsible for carrying the man in traditional attire out of the car to administer emergency CPR.

Others held up umbrellas to shelter the elderly man in traditional attire from the rain and wind.

Some pulled out cell phones, dialing the hospital's emergency number.

Some kept their guns at the ready, on guard against a possible repeat attack...

"How is Grandpa? When will the ambulance get here?"

The pigtailed girl crouched next to the man in traditional attire, watching a square-faced bodyguard perform CPR, her shoulders shaking as she asked through her tears.

During the recent gun battle, bullets had pattered down like rain on the bulletproof car, "tat-tat-tat" sounding incessantly. Though the grandfather and granddaughter inside were unharmed, the girl was terrified, and the incident had left the elderly man in traditional attire both shocked and furious.

As a result, the man had suffered a heart attack, convulsing before falling unconscious.

Panicked and beside herself with fear, the pigtailed girl had not considered the danger outside as she rushed from the car, crying for help.

"Miss, the chairman's condition is very serious! We're outside the city; even a fast ambulance will take at least ten minutes to arrive!"

The black-clad bodyguard holding the umbrella said with a grave expression.

Hearing this, the girl cried even louder.

"The way you're doing it is useless."

A lazy voice rang out. The square-faced bodyguard and the pigtailed girl both looked up to see a handsome young man standing with a black umbrella, dressed in a black T-shirt.

Fang Bai stood quietly, his gaze resting on the man in traditional attire, speaking in a tone that was both plain and calm, "If he's not saved in time, this old man will die within five minutes."

"You... you're talking nonsense! My grandpa will be fine!"

The pigtailed girl suddenly stood up, wiping the tear stains from her cheeks, and glaring at Fang Bai with her clear, contrasting eyes, indignantly retorted.

The pigtailed girl was only about thirteen or fourteen, yet she already stood around 165 centimeters tall, with a delicate nose, rosy lips, snow-white skin, large eyes, and gently arched eyebrows. Her body was like a budding flower yet to unfold.

Her skin was tender as a baby's, pale as milk, and she was dressed in a pink princess gown, exuding nobility without losing cuteness.

"Pretty girl, I'm not talking nonsense! Your grandpa is really dying! Hmm, in five minutes, even if I intervened personally, it would be too late to save him!"

Fang Bai smiled as he met the pigtailed girl's clear eyes.

Beauty is always pleasing to the eye, regardless of age.

Although the pigtailed girl here was still a bit young, Fang Bai was willing to bet that when she grew up to be seventeen or eighteen, she would be no less lovely than Qin Yaorao, Su Linglong, Tang Wenrou, or Xia Chenyu.

Of course, Fang Bai felt only pure admiration for the little beauty before him, without any improper thoughts.

The summer rain came swiftly and ended just as suddenly; the downpour ceased, and even a few rays of sunlight pierced through the parting clouds.

"Sir, if you can heal our chairman, please help!"

The square-faced bodyguard who had been performing CPR stood up, bowed deeply with respect towards Fang Bai.

Having witnessed Fang Bai send more than twenty men in camouflage tumbling into a river, the bodyguard knew he was in the presence of an ancient martial arts expert, and from Fang Bai's tone, it seemed that as long as it was within five minutes, he was confident he could save the chairman.

"Sir, please!"

Seeing Fang Bai hesitate, the square-faced bodyguard bowed again, even more earnestly.

"Big brother, are you a doctor? Can you really cure my grandpa?"

The twin-tailed girl was excited, having cast aside her earlier anger at Fang Bai, seizing Fang Bai's sleeves as she asked.

Seeing Fang Bai nod, hope filled the girl's expression as she pleaded, "Then, big brother, can you help me, please? My grandpa is the most important person to me; I don't want him to die."

In a past life, the affectionate Fang Bai was a man who took pity on the fairer sex, rarely refusing a request from a woman, especially such a pitiful little beauty.

"Alright, I'll give it a try."

Moved by the little beauty's pleading eyes, Fang Bai's heart softened.

"As long as you can cure our chairman, the medical fee is no issue!"

The square-faced bodyguard, being a smart man, immediately declared his stance upon Fang Bai's agreement to save the man.

In the bodyguard's eyes, since Fang Bai was indeed a doctor, it was natural for doctors to treat and save patients and for the patients to pay medical fees.

Moreover, with a financial incentive, perhaps Fang Bai would put even more effort into the rescue.

Fang Bai nodded; he was a stranger to these people, and since they offered to pay a medical fee voluntarily, he had no qualms about accepting it, particularly as they seemed very wealthy.

Fang Bai placed the black umbrella aside and squatting down, he opened the Tang suit clad elder's shirt and flipped his hands, suddenly producing several silver needles between his fingers.

"Ah! Why are you sticking needles in my grandpa?"

When the girl saw those silver needles piercing near her grandpa's heart, she thought Fang Bai meant to harm him. Her face drained of color as she cried out in shock.

"Little beauty, I am saving your grandpa right now. If you scream and shout like that, you'll startle me. If I misplaced a needle, your grandpa's life could be at risk! Don't come crying to me then!"

Fang Bai winked, teasing the twin-tailed girl with a smile.

"Then... then I won't talk anymore..."

The twin-tailed girl was so scared that she clamped her mouth shut, daring not to make another sound.

Fang Bai couldn't help but let out a wry smile, as he gripped the ends of the silver needles, deftly lifting, pricking, and twisting, his movements varying between fast and slow.

The twin-tailed girl's eyes widened as she unblinkingly watched her grandpa's face, silently praying for him to wake up quickly.

"Hey, little beauty, I've already cured your grandpa. Am I impressive or what?"

Ten minutes later, Fang Bai wiped the fine sweat from his forehead, sighed in relief, and after removing the needles, he smiled at the twin-tailed girl.

"You're lying!"

Seeing her grandpa unmoving, tears immediately streamed down the girl's face as she cried, "My grandpa hasn't woken up; you didn't cure him!"

"When I say he's cured, he's cured."

As Fang Bai spoke, he gently tapped the top of the Tang suit-clad elder's head. The elder's body trembled, and suddenly he began to cough violently, and then, his eyelids twitched and flew open.

"Grandpa, you've finally woken up!"

Seeing the Tang suit-clad elder awaken, the twin-tailed girl cheered, not bothering to wipe the tears from her face, she leaned over to gently help the elder sit up, her tears turning to laughter as she said, "You just scared Hua'er to death! If something had happened to you, who would accompany Hua'er to play everywhere in the future?"

"Cough... Cough..."

The Tang suit-clad elder coughed again, frightening the twin-tailed girl, who kept patting his back to help him catch his breath.

Chapter 113: Rushi Ruhua

"Hua'er, I'm all right now!"

The old man in traditional attire checked himself and felt no pain in his chest area any longer. His body seemed to be in good shape elsewhere too, so knowing he was temporarily out of danger, he stood up on his own.

"Grandpa, you just woke up. You need to behave and not wander around!"

The twin-tailed young girl followed the elder in traditional attire, lending a hand to support him as she reproached him with a delicate voice.

"Hua'er, I really am fine."

The old man in traditional attire took a few deep breaths and then waved his hand, signaling to the twin-tailed girl that there was no need to assist him.

The square-faced bodyguard who had asked Fang Bai to save the elder walked up close and explained the recent events in a low voice.

"Young doctor, thank you so much!"

The old man in traditional attire turned his gaze towards Fang Bai and gratefully said, "If it weren't for your timely intervention, my old life, my granddaughter's life, and the lives of these bodyguards might have been lost here. You are the lifesaver for all of us. May I ask for the young doctor's name?"

"Fang Bai."

"My name is Dongfang Leiming."

Dongfang Leiming extended his hand and shook hands with Fang Bai.

"Chairman, the circumstances of this attack are very strange."

The bodyguard standing next to Dongfang Leiming had a solemn expression as he spoke in a grave tone, "The attackers clearly knew we would pass here and were lying in ambush ahead of time, which indicates we have a mole. Moreover, the identities of the attackers are evidently well-trained assassins. I suspect..."

"Let's talk about this matter after we get back."

Dongfang Leiming interrupted the bodyguard, his gaze sweeping around the area.

Above the stone bridge, bodies were strewn about haphazardly, and every car was riddled with bullet holes, a testament to the intensity of the recent gunfight.

"Those assassins were formidable; we suffered serious casualties this time!"

The old man in traditional attire lamented the sight of his few remaining bodyguards. He had weathered countless storms in the business sea for decades and faced numerous attacks, but the loss of bodyguards this time was the most severe.

If Fang Bai had not happened to pass by and become involved in this incident, Dongfang Leiming and his group could have very well lost their lives.

To say that Fang Bai was their lifesaver was no exaggeration.

"Doctor Fang, we won't forget the lifesaving grace you've shown us... This is the consultation fee, and also a token of my gratitude. Please accept it, Doctor Fang."

Dongfang Leiming instructed a bodyguard to fetch a checkbook from his silver bulletproof limousine, casually wrote a string of numbers on a check, and then handed it to Fang Bai.

"This check can be cashed at any bank in Huaxia. Of course, if you are not satisfied, I can write you another one."

"I cured your heart disease; ten million is just right. Old Master Dongfang, we shall meet again."

Fang Bai glanced at the check, pocketed it, and then turned to leave.

"Please wait, Doctor Fang!"

Dongfang Leiming called out. Seeing Fang Bai stop, he quickly jotted down a mobile number on a piece of paper and walked over to slip it into Fang Bai's hand.

"Doctor Fang, if you ever need help in the future, you can dial the number on this, and someone will come forward to assist you... It seems like Doctor Fang is in a hurry to be on his way? I have matters here to attend to as well, so I won't keep you,"

Fang Bai nodded, put the piece of paper and check Dongfang Leiming had thrust into his hands together, and seeing the little beauty named Hua'er with twin ponytails sneaking glances at him, he waved at her and said with a grin, "Little beauty, until we meet again!"

"See you, big brother!"

Hua'er smiled and waved back at Fang Bai. With her grandfather out of harm's way, her mood had brightened.

About fifteen minutes after Fang Bai left, a large number of bodyguards from the Dongfang Family arrived at the scene by car.

Two hospital ambulances arrived at the same time.

The hastily arriving bodyguards went to deal with the aftermath of the shootout and to treat the injured.

The medical staff that got out of the two ambulances, looking panicked, leaped down with stretchers in hand and rushed over to where Dongfang Leiming was.

A bald male doctor in a white coat, seeing Dongfang Leiming unharmed, first paused, then heaved a sigh of relief, wiping the beads of sweat from his forehead, and said with a puzzled face, "Chairman, you... weren't you..."

"My motorcade was just attacked by gunmen, and indeed, I did pass out from my condition, but thankfully a passing doctor revived me. I think I'm temporarily out of danger,"

said Dongfang Leiming, waving his hand.

"Chairman, for the sake of your health, I suggest we still go to the hospital for a thorough check-up as soon as possible."

The bald male doctor bowed deeply, saying respectfully.

The bald male doctor was the dean of Yanjing East Hospital, and East Hospital is one of the industries under Dongfang Group, so the bald dean showed great respect to Dongfang Leiming.

"Yes, Grandpa, let's go to the hospital quickly!"

Hua'er also urged him on, as Dongfang Leiming's sudden collapse into unconsciousness had given her quite a fright, and even now as she recalled the event, her little heart was still thumping wildly.

Dongfang Leiming nodded and got into one of the ambulances, leaving the scene quickly under the protection of a host of bodyguards.

Yanjing East Hospital, located on the eastern outskirts of Yanjing, is one of the large privately-owned hospitals in Yanjing and was designated a Huaxia Grade Three Class-A hospital a year ago, enjoying a good reputation throughout Huaxia and even the world medical community.

Many people know that this internationally renowned hospital is just one of the many industries spread across Huaxia by the Dongfang Family.

As one of the most prominent families in Yanjing, the Dongfang Family is illustrious, and the current Family Head, Dongfang Leiming, is a legendary figure in the Huaxia business community.

It is under Dongfang Leiming's leadership that the originally obscure Dongfang Family has become, in just thirty years, a powerful and influential magnate with assets worth hundreds of billions, holding a significant position in the business community of Yanjing and Huaxia.

Dongfang Hospital was also founded by Dongfang Leiming himself and named after the family surname.

Around two or three in the afternoon, in a conference room of a building at Yanjing East Hospital, the hospital dean Ma Nengzhou, several deputy deans, three authoritative experts in the field of cardio-cerebrovascular diseases, and the actual powers of various departments, all gathered together.

The Family Head of the Dongfang Family, Dongfang Leiming, and the direct descendants of the Dongfang Family filled the entire conference room.

Dongfang Leiming was seventy-eight years old this year and had lived to see four generations under one roof.

Among the direct relatives present, besides Dongfang Leiming's two brothers and two sisters, as well as his children, grandchildren, daughters-in-law, and granddaughters-in-law, the group numbered dozens.

And among these dozens, apart from Dongfang Leiming, the most eye-catching were his granddaughters Dongfang Rushi and Dongfang Ruhua who sat among the grandchildren.

Chapter 114: Inconceivable

Dongfang Rushi had just turned twenty this year and had recently graduated from a renowned business school abroad. She returned to help her grandfather manage the family business.

She embodied a blend of calm, wisdom, and beauty, showcasing extraordinary talent from a young age as a typical child prodigy. She was acclaimed as the "First Talented Businesswoman of Huaxia" and also known as "The First Beauty of Yanjing."

Unlike her sister Dongfang Ruhua, who favored playing with different hairstyles and loved to wear pink, Dongfang Rushi typically dressed in casual black shirts and pants, always keeping her hair pinned up, presenting an image of simplicity and efficiency.

While her sister Dongfang Ruhua was sweet and lovely, Dongfang Rushi was cool and reserved, sparing in her smiles. She had a poker face all year round, often teased by her sister for being robot-like.

The two sisters shared a resemblance in appearance but were entirely different in dress, personality, and interests. However, both were dearly loved by Dongfang Leiming.

At this moment, Dongfang Rushi sat quietly beside her sister, with a placid face that revealed nothing of her inner thoughts.

Her silky, satin-like hair was tied in a bun at the back of her head, and she wore black clothes tailored from high-quality fabric that perfectly accentuated her curvaceous figure.

Yet, her indifferent expression and cold demeanor kept people at a respectful distance.

Dongfang Ruhua was only fourteen this year. Although she didn't possess the stunning talents or the tall and proud figure like her sister, her endearing and adorable nature made her a beloved princess in the family, with everyone enjoying a chat and a laugh with her.

Headed by Ma Nengzhou, the authoritative experts from Dongfang Hospital were huddling together, engaged in a hushed discussion.

All their faces bore indescribable expressions.

An hour earlier, Dongfang Leiming had arrived at Dongfang Hospital following the ambulance and underwent a comprehensive examination that primarily focused on his heart.

The results of the examination left the medical experts, who were familiar with Dongfang Leiming's condition, utterly dumbfounded and in disbelief.

Despite having heard some details from the medical experts, Dongfang Leiming remained composed while waiting for the final verdict. However, Dongfang Ruhua, finding the situation tedious, couldn't help but ask.

"Uncle Ma, what are you all whispering about so secretively? Haven't the results of my grandfather's check-up come out? What's wrong with his illness?"

"Chairman, distinguished guests, I have some great news to report to you here first!"

Hospital Director Ma appeared to be still recovering from the earlier shock, his voice trembling slightly as he said, "After our careful examination, we have conclusively determined that the chairman's heart disease has been cured... Please understand clearly, it's cured! Completely cured!"

"Uncle Ma, is that true?"

Dongfang Ruhua suddenly stood up, her eyes wide with a mix of hope and skepticism.

The other direct descendants of the Dongfang family present at the scene shared a similar expression to Dongfang Ruhua's, hardly daring to believe.

Hospital Director Ma solemnly declared, "Second Miss, how could I joke about such a matter? I can tell you with full responsibility that the chairman has now completely freed himself from the trouble of heart disease. However..."

"However, what?"

Dongfang Ruhua immediately tensed up again, and even Dongfang Leiming couldn't help but frown.

"Although the chairman's heart disease has been cured, we've observed some positive changes that are quite astonishing and unbelievable... it defies medical common sense..."

Director Ma raised the several diagnostic slips in his hand and continued, "These are the various test data regarding the Chairman's cardiac function. If I were to summarize these data into one sentence, it would be: the heart of a fifty-year-old in the body of a seventy-year-old!"

"Director Ma, do you mean that not only has my grandfather's heart condition recovered, but its function is also like that of a fifty-year-old?"

Although Dongfang Ruhua was young, she was also exceptionally sharp. After a moment of surprise, she immediately understood the implications of Director Ma's last sentence. Her clear eyes, distinctly black and white, radiated with excitement.

"Yes, Second Miss!"

Director Ma nodded vigorously, saying with undisguised excitement, "I've been practicing medicine for decades, and I've never seen anything like this. It's simply a miracle!"

"Grandpa, is this related to that big brother named Fang Bai?"

Dongfang Ruhua turned her head to look at her grandfather, Dongfang Leiming, remembering Fang Bai's face that seemed to sparkle with radiant sunlight when he smiled.

"Hua'er, both of us, grandfather and granddaughter, have been shortsighted!"

Despite being someone who had braved countless tumultuous situations, Dongfang Leiming couldn't help feeling overwhelmingly excited upon learning that not only had his heart disease been cured, but he had also regained the heart health of his fifties.

"When that Doctor Fang accepted my check for ten million, he said he had cured my heart disease and that the ten million was well-deserved... At that time, I didn't believe it, but now it seems that Doctor Fang was telling the truth!"

Dongfang Leiming slowly stood up, let out a long sigh, and said, "Ten million in exchange for a life, I've got a great bargain! Doctor Fang's medical skill is so remarkable, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call him a Divine Doctor!"

"Is that big brother's medical skill even better than the four National Doctors by the Prime Minister's side?"

Dongfang Ruhua tilted her head and asked.

She remembered that when her grandfather invited a National Doctor to treat his heart condition years ago, that doctor didn't seem to have much of an answer either, merely offering suggestions like getting adequate rest, engaging in appropriate exercise, and avoiding excitement.

If the National Doctors couldn't cure an illness that the smiling big brother managed to heal, didn't that mean that the National Doctors were not as good as him?

In response to his granddaughter's question, Dongfang Leiming remained noncommittal.

In fact, Dongfang Leiming had always had the utmost faith in the four National Doctors, considering their medical expertise to be the best in all of Huaxia. Even the Prime Minister held them in high regard; it

was just that his heart condition was somewhat unusual, and not even surgery could cure it, so he lived each day as it came.

Because of this, Dongfang Leiming had even prepared his will and affairs for the afterlife, fearing that he might suddenly depart from this world one day, leaving the Dongfang Family unprepared and in disarray.

"Xiao Li, you should still remember what Doctor Fang looks like, right?"

Dongfang Leiming suddenly turned around and asked a bodyguard who stood behind him in a low voice.

Seeing the bodyguard nod, Dongfang Leiming continued, "Doctor Fang should be in Yanjing City. Take some people with you and try to find him. If you can locate him, say... say that Dongfang Leiming is inviting him to my home as a guest, to properly thank him in person!"

"Grandpa, haven't you already given him a diagnosis fee of ten million?"

In Dongfang Ruhua's view, it was commendable that Fang Bai had cured her grandfather's heart disease, but her grandfather had also given him a generous fee. The two were even.

Chapter 115: Hi, handsome!

"Hua'er, that Doctor Fang didn't just save Grandpa's life, but he also gave him a heart that is twenty years younger. Tell me, can you buy that with a mere ten million?"

Dongfang Leiming was extremely astute and didn't view matters as superficially as his granddaughter.

He reached out to touch Dongfang Ruhua's head and continued with a chuckle, "Besides, everyone eats grains, who doesn't have some ailments? To make an acquaintance like Doctor Fang, that's an extra layer of security for our lives!"

"Oh, I understand now."

Dongfang Ruhua nodded, enlightened, and the delicate visage of the smiling young man in black resurfaced in her mind.

.....

Yanjing City, situated at the northern end of the North China Plain, near the Bohai Bay, with the Liaodong Peninsula above, the Shandong Peninsula below, and surrounded by mountains on the west, north, and northeast, was blessed with both mountains and waters, a place of outstanding people and magical land, the site of several ancient dynasties.

When Fang Bai took his first step into Yanjing City, he felt an extraordinary aura and couldn't help but feel elated.

This elation was not because of the many beautiful scenes near Yanjing, nor because of the bustling Yanjing City, but because the air here carried traces of Essence Energy.

Fang Bai was certain that near Yanjing City, there must be some natural treasure containing a massive amount of Essence Energy, or even a vein of Essence Stones hidden in the nearby mountains.

Previously, in Fuhu Mountain, Fang Bai had found ten of the lowest quality Red Essence Stones and was already thrilled. If he could truly find an Essence Stone Mine near Yanjing, that would be like striking a huge windfall.

If he really found an Essence Stone Vein, then for a long time to come, Fang Bai wouldn't have to worry about a lack of Cultivation Resources.

After arriving in Yanjing, Fang Bai contacted Su Linglong on his cell phone and learned that she had arrived a few days before him and had already reported to Yanjing Hospital.

At that time, Su Linglong was out exploring Yanjing City with a group of girlfriends.

Su Linglong wanted to rush over to meet Fang Bai and then accompany him to report to Yanjing Hospital, but Fang Bai politely declined her offer with a laugh.

After ending the call with Su Linglong, Fang Bai hailed a taxi and headed straight for Yanjing Hospital.

Yanjing Hospital, a large integrative hospital combining traditional Chinese and Western medicine, was equipped with advanced medical facilities and had highly skilled doctors. It was famous throughout Huaxia and renowned worldwide, with many of Huaxia's leading medical figures teaching there.

Even one of the current four 'National Doctors' of Huaxia started their career there.

Fang Bai, with his internship qualification certificate, reported to the Traditional Chinese Medicine department of Yanjing Hospital. He smoothly completed all the procedures and was assigned to intern in the acupuncture and massage department, starting work three days later.

As per regulations, medical interns aren't paid, and they're also responsible for all of their living expenses including food, clothing, housing, and transportation.

For interns from less affluent backgrounds, spending an entire year in a high-cost city like Yanjing without earning money could be quite a burden.

However, money was currently not an issue for Fang Bai.

With the few million he had obtained from Rejuvenation Hall, coupled with the ten-million-yuan check from Dongfang Leiming that he had yet to cash, Fang Bai now had fifteen million yuan on hand.

With a bit of frugality, this amount was more than enough for Fang Bai to live comfortably in Yanjing for a while.

Of course, Fang Bai's effort to earn money was mainly to gather Cultivation Resources. If he took a fancy to any desirable Cultivation artifact, he would spare no expense to obtain it.

In that case, over ten million yuan in his possession really wouldn't be considered much.

In the small wooden box on Fang Bai's person, there were still ten pieces of Red Essence Stone. To the average person, these ten pieces of Red Essence Stone were considered to be top-grade jade, which could fetch tens of millions if sold on the market.

Of course, Fang Bai had no intention of selling the hard-earned Essence Stones; he planned to use them for cultivation, to increase his own strength.

When Fang Bai used the Essence Stones to cultivate, he needed to circulate his cultivation technique to absorb the Essence Energy contained within the stones. Once the Essence Energy was drawn out, it was like a person being drained of their essence.

By then, the ten magnificent Essence Stones would become ten piles of worthless stone chips, which would be impossible to sell.

After handling the hospital matters, Fang Bai's next step was to rent a house to serve as his base in Yanjing for the foreseeable future.

Fang Bai preferred to rent a place in a quiet suburban area, ideally one with a large courtyard and close to the mountains, which would facilitate his external cultivation.

In fact, Fang Bai had enough money to buy a house in Yanjing, but he had decided to use those funds to purchase jade instead. He felt that spending millions on a house was unnecessary for the time being.

Fang Bai took a taxi and spent nearly two hours touring the eastern and northern suburbs of Yanjing, finally arriving at a village in the northern suburban-rural border, as suggested by the taxi driver.

According to the taxi driver, this village had many houses available for rent, most of which came with courtyards.

Normally, students were the primary tenants, but since the summer break had started, many had vacated and returned home, making it quite easy for Fang Bai to find a suitable house to rent.

Having arrived near the village mentioned by the taxi driver, Fang Bai paid the fare, got out of the taxi, and walked slowly along a concrete road leading to the village.

The architecture in this village was dominated by quadrangle courtyards of various sizes, each planting willows both inside and outside the yard.

Based on the architectural style of these courtyards and the age of the willows, this village appeared to have some history.

After a stroll around the village, Fang Bai completely fell for the place.

The environment was serene, the air fresh, with little bridges over meandering water streams, and homes exuding simplicity.

Standing at the entrance to the village and gazing north, he could see the towering mountains stretching into the distance.

What thrilled Fang Bai the most was that the faint Essence Energy permeating Yanjing City seemed to emanate from the mountain range to the north.

This indicated that within those mountains lay treasures or an Essence Stone Vein suitable for martial artists to cultivate.

"I'll settle down here!"

Fang Bai decided that no matter how expensive the rent was, he would lease a house and settle in.

The taxi driver was right; there were many households in the village with vacancies. As Fang Bai strolled through the village, he noticed many "Room for Rent Inside the Courtyard" signs posted next to the doors of numerous homes.

Fang Bai visited a few of these homes but wasn't completely satisfied with any; either the courtyards were too small or too cluttered.

"Hey, handsome! Are you looking to rent a house?"

Not long after stepping out of one household, Fang Bai heard a crisp voice calling from behind.

Fang Bai turned around to find a beautiful young girl about sixteen or seventeen years old, with long hair reaching her waist, standing before him.

Chapter 116: Renting a House

The young girl had an oval-shaped face, sparkling eyes, white teeth, a straight nose with rosy lips, and extremely beautiful features. Her eyes were lightly accented with smoky makeup, and her cheeks had a touch of blush, exuding innocence and cuteness with a hint of charming sensuality.

She was wearing a summer school uniform for female middle school students, a white short-sleeve shirt paired with a black and red checkered knee-length skirt. Her straight and slender calves were exposed, dazzlingly white, and she wore a pair of black sandals on her feet, with a backpack slung on her back.

It was now the beginning of July, and schools across Huaxia had already begun their summer vacations. Judging by the appearance of the girl, she was likely on her way to a supplementary class.

If she was heading to school, the school would not permit students to wear makeup.

The corners of the girl's eyes and lips were slightly upturned, suggesting she was likely someone who was independent and had a rebellious streak.

"Hmm, I'm looking to rent a place."

Fang Bai looked at the girl before him and said with a smile, "Are you offering to introduce me to a house?"

"We have several vacant rooms at home. They're a bit pricey, but we keep everything inside and outside the house clean and tidy, unlike others' disorganized mess, guaranteeing your satisfaction. So what do you say, handsome, want to come and take a look?"

The girl crossed her arms over her chest and sized Fang Bai up and down with a seemingly wise and weathered air.

"Alright. Lead the way, please."

Fang Bai nodded with a smile and followed the girl to a courtyard residence located at the northwest corner of the village.

The girl walked briskly and urgently, with an energetic stride unlike that of a girl, in stark contrast to her delicate and beautiful appearance.

With a graceful figure and light steps, the girl's movement exuded beauty whether she moved quickly or slowly, providing a pleasurable sight.

From behind, Fang Bai admired the girl's agile and elegant figure, and for a moment, felt as if both the village and the girl were scenes from a painting.

After a four to five-minute walk, they pushed open a large red lacquered gate and entered the girl's home.

Her family's residence was also a courtyard residence, larger than the few others Fang Bai had previously seen.

Two robust willow trees grew in the center of the courtyard, with grape trellises built against the walls on both the east and west sides, already laden with grapes. Beneath the trellises, there were stone stools and a stone table.

In the scorching summer days, resting under the dappled light of the grape trellises was indeed an appealing choice.

To the north side of the courtyard were three tiled houses, where the landlord obviously resided. Although the houses were old, they were well-kept and appeared regularly maintained.

To the east of these tiled houses lay the kitchen and storeroom, while to the west, there were three connected bungalows, which were likely the ones available for rent.

At the two ends near the entrance to the southern side of the courtyard, there were two small vegetable patches growing seasonal greens.

The layout of the girl's home reminded Fang Bai of his own in Zhongzhou, and upon entering the courtyard, he immediately decided to live there, even without seeing the rooms.

"Handsome, wait here for a moment. I'll go get the keys. You can check if the room is to your liking in the meantime."

Speaking thus, the girl dashed into the room at the eastern end of the tiled houses and returned holding a set of keys.

"All three of these rooms are available. Have a look and see which one you prefer. If you're satisfied, then we can discuss the rent."

"No need to look. I'll take all three rooms. I'll rent them for a year first. Tell me how much it is," Fang Bai said with a smile.

"Renting all three?"

The girl paused, then asked, "You're not alone?"

"No, just me alone."

"You're renting three rooms just for yourself? Can you really use them all?"

"I like the quiet. If I rent all three rooms, you won't need to rent to anyone else. Is that not okay?"

"That's fine. But... as I said earlier, our rooms are a bit more expensive than others'."

"There has to be a price, no matter how expensive, right?"

"Oh, each room's rent for one year is five thousand, so renting three rooms would be fifteen thousand. Plus, utility bills and the like are on you..."

"Deal!"

Fang Bai had thought that the three rooms would be very expensive. Fifteen thousand a year was indeed much higher than the rent at other places, but to live in such a beautiful environment by the mountains and water, Fang Bai felt like he had stumbled upon a great bargain.

On his way to Yanjing, to make spending more convenient, Fang Bai always carried around several hundred thousand in cash.

After reaching an agreement with the young girl, Fang Bai immediately took out fifteen thousand from his backpack, handed it to her, and signed his name on the rental contract that had been prepared earlier.

And so, Fang Bai officially became the tenant of this courtyard house, and what's more, the only tenant.

The girl carefully counted the money to make sure it was correct, and then handed over the keys to the three rooms to Fang Bai before happily entering the tile-roofed room on the east side.

Fang Bai, blessed with excellent hearing, heard the girl seemingly talking to a woman in the room.

The woman seemed to be in her forties, with a weak voice as though she was burdened by illness.

Fang Bai had no interest in eavesdropping on others' privacy, so he took the three keys and opened the doors to the three rooms on the west side.

Looking inside, he saw that each room was very clean. The windows shone, and there wasn't a speck of dust; Fang Bai was very satisfied.

The rooms were well-equipped and had some simple furniture. Fang Bai only needed to buy some basic necessities to live there comfortably.

As for meals, Fang Bai intended to eat all three meals outside to avoid the hassle of washing and cleaning and to change flavors often, thereby trying out all the different cuisines of Yanjing City.

After sitting in the room for a while, the sun began to set, and it was nearing dusk.

Fang Bai prepared to go out for dinner and buy some things on the way back, and then take a hot bath before sitting on the bed to perform his exercises and relieve the exhaustion from traveling these past few days.

Just as he was about to lock the door to leave, he saw the red lacquered gate of the courtyard being pushed open, and a man with long hair and a full beard walked in.

The bearded man was in his early forties, around one meter seventy-five tall, slightly stocky, with bushy eyebrows and large eyes, a straight nose, and wearing a set of somewhat worn gray linen clothes.

If the bearded man's skin weren't so dark, if there wasn't a scar an inch long on his left cheek, if his long hair were cut shorter, if he could shave off his full beard, he would undoubtedly be a very handsome man.

The bearded man entered the courtyard and, seeing Fang Bai, paused for a moment, then his eyes narrowed as he closely sized up Fang Bai.

With just one glance at the bearded man, Fang Bai sensed a dangerous aura.

This was a martial artist even stronger than himself!

From the moment Fang Bai saw the bearded man, he made this judgment.

Based on the realms of martial artists in this world, if Fang Bai was a mid-rank Profound Level martial artist, then this bearded man could very well be a high-rank Profound Level martial artist.

This was the first time Fang Bai had encountered someone with greater strength than himself since his rebirth in this world.

Chapter 117: Man-Eating Flower

Under the intimidating gaze of the bearded man, sharp as a blade, Fang Bai deliberately displayed a hint of panic, his interest in the man growing immensely.

Although Fang Bai was himself a martial artist, he wasn't worried about being seen through by the stronger bearded man.

According to common sense, among martial artists, the weaker have no way to hide their strength in front of the stronger.

But Fang Bai was an exceptional martial artist. The cultivation technique he practiced came from the Cultivation World he inhabited before his soul transmigration, far superior to any cultivation methods in this world practiced by other martial artists. Unless he intentionally revealed it, no one would be able to tell he was a martial artist.

Fang Bai could smell a heavy scent of blood on the bearded man, which wasn't human blood but from certain animals.

From this, Fang Bai speculated that the bearded man likely worked in slaughtering animals like pigs and sheep.

"Mingyue, come out!"

After scrutinizing Fang Bai for a moment and concluding he was just an ordinary boy, the bearded man's face finally showed a smile as he stood in the courtyard and called out loudly.

"Dad, you're back?"

Upon hearing the bearded man's voice, the girl wearing a middle school uniform ran out from the house, grinning and circling around the bearded man.

"You look in good spirits today, and there's even a smile on your face... Dad, I bet you made more money than usual today, am I right?"

Mingyue's father seemed to dote on his daughter a lot. Seeing her, his smile broadened, and he reached out to pat the girl's head.

"Business was good today; most of the pork, beef, and lamb were sold. Haha, when business is good, I make more money, and when I make more money, I'm happy. And of course, when I'm happy, I smile... Mingyue, did you pay attention in your tutoring class today?"

"Of course! I was really focused!"

The girl named Mingyue assured earnestly, but as she spoke, her eyes kept darting around, revealing a hint of slyness, obviously lying.

Mingyue's father nodded, satisfied, and said, "I'm just a pig butcher without much prospects. Your mother is sick and can't earn money. So you must study hard and earn more when you grow up. You'll need to support the family when your mother and I get old."

"Studying hard doesn't necessarily lead to a good future though!"

Mingyue pouted, speaking dismissively: "Han Xiaomei in our class dropped out last year to help her parents sell clothes, and she made a lot of money. Now she even has her own car."

"So what, do you also want to drop out and help me butcher pigs?"

Mingyue's father was displeased, glaring at his daughter and scolding, "I'm warning you, if you don't study hard, I'll spank you!"

Seeing Fang Bai still standing in the yard, watching with a smile, Mingyue felt embarrassed and frustrated, stamping her foot and saying, "Dad, I'm already a big girl, and you still keep threatening to spank me. It's not shameful for you to not earn money, but I'm embarrassed enough!"

"If you know it's embarrassing, then study hard for me. If you do well, you'll be rewarded by your dad; but if not, you'll be waiting for a slap!"

Mingyue's father laughed heartily.

"Dad, our house has been rented out."

Mingyue seemed to hate studying and quickly changed the subject, pointing at Fang Bai and saying, "It's him; he rented all three rooms by himself! He paid a year's rent, and I've given it to mom to keep safe!"

Mingyue's father waved Fang Bai over, and once Fang Bai approached, he asked with a smile, "Young man, what's your last name?"

"Hello, uncle, I'm Fang Bai."

"Oh, Fang Bai, are you studying in Yanjing, or are you working here?"

"I'm a student at Zhongzhou Medical College, preparing for a one-year internship at Yanjing Hospital."

"I see... well, Yanjing Hospital is a big hospital... and being a doctor is a good profession with a lot of prospects. Young man, work hard, and in the future, you'll make a lot of money to support your parents. Don't be like my daughter, half-hearted in her studies, having teachers come for home visits for no

reason, and having to spend money on summer classes, not even sure if it's useful... Ouch, Mingyue, stop pinching me!"

"Who told you to speak ill of me!"

Mingyue reached out and pinched her father's waist, then dodged away and made a face at him.

"Sigh, my daughter has been rebellious since she was young. If I tell her to go east, she goes west; there's just no controlling her... How did I end up with such a mischievous girl?"

Mingyue's father rubbed his forehead in distress, looking as though he was deeply disappointed.

"Uncle, I think what Mingyue said makes sense. Diligent study doesn't necessarily guarantee success. I know quite a few university graduates who aren't doing so well, while some who only finished elementary or middle school are doing pretty good. In the end, no one can say for certain what the future holds; it all depends on chance and opportunity. In my view, as long as a girl doesn't follow bad influences and become corrupted, she should be left to make her own choices!"

"Dad, did you hear that? Fang Bai is an outstanding student from the medical college, and even he says studying is useless. Why do you have to be so strict with me... I might as well not go to that tutoring class anymore! It's so annoying to study!"

Mingyue felt as if she had found a kindred spirit after hearing Fang Bai's words.

"You wouldn't dare!"

Mingyue's father glared with a threatening look. "We spent two thousand yuan enrolling you in a tutoring class; you think you can just say no and not go? That money would be wasted. Say you won't go again, try me."

With that, he rolled up his sleeves, as if ready to strike.

Mingyue let out a scream and dashed into the room. When she came back out, she was pushing a wheelchair with a middle-aged woman in it who looked about the same age as Mingyue's father.

Fang Bai knew this woman must be Mingyue's mother, who had been talking with Mingyue inside the room just now.

Mingyue's mother seemed frail and pallid, with a complexion that looked as if it had a layer of dust on it, similar to the color of the sky in Yanjing on days when the air quality was poor.

"Mom, dad's going to hit me; you have to take my side!"

Mingyue wheeled her mother out from the room to intervene.

"This is Mingyue's mother. She's unwell and can't walk easily."

Mingyue's father saw Fang Bai looking at his wife and lost the will to reprimand his daughter. He sighed and the smile faded from his face, his expression growing somber.

"Hello."

Mingyue's mother smiled weakly at Fang Bai.

Fang Bai glanced at Mingyue's mother's face and knew instantly that her father was lying.

Her mother didn't have a sickness, she had been poisoned by something called the "Man-Eating Flower."

This type of poison was something Fang Bai had encountered in his previous life in the Cultivation World, made from the pollen of a flower called the "Man-Eating Flower," mixed with several other toxic venoms.

The "Man-Eating Flower" poison wasn't particularly strong; it was not the kind that kills someone almost instantly after ingestion, but rather, it had a slow and enduring toxicity.

Once afflicted with the "Man-Eating Flower" poison, the toxin would gradually seep into the internal organs, bones, and bloodstream, slowly devouring a person's vitality until they eventually died, which could take months or even years.

Chapter 118: Baili Mingyue

"Uncle, how long has Auntie been sick?"

Fang Bai asked casually.

"It has been over a decade now... Fang Bai, you haven't finished shopping yet, right? Why don't you let Mingyue accompany you to the nearby department store to look around?"

Mingyue's father seemed very reluctant to discuss his wife's illness with strangers and smily steered the conversation away.

Surviving for over ten years with the "Man-Eating Flower" poison indicates that there must be some special medicine suppressing the spread of the toxin.

However, while this method can extend a patient's life, it only treats the symptoms, not the root cause, and the backlash will be severe in the future.

Once the toxicity accumulates to a certain level within the body, it will suddenly erupt. At that time, the poisoned person's skin turns black, black blood flows from all seven orifices, and they die in extreme agony—the death is horrifically tragic.

Presumably, Mingyue's parents have yet to find a cure for the poison and can only rely on certain drugs to suppress it, hanging on day by day.

Seeing that Mingyue's father did not wish to elaborate, Fang Bai did not press further. After chatting with the family about this and that, he followed Mingyue to the nearby department store to shop.

On the way to the department store, Fang Bai learned through Mingyue that their family name was Qiu, with the father named Qiu Zhan, and the mother, Qiu Yuzhi.

For some reason, Fang Bai always had an intuition that both Qiu Zhan and Qiu Yuzhi, this couple, exuded a sense of mystery.

There's no need to mention Qiu Zhan, who is an even more powerful Martial Artist than Fang Bai.

And although Qiu Yuzhi is stricken with a strange toxin, weak and infirm, Fang Bai was certain that had it not been for the toxin, she would also have been a Martial Artist, with strength not much less than her husband's.

Fang Bai speculated that the Qiu family must be living in seclusion here, and they must have lived here for many years, fully integrating into the life of this place.

Martial Artists live in seclusion typically for two reasons: one is to seek peace after being accustomed to a lively and bustling life; the other is to avoid enemies.

In the case of the Qiu family, the latter possibility seems more likely.

Fang Bai even suspected that the Qiu family might not originally carry the surname Qiu, and it's quite possible that after living in seclusion here, they had someone help them change their names and continue living under new identities.

Logically, a secluded Martial Artist should prefer tranquillity and not easily rent out their house. But when Fang Bai saw Qiu Yuzhi, he understood some of the reasons.

Qiu Yuzhi, stricken with the strange toxin, needed to prepare medicinal herbs to suppress the toxicity, and those herbs were certainly not cheap. Over the years, this drained the Qiu family's finances, necessitating the renting out of rooms for some income.

Qiu Zhan was a master, and there were plenty of ways he could make money, but if the family was hiding from enemies, they would not dare to show themselves, much less attract attention.

Mingyue was studying at Yanjing No. 16 Middle School. After the summer vacation ended, she would move up to the third year of high school. Although Fang Bai had not talked much with her, he had already gotten a clear sense of her character.

Mingyue was an independent and rebellious girl, generous in spirit, and highly principled. It was said that many students in school liked her, but there were also not a few who had conflicts with her.

Mingyue liked to stand up against injustice. Whenever she saw someone being bullied at school, she would intervene. The fact that she had learned some self-defense skills from her father since a young age made her formidable in a fight and even boys were afraid of her, leading to the nickname "Campus Witch."

In Yanjing No. 16 Middle School, although Mingyue could not be considered wealthy, when it came to looks, she was undoubtedly first. She required no makeup—a plain face was enough to outshine the other dolled-up girls.

Of course, if she put on some light makeup, like the subtle smoky eyes and a hint of blush she wore today, she was breathtaking, capable of overshadowing the second most beautiful girl in school by miles.

But despite Mingyue's beauty, no boy dared to give her a second glance, let alone pursue her.

Because Mingyue's temperament was volatile; instead of engaging in verbal altercations like most, she was direct with her hands and feet.

It was said that a boy, after giving her a few extra glances and whistling at her, ended up getting beaten into a pig-headed state by her, unrecognizable even to his own parents when he got home.

So this thorny blossom was left untouched by the boys, who feared just one careless touch would leave them bloodied.

On the way, Fang Bai cracked a few harmless jokes with Mingyue, and she responded by glaring at him several times, threatening to thrash him.

If it had been a boy who knew Mingyue's personality, he would have turned pale with fright at her threats, but Fang Bai just chuckled.

Though the girl had learned some skills from her parents, her Qi Sea didn't contain any True Yuan, which meant she hadn't reached any significant level of mastery and couldn't be considered a Martial Artist. Fang Bai could subdue her with just one finger.

The department store had everything from large refrigerators and televisions to the smallest items like toothpaste and toothbrushes, encompassing all necessities of life.

Accompanied by Mingyue, Fang Bai took a walk around the market and purchased some toiletries and bedding.

By the time they finished shopping, dusk had fallen. Fang Bai carried several large and small bags while Mingyue also helped him carry a couple; together, they headed out of the department store.

"You've been with me for so long, you must be tired and hungry, right? To show my gratitude, let me treat you to dinner!"

Reaching the entrance of the department store and smelling the fragrance wafting from a noodle shop, Fang Bai said to Mingyue with a smile.

"Do you have your phone with you? Let me borrow it; I need to call my dad and tell him you're treating me to dinner."

Mingyue was straightforward and enjoyed making friends. She had walked and talked with Fang Bai and found him to be a pretty good conversationalist. When Fang Bai offered to treat her to dinner, she didn't hesitate.

Fang Bai freed up his right hand and handed his phone to Mingyue.

"Wow, an apple phone! What does your family do, Fang Bai? You seem quite rich!"

Mingyue took Fang Bai's phone, first made a call to her father at home, and after hanging up, she examined the phone closely and then stared at Fang Bai, inquiring.

Scratching his head, Fang Bai said, "Rich is not exactly the word, but we have enough to eat and wear. My family comes from a lineage of Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners, and my father is an old TCM doctor who runs a clinic in Zhongzhou."

Mingyue's eyes lit up, and she eagerly asked, "Is your father's medical skill highly proficient?"

"To be honest... my medical skill is even better than my father's."

"Ah..."

Mingyue immediately lost her enthusiasm.

"What's wrong?"

Fang Bai was curious upon seeing Mingyue's listless appearance.

Mingyue sighed and said, "My mother has been ill for over a decade, and no treatment has cured her. These last two years, her condition seems to have gotten worse. If your father was a good doctor, I would have asked him to come see my mother. But now..."

Fang Bai smiled and said, "You're disappointed because you heard that my father's medical skill isn't even as good as mine, right?"

Mingyue nodded and said, "Yes. You are just a medical student intern; I imagine your medical skill isn't that advanced, and if my father isn't even as good as you, then it's definitely not going to work."

She paused for a moment, then, without waiting for Fang Bai to respond, turned and walked towards the noodle shop, saying, "Let's just eat. I have to go home after dinner, or else my parents will worry."

Chapter 119: Love Rival

"Order whatever you like to eat or drink, don't worry about saving money for me."

Fang Bai caught up and, after finding a spot to put down his bags, he patted his chest and said to Mingyue.

"Don't worry, I never knew the meaning of the word 'modesty'!"

Mingyue said cheerfully, ordering her usual favorites—two side dishes and a bottle of beer—then turned to Fang Bai, "That's all for me, what about you?"

Fang Bai had a much larger appetite than Mingyue and preferred meat dishes. Seeing that Mingyue had only ordered two vegetarian dishes, he added four meat dishes, two more vegetarian dishes, and a soup.

Where Mingyue had ordered a bottle of beer, Fang Bai went for a bottle of baijiu, and the high-proof kind at that.

"There are only two of us, yet we've ordered eight dishes and a soup, we can't possibly finish it all! Fang Bai, you're being too wasteful! Having money doesn't mean you should spend it like this!"

Mingyue scoffed at Fang Bai's extravagant wastefulness and criticized him without reserve.

Fang Bai sighed, "When I was a child, my family was poor, and I never had a full meal. I was skinny and weak, as pathetic as one could be. Now that I have money, I just want to eat more to make up for the past!"

"That mentality of yours is just like that of a nouveau riche!"

Mingyue rolled her eyes and said irritably.

Fang Bai laughed out loud, not taking offense, and sat down at a dining table with Mingyue.

"It's such a hot day, how refreshing it is to drink a chilled beer. But you're drinking baijiu... that's really beyond my comprehension! Can you even finish a bottle of baijiu? That's about half a liter!"

Once seated, Mingyue poured herself a beer and, seeing Fang Bai pour a glass of baijiu, couldn't help but comment.

"Drinking beer is no different from drinking tap water; it doesn't give me a buzz! A man should drink the strongest liquor! Honestly, I was born with a great capacity for alcohol. Half a liter of baijiu is simply a warm-up for me; a liter gets me into the mood, and three to five liters is just right."

"You're boasting!"

"For a young lady like you, being able to drink a bottle of beer is not bad; you have a decent tolerance."

"Psh, if I had three or five female classmates to drink with me, I could handle eight to ten bottles easily!"

Mingyue patted her full, resilient chest and also blew her own trumpet.

The two clinked glasses and began drinking, as the eight dishes and one soup were served one after another.

Mingyue had thought Fang Bai ordered so many dishes just to show off, but to her astonishment, he coordinated bites of food with swigs of alcohol like a whirlwind, actually managing to consume most of the huge spread, especially favoring the meat dishes.

Mingyue was dumbfounded. She had thought she could eat a lot, was hearty, and had no care for her image at meals, but today she realized that compared to Fang Bai, she was just playing at it, not even worth mentioning.

"You are really a foodie!"

Mingyue commented, filled with emotions, as Fang Bai finished the last sip of his drink and the last piece of meat.

She had thought Fang Bai would be full after eating so much, but unexpectedly, he ordered a big bowl of ramen, claiming it was to keep her company and eat at a leisurely pace.

"Qiu Mingyue, you're eating here too?"

A nasal voice called out, and Mingyue turned her head to see six young men and women, about her age, entering the noodle shop.

The speaker was a boy with several pimples on his face, wearing a white T-shirt, paired with blue denim shorts, and sporting a pair of white summer sports shoes on his feet.

Clearly acquainted with Qiu Mingyue, upon seeing her, the pimple-faced boy greeted her.

Seeing Mingyue turn her head to look at him, the pimpled boy became excited as if injected with chicken blood, puffing his chest out proudly, and the adoring look in his eyes couldn't be concealed at all.

Then he glanced at Fang Bai, who was sitting opposite Mingyue, and his expression went blank for a moment. Then, his face reddened like a fighting cock, and his gaze filled with killing Qi as he looked at Fang Bai.

"Sun Hao, Yang Juan, Dapeng, Liu Yang, Mei Xi, Duoduo, how come you guys are all together?"

Seeing the group of six boys and girls approach, Mingyue put down her beer bottle and casually asked.

"It's Duoduo's birthday today; Dapeng is treating us, so we came along."

Sun Hao, the boy with acne, took his gaze off Fang Bai and pointed to a round-faced cute girl.

"Duoduo, how come you didn't even let me know about your birthday today?"

Mingyue looked at Duoduo with dissatisfaction and said, "Don't you consider me a friend?"

Apparently a bit afraid of Mingyue, the "Campus Witch," Duoduo replied timidly, her face flushed, "That's not it, Mingyue. I know your parents are strict, and you're attending tutoring classes, so I didn't call you over. Please... please don't be mad!"

Mingyue pouted and dismissively said, "We're classmates. My parents wouldn't oppose me celebrating a classmate's birthday. As for tutoring classes... I go if I want, I don't if I don't, no one can dictate me!"

At that point, she took out fifty yuan from her pocket, forcefully stuffed it into Duoduo's hand, and said with an air of grandiosity, "It's your birthday, and I didn't get you a gift. Take this fifty yuan as a token of my thoughts. Also, I'm treating you all for the meal today... Dapeng, don't argue with me, or I'll beat you up!"

"No... won't argue... I'm not arguing..."

The tall, thin boy named Dapeng, holding a custom-made birthday cake, hastily waved his hands and forced out a smile uglier than crying upon hearing her words.

No wonder he wore that expression; he had intended to use Duoduo's birthday as a chance to treat her and the others to gain her favor, but he hadn't expected to encounter Mingyue, who usurped his opportunity to show his attentiveness.

At Yanjing No. 16 Middle School, especially among the boys in Mingyue's class, few were not afraid of her. Dapeng, a classmate of Mingyue's, had once tried to hit on her and ended up being soundly beaten by her.

Even though they had thawed their previous animosity, Dapeng still harbored a psychological shadow. Whenever he saw Mingyue, his legs would uncontrollably tremble, and he would stutter when speaking.

"Come on, everyone, take a seat here... Duoduo, come with me to order the food, and choose what you like to eat... Today I'm the host, everyone should eat and drink well! Oh yes, Fang Bai, do you still have money on you? Great, when it's time to pay for Duoduo and the others' meal, cover it for me first, and I'll pay you back later."

Mingyue acted like a big sister, making sure Dapeng and the others sat around the table and confirming that Fang Bai had enough money to cover the treat before dragging Duoduo by the hand to order food.

"Hey, what's your relationship with Qiu Mingyue?"

Seeing Mingyue leave, Sun Hao glared at Fang Bai with a malicious look and asked in a low voice.

"My relationship with Mingyue? Of course, we're friends... the really good kind, you know!"

Fang Bai knew Sun Hao considered him a rival in love and couldn't help but chuckle, deliberately teasing him.

Sun Hao obviously understood, and his neck turned red as well. Out of consideration for Mingyue outside, he wanted to lash out but didn't dare. Instead, he continued to speak in a low voice, "Mingyue has a bad temper, and likes to hit people. You better not hang out with her, or you'll regret it!"

Fang Bai laughed and said, "She's never hit me, she's very gentle towards me."

Chapter 120: Good Man? I'm Not!

When a violent woman becomes tender in front of a man, it often means she has likely fallen for him.

Watching the handsome and unique Fang Bai, decked out in branded clothes, Sun Hao couldn't help but feel inferior. Soon after, he developed a strong sense of hostility towards Fang Bai.

"I've liked Qiu Mingyue for a long time."

Sun Hao began threatening Fang Bai, putting on a fierce look and said viciously, "You better stay away from her, stop hanging out with her. Otherwise... I've got a lot of buddies, just a few of them could beat you flat!"

The few people present were Sun Hao's classmates and friends; obviously, they wouldn't take Fang Bai's side. Sun Hao wasn't worried at all that these words would reach Mingyue's ears.

"Mingyue won't like you."

Fang Bai found arguing with a high school student over jealousy quite amusing and said confidently, "First, you're a bit hard on the eyes and still have a face full of acne; second, from your clothes, it's clear your family isn't well-off; third, you're a weak man. If I were you, I'd have settled this with my fists already if another man was after my woman."

Sun Hao's fists immediately clenched as if he wanted to explode, but thinking of Mingyue outside choosing dishes with Duoduo, he didn't dare to do anything.

Fang Bai taunted Sun Hao a few times. Seeing him so angry his neck reddened and he huffed and puffed, Fang Bai couldn't help but grin and leisurely focused on finishing the bowl of ramen in front of him, ignoring Sun Hao completely.

Mingyue and Duoduo soon returned to the table having ordered ten dishes and a case of beer.

The majority of the dishes were ordered by Mingyue, who thought someone like Fang Bai who adored eating was a once-in-a-millennium find. As long as he didn't keep eating, the dishes would be enough to fill the stomachs of Duoduo and the rest.

With Mingyue there, Sun Hao didn't dare to lose his temper at Fang Bai. Instead, he put on a smiley face, constantly trying to ingratiate himself with Mingyue, even if she said something unpleasant or rolled her eyes in disgust at him, he took it all as sweet as honey.

"Duoduo, Dapeng has been courting you recently, right?"

In the midst of laughter, Mingyue had drunk two bottles of beer, her little face slightly red, and her speech not as clear as before.

Both Duoduo and Dapeng blushed, exchanged glances, then swiftly looked away.

Mingyue let out a snort of laughter, heartily patted Dapeng on the shoulder and said, "You might look a bit effeminate, but you're honest and kind-hearted. With you, Duoduo will definitely not be bullied. Since you like Duoduo, go for it boldly, I support you!"

Though the term "effeminate" somewhat vexed Dapeng, the last words from Mingyue made him smile brightly.

"Duoduo, you can't let Dapeng win you over too easily."

Mingyue patted Duoduo's shoulder again, seriously saying, "Men are all the same, the easier a woman is to pursue, the less they cherish her. Remember, even if you two become a couple in the future, don't just give your body to him lightly... Humph, once a man's had a woman's body, and the novelty has worn off, it's easy for him to crave something new. So as a woman, you must guard your last line of defense well!"

Duoduo nodded in agreement, and there was a new wariness in her gaze towards Dapeng.

Dapeng felt a mix of laughter and tears, thinking that with Mingyue's advice, it was going to be difficult to get intimate with Duoduo in the future.

As the evening wore on with laughter, the sky outside darkened. Mingyue's father called Fang Bai's cell phone to inquire about the situation and urged them to hurry back.

Mingyue also didn't dare to return too late; if her father really got angry, she'd be a bit scared, so she settled the bill with Fang Bai and parted ways with Dapeng, Duoduo, and the others at the ramen shop entrance.

When they arrived back at the courtyard house, Qiu Zhan, who came out to open the door for them, smelled the alcohol on Mingyue, frowned, and said sternly, "Have you been drinking?"

Seeing her father's grim expression, Mingyue stuck out her tongue and said, "It was a classmate's birthday; I had some beer."

Qiu Zhan let out a snort and, due to Fang Bai being nearby, just said, "Don't let it happen again," before letting her wash up and rest.

Fang Bai, carrying bags big and small, entered the middle room on the west side, took out the items he bought and arranged them neatly, spread out the quilt, then closed the doors and windows, took a shower, and honestly lay down to rest.

Fang Bai didn't circulate his cultivation technique, nor did he take out the medicinal pills and Essence Stones he had obtained at Fuhu Mountain for cultivation, for fear of being discovered by Qiu Zhan.

Fang Bai would take out the medicinal pills and Essence Stones for cultivation in the nearby mountains while doing his morning exercises the next day.

Having the expert Qiu Zhan around indeed caused some trouble to Fang Bai's cultivation, but these troubles were only temporary.

As long as Fang Bai diligently practiced cultivation, once his strength surpassed or even matched Qiu Zhan's, he would no longer need to worry.

Because by then, Fang Bai would be able to conceal his own aura well and prevent Qiu Zhan from detecting it.

That night, Fang Bai didn't practice cultivation; instead, he slept soundly with peace of mind.

The next day at around four in the morning, Fang Bai got up to wash, then put on a black thin shirt and pants specially for cultivation, took two jade bottles containing "Gathering Yuan Pills" and ten Red Essence Stones, and placed them together in a wooden box, preparing to leave.

"Fang Bai, this early?"

From the room on the east side of the north side, a "squeak" sound was heard as the door opened, revealing Qiu Zhan's face with a bushy sideburn beard.

"Uncle is early too!"

Knowing he couldn't hide his movements from Qiu Zhan, Fang Bai smiled and said, "I'm used to morning exercise at home every day. Sorry for disturbing your rest, uncle."

Qiu Zhan waved his hand, walked to the courtyard, took a deep breath of fresh air, and said, "I used to like morning exercises too, but now I have to take care of my wife and daughter and rarely have time to go out."

Fang Bai praised, "Uncle is a good man."

"A good man? Not me!"

Qiu Zhan shook his head, gave a self-deprecating smile, and said, "My wife has been sick for over a decade, and I haven't been able to cure her; I can't be by my daughter's side all the time to teach her, I haven't bought her many pretty clothes or the toys she loves... I owe my wife and daughter, I'm not a good man."

Fang Bai said, "Hardships are only temporary, maybe one day, everything will get better."

"I'll take your auspicious words."

Qiu Zhan laughed, clearly in a slightly better mood.

"Strange, this young man named Fang Bai is clearly not a martial artist, yet he has an indescribable, transcendent quality..."

Watching Fang Bai leave through the main gate of the courtyard, Qiu Zhan was thoughtful and then chuckled mockingly at himself, "In this world, some people are just naturally extraordinary. Maybe I'm overthinking it."

In the early hours of a midsummer day at four in the morning, the sky was already slightly lit. As Fang Bai stepped out of the courtyard, there were already people moving about on the village roads, all up for their morning exercises.

It's just that their exercise was limited to the vicinity of the village, at the furthest to a nearby square, no one, like Fang Bai, bolted towards the mountains to the north after leaving the village.