

Doctor 181

Chapter 181: Underwater

"Let's go to the back of the yacht. When the opponent fires the missile, we'll jump into the sea and try not to be spotted by them," Fang Bai said.

Fang Bai no longer steered the yacht and let it drift freely, then he, Ye Wumei, and the Lightning Mink crouched and crawled to the back of the yacht.

"I'm giving you one last ten seconds to stop the yacht, or I will order the missile launch! Ten... nine... eight... seven..."

The woman on the yacht ahead repeated the previous words several times through the loudspeaker. Seeing no response from Ye Wumei and no slowing down of the yacht she was on, the woman ran out of patience and began to count down harshly.

The drawn-out countdown reached Ye Wumei's ears. Whether it was fear or nervousness, her body trembled slightly.

"Are you ready?"

Fang Bai's hand suddenly reached out, grabbed one of Ye Wumei's hands, and asked with a smile.

Ye Wumei, facing Fang Bai's gaze, felt a sudden surge of strength from his smile, as if everything was not so frightening anymore.

"Yes! I'm ready!"

Ye Wumei nodded vigorously.

"Remember, hold your breath before you enter the water, just like you do on land!"

"Yes!"

"Six... five... four..."

The countdown from the yacht ahead came every few seconds, tightening the grip between Fang Bai and Ye Wumei's clasped hands.

"Three... two... Ye Wumei, since you wish to seek death, then I shall grant it!"

The woman on the yacht ahead had a fierce glint flash in her eyes. She raised her right hand high and then swung it down with force.

The burly man beside her, carrying a portable missile launcher, saw her gesture and immediately aimed the missile at the yacht rented by Fang Bai. With a fierce smile on his lips, he pressed the launch button hard.

Whoosh—

The missile howled out of the launch tube, trailing a tail of light, and hurtled towards the yacht rented by Fang Bai.

"Jump!"

The moment he saw the flash of fire, Fang Bai immediately pulled Ye Wumei, and together with the Lightning Mink, they jumped into the sea.

As soon as Fang Bai hit the water, he used the "Thousand Catty Drop" technique to quickly sink.

Boom—

Just one or two seconds after they jumped into the sea, they heard a muffled sound above them, indicating that the yacht had been hit.

Ye Wumei remembered Fang Bai's earlier advice and held her breath the moment she jumped into the sea.

After entering the water, her body sank several meters below the surface with Fang Bai. Initially, she felt somewhat frightened, but as she felt Fang Bai holding her hand tightly, her heart calmed down.

Martial Artists, because they have True Yuan to circulate within their bodies, are very proficient at holding their breath.

If Ye Wumei were to hold her breath on land, she could go for over ten minutes without breathing.

As for someone like Fang Bai, who cultivated a special technique, not only was his body extraordinary, but his True Yuan was also exceptional. Even using the most basic Turtle Breath Technique, he could stay submerged and move underwater for five or six hours straight.

Fang Bai, carrying Ye Wumei, plunged into the sea and, without lingering at the original spot, twisted and turned below the surface like a swimming fish, heading east.

Alone, he could travel a mile in one minute underwater, but with Ye Wumei, his speed was significantly slower.

After about fifteen minutes, Fang Bai, Ye Wumei, and the Lightning Mink appeared beneath the sea surface four or five miles away, while above them, yachts with searchlights occasionally passed.

Fang Bai knew that after sinking their yacht and not finding their bodies, the pursuers had begun searching nearby waters, determined to find them dead or alive.

If Fang Bai and Ye Wumei surfaced now, they would immediately become live targets for the enemies' gunfire.

Fang Bai could hold his breath underwater for a long time, but Ye Wumei couldn't.

She had been holding her breath for over ten minutes and was reaching her limit, feeling as if her chest was about to burst. Remembering what Fang Bai had said earlier, she quickly pushed him hard.

Fang Bai stopped swimming, turned to face Ye Wumei, and pulled her into his arms, slightly tilting his head to seal her lips with his.

"Mmm..."

Ye Wumei, caught off guard by the kiss, widened her eyes in surprise, struggling lightly, but Fang Bai held her even tighter.

Just as Ye Wumei thought to struggle more, she felt a stream of air from Fang Bai's mouth into hers. She inhaled instinctively, and the air swiftly filled her chest, greatly easing the feeling of tightness.

"He's not taking advantage of me; he's giving me breaths to help me," she realized.

That's when Ye Wumei suddenly remembered Fang Bai's words before they jumped into the sea, that no matter what he did, she shouldn't struggle or resist.

Ye Wumei was not the kind of woman who would disregard her own life for the sake of her reputation, so knowing that Fang Bai was doing this to save her, she accepted it wholeheartedly, opening her mouth wider to take in more of the airflow.

To Ye Wumei, Fang Bai's mouth was like an oxygen tank's Qi Shield, and she needed to breathe in more air.

Streams of air passed from Fang Bai's mouth into Ye Wumei's chest, until she felt capable of holding her breath again and pushed Fang Bai away.

Fang Bai seemed to understand her signal and immediately moved his lips away, then continued to swim, holding her with one hand and propelling them forward with the other.

Every fifteen minutes or so, they would stop briefly to exchange breaths, and then they would commence their next dive.

An hour later, there were finally no more signs of yachts above, but still wary of nearby vessels, Fang Bai dared not surface.

Two more hours passed, and the Lightning Mink, that had been following them, surfaced to scan the surroundings, then dove and shook its head and nodded at Fang Bai.

Having been around the little creature for a long time, Fang Bai felt a kind of telepathy and understood that its head shaking and nodding meant there were no longer any yachts above, and it was safe to surface.

Thus, Fang Bai, holding Ye Wumei's hand, quickly ascended, breaking the surface with a splash.

Phew—

Ye Wumei had been stifled underwater for hours, feeling terribly uncomfortable, and upon surfacing, she opened her mouth wide and greedily inhaled the fresh air.

Fang Bai also breathed deeply, needing to replace the slightly stale air in his lungs with fresh air, to be ready in case another yacht came searching and he had to continue

the underwater escape with Ye Wumei.

Having evaded pursuit by four yachts, Fang Bai and Ye Wumei felt like they had narrowly escaped death, but they soon discovered a new major problem.

After hours of underwater travel, they had strayed far from their original path, and even the Lightning Mink couldn't sniff out the trail they had left on the way, making it impossible to return the way they came.

Chapter 182: Lonely Island

Getting lost at sea is a matter of life and death. Fang Bai and Ye Wumei looked at each other, both somewhat dumbfounded.

"What should we do?"

Ye Wumei, with a worried face, said, "We have no idea how far we are from land. If we are close, after daybreak, there might be a chance to encounter a fishing boat, and we'll be rescued; but if it's too far, even if we don't drown, we'll die of thirst or hunger."

Fang Bai forced a smile and said, "The only thing to do now is to find the right direction and try to swim towards land. If we get the direction wrong... well, then we'll just have to wait to become food for fish and shrimp!"

Ye Wumei asked, "But where is the direction to land?"

Fang Bai answered, "I don't know. Little Mink, can you figure out the direction?"

In this world, sometimes animals understand nature better than humans, as well as being more familiar with it. The Lightning Mink, being a half-spirit beast with awakened intelligence, became Fang Bai's hope.

With a "squeak," the Lightning Mink jumped onto Fang Bai's head, stood upright, and looked around. A moment later, it excitedly pointed in a certain direction.

"The Lightning Mink says it senses the presence of land in that direction."

Fang Bai glanced in the direction the Lightning Mink pointed to, said nothing further, and had Ye Wumei hold onto his left arm. With his right arm, he swam powerfully, propelling them through the water like a fish, with Ye Wumei in tow.

The Lightning Mink jumped down from his head, leading the way in front of him.

About two hours later, the sky gradually brightened.

Fang Bai, seeing the fish-belly white of dawn, knew they were swimming towards land. He was overjoyed, and couldn't help but praise the Lightning Mink a few times.

If they hadn't brought this little creature along to rescue someone, Fang Bai and Ye Wumei would likely have been lost at sea by now.

Over the past half-night, Fang Bai had been swimming with Ye Wumei, barely stopping. His True Yuan had been greatly depleted, but fortunately, his Space Ring contained plenty of Elixirs and Essence Stones to quickly replenish his spent True Yuan.

Ye Wumei saw Fang Bai touch the black ring on his finger from time to time, then something would appear in his hand – some Elixirs and glittering, translucent stones – and she couldn't help feeling surprised.

However, since they were still in a dangerous situation, Ye Wumei didn't have the mood to ask about it.

By noon, Ye Wumei was both hungry and thirsty, and the blazing sun in the sky even made her feel dizzy and lightheaded.

Squeak—

Just then, the Lightning Mink leading the way returned, jumping onto Fang Bai's shoulder, excitedly pointing to the left front.

Although Ye Wumei didn't understand what the Lightning Mink was squeaking about, its excited demeanor told her there must be some delightful discovery.

"Little Mink says there's a small island ahead,"

Fang Bai turned his head and said to Ye Wumei.

"Really? That's wonderful!"

Ye Wumei was overjoyed.

After swimming several hundred meters in the direction the Lightning Mink pointed, they indeed saw a small island appearing on the sea ahead.

The two of them and the mink landed on the small island, and discovered that although it was not large, the island was lush with trees, with plenty of shaded places untouched by sunlight, perfect for resting.

After tossing and turning in the sea for most of the night, they were all exhausted, both human and mink alike. If they could hide in the cool shade on the island and sleep for a while, it would be incredibly comfortable.

"Change out of your clothes and find a place to sleep. Little Mink and I will keep watch. If anything happens, we'll wake you up,"

Fang Bai took out another set of clean clothes from his Spatial Ring and handed them to Ye Wumei.

This was the second set of clothes that Fang Bai had given to Ye Wumei. Fortunately, he had prepared several sets in his Spatial Ring, otherwise, Ye Wumei would have had to continue wearing wet clothes, which would have made it difficult to sleep well.

"Thank you. I'll return them to you as two new sets of clothes once we get back," she said.

Ye Wumei took the clothes from Fang Bai and walked behind some rocks to change into the clean set. Then, she lay down to sleep beneath a few small trees with thick foliage.

Since the day of her concert, she had not slept for a full day and night, and after the fear and struggle for survival at sea, she was extremely exhausted and fell into a deep sleep soon after lying down.

There were plenty of sea turtles, sea snakes, and seabird eggs on the small island—a piece of good news for the Lightning Mink. Once it landed on the island, it began to fill its belly with these things.

Fang Bai took out some water and food from the Spatial Ring to eat, then sat cross-legged on a flat rock to rest and cultivate.

Throughout the better part of the night, Fang Bai, carrying Ye Wumei, had been swimming on the surface and diving underwater, exhausting and restoring his strength and True Yuan repeatedly in cycles.

Fang Bai treated this process as a form of extreme physical training from which he greatly benefited. Furthermore, the boost from the Essence Energy of the sea had increased his strength considerably.

After filling its stomach, the Lightning Mink also lay down next to Fang Bai to start absorbing the Essence Energy from the sea.

Half a day later, both Fang Bai and the Lightning Mink left their Cultivation State, appearing refreshed and lively, full of vigor.

"Staying on this island isn't a solution. I'm going to make a raft. Once it's ready, we'll leave," Fang Bai announced.

After speaking, he started to gather wood from around the island, then brought the logs together and tied them side by side with strong vines to create a small raft capable of carrying two or three people.

He then made a large, simple "oar" to maneuver the raft.

Once all was prepared and the sun began to set, Ye Wumei also woke up at that time.

Hunger had woken Ye Wumei.

She hadn't eaten or drunk anything for a day and a night, and upon waking, her stomach kept growling. Seeing Fang Bai and the Lightning Mink looking at her, her pretty face couldn't help but turn bright red with embarrassment.

"Man is iron, food is steel, and one gets panicked without a meal. You've missed quite a few meals; you must be starving. Come on, eat and drink something... Don't rush, chew slowly so you don't hurt your stomach," Fang Bai advised with a smile.

Pulling out a pile of food and drink from his Spatial Ring, Fang Bai placed them all in front of Ye Wumei.

Looking at the food in front of her, much of which she liked, Ye Wumei's eyes brightened up.

"Where did all this food and the clothes you gave me come from?" she asked.

After a good sleep and now well-fed and hydrated, Ye Wumei had finally returned to normal. With her circumstances slightly improved, her tense nerves temporarily relaxed, prompting her to ask the question she had been wanting to know.

"Take a guess," Fang Bai responded, not intending to keep Ye Wumei in the dark, smiling as he spoke.

Though their time together had been short, they had shared both joys and hardships. For Fang Bai, who had come to know the 'National Sweetheart' Ye Wumei's personality, it was easy to guess her character.

Chapter 183: Night Talk

The dazzling halo of being a superstar made Ye Wumei seem unapproachable, but in reality, when you got to know her, you'd find that she was neither aloof nor pretentious, and certainly not scheming. In short, she was a very approachable and easy-going woman.

Ye Wumei circled around Fang Bai and, seeing that there was nowhere on him to hide anything, shook her head and said, "I can't guess..."

"Look closely..."

Fang Bai extended his left hand to reveal the Space Ring with flecks of gold shimmering against the black, then touched the ring with his right hand and a bottle of Baijiu appeared in his grasp.

"This ring... it's incredible!"

Ye Wumei's little mouth formed an "O" in surprise.

Fang Bai laughed heartily, unscrewed the bottle, tilted his head back, and "glug glug glug" downed the entire bottle of Baijiu.

After the bottle of Baijiu, Fang Bai felt blood surge through his body like the mighty Yangtze River, bringing him an indescribable warmth and comfort.

Since his rebirth in this world, Baijiu had become Fang Bai's favorite drink.

The stronger the Baijiu, the more satisfying and exhilarating Fang Bai found it to drink.

Whereas others might harm their health by drinking too much alcohol, an excessive amount for Fang Bai could actually stimulate the circulation of True Yuan, hasten his blood flow, and was incredibly beneficial for his cultivation.

Ever since discovering the wonderful effects of Baijiu, every meal for Fang Bai had to include alcohol to make it joyful.

And after acquiring the Spatial Ring, the amount of Baijiu he stored within far exceeded that of mineral water.

"This is called a Spatial Ring. It looks like an ordinary ring on the surface, but inside, it contains a space the size of a room..."

With nothing else to do, Fang Bai sat on a flat rock by the seaside and waited for Ye Wumei to join him. He then began to explain the wonders of the Spatial Ring to her in detail.

By this time, the sun was about to dip below the horizon, and its remaining glow cast a fiery red cloak over the two of them.

Ye Wumei sat beside Fang Bai, her body slightly turned towards him as she watched him talk about the ring, and for some reason, she became distracted. Her mind wandered back to the scene under the water when her lips were sealed tightly by Fang Bai's, and her cheeks warmed, her gaze becoming somewhat dreamy.

"What's wrong?"

Noticing Ye Wumei's unusual expression and her soul seemingly adrift, Fang Bai asked curiously.

"No... Nothing..."

Ye Wumei quickly lowered her head in a fluster, avoiding Fang Bai's gaze.

"How can one buy a ring like that?"

Once her expression returned to normal, Ye Wumei looked up again and inquired about the Spatial Ring on Fang Bai's finger.

"Buy?"

Fang Bai responded with a wry smile, "This sort of item is priceless; no matter how much money you have, you'll never be able to buy it!"

Ye Wumei obviously didn't believe him, and asked, "Then where did you get this ring from?"

Fang Bai said, "If I told you I found it, would you believe me?"

"I don't believe it!"

Ye Wumei shook her head, "Such luck has never happened to me. And someone who owns something so precious would surely take great care of it; how could they possibly lose it?"

"There's nothing I can do if you don't believe me. Too bad there is only one ring, otherwise, I'd definitely give you one."

"Your words are enough."

Ye Wumei wouldn't want to take what someone else cherished; she smiled and changed the subject. Pointing at the small raft by the sea, she asked, "Did you make that?"

"Yeah, I built it while you were asleep. Tomorrow morning, we'll set off on it."

"Can it work..."

"As long as there's the slightest hope, I want to try. It's better than staying on this island waiting to die!"

Although Fang Bai's Spatial Ring contained food and water, it was only enough to last them three or four days. If they didn't think of a solution in advance, they really might end up trapped to death on this deserted island.

Ye Wumei nodded without saying anything more.

Over this day and night, Ye Wumei experienced a roller coaster of life and death. She had come to terms with everything, thinking that rather than waiting to die on this deserted island, it would be better to take a risk on the small wooden raft that Fang Bai had made. Maybe there was a chance to reach the mainland.

Moreover, the young man by her side had already brought her one surprise after another. She really hoped that the surprises would continue.

The two of them sat on the rocks by the sea and chatted. Unnoticed, the sky had darkened, and a bright moon had risen, casting silvery light upon the sea, creating a shimmering wave pattern.

Ye Wumei looked up at the bright moon in the sky, and two silent tears streamed down her cheeks.

"Why are you crying?"

Fang Bai asked, puzzled.

"Suddenly, I miss home, my dad and mom..." Ye Wumei dabbed the tears from the corner of her eyes and said with a choked voice, "My parents have always adored me, indulging my every whim, treating me as their treasure... They must be so worried now that something has happened to me."

"Don't worry, you'll soon be back home and see your parents," Fang Bai reassured her.

"I hope so."

Ye Wumei sniffled, took a couple of deep breaths, and forced a slight smile onto her face.

She had slept most of the day, so she wasn't sleepy at all, and Fang Bai, having rested for half a day, was even more alert than her.

Since neither of them felt like resting, they continued talking, from the recent kidnapping incident to Martial Arts, from singing to their respective families...

In all her years, Ye Wumei had never had such an in-depth conversation with someone, particularly a man. Whether she was sharing her own stories or listening to Fang Bai talk about his, she exhibited an excited and interested demeanor.

The Lightning Mink lay between them, half-closing its eyes, appearing both lazy and content.

By midnight, the sea breeze grew stronger, the warm wind blowing past them gave a relaxed feeling.

"Fang Bai, I'm getting sleepy! I can't keep chatting." Ye Wumei rubbed her eyes and smiled apologetically.

"Go to sleep," Fang Bai waved his hand and said, "Get a good rest. We'll set sail on the raft first thing in the morning."

Ye Wumei stood up, said goodnight, and lay down in the spot where she had rested during the day.

Fang Bai sent the Lightning Mink over to stay by Ye Wumei's side, lest any nocturnal animals come out and bite her.

Before long, Ye Wumei's steady breathing reached him, and Fang Bai knew she had fallen asleep. He smiled slightly and began to cultivate under the caress of the sea breeze and the illumination of the moonlight.

That night's cultivation brought Fang Bai unexpectedly significant results, and his strength had once again improved.

Fang Bai thought to himself no wonder in his previous life, many Martial Artists favored cultivating on remote islands overseas, since those places were far from worldly distractions and closer to nature. The serene mindset enhanced cultivation efficiency.

In this world, there were also myths of "Immortal Mountains Overseas," such as Penglai, Fangzhang, and Yingzhou; and Zuzhou, Yanzhou, Xuanzhou among the ten continents...

For ordinary people, the ten continents and three islands were mere legends, but Fang Bai felt that these mythical Immortal Islands and continents, elusive in the eyes of the common folk, might indeed exist. It was just that ordinary people couldn't find their locations.

Chapter 184: Star Ye, Don't Misunderstand!

In his previous life, whether it was in the Cultivation World or the Immortal Realm, many powerful experts could use profound and wondrous formations to create isolated Minor Worlds.

The mythical ten continents and three islands mentioned in this world's legends were likely separate Minor Worlds, existing in isolation and forming their own domains.

At this thought, Fang Bai couldn't help but conceive an idea.

He planned, if the conditions permitted in the future, to buy an island and then set up a Concealment Formation around it. He would build antique-looking houses on the island, plant a variety of Spiritual Medicines, and raise some spiritually aware animals as a place for his cultivation.

If possible, he would also invite some relatives and friends to live on the island. Even if some of them had mortal bodies and were destined not to cultivate, living on the island could still grant them a longevity far beyond that of ordinary people.

Fang Bai believed that, one day, when he turned the ordinary island into an "Immortal Island," those relatives and friends would find it hard to refuse his invitation once they knew the benefits of living there.

The next day before dawn, when a pale light began to emerge in the sky, Ye Wumei woke up. After having some food and drink with Fang Bai, they sat on a small raft and paddled towards the mainland.

Fang Bai's "Dragon-Tiger-Lion-Elephant Technique" had reached the second layer, the "Accumulating Essence Realm," and he had achieved perfection in that realm. He possessed the strength equivalent to eight of these mythical beasts, immensely powerful.

He sat at the front of the small raft, wielding a makeshift oar made of bundled wood, paddling vigorously. The raft shot across the sea's surface like an arrow.

Despite its simple construction, the raft was not only faster than swimming in the water, but it also removed the discomfort of being soaked in the sea.

The only drawback was that paddling the small raft consumed a great deal of True Yuan.

Even with elixirs, Essence Stones, and the Essence Energy of the sea to replenish his spent True Yuan, the rate of replenishment couldn't catch up with the consumption. Therefore, whenever Fang Bai's True Yuan and physical strength were nearly depleted, he would lie flat on the raft to rest and recuperate before continuing to paddle.

Seeing Fang Bai's hard labor, Ye Wumei volunteered to take over for a while. However, she hadn't paddled far before depleting the meager True Yuan within her body. She bit her lip and persisted for a moment longer, but soon blisters formed on the palms of her hands.

When Fang Bai saw her looking down at the blisters on her palms, about to cry, he couldn't help but chuckle silently.

"Such physical labor should be left to a man like me. You just sit comfortably at the side. Here, let me see those blisters on your hands... Don't worry, this minor injury will heal in a couple of days with some medicine," he said.

As he spoke, Fang Bai took Ye Wumei's hands into his to examine them.

Ye Wumei's hands were white and slender, as delicate as jade, resembling a flawless piece of art, pleasing to the eye. However, the sight of several blisters on them was quite alarming.

"This might sting a little, don't move!" Fang Bai warned, as he suddenly produced a silver needle in his hand.

With lightning-fast movements, he punctured the blisters and then took out a medicinal herb from his Spatial Ring. He plucked a few leaves, chewed them up, and applied the paste to the busted blisters before wrapping them up with a strip of cloth. And that was it.

Throughout the process, Ye Wumei bit her lip and frowned slightly but didn't make a sound.

After administering medicine to Ye Wumei, Fang Bai didn't let go of her hands. Instead, he gently squeezed her soft and slender palms a few times.

Ye Wumei's face flushed red, mistaking Fang Bai's actions as deliberate flirtation, and somewhat bewitched, she did not pull her hands away.

"Uh... Star Ye, don't get me wrong!" Fang Bai, noticing the unusual look on Ye Wumei's face and realizing his unintended implication, cleared his throat and earnestly said, "I've noticed that your bones are exceptional, making you a one-in-a-million martial talent..."

Ye Wumei let out a chuckle, thinking of a scene from a certain movie, she said, "So, are you going to tell me next that the maintenance of world peace depends on me? And then you're going to try to sell me a secret book for a bargain, called Tathagata Palm?"

Fang Bai was taken aback, then burst into loud laughter.

What Ye Wumei referred to was a segment from a movie starring Zhou Xingxing, known as the "King of Comedy," and the original owner of the body Fang Bai had taken over was a loyal fan of Zhou Xingxing, having watched that movie more than once. Having merged memories from two lifetimes, Fang Bai naturally knew of it as well.

"Star Ye, I'm not joking. I'm serious..."

After laughing, Fang Bai's expression became serious as he said in a grave tone, "Your physique is truly suitable for cultivation. With proper guidance from a renowned master, you will achieve extraordinary accomplishments on the Martial Dao path in the future."

Ye Wumei said, "That's exactly the opposite of what my master said. My master told me I'm not cut out for martial arts, and no matter how much I train in this life, I will only ever reach the status of a Yellow Level Martial Artist. I really liked martial arts at first, but after hearing what my master said, I lost motivation..."

Fang Bai curled his lip in disdain, "No offense to your master, but his judgement is really not that great, mistaking jade for a mere stone. If he were standing in front of me right now, I would definitely criticize him fiercely!"

Ye Wumei giggled, "My master is my father, and he's a High Rank Yellow Level Martial Artist. All the Martial Arts I know, it was he who taught me."

Fang Bai was startled for a moment but then said irritably, "So what if he's your father? If I met him, I would still criticize him! He's burying a Martial Dao genius!"

"Do you think I have what it takes to practice martial arts?"

Ye Wumei asked with some excitement, blinking her eyes.

Fang Bai spoke earnestly, "In the Martial Dao World, there is the concept of 'Spiritual Root'. Anyone who possesses a Spiritual Root is considered a Martial Dao genius. As long as one diligently cultivates, their achievements are boundless."

"Spiritual Root?"

Ye Wumei was puzzled, as this was the first time she'd heard the term.

"Yes, there are many types of Spiritual Roots, among which the Five Elements Spiritual Root are the primary ones, with the Wind and Thunder Spiritual Roots being more rare. Each type of Spiritual Root can cultivate corresponding techniques... For example, a person with a Fire Spirit Root can cultivate Fire-based Techniques..."

Ye Wumei listened carefully as Fang Bai explained the relationship between the "Spiritual Root" and Martial Arts, the more she listened, the more astonished she became.

The Martial Arts described by Fang Bai surpassed Ye Wumei's understanding, greatly different from the Martial Arts of this world known to her—it could be considered a super-upgraded version of the Martial Arts of this world.

"Are you saying that a Martial Artist with a Fire Spirit Root, when cultivated to a certain realm, can strike out fireballs with a punch?"

"Yes."

"Wouldn't that be like having special abilities? It also sounds like the magic of witches and wizards from the Western world's legends."

"I've never interacted with people with special abilities, nor have I seen magic... but I believe they are mostly similar, all involving the use of Heaven and Earth Origin Energy for attack or defense."

"So, what kind of Spiritual Root do I have?"

Ye Wumei's eyes sparkled with excitement.

Chapter 185: Wind Art

"Wind!"

Fang Bai said, "You have a Wind Spirit Root, which is somewhat beyond my expectations. There aren't many people who possess this kind of Spiritual Root."

Ye Wumei asked, "So is this kind of Spiritual Root good, or bad?"

Fang Bai said, "There's no such thing as good or bad when it comes to Spiritual Roots, because the cultivation technique corresponding to each Spiritual Root, once cultivated to its ultimate potential, can unleash immense power. For instance, if you cultivate the Wind System Technique to a high realm, a single punch from you will generate a gale that can sweep away and destroy everything."

Ye Wumei's mouth once again fell open in amazement. She couldn't imagine what it would be like to punch out a hurricane.

"Once we're on land and you see your parents, if they agree to let you train in the Martial Dao with me, I'll teach you the Wind System Technique. If they're unwilling..."

"No need to ask them, I can decide for myself!"

Ye Wumei couldn't wait to interrupt before Fang Bai finished speaking, "Fang Bai, I want to start learning with you right now. Teach me, will you?"

For Ye Wumei, both singing and martial arts were her passions. It was only later, when her father deemed she wasn't cut out for training in martial arts, that he abandoned her instruction in this area. This shift caused her to devote all her energy to singing.

The kidnapping incident had made Ye Wumei realize the importance of having strong martial arts skills, and Fang Bai's words also filled her with endless hope and aspirations.

"Alright, I'll now teach you the Wind System Technique 'Wind Art.' Listen closely..."

Fang Bai's hands kept moving, continuing to paddle with the simple "oars," while he began to recite the 'Wind Art' for Ye Wumei to hear.

For ordinary people, 'Wind Art' was mysterious and profound, difficult to comprehend, and even harder to memorize. Understanding, integrating, and mastering it seemed nearly impossible.

But Ye Wumei, being one with a Spiritual Root, was a natural cultivator. To her, hearing the 'Wind Art' was like listening to a divine and enchanting melody, and she became instantly intoxicated and obsessed with it.

As Fang Bai recited the 'Wind Art' for the first time, Ye Wumei felt as if a skylight had been opened in her mind, bringing clarity where there had once been murky confusion from her previous ancient martial training. At that moment, everything became clear and lucid.

During the second recitation, Ye Wumei managed to memorize most of the 'Wind Art.'

By the third time, she had firmly imprinted the 'Wind Art' in her memory.

When Fang Bai asked her to repeat it, she recited it flawlessly, her face lit up with unbounded joy as if she had found a priceless treasure.

After reciting the 'Wind Art' once, Ye Wumei's understanding of the technique deepened, and she felt an almost enlightened sensation.

This was followed by the realization that her strength seemed to have suddenly doubled.

"Congratulations, superstar,"

Fang Bai watched Ye Wumei, who was immersed in her transformation, with a beaming smile and said, "Your cultivation level has leaped from the Yellow Level beginner stage straight to the Yellow Level intermediate stage. This is the benefit of training in the Martial Arts with me."

Fang Bai said this also to reinforce Ye Wumei's aspiration for martial arts, to keep her determined in case her parents might persuade her to change her mind after meeting them.

In this world, individuals like Fang Yun, Su Linglong, Baili Mingyue, and Ghost Hand who possessed such Spiritual Roots were very rare. So whenever Fang Bai found one, as long as their nature was good, he was determined to persuade them to train under him and teach them cultivation techniques.

That way, in the long years of cultivation to come, Fang Bai would have like-minded companions, so he wouldn't feel lonely and isolated.

"Did I really advance just like that?"

Ye Wumei heard Fang Bai's words and felt her own strength surge in an instant, her excitement knew no bounds.

"Dad said I wasn't cut out for martial arts, and for many years he wouldn't teach me any. This time when I see him, I must show off a little, letting him know his daughter is not just good at singing, but also a genius in the Martial Dao!"

Ye Wumei was animated with joy, thinking to herself with gleeful anticipation.

Ye Wumei made up her mind that even if her father agreed to teach her martial arts, she wouldn't learn from him. She'd rather follow Fang Bai, her readily available master, to a brighter future.

And so, in this world, Fang Bai gained another loyal follower.

After learning the "Wind Art," Ye Wumei became fully immersed in her Martial Dao world, seated cross-legged on the small raft, focusing intently on her cultivation.

By noon, the weather had changed dramatically, with wind and rain combining in a fierce tempest that nearly capsized the small bamboo raft.

Yet even in such peril, Ye Wumei appeared unaffected, remaining deeply absorbed in her cultivation state.

Seeing Ye Wumei reach a realm where neither wind nor thunder could disturb her, Fang Bai felt deeply gratified, thinking that martial artists with both Wind and Thunder Spiritual Roots indeed seemed more exceptional than those with the Five Elements Spiritual Root.

Fang Bai had set Ye Wumei on the path of Martial Dao, and as long as she maintained a resolute heart in the Martial Dao and continued to cultivate diligently, her future accomplishments would be boundless.

As dusk fell and the storm subsided, just as Fang Bai worried they might have to spend the night on the small raft, he spotted, far ahead on the sea's horizon, a fishing boat flying the flag of Huaxia Country.

Fang Bai was overjoyed and woke up the still-cultivating Ye Wumei, pointing towards the direction of the fishing boat.

"We're saved!"

Seeing the fishing boat, Ye Wumei was so excited she nearly jumped for joy.

Fang Bai paddled furiously, moving the small raft swiftly towards the fishing boat, while Ye Wumei waved her arms high, signaling continuously.

Soon, the fishermen aboard the boat noticed the small raft and stopped their vessel. When the raft drew near, someone on the deck threw down a rope ladder, gesturing for Fang Bai and Ye Wumei to climb aboard using it.

For Fang Bai and Ye Wumei, the rope ladder was unnecessary. After the Lightning Marten jumped onto his shoulder, Fang Bai wrapped one arm around Ye Wumei's waist and, with a light tap of his toes on the raft, the two of them and the marten soared into the air and landed steadily on the deck of the fishing boat.

The fisherman was startled and plopped down onto the deck.

A man, a woman, and a marten thus appeared on the fishing boat.

After two days and nights adrift at sea, Fang Bai and Ye Wumei looked disheveled and their clothes were in disarray, appearing rather bedraggled, but once on the fishing boat, they finally got the chance to tidy up.

When the two reemerged on deck after fixing their clothes and hair in the cabin, the fishermen all felt a sense of being dazzled.

The pair, similar in age, with the man handsome and the woman beautiful, stood side by side like a golden boy and jade girl, each complementing the other.

Especially Ye Wumei, even though she was wearing Fang Bai's oversized clothing which hid her impressive figure, her stunning beauty and ethereal charm were still enough to leave the fishermen in awe.

Perhaps it was because these fishermen often spent time out at sea fishing and had no time to follow entertainment programs, so none of them recognized Ye Wumei.

Chapter 186: Male Bestie

This fishing boat came from a small fishing town under the jurisdiction of Qingdao City. There were seven fishermen on board, with the oldest being sixty and the youngest only seventeen or eighteen. They were preparing to go offshore for fishing when they happened along Fang Bai and Ye Wumei.

The fishermen explained that here was already within Huaxia's coastal waters, and they were less than a hundred nautical miles from land.

When the fishermen asked how Fang Bai and Ye Wumei ended up here, Fang Bai made up a story on the fly, saying he and Ye Wumei were out playing on a small yacht when they encountered a storm. The yacht capsized, and the two of them hastily built a small raft on an island, drifting all the way here.

"How much money can you make from a fishing trip?"

After chatting with the fishermen for a while, Fang Bai suddenly asked.

"Our boat is small, so we don't catch a lot of fish. We can make about thirty to fifty thousand per trip," replied the eldest fisherman, who was also the captain of the fishing boat.

"I'll give you a hundred thousand, let's turn back immediately. What do you think?"

As he spoke, Fang Bai took out a wad of a hundred thousand in cash from his Spatial Ring and stuffed it into the captain's hands.

The fishermen on the boat watched as Fang Bai seemingly conjured a thick stack of banknotes out of nowhere. They glanced at each other, suspecting that Fang Bai might not be an ordinary person but rather one of those legendary figures with extraordinary abilities.

"Let's go, pack it up and head home!"

The captain took Fang Bai's money without a word, waved his hand decisively, and ordered the boat to turn around and head back.

The fishing boat rode the winds and waves, speeding towards Qingdao.

Around ten o'clock at night, the fishing boat docked at a small fishing town wharf on the outskirts of Qingdao City.

Fang Bai and Ye Wumei set foot on land, and only then did they truly feel relieved.

With excitement in their hearts, they bid farewell to the fishermen and walked together to the nearby small fishing town.

In a clothing store in the town, Ye Wumei casually bought a set of women's clothing that fit her, along with large sunglasses and a hat. Assured no one could recognize her, she then took a taxi with Fang Bai into the bustling downtown area of Qingdao City.

Since it was quite late, they checked into two adjacent rooms in a five-star hotel in the downtown area and settled in for the night.

The first thing Ye Wumei did after settling in was to call her parents and let them know she was safe.

Upon receiving the call from his daughter, Ye Xing, as the father, remained relatively calm, but Ye Wumei's mother, Sun Lin, couldn't control her emotions and burst into tears over the phone.

Ye Wumei had been missing for a full two days and nights. During that time, the kidnappers had contacted her father, Ye Xing, demanding a ransom of one billion US Dollars. Worried about being tricked, Ye Xing did not agree immediately, only saying that he was trying to raise the money in order to buy time.

However, for some reason, the kidnappers suddenly cut off contact with Ye Xing.

With their daughter missing and no news about whether she was dead or alive, Ye Xing and his wife were desperately anxious. They mobilized almost all of the Ye Family's resources to search for any clues about their daughter, even raising the reward from ten million to thirty million.

During these two days and nights, Ye Xing and his wife lived in a state of constant anxiety. Sun Lin had lost her appetite, couldn't sleep well, and had become visibly haggard.

When Sun Lin suddenly received a call from her daughter, the tightly wound nerves finally relaxed, and she just broke down. She cried on the phone, and after hanging up, she threw herself into her husband's arms and wept bitterly.

After finding out the current situation of his daughter and the hotel she was staying at, Ye Xing told his daughter to stay put in the hotel and immediately took a large group of Ye Family experts and bodyguards, rushing to Qingdao from Yuezhou overnight.

While Ye Wumei was on the phone with her family, Fang Bai also made a call to Tang Wenrou in Yanjing, telling her that he had found Ye Wumei and they were now staying in a hotel in Qingdao.

Tang Wenrou, upon hearing the news, was overjoyed and also set out for Qingdao overnight.

Ye Wumei did not heed her parents' advice to stay quietly in the hotel. After freshening up in her hotel room, she knocked on Fang Bai's door, wanting him to accompany her to buy clothes and eat supper.

"You still dare to go out for supper? You were kidnapped because you went out for supper in the first place!"

Seeing Ye Wumei's excited demeanor, Fang Bai said with a smile.

"I'm not afraid. With you, the formidable bodyguard, around, no kidnapper stands a chance! Besides, if I don't go out now, when my dad arrives, he will surely cage me like a bird, not allowing me to roam around. Fang Bai, please..."

Fang Bai had little interest in shopping. He originally intended to sit on the balcony outside his room, facing the sea to cultivate after washing up, but with Ye Wumei's pleading, he found it hard to refuse and could only nod in agreement with a wry smile.

The Lightning Mink didn't follow the two of them out, preferring to scamper onto the hotel room's balcony to absorb the Essence Energy from the sea and the essence of the moon for cultivation.

Once out of the hotel, Ye Wumei clung to one of Fang Bai's arms as if a little bird relying on people, looking extremely affectionate.

Regarding Ye Wumei's affectionate behavior, Fang Bai jokingly said, "Look here, Star Ye, if people discover us like this now, your scandal will be all over the headlines tomorrow. It won't affect me much, but aren't you worried about damaging your image?"

"So what if they see? What's the big deal? If it comes to it, I'll just say you're my guy best friend!"

Ye Wumei said nonchalantly, her hands that were hooked onto Fang Bai's arm not only showed no sign of loosening but actually gripped even tighter.

The relationship between the two had indeed transcended that of ordinary friends after experiencing life and death together at sea, and Ye Wumei's description of "guy best friend" was quite fitting.

Moreover, when Ye Wumei and Fang Bai went out together, they both put on newly bought large sunglasses and hats, nearly half of her beautiful face was covered, making it difficult to recognize her identity unless someone had interacted with her many times.

The time was around eleven o'clock at night, and the downtown area was still bustling, with many stores still open for business.

After browsing a few designer clothing stores, Ye Wumei bought five sets of clothes and shoes from head to toe, each set quite costly.

Of course, Fang Bai was the one who paid, as Ye Wumei had been stripped clean by the kidnappers after the abduction, left without a single cent.

"Consider the money a loan from me. I'll pay you back when my dad comes to pick me up," Ye Wumei said to Fang Bai after purchasing the clothes.

Fang Bai waved his hand with a smile, saying, "Forget about the money... in the future, just send me a few free tickets to your concerts."

Ye Wumei said, "In the future, I'll send you tickets for every concert, but you have to remember to come and support me!"

Fang Bai replied, "Of course, we are comrades who have shared life and death experiences, so I will definitely attend every concert of yours!"

The two first took the clothes and shoes they bought back to their hotel room, and then went to the nearby snack street for supper.

Chapter 187: Lichun Yushui

It was around midnight, and the traffic and pedestrians on the street had thinned out considerably. Fang Bai and Ye Wumei arrived at a barbecue restaurant on the snack street called "Crazy Summer." They sat down at an outdoor stand, Fang Bai ordered some food and drinks, and they chatted as they waited.

Just then, a black-clothed woman with ear-length short hair walked slowly from the far end of the street.

The woman appeared to be around thirty, with wheat-colored skin, a tall figure, and delicate features, qualifying her as a beauty.

She held a black handbag in her left hand and looked around as she walked, seeming to size up the pedestrians on either side of the street.

As she passed by the "Crazy Summer" barbecue restaurant, her gaze swept over and spotted Fang Bai and Ye Wumei sitting outside. The eyes behind her sunglasses suddenly shot out two sharp gleams.

"Lichun, this is Yushui! Snack street 'Crazy Summer' barbecue restaurant, target sighted, arrive quickly!"

Without stopping, the black-clothed woman continued walking about a hundred meters forward, then slightly lowered her head and whispered into a button-type micro communicator at her collar.

"Yushui, this is Lichun, message received. I'll arrive in ten minutes."

From the other end of the micro communicator, another woman's voice responded.

After a quick and brief exchange, the two women ended their conversation.

Taking a deep breath, the black-clothed woman turned around and slowly walked over to a table outside the "Crazy Summer" barbecue restaurant, ordered some items, and began to eat and drink alone.

Her chosen seat was only about ten meters away from where Fang Bai and Ye Wumei were sitting, and her view was of their backs.

The black-clothed woman gazed at the backs of Fang Bai and Ye Wumei, a flicker of killing intent crossing her lips as her left hand gripping the handbag tightened.

Meanwhile, Fang Bai and Ye Wumei were clinking their glasses and then drinking, seemingly oblivious to anything amiss.

"Your expression just now was a bit strange..."

Ye Wumei put down her glass and looked into Fang Bai's eyes as she said this.

"Really? What did my expression look like just now?"

After Fang Bai finished his drink, he didn't put down his glass but kept playing with it in his hand,

"You just smiled, and your smile seemed to carry a bit of sarcasm and disdain... Hey, are you laughing at me for not being able to drink liquor?"

Fang Bai shook his head and said, "No. I was laughing because some people think they can act without notice, but in reality, they are already within someone else's grasp."

When Fang Bai said this, he used the "Thread Condensation Sound Transmission" technique, and only Ye Wumei could hear him.

"Your words are baffling... I have no idea what you mean..."

Ye Wumei said with a frown, after eating a skewer of grilled mutton.

"You'll understand soon."

Fang Bai poured himself another glass of liquor, clinked it lightly against Ye Wumei's drink, and then downed it in one go.

Five minutes later, a red sedan drove into the snack street and stopped at the roadside outside the "Crazy Summer" barbecue restaurant.

The car door opened, and another black-clothed woman got out of the sedan.

This black-clothed woman was about the same age as the other who had arrived earlier, dressed similarly, and at first glance one might think they were twins. However, upon a closer look, their faces were not alike.

The two black-clothed women quickly sat down at the same table, exchanged a quick glance, and then started whispering to each other like long-lost sisters reuniting.

Both women were graceful beauties and their arrival drew the gazes of nearly all the male customers in the restaurant. Even Fang Bai couldn't help but turn his head and take a few glances.

"Do I look good?"

Ye Wumei's voice, tinged with a hint of reproach, reached Fang Bai's ears, carrying a faint sourness in her tone.

Fang Bai laughed and said, "You look good indeed. But compared to you, Star Ye, they're a notch below."

Hearing this, Ye Wumei's eyes crinkled with delight, her joy boundless. She happily piled several skewers of grilled lamb onto the plate in front of Fang Bai, saying, "This tastes great. Have a few more."

"Beauty is a feast for the eyes. Even if I don't eat anything, just looking at you is enough to fill me up."

"Flatterer!"

Ye Wumei playfully scolded him, feeling a bit shy under Fang Bai's smiling gaze.

After a few playful exchanges that were all in good fun, when Fang Bai had said that the others were a notch below Star Ye, the expressions of two women in black sitting not far from them changed slightly. Their eyes sharpened with intensified Killing Qi.

The taller of the two women in black on the left gave a glance to her slightly shorter companion on the right. Both of them stood up at the same time and walked over to Fang Bai, positioning themselves one on each side of him.

"Handsome, have we met somewhere before?"

The tall woman in black glanced over Ye Wumei, who was wearing sunglasses, and then looked at Fang Bai with a surprised expression, as if she had just reunited with an old friend.

"Yeah, I also feel like I've seen you before!"

The shorter woman in black said with a coquettish giggle, placing her right hand on Fang Bai's shoulder.

Ye Wumei, sitting beside Fang Bai, became visibly uncomfortable when she saw this. She started guessing what relationship these two women could have with Fang Bai.

"Playing these little tricks in front of me is useless,"

Fang Bai suddenly said with a smile, leaving Ye Wumei somewhat baffled.

Then Ye Wumei saw Fang Bai swiftly grab the hand of the shorter woman in black that was on his shoulder.

"What is that..."

In the bright light, Ye Wumei noticed that between the fingers of the shorter woman in black, there was a thin black needle-like object.

Captured by Fang Bai, the shorter woman in black knew things had gone awry. She struggled fiercely to no avail and her face turned pale out of fear.

At the same time, the taller woman in black standing on Fang Bai's other side flashed a cold glint in her eyes. She too produced a black needle-like object between her fingers, stealthily aiming for the artery in Fang Bai's neck.

"Be careful..."

Amid Ye Wumei's cry of alarm, Fang Bai leaned slightly back, evading the taller woman's attempt to stab him. He then flicked his finger on her wrist lightly.

The tall woman in black felt her wrist go numb and lost her grip on the black needle, which fell to the ground. Immediately after, Fang Bai had secured her wrist as well.

Both women in black had one wrist controlled by Fang Bai, their bodies half-numb, rendering them incapable of attacking or even mustering the strength to resist.

The customers around them noticed the commotion and turned their gazes in their direction.

A few burly men, seeing the two women in black with pained expressions on their captured wrists, thought Fang Bai was bullying them. They felt a surge of knightly compassion and scowled as they approached, preparing to play the heroes in a "Hero Saves the Beauty" scene.

But Fang Bai shattered the table in front of him with a palm strike, scaring them so pale that they meekly retreated to their seats.

Chapter 188: Ye Family Ye Xing

"Fang Bai, what... what's happening?"

As a martial artist, Ye Wumei could certainly tell that the two women in black were attacking Fang Bai with needle-like objects. Yet, she couldn't fathom why they would attack Fang Bai, whom they didn't appear to know.

"Have you noticed that their clothes seem familiar?"

Fang Bai said to Ye Wumei.

Upon hearing this, Ye Wumei's eyes widened as she scrutinized the two women from head to toe, then suddenly exclaimed, "You mean... they're in league with the kidnappers?"

"Very likely."

"But why would they attack you instead of me?"

"Because I'm stronger than you. They need to take me down first so they can kidnap you again!"

"But... how would they know we've already returned to land and are eating here?"

"Maybe they have a vast intelligence network behind them, with people in every city, capable of providing timely information and intelligence."

"This... this is too terrifying..."

"Not only are they terrifying, but they are also extremely vicious..."

Fang Bai looked down at the black needles that had fallen from the hands of the two women in black and frowned, "These two needles are coated with a potent poison. Just a tiny puncture could quickly result in death by poisoning... If it were anyone else, they'd be dead by now."

"Such ruthless lunatics!"

Ye Wumei, infuriated, stepped towards the shorter black-clad woman and glared at her fiercely before asking loudly, "Just who are you?"

Despite being at a disadvantage, the shorter woman in black showed no fear and sneered, "Ye Wumei, don't bother. I won't tell you anything."

Then, she said to Fang Bai, "Don't think you're out of danger just because you've caught us. Heh, let's all go to hell together!"

A resolute look crossed her eyes as she squeezed her handbag firmly with her hand.

Fang Bai immediately sensed an extreme threat approaching, his expression changed, and he suddenly kicked the handbag out of the shorter woman's hands.

At the same time, Fang Bai let go of the taller woman in black, grabbed Ye Wumei's hand, and swiftly dashed into the barbecue restaurant for cover.

Boom——

The handbag traced a parabola in the air, flying toward the wide street. Before it even hit the ground, an earth-shattering explosion sounded.

Ye Wumei, taking cover in the barbecue restaurant, watched the street turn into a chaotic mess, realizing that the seemingly innocuous handbag didn't contain feminine items but a high-powered explosive.

Fortuitously, it was the middle of the night and the streets were devoid of pedestrians or traffic; otherwise, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

Still, several diners outside the restaurant were affected by the blast wave, resulting in numerous light injuries.

After the explosion, the area around the barbecue restaurant was in disarray, with people shouting, crying, and calling emergency services...

The two women in black lay motionless on the ground.

Fang Bai emerged from the barbecue restaurant, approached the two women, and as he crouched to inspect them, he saw a trickle of black blood at the corner of their mouths—they were dead.

"They're dead?"

Ye Wumei's astonished voice came from behind.

Fang Bai stood up, sighed, and nodded, "Suicide by poison... the poison was in their mouths. Realizing they couldn't escape, they chose to kill themselves... Who exactly is backing them?"

Minutes later, the sound of police sirens and ambulances rang out simultaneously.

"Let's head back to the hotel; otherwise, when the police start asking questions, there will be more trouble."

Fang Bai took Ye Wumei's hand and, amidst the chaos, quietly slipped away.

Half an hour later, the two returned to their five-star hotel and waited comfortably for the Ye Family members and Tang Wenrou's arrival.

By 3 o'clock in the early morning, Tang Wenrou and Ye Xing arrived in Qingdao almost at the same time and met in the five-star hotel where Fang Bai and Ye Wumei were staying.

Accompanying Tang Wenrou was a group of core team members from the police station.

With Ye Xing came his wife Sun Lin, as well as dozens of Ye Family experts and bodyguards, forming a mighty entourage.

Upon meeting, Ye Wumei and her mother Sun Lin burst into tears, while Tang Wenrou walked up to Fang Bai to start a conversation with him.

"Are you Fang Bai?"

After consoling his wife and daughter, Ye Xing also approached Fang Bai and looked him up and down.

Ye Xing might be fifty years old this year, but he led a life of privilege and took good care of himself, looking more like someone around forty-five.

Ye Xing had a special identity, not only serving as the top official in Yuezhou but also being a Profound Level Martial Artist.

As a high-ranking official and a Profound Level Expert of the Ancient Martial World, this dual identity imbued Ye Xing with an imposing aura of superiority wherever he went.

Unlike other Martial Artists who preferred to keep a low profile, Ye Xing did not deliberately conceal his authoritative and Martial Artist Aura because he needed to use these advantages to subdue or intimidate those potential adversaries, whether overt or covert.

"I am Fang Bai."

Fang Bai, having learned of Ye Xing's identity from Ye Wumei's prior disclosure, greeted him with a slight smile and a calm response.

When he spoke, he looked straight into Ye Xing's eyes—neither overbearing nor sycophantic, exuding an air of serene confidence.

The aura deliberately released by Ye Xing didn't pressure him at all.

Ye Xing was slightly surprised. As a Martial Artist, he knew that in the secular Ancient Martial World, Profound Level Martial Artists were at the pinnacle, rarely meeting their match. Yet this young man named Fang Bai seemed unaffected by his aura, not showing the slightest hint of distress.

This indicated that Fang Bai's strength was no less than his own and might even be stronger.

"I'm Ye Xing, Wen Rou's father. Thank you for saving my daughter."

Having gauged Fang Bai's strength, Ye Xing inwardly marveled. He then retracted his aura and shook Fang Bai's hand with a slight smile on his face.

Fang Bai pointed towards Tang Wenrou and said, "Actually, you should thank Officer Tang. It was her words that moved me to act!"

"Could it be that it wasn't the reward money that moved you?"

Tang Wenrou teased, the corners of her mouth carrying a faint smile.

The kidnapping of Ye Wumei had put enormous pressure on the entire police force, including Tang Wenrou. Now that Ye Wumei had returned safely, the pressure weighing on the shoulders of Tang Wenrou, the head of the serious crimes unit, had suddenly lifted, making her feel much more relaxed.

"Truth be told, money is important to me, but friends matter even more!"

Fang Bai looked at Tang Wenrou and said earnestly, "When Star Ye was kidnapped, as your friend, I knew you were under a lot of pressure. So when you found me and asked if I was willing to help, I agreed without hesitation. Even without the reward money, I would have acted to relieve your stress."

Hearing Fang Bai's words, seeing the seriousness in his speech, Tang Wenrou felt a warmth in her heart.

Chapter 189: Wrathful Beauties

Ye Xing was not clear about the relationship between Tang Wenrou and Fang Bai, nor was he interested in knowing. His greater concern was still the ins and outs of his daughter's kidnapping.

The Ye Family was a powerful clan in Huaxia, and Ye Wumei's kidnapping was equivalent to someone blatantly provoking the Ye Family. If the Ye Family did not retaliate, they would certainly be ridiculed for their incapability.

"Fang Bai, I'd like to understand more about Wumei's kidnapping to find the mastermind behind this. Can we talk about it in detail?"

Ye Xing glanced at his daughter who was still crying and said with a wry smile, "I had planned to talk to Wumei about it, but she's in tears and probably can't speak clearly at the moment..."

"Of course, that's no problem."

Then, Fang Bai recounted the whole experience of taking the Lightning Mink from Yanjing, tracking down to that island to rescue Ye Wumei, and then the treacherous journey back.

Fang Bai kept his story brief and to the point, so some parts sounded thrilling but were far from the true heart-stopping scenes that had occurred.

Especially the part where their small yacht was destroyed by the enemy's portable missile and he had to breathe for Ye Wumei by pressing his lips against hers while underwater, Fang Bai deliberately skipped over.

The situation was urgent at the time, and if he hadn't mouth-to-mouth resuscitated Ye Wumei, she might have died, but who knows what Ye Xing, as Wumei's father, would think if he knew about it?

Thus, Fang Bai decided it was better not to mention that incident to avoid future awkwardness when they met.

Fang Bai wasn't worried that Ye Wumei would leak this part of the story, as she was a girl with an even more delicate and tender face, likely too embarrassed to tell others and would probably keep it to herself forever.

And of course, even if Ye Wumei told her parents about the incident, Fang Bai was not at all worried.

Fang Bai believed that Ye Xing would understand that his actions were not to take advantage of his daughter, but to save her life. He wouldn't be angry but should be thankful to Fang Bai.

From Fang Bai's words, both Ye Xing and Tang Wenrou detected some inconsistencies, such as Ye Xing knowing that his daughter couldn't swim and wouldn't have been able to dive underwater without Fang Bai's help...

However, neither Ye Xing nor Tang Wenrou cared about those details; they were more focused on the kidnappers, noting with concern that the kidnappers even had portable missiles, indicating they were likely a large organized crime group with discipline.

Through this incident, Ye Xing gained further understanding of Fang Bai's strength.

Although Fang Bai didn't reveal his specific realm of ability, Ye Xing could surmise that he too was a Profound Level Martial Artist, and a significantly stronger one compared to himself, a beginner at the Profound Level.

"Speaking of those kidnappers, I just remembered something..."

After taking a sip of tea, Fang Bai said, "Tonight, when Wumei and I went out for a late-night snack, we were attacked by two women whose target also appeared to be Wumei. And their attire was exactly the same as the eight kidnappers on the island..."

Ye Xing abruptly stood up and asked loudly, "Where are those two women?"

Fang Bai replied, "After I subdued the two women, they committed suicide by taking poison. Their bodies are probably with the local police. Mr. Ye, if you are interested, you could visit the police to have a look. Perhaps some clues can be found..."

Ye Xing nodded, advised his wife and daughter briefly, and immediately took a group of people, along with Tang Wenrou, out of the hotel to the local police station to learn about the situation.

After Sun Lin and her daughter cried together for a while, she said some comforting words and then took her daughter's hand to thank Fang Bai before the mother and daughter headed to the adjacent room to rest.

The next morning, after having breakfast with Ye Wumei and Sun Lin, Fang Bai was talking with them when Ye Xing and a group of people, including Tang Wenrou, returned to the hotel from the police station.

"The mastermind behind the scenes has been found!"

Upon seeing his wife, daughter, and Fang Bai, Ye Xing clenched his fists, his face grave as he said solemnly, "On the left arm of the two deceased women, there was a tattoo of a long-haired woman holding up a flame, and on their right arms were engraved the red characters 'Lichun' and 'Yushui'..."

"What does this signify?"

Fang Bai asked with a frown.

"Have you ever heard of the organization 'Wrathful Beauties'?"

Tang Wenrou interjected.

"'Wrathful Beauties'?"

Fang Bai shook his head and said, "I haven't heard of it. But from the name, it seems to be an organization dominated by women..."

"Exactly!"

Tang Wenrou's expression also turned somewhat grim as she continued, "Wrathful Beauties is a large international crime syndicate whose core members are all women. This organization is involved in almost every kind of nefarious activity, yet they operate extremely covertly, causing headaches to governments worldwide..."

As she said this, she seemed to recall something else and added, "The formidable aspect of 'Wrathful Beauties' is that it has twenty-four assassins named after solar terms, and all those assassins are Profound Level Martial Artists."

Fang Bai nodded and said, "The two women who died last night were both at the initial stage of the Profound Level."

Tang Wenrou said, "Their codenames were 'Lichun' and 'Yushui'. If my deduction is correct, their strength should be the weakest among the twenty-four assassins of 'Wrathful Beauties'."

Ye Xing's pupils contracted slightly as he furrowed his brows deeply and said with great worry, "If the weakest are at the initial stage of the Profound Level, doesn't that mean the strongest could be at the Earth Level or Heaven Level?"

Although Sun Lin was not a Martial Artist, having lived with her husband for many years, she had been exposed to the martial world and knew how martial artists were classified. Hearing this, her face turned pale as she looked at her husband and asked with a trembling voice, "Our Ye Family has never provoked this organization, why would they target Wumei at every turn?"

After pondering for a moment, Ye Xing replied, "Although the Ye Family hasn't provoked 'Wrathful Beauties', we have quite a few enemies. It's not impossible that someone has paid to hire the assassins of 'Wrathful Beauties' to target us! Such extreme organizations act once they've received money, never questioning the morality or validity of their deeds."

Sun Lin asked, "What do we do then? Do members of our Ye Family need to be constantly on guard against attacks and ambushes every time we go out?"

Ye Xing gritted his teeth and said, "I will definitely get to the bottom of this. I want to see who it is that's scheming against our Ye Family behind our backs. And what unspeakable motives they have!"

Saying this, he turned to Ye Wumei and instructed, "Wumei, cancel all your upcoming concerts. It's best not to go out until we get to the bottom of this."

Ye Wumei glanced at Fang Bai and said, "I don't mind canceling the concerts. But... But..."

"But what?"

Ye Xing glared at his daughter and commanded sternly, "Be good and obey. Don't be willful!"

Chapter 190: I Want to Learn Martial Arts!

Ye Wumei bit her lip and said, "If you won't let me have a concert, you've got to let me do something else, right? Being cooped up at home all day, I'll go crazy!"

"What do you want to do?"

"Learn martial arts!"

Ye Wumei stated firmly, "I want to learn martial arts!"

Ye Xing was taken aback and then chuckled, "I've said before, you're not cut out for martial arts ... not giving up yet?"

"You say I'm not cut out for martial arts, but someone else says I'm a martial arts genius!"

Ye Wumei held her chin high, a look of pride on her face, and said, "Dad, look at what realm I'm at now ..."

With that, she released all her qi without holding anything back.

"Yellow Level intermediate stage?"

Feeling his daughter's released qi, Ye Xing was shocked and asked, "You've focused on singing these past two years, haven't you given up on cultivating martial arts? When did you break through?"

"I broke through during the kidnapping."

Seeing the surprise on her father Ye Xing's face, Ye Wumei couldn't help feeling a bit smug.

"You just said ... someone told you that you're a martial arts genius? Who said that?"

Ye Xing suddenly recalled what his daughter had mentioned earlier and couldn't help but ask loudly.

"I ... "

Ye Wumei quickly glanced at Fang Bai, her eyes pleading for help.

Ye Xing had long noticed that his daughter kept looking over at Fang Bai every now and then, as if she cared about Fang Bai a lot, and after thinking about how she had been with Fang Bai day and night since being rescued, he wondered what might have happened between them, his heart skipped a beat and his face turned a bit odd.

Seeing Ye Xing's odd expression, Fang Bai realized he might have misunderstood something and cleared his throat, laughing, "Mr. Ye, the one who said your daughter is a martial arts genius was me. I don't know why you think your daughter isn't suited for martial arts, but from my point of view, she's a rare martial arts prodigy!"

Mr. Ye said, "Wumei started learning martial arts from me when she was six, and by the age of fourteen she had reached Yellow Level early stage, but she's been stuck at that stage ever since and hasn't advanced. Meanwhile, other members of our family around her age, each one is stronger than her."

Fang Bai said with a smile, "Mr. Ye, have you ever considered that your daughter's lack of advancement might not be her own fault?"

Ye Xing's eyebrows shot up, his tone less than thrilled, "Are you suggesting that I, as a father, don't teach well?"

"That's right!"

Fang Bai wasn't worried that his words would anger Ye Xing and said, "If your daughter is a piece of top-quality uncut jade, then you're an inferior jade carver ... Mr. Ye, you understand what I'm saying, right?"

Even though Ye Xing had good self-restraint, to be considered nearly worthless by Fang Bai, he couldn't help but get a bit angry, yet he laughed instead of getting mad, "Fine, I'm not skilled enough, I can't teach my own daughter well. If I hand my daughter over to you to teach, do you think you can do a better job?"

Fang Bai said confidently, "If she's under my tutelage, I guarantee that within a year, your daughter's strength will surpass yours!"

Hearing Fang Bai's words, Ye Wumei's eyes lit up.

Ever since she was little, she had greatly admired her father, hoping to become as formidable as him when she grew up. But as she got older, that goal seemed increasingly out of reach, especially when her father told her she wasn't suited for martial arts; she had almost completely given up on that dream.

But now, Fang Bai spoke with full confidence that she would surpass her father's strength within a year, and she became excited, with the fire of hope blazing in her heart.

Ye Wumei's gaze turned toward her father, feeling both nervous and filled with hope.

She hoped that her father would nod in agreement to her learning martial arts with Fang Bai, rather than refusing.

However, Ye Xing's gaze was on Fang Bai, his expression tinged with dissatisfaction.

Ye Xing thought that Fang Bai was boasting.

The Ye Family was not without its experts, but regardless of who it was, everyone believed Ye Wumei was not cut out for martial arts, yet Fang Bai stubbornly insisted that Ye Wumei had a rare martial arts talent and even claimed he could make her a Profound Level Martial Artist within a year.

In Ye Xing's view, learning martial arts was an extremely arduous and long process. For someone to enter the higher echelons and become a true Martial Artist, they had to start cultivation from childhood, and it simply wouldn't do without eight to ten years of effort.

And after becoming a Martial Artist, each increase in strength required several years of hard practice. As for advancing several ranks within a year, that was impossible unless one encountered an incredible stroke of luck.

Ye Xing surmised that even if Fang Bai's strength was greater than his own, it wouldn't be by much, at most making him a mid- Profound Level Martial Artist.

For a Martial Artist of that level, to train someone from the middle Yellow Level to the Profound Level within a year was nothing short of a fool's dream.

Ye Xing even wondered if Fang Bai had ulterior motives in urging his daughter to learn martial arts from him.

Ye Xing, being experienced in matters between men and women, had noticed his daughter sneaking glances at Fang Bai and knew she had developed a liking for him.

Ye Xing was not against his daughter dating, but the precondition was that the man must be someone they knew well, and his knowledge of Fang Bai was virtually nonexistent. He only knew that Fang Bai was Tang Wenrou's friend, currently interning at Yanjing Hospital, and beyond that, he knew nothing.

With a person he did not know well, Ye Xing wouldn't allow his daughter too much contact, even if Fang Bai had once risked his life to save her from kidnappers.

Ye Xing would be grateful to Fang Bai and would pay him a generous reward, he might even agree to many of his requests, but he would not easily entrust his daughter to him for guidance.

"I will seriously consider this matter when I return home!"

Although Ye Xing didn't oppose Fang Bai teaching his daughter, such an ambiguous statement was obviously a brush-off, effectively a veiled refusal.

Fang Bai knew that Ye Xing still didn't trust him. Even though he wanted to find the time to teach Ye Wumei some cultivation techniques, with Ye Xing having said such, there was no choice but to put the idea on hold for now.

Fang Bai preferred things to happen naturally, he never liked to force matters.

"Star Ye, it seems I won't be able to teach you martial arts for the time being. However, if you diligently practice the 'Wind Art,' there should be no problem in advancing to a high-rank Yellow Level Martial Artist within a year. And if you can convince Mr. Ye, you can always come to find me at Yanjing Hospital."

Fang Bai said to Ye Wumei with a look of regret.

Outside, Ye Wumei was a star that everyone watched, but at home, she was an obedient and good girl, seldom going against her parents' wishes.

Ye Wumei also knew what her father was worried about, and because this worry was all for her own good, she accepted it quietly, although her heart was full of silent resentment.

But Ye Wumei was not one to give up easily. She secretly resolved to pester her father every day upon returning home until he agreed to let Fang Bai teach her martial arts.

Ye Wumei, having been through life-and-death experiences with Fang Bai, trusted him completely.