

Emperor 5271

Chapter 5271: How Manly

Li Qiye and the woman were as intimate as can be, causing others to have strange thoughts.

Of course, no one else was here in the audience with the exception of the old servant and Li Zhitian. Both have turned away, not wanting to be impolite.

“Sigh, how much longer are we going to do this? We’re killing the grasses.” Li Qiye shook his head.

“You’re tearing my clothes too.” She complained.

“Uh... please don’t get this twisted, you’re the one grinding on me.” Li Qiye said.

“And?” She seemed intent on annoying him.

“Sigh, fine, you win. No Lis in this world can compete with you.” He raised his hands and surrendered.

“Giving up, right?” She grabbed his wrists with one hand while searching for something with the other.

“What are you looking for?” He smiled helplessly.

“Just coping a feel.” She said while still moving her hand around.

“If you keep doing this, I can’t gain my innocence back even after jumping into the yellow river. Just tell me what you’re looking for, I know what I have on me the best.” He complained.

“Hard to say, I’m just checking to see if you have made a deal.” She stared at him.

“A deal?” He stopped messing around and glared back at her ordinary face: “Who are you?”

His eyes became profound again, wanting to see through her.

She arched her chest and said: “Your noisy and intrusive habit won’t change. Keep on looking then.”

“It’s a good thing I don’t have a nosebleed right now or you will accuse me of being an old pervert.” Li Qiye sighed.

“I’m afraid that even being an old pervert is beyond your capabilities.” She mocked.

This prompted him to break free of her grip and flipped her back to the bottom again, gaining the absolute upper hand.

“Does this make you feel more of a man?” She asked.

“No, but as a man, I didn’t appreciate your comment regarding my health.” He smiled and shook his head.

“This is the perfect time to check.” She said provocatively.

“We can’t do this in broad daylight.” He said.

“Listen, it’s okay if you have a health issue, no need to keep on hiding it.” She said.

“Are you sure?” He activated his aura and grabbed her hands tightly: “My apology then.”

“Finally.” She showed no sign of fear.

“You’ve been asking for it this entire time. Now, will you take it off first?” He said.

“Try it if you dare.” She said.

“I don’t think you can take my full force before being reduced to ashes.” He said.

“Strong words, we’ll see if you can back it up.” She glared at him.

“Very well, I will show you how manly I am!” He shouted and activated his divine intent.

Three thousand words were only a grain of salt in the ocean compared to the immensity of his mind. Thus, she became helpless and was pulled into its flow.

“Can you still handle it now?” The master of the mind ocean spoke with an imperious voice.

“Bring it.” She said.

“Don’t say that I’m cheating now.” Li Qiye laughed and sent his ocean forward.

“Activate!” She created one heavenly gate after another to protect her mind.

“Rumble!” Unfortunately, the countless layers couldn’t handle Li Qiye’s mental attack, causing her to moan in pain.

She was eventually overwhelmed and his divine intent invaded her mind. It was too late for her to resist his unstoppable momentum.

“Boom!” In the deepest and most profound part of her mind came a devastating blast.

“This is...” Li Qiye’s expression soured as he tried to create a barrier around the source of the explosion.

This bought her enough time to escape his grip. She leaped into the air and disappeared from sight, her voice lingered from a distance: “Li, this isn’t over yet!”

“So suicidal.” Li Qiye got up and murmured: “So hellbent on taking me down even if it means dying.”

He pondered for a moment before shaking his head and dropping the issue.

Now, the old servant and Li Zhitian were finally able to turn around, acting as if they didn’t hear anything.

“Another victory, Master.” The old servant bowed.

“Isn’t it too late to start flattering me?” Li Qiye said.

“It came from the heart.” The quiet old man spoke more than usual.

“She’s the legendary...” Li Zhitian tried to calm down. That woman earlier was frightening since she made him feel helpless despite having twelve sacred fruits.

“It’s just a title, doesn’t mean much.” Li Qiye shook his head.

“Why are there two similar titles?” The old servant asked.

“You should ask them, why is there a title for each sex?” Li Qiye said while looking up at the sky. He remembered a few things but they didn’t quite apply to this situation.

“You owe her something?” Li Zhitian became curious. The man before him was powerful enough to not owe anyone but she certainly made it seem that way.

“I don’t know.” Li Qiye himself thought that too many unexpected things have happened recently.

‘What are you doing, villainous heaven?’ He thought to himself.

“Well, whatever, let’s go drink again.” He clapped and told the two with a smile.

Once they got close to the entrance, the tavern suddenly jumped away. It grew four legs and started running.

“Let’s keep up.” Li Qiye told the others.

Chapter 5272: Selling Tofu Pudding

The tavern resembled an ostrich sprinting in the desert from a distance.

Li Qiye followed with the old servant, True Bear, and Li Zhitian right behind him. They ran for days and nights until they reached a place shrouded in fog.

It had a hypnotic property, capable of luring others to sleep and making them lose all sense of direction.

The trio immediately protected their mind and focused up, not wanting to be left behind.

Li Qiye moved left and right randomly. The others knew that they needed to follow his steps precisely.

They eventually reached a desert with bright stars above resembling spatial coordinates. As they looked up, they felt attached to a particular path - one that could lead them home.

In the dunes nearby, sands were blown away by strong gusts. This revealed white bones beneath - gigantic in size. One could imagine the enormity of the entire skeletons buried beneath.

“Over there!” Li Zhitian spotted the running tavern.

It was on top of a sand dune with the sign still swaying to the wind. There were no signs of human presence, only bones. Thus, the tavern being here painted a creepy picture instead of proving comfort.

Of course, the group was courageous enough to ignore this.

“Okay, let’s take a nap first.” Li Qiye looked around before sitting down and closing his eyes.

“A nap?” Li Zhitian didn’t understand. However, the other two sat down and closed their eyes.

This made him follow the trend as well. Once he woke up, he found himself to be in the middle of a city.

The others were already awake so he stood up as well.

“An interesting place.” Li Qiye smiled nonchalantly while observing the busy street.

“How strange.” On the contrary, the old servant was rather cautious.

“Where is this place?” Li Zhitian didn’t expect to be teleported here after the nap. Did someone move the group? No, they would have noticed and woken up in time.

“It popped up overnight.” He murmured - a desert during nighttime and a vibrant city during the day. This would be fine and all if there weren’t huge skeletons buried beneath the sands.

Li Qiye smiled and started walking. The city was packed with inhabitants and merchants - no different from one commonly seen in the mortal world.

Amusingly enough, Li Qiye took his time walking and appreciating the scenery as if it was the most beautiful sight.

“Tofu pudding here, tofu pudding...” A not-so-loud but powerful chant came from a hawker carrying a pole on his shoulders with two wooden barrels attached to the sides.

He had a square-shaped face covered in wrinkles, dressed in coarse clothes with towels on his shoulders to mitigate the pole’s weight. Despite carrying two barrels full of tofu, he still walked with remarkable agility - a sign of vitality and strength as if age had only made him stronger.

“Do you want some tofu pudding?” He stopped after noticing Li Qiye’s gaze.

Li Qiye only smiled in response while Li Zhitian said: “Give us one bowl each.”

“Just him is fine.” Li Qiye shook his head and glanced at Li Zhitian.

The latter was a bit confused but one bowl was placed in his hand already. He looked up and the old man was already walking away while chanting.

“I still haven’t paid!” He shouted but the old man disappeared into the crowd.

He figured that he might as well finish the bowl.

“Shit!” He yelled after having a taste and spat everything out. He looked at the ground and saw a pile of sand but when he looked at the bowl, it was still filled with tofu pudding.

He activated his heavenly gaze and saw the content shifting back and forth from sand to tofu. He then looked around and saw many illusions.

It seemed that the entire city was fake. However, the merchants and pedestrians were real, seemingly crafted by a mysterious power. This made it hard to discern reality from otherwise.

“What’s real and what’s fake here?” He murmured.

The old servant observed the scene carefully and had a hard time as well.

“When something false appears to be true, then the truth becomes false, and vice versa.” Li Qiye said with a faint smile.

“Rumble!” Suddenly, loud explosions came from a figure large enough to blot out the sky.

They looked up and saw a massive skeleton. Just one stomp could wipe out the entire city.

“?!” Li Zhitian and True Bear became alarmed.

However, the merchants and pedestrians didn’t seem to notice and continued as usual.

“All of you, kneel before my mighty self before I flatten your world!” The figure roared thunderously. His wrath could end with absolute destruction.

“Little goblin, stop causing trouble.” Someone in the crowd shouted.

“Bam!” A loud detonation occurred.

Li Zhitian and the others thought that an attack against the city was about to occur. However, the skeleton crumbled and disappeared from sight, revealing a young goblin of the earth affinity standing up.

Chapter 5273: Find That Sheep

“You’re being too much, don’t call me a little goblin! You can’t call me that!” The little guy started yelling.

Unfortunately, his wrathful declaration fell upon deaf ears. Thus, he gave up and ran into the crowd, also disappearing.

Li Zhitian found the whole incident absurd. However, similar events happened several times during their stay.

“Raa!” A white tiger twice the size of a regular one appeared before them. Its aura had the immensity of a great mountain; it seemed capable of taking down any foe with a single pounce. Its roar alone instilled fear into the heart of all listeners.

“Do you need a mount? There is a fee.” It spoke to the group.

“My feet are a little tired.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Climb up, pay whatever tip you want.” The tiger crouched down before Li Qiye who casually tossed a few things.

The tiger ate them and accepted the payment. With that, Li Qiye rode the beast through the city with the group walking behind.

The old servant had rich experiences in life. Nonetheless, he still found this place particularly strange.

Li Zhitian stopped again to assess the crowd. They all had normal expressions and went on with their lives, whether it be the servants or the merchants. They looked rather satisfied with their current life.

“Buzz.” Now, a radiant winged figure appeared above, looking like a god. Feathers made out of light scattered downward and touched the ground, causing it to light up.

“Ladies and gentlemen, Celestial Court orders deployment for another expedition!” The figure shouted.

The old servant and Li Zhitian shuddered after hearing this.

“Scram!” Those on the streets shouted back.

“Don’t be unreasonable now!” The figure shouted.

“Scram!” The inhabitants of the city including Li Qiye’s tiger took out a slingshot and started shooting at the figure.

“Pluff! Pluff!” Countless marbles struck the figures and tore the feathers off. Now, the figure looked like a plucked chicken, no longer as imperious as before.

His appearance prompted the group to break out in laughter.

The figure got up after the barrage and instantly ran away. Everyone returned to their previous task; life in the city resumed.

"I don't get this place." Li Zhitian was startled again. The inhabitants here couldn't be bothered with anything.

"Everyone has an inner self that can only be unleashed at certain moments." Li Qiye smiled and said: "Unfortunately, few have the privilege of living the way they want."

"What does inner self mean in this case?" Li Zhitian asked. He knew about anima, or the true self, in terms of cultivation.

"You are from Imperial Clan, born with matchless nobility. But if you actually want to be a humble potato seller and find great joy in this life, this would be your inner self." Li Qiye said while glancing at the youth: "Apart from aspiring to reach the apex, have you ever thought about what else you would want to do in life?"

"Hmm..." He hasn't thought of this question before because his fate was determined since birth.

Their clan had an exalted history. The Qian was arguably superior but they were gone now. Their progenitor, Crimson Emperor, was unbeatable. In the present, Immensity Conqueror also dominated.

He, Li Zhitian, was born with an exceptional gift. Thus, cultivation was his path. His future was rather obvious - a supreme genius looming above all.

Therefore, he had never thought about any other path. He only wanted to follow in the footsteps of the progenitor and Immensity Conqueror.

"It seems sad when you put it this way, Young Noble. I haven't really thought about what I truly want to do." Li Zhitian smiled wryly.

"It's alright. I myself had the desire of opening a small shop decorated with bright lanterns at night, living my remaining years selling random things." The old servant interjected.

Li Zhitian knew that the old man was stronger than him. This lifestyle didn't fit such a powerful cultivator.

"Raa!" True Bear joined the conversation.

Li Qiye smiled and said: "I know, you want to find a cute female bear and have a nice family of cubs."

"I know what I want to do too." The tiger said: "Entering the mortal world and enjoying good food and drink."

"Master, what is your strongest desire?" The old servant boldly asked.

Li Qiye chuckled and stared at the horizon: "If my current self were to not exist, then the thing I want to do the most is to find that sheep."

"What sheep?" Li Zhitian didn't understand.

The old servant pondered in silence while True Bear let out another cry.

“The inner self.” Li Zhitian looked around and thought about his own situation.

What would he truly want to do if he wasn’t affected by external circumstances? He never thought about it before but now, he was rather curious about the answer.

Chapter 5274: Not A Human

The busy street was filled with people searching for their inner selves and happiness. Whether it was good or bad, they still found something unique.

“Rumble!” A middle-aged man in full armor looked rather dominant. However, his action didn’t match his impressive appearance.

He carried a wolf’s fang cudgel on his shoulder and had a stalk of grass in his mouth, portraying a warrior who fears no one.

He walked to a stall and smashed the ground with both hands while shouting ferociously: “Time to pay the protection fee!”

The vendor ignored him causing him to open his eyes even wider: “Did you hear that? Time to pay up!”

“What fee?” The vendor finally glanced at him: “What protection fee?”

The man took out a small book and flipped the pages before shouting: "Your stall has been under my protection for 38,860 periods, time to pay up."

"Put it on credit." The vendor casually responded.

"Fine, 38,861 periods then, you better pay next time or I'll smash your stand." The man agreed before moving onward.

"Bam!" He raised his cudgel and threatened another stall owner: "Old man, time to pay the protection fee."

"I haven't opened yet, I'll pay afterward." This stall owner wasn't afraid.

"Remember, pay me first when you get some money." The man said before moving on.

"Time to pay the protection fee..." He went to all the stalls.

The owners agreed to pay but gave reasons to delay the actual payment. He didn't seem to mind and continued to play the role of a violent thug.

"Do you believe in the light?" As for the group, they were interrupted by a passerby.

He was dressed in plain clothes and had a distinctive bowl haircut, looking like a wandering ascetic.

He placed his palms together and they became resplendent.

“No.” Li Qiye smiled and shook his head.

“The light is everywhere. Believe and you shall be granted eternal life.” The ascetic handed out leaflets to the group, even to True Bear and the tiger.

The leaflets were written with luminous runes shimmering with mysterious profundities.

Li Zhitian couldn't believe the level of cultivation required to write the runes. Who else in the upper continent could write something like this?

“Believe and you shall be granted eternal life.” The ascetic bowed humbly while speaking. The power of the light exuded from his chest, seemingly granting him everlasting life.

“...” The old servant was startled too. He was reminded of the founder of Heaven Alliance - Light-dragon Conqueror. However, this ascetic seemed to be on a higher level.

“You might not live forever.” Li Qiye said.

“Light is a cycle of life and death, death and life, but as long as the heart is willing, the light shall always be there.” The ascetic responded.

“Hard to say. Only the dead truly knows. Understanding the principle is one thing but whether the dao heart will persevere before falling into the darkness is unknown.” Li Qiye said.

“Trust in the light and be eternal.” The ascetic didn’t argue or concede.

“Fine, I suppose it’s a good thing for one to be fulfilled in their wishes, whether it be in life or death.” Li Qiye said.

“Bam!” Someone suddenly patted the ascetic on the shoulder and said: “Missionary, you have been preaching every day on my street, you owe me a protection fee as well.”

“Trust in the light.” The ascetic handed him a leaflet and said: “Please accept the payment.”

“Tch, keep it for yourself, who believes in your light? Pah, only fools.” The middle-aged thug glared and said: “Don’t try this nonsense again, pay the fee or I’ll smash you with my cudgel.”

“We are brothers under the light, whether it be times of happiness or tribulation. May the light illuminate your barbaric heart...” The ascetic bowed and started chanting.

“Enough.” The man waved his hand as if he was chasing a fly away: “Always blabbering about the light, trying to sell it like merchandise. Well, there’s no light left here.”

“The light forgives the vulgar and lowly.” The ascetic said: “Accept the light and let it infuse you with noble intentions...”

“I will smash you if you don’t leave.” The man got a headache and raised his cudgel.

The ascetic feared not and turned toward Li Qiye's group: "Believe in the light and you and I shall ascend to paradise together to witness the eternal radiance..."

"How about this, come back and enlighten me once your light is eternal." Li Qiye answered for the group.

"Wonderful." The ascetic was delighted to hear this: "I shall meet you again when that happens."

With that, he left to pass out more leaflets regarding the light.

"Gentlemen, you must be outsiders." The man took a look at the group and his eyes lit up akin to a wolf staring at several fat sheep.

"Outsiders or insiders, is the distinction what makes us humans or otherwise? Does it matter here?" Li Qiye asked.

"Hmm, I suppose not. None are humans either way." The man said, amused by Li Qiye's response. He slapped his thigh and said: "Very well, I'll give you a fifty percent discount on the protection fee."

"Such a big discount?" Li Qiye smiled.

"In this city, as long as you pay my protection fee, you can freely roam everywhere. Just say my name and everyone will know to back off. How do you want to pay?" The man said.

“Since we’re not humans, we can’t pay yet. Just put it on credit, I’ll pay when I have money.” Li Qiye said.

“Credit again? I got a family to feed with this small protection business, I can’t do this all the time.” The man said.

“Well, since I don’t have money, I don’t need your protection, then why should I pay?” Li Qiye shook his head.

“Okay, okay, it’ll be on credit, just remember to pay it back next time. This is the only exception, okay?” The man was afraid of losing a customer.

“Yes, there won’t be a next time.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Good, you can feel free to roam the city now. There’s nothing to worry about since you’re under my protection.” The man tapped Li Qiye’s shoulder.

Li Zhitian and the others were astonished. How could there be such an easy-going thug in this world? If all of them were like this, the world would be a harmonious place.

“I’m off to collect more fees.” The man wrote down Li Qiye’s debt and left.

“Seems like a terribly-ran racket.” Li Zhitian said.

“The fee doesn’t matter, he just wants to be an elegant villain, similar to how you want to open a small shop.” Li Qiye said.

“So this is his inner self.” The old servant understood.

Chapter 5275: Dragon Heart

A few things here couldn’t be seen in the outside world. For example, when the group turned a corner, they heard an advertisement regarding dragons.

“Dragon meat, fresh! Very reasonably priced! Dragon meat!” A merchant shouted.

Li Zhitian took a deep breath after seeing this: “Fuck, that’s a big adult true dragon.”

The great beast lay before them with its eyes closed, brimming with a divine aura. Each scale shimmered brightly and its very presence caused auspicious images to appear above.

It was unknown whether the creature was alive or dead. Nonetheless, just one drop of blood would be immeasurably beneficial to any cultivator.

This was not a so-called “true dragon” in the mortal world. Those true dragons clearly evolved from lizards and serpents. This one was the real thing.

The seller was a man wearing a crimson robe. He exuded an air of dignity as if he was sitting among the clouds. His charisma was second to none.

However, he held a butcher blade while loudly peddling: "Dragon meat for an incredible price!"

"Are you really selling dragon meat?" Li Zhitian murmured.

True Bear cried out several times, not daring to get close to the dragon.

"Why would I be lying?" The man glared at Li Zhitian and said: "Little grandson, how many pounds do you want?" [1]

"..." Zhitian felt as if he was being insulted by this address, thinking that he had misheard.

"Give me half to bring home." A man only around twenty years of age said. However, he had an ancient aura as if he had just walked out from an old painting due to his old crest and sword.

The seller in crimson ignored him, causing him to touch the true dragon: "Cut from here and give me this side, I don't want the other."

The seller still ignored him.

"Start cutting already, I have to start the stew soon." The man insisted but was treated like air again.

“Are you selling or not?!” He finally raised his voice.

“You didn’t pay last time.” The man in crimson finally stared at him.

“Ridiculous, my clan is known for being wealthy with inexhaustible treasures, we can last for thirty generations while trying to spend it all, don’t slander me, I don’t owe you any money.” The young man stared with his eyes wide open.

“Slander? You took half the dragon meat last time and still didn’t pay.” The man in crimson said.

“Given how rich I am, do you think I give a damn about a few coins?” The young man pulled up his sleeves and looked like a prodigal young master: “Keep on spewing this nonsense and I’ll buy your entire business up.”

“What nonsense? You really did ate half of my meat and didn’t pay.” The true dragon suddenly got up and pointed at the youth while shouting.

This left the group slack-jawed with the exception of Li Qiye. Why did the dragon help the butcher argue about debt? Moreover, wasn’t it half-eaten?

“You... you...” The young man pointed at the dragon and stammered: “You watch your mouth too! We have too much money to spend, I can easily afford your crappy meat!”

“Should I cut open your stomach and have a look?” The dragon stared at him in response.

"You evil dragon! You deserve death a thousand times!" The young man shouted: "I should boil and fry you every day!"

"Too bad you can't." The dragon gloated and lay back down; its expression infuriated the youth and made him leave.

"Dragon meat for sale here!" The man in crimson started advertising again.

"Are you really selling?" Li Zhitian stared at the dragon, confused.

"Little grandson, are you buying or not?" The man in crimson stared at Li Zhitian, seemingly thinking that the guy was an idiot.

"Give me the heart." Li Qiye smiled.

The man was happy to have an actual customer. He revealed a beaming smile and said: "Alright, coming right up."

Having said that, he picked up his butcher knife and started slicing.

"Ahh!" Dragon blood and essences splashed everywhere. Everyone could see that these were priceless treasures.

"Crack!" The man moved with lightning speed. The knife was sharp enough to cut the dragon open, revealing a pulsing dragon heart.

“Not bad at all.” Li Qiye praised after seeing it.

“Taking it out now.” The man reached into the chest.

“Bam!” The dragon suddenly jumped up and yelled: “What the hell are you doing, such crappy techniques. That hurts, I’m not selling anymore.” Having said that, it started leaving while closing its chest.

“Brother Dragon, come back! Come back!” The man shouted.

“No, I’m done here.” The dragon completely ignored him and left.

Li Zhitian was left speechless by this ridiculous scene.

“Sigh, too clumsy today and couldn’t extract the heart.” The man wiped his hands and said helplessly: “Come early tomorrow, I promise I will get you that dragon heart. Be really early or someone else will take it first.”

“Tomorrow then.” Li Qiye smiled and rode the tiger away.

Once they left the stall, Zhitian asked: “Do you really want to buy that heart?”

"A guy who likes to sell and the other who likes to endure, there's no problem here. It's just a transaction." Li Qiye smiled.

"I don't understand that full-grown dragon. Why does it want to be butchered?" Zhitian said.

It was one thing for a dragon to be killed and sold. In this case, it willingly let the man in crimson cut it open.

"This act shows its worth." Li Qiye responded.

"Uh, please elaborate." Zhitian responded.

"An adult true dragon is so precious that it is always hunted. If there's a dragon that isn't desirable, then it's not a true dragon." Li Qiye said.

"Makes sense." Zhitian said.

"One is willing to be butchered and the other is a butcher, a perfect match out of necessity." Li Qiye smiled.

Chapter 5276: Fortune-telling

"Fortune-telling, fortune-telling, fortune telling..." An old man on the street repeated this phrase like an emotionless machine only capable of one thing. The tone and pace remained exactly the same.

His robe had patches on them but was as clean as can be - an indicator of his meticulous personality. He seemed to be visually impaired, unable to see anyone passing by. His only companion was the sun and the repeated chant with no end in sight.

He had a bamboo stick that was most likely used for walking. It also resembled a staff meant for striking snakes. It had eight colors, seemingly polished to have a glazed texture. Its shine tempted others to touch and feel its surface.

Thus, more people actually paid attention to his stick rather than him despite his bizarre nature.

Li Qiye was one of them. He stopped and took a look at the old fortune-teller.

Li Zhitan and the others paused as well. The old servant noticed the stick: "This bamboo stick..."

"Fortune-telling?" The old man's tone finally changed after noticing someone standing in front of him.

"Accurate?" Li Qiye sighed and asked.

"Absolutely accurate, and it is also free." The old man said.

"Free?" Li Zhitan became curious.

"Fortune-telling is peering into the wills of the heaven. There cannot be a payment or a tribulation is inevitable." The old man said seriously.

“That’s a thing?” Zhitian was surprised once more.

“Allow me to read your fortune to dispel any skepticism.” The old man reached for Zhitian’s hand.

He couldn’t dodge the old man’s advance despite being a twelve-fruit dragon lord.

“Very well, Sir. Please read my fortune.” Since he was caught already, he decided to go with the flow.

The old man held Zhitian’s palm and started gently tracing the lines, needing to rely on the touch instead of his eyes.

“Your fate is vast.” After a while, the old man concluded.

“What do you mean by that?” Zhitian asked.

“A fate encompassing vast possibilities and branches but most importantly, avoiding the great calamities.” The old man continued: “As long as your heart is kind and compassionate, your remaining years will be filled with glory and success. I offer you two words, benevolent heart.”

“Benevolent heart.” Zhitian murmured.

“Please read my fortune.” The old servant became interested and offered his hand.

The fortune-teller held his hand and gently traced the palm: "Your fate is very thick."

"How so?" The old servant asked for elaboration.

"A profound and far-reaching destiny, albeit progressing at a snail's pace. Small steps are needed before covering great distances." The old man said: "You do have a lucky star. With their help, you will attain indescribable prosperity and fulfillment."

"Thank you, Sir." The old servant bowed and didn't ask for much more. Knowing too much about the future might not be a good thing.

"Raa!" True Bear became interested as well and touched the old fortune-teller's hand.

Li Zhitian chuckled after seeing the excited bear. Of course, he didn't think the old fortune-teller would have a problem with this because the bear was sentient.

The old man didn't refuse and started tracing the paw earnestly, seemingly checking the shape of the bones.

"Your fate is filled with adversity and fatal perils. They are unavoidable and you will have a hard time escaping from their clutches. However, if you encounter noble individuals, prosperity and opportunities will replace disasters." The old man concluded.

"Raa." The bear let out a quiet cry and seemingly bowed to show his gratitude.

"Fortune-telling, fortune-telling, fortune-telling..." The old man went back to chanting as if it was as crucial as breathing.

He paused for a moment and stared at Li Qiye: "Do you want your fortune told?"

"My fate isn't an easy one to be read." Li Qiye smiled.

"All fates can be examined. Good or bad, that is up to the heaven." The old man said.

"True." Li Qiye nodded in agreement.

"So how about it?" The old man insisted.

Li Qiye stared at the old man before letting out a soft sigh. He raised his hand and said: "Can't refuse a free reading, I suppose. Go for it."

The old man's expression became solemn the moment he touched Li Qiye's hand. As the assessment continued, it became increasingly grave. He then let go of the hand.

"How is it?" Li Qiye asked.

"Your fate is as noble as the heaven, I can't and shouldn't read it." The old man shook his head.

“Yes, I myself can’t delve too deeply into it, let alone others.” Li Qiye agreed.

“As noble as the heaven.” The old man remained tight-lipped as if these secrets shouldn’t be revealed.

“Have you read your own fortune?” Li Qiye asked.

“Yes, a destined death.” The old man said.

“If you have foreseen it, why not walk a different path?” Li Qiye asked.

“I do not fear what is written in my destiny. In fact, using my life to prove my fate is the truth.” The old man said.

“Death is the end, only bones remain.” Li Qiye said.

“Everlasting life means countless bones.” The old man responded.

“Can’t argue with that.” Li Qiye nodded and stared into the distance: “Where should I go from here?”

“Not to be foretold, and it shouldn’t be either.” The old man had an answer.

"How so?" Li Qiye pressed on.

"Everything about you is already predetermined whether I calculate or otherwise." The old man said.

"If that's the case, maybe I should just go be a shepherd." Li Qiye shook his head.

"But that is not your fate, so you won't." The man said.

"I determine my fate, not the heaven." Li Qiye said.

"And if you're you?" The old man answered with a question.

"Huh..." Li Qiye smiled wryly and stroked his chin: "I see, that is a compelling argument. If I'm the heaven and my fate is determined by me, then it is still the heaven's decision. Seems like I'm digging my own grave."

"This is your destiny." The old man couldn't help but say.

"Unfortunately, I'm not a believer. My fate is stronger and so is my determination and dao heart. Fate cannot dictate my path." Li Qiye shook his head.

"You are one of the few who speaks such words, perhaps the only one who is carrying it out." The old man said.

"I am alone on this path toward the dao, so I won't allow the heaven to outmatch my fate." Li Qiye smiled.

"I see..." The old man contemplated in silence.

"We are all insignificant ants." he commented after a while.

"Yes, but it is worthwhile to become an ant capable of baring its fangs." Li Qiye said.

"Toward whom?" The old man asked.

"That depends on the toughness of the ant's dao heart." Li Qiye smiled.

Chapter 5277: Treasure Trunk

"Clank! Clank! Clank!" A bell toll or an alarm gong going at a regular pace could be heard clearly throughout the city.

"It's payday." Many dropped what they were doing and rushed toward the source of the sound.

The tiger ridden by Li Qiye also did the same, galloping through the street. The old fortune-teller gathered his items and ran with his walking stick. No one would think that he was blind after seeing his impressive agility.

Once they got to the source, they saw a tavern situated on a high spot in the city - the very tavern that they have been chasing.

“Let’s take a look.” Li Qiye said with a smile.

The tavern was filled with a diverse group - from merchants and servants to all the other members of the city...

The fee-collecting thug, dragon killer, fortune-teller, little goblin, ascetic, and the young man who didn’t pay were present as well.

They waited with their eyes fixated on a table in the center.

“Rumble!” A trunk suddenly appeared on the table.

“What’s that?” Li Zhitian asked quietly.

“Just watch, we’ll find out soon enough.” Li Qiye smiled.

The atmosphere became rather tense as everyone watched with bated breath.

“The treasure trunk is full, we can start the split now.” The old fortune-teller touched the trunk and told everyone.

“Ivory Street has the most merchants, we should get half.” The dragon killer in crimson said loudly.

“Lies!” The middle-aged thug retorted: “All of you owe me money for a long time now, this entire trunk should be mine.”

“Who needs your protection?” The young freeloader said: “Our clan has thousands of bodyguards, not to mention our numerous stores and laborers. We deserve half the share.”

“Untrue, untrue.” The ascetic shook his head: “The compassionate light illuminates all. I will take the trunk and distribute the content to everyone. It doesn’t matter how much I get or how much you get, leave it to fate. How does that sound?”

“I have been entrusted by the mandate of Celestial Court, it is my duty to oversee the distribution.” The winged celestial being appeared again.

Everyone else took out their slingshots and started shooting stones at him again.

“Ah!” He was filled with countless holes while groaning on the ground.

“You all are going too far, why do you always gang up on me!” He wailed and screamed: “I have parents too, just like all of you, what’s wrong with me expressing my opinions!?”

Everyone ignored him and put away their slingshots. If he were to say “Celestial Court” one more time, they would fire again.

“Since my clan is so rich, we are the least likely to embezzle. How about this, I’ll carry it back first and you come to my house to get your fair share.” The prodigal young master suggested.

“Screw that!” The adult true dragon said with disdain: “Pay what you owe me for my meat first before spewing this crap about how rich your clan is.”

“This is absolutely a misunderstanding.” The youth didn’t turn red at all as he said: “Brother, there is not a single piece of meat missing from you. I didn’t eat anything. You must have gotten the wrong person or are deliberately slandering my good reputation. Don’t be fooled, ladies and gentlemen.”

“Bah.” Many gave him looks of contempt, clearly not trusting him.

“I am the largest in the world, I should get the biggest share!” The giant skeleton appeared again and roared.

“Little goblin, stop being so loud, get down!” Someone shouted at him.

“Bam!” The skeleton crumbled again and the cute goblin rolled on the ground: “Stop calling me little! I’m larger than all of you, larger than the heaven itself! If I hear someone say the word ‘little’ again, I will smash you with my bones!”

His words fell on deaf ears. This was definitely not his first time making this threat.

“I am undoubtedly the lord of the city, let me take care of this.” The thug slammed his cudgel to the ground, resulting in a violent quake.

“Looks like it’s a test of power!” The dragon smashed its claw, issuing an even more violent quake.

“Win people over with virtue instead of force.” The old fortune-teller shook his head: “We shouldn’t resort to excessive force, how uncouth.”

“Yes, logic and reason instead of force.” The tiger nodded in agreement.

Arguments broke out everywhere in the tavern; a solution remained out of reach.

“Enough arguing, let me take a look.” Li Qiye stepped forward amidst the heated argument and opened the trunk.

“Creak.” The content was revealed.

“...” Zhitian’s group was left dumbfounded.

Given the fierce competition, they assumed that the inside would be filled with treasures and artifacts. However, it was filled to the brim with nothing but stacks of worthless paper.

Li Zhitian rubbed his eyes and took another look. The result was still the same.

“This is...” the old servant had a serious expression. He already had a good idea of what was going on but this confirmed his theory.

He looked around and saw the inhabitants of the city becoming blurry, seemingly fading away.

Li Qiye, on the other hand, remained unfazed as if everything was normal. He said: “There’s plenty for everyone, no need to fight. Follow your heart and take what you need.”

“Now this is more like it.” One person grabbed a handful of paper and stuffed it into their pocket. He patted the filled pocket with satisfaction.

“Me too.” The thug grabbed a handful but thought that this was too much and returned some. He then stuffed the rest into his pocket for a perfect fit.

The rich young master also grabbed a bunch but under everyone’s gaze, he felt embarrassed and returned a few. Nonetheless, this didn’t stop the gazes so he returned a little more.

“Hmph, it’s not like I need money.” He ended up only grabbing a few pieces.

“I am poor and need more.” The little goblin stuffed several pockets before stopping.

“I am full of integrity while representing Celes-...” The winged man stopped speaking when he saw the slingshots again.

“Money is only worldly possession, I do not forget my true purpose.” He changed his tune and ended up only grabbing five pages or so.

Chapter 5278: Old Man In The Corner

Since everyone only grabbed three to five pieces, there was enough for everyone.

“M-my turn?” An old man appeared out of nowhere and surprised everyone.

He wore a gray robe that has turned white due to age and repeated washing. Unfortunately, it was covered in dirt and mud.

He didn’t have many wrinkles, only a sickly complexion and a dark tan. It seemed that he was malnourished and had a tough life.

Though he tried to keep his sparse gray hair neatly combed, his tough work made it messy toward the end of the day.

When he opened his mouth, people saw that he only had a few teeth left - yellow and some with cavities.

Everyone dispersed, not wanting to be near him. In fact, the smell was so unbearable that Li Zhitian and the others left the tavern, leaving Li Qiye behind.

“Is there any more?” He asked.

“Yes, how many do you want?” Li Qiye smiled.

"All of it." He answered and took the entire trunk away.

Li Qiye watched his departing figure and said sentimentally: "No desires in life, at least there are some now."

With that finished, he left the tavern and saw a group loitering outside - those he had met previously.

"Not working?" Li Qiye sat down next to them and asked.

"Sigh, can't work every day, you know?" The thug shook his head: "I finally got my hand on some money, gotta relax now."

"Exactly." The winged man appeared to be satisfied as well. He belched and said: "Regarding this matter, I can't help but bring up Celestial Court..."

Everyone stared at him and reached into their pocket again, being less aggressive than usual due to their current good mood.

"Stop, stop!" The winged man said: "This is a complaint about Celestial Court. Sigh, we're all just workers but they push us too far, expecting us to work like oxen and horses. That's why we need to take a little break and rest right now."

The group spared him after listening to the entire line.

"This doesn't come by all the time." The dragonslayer in crimson sighed and said.

"Relaxing all the time will hurt your balls though." The adult dragon appeared well-fed and burped before finally releasing a loud fart.

"You are disgusting." The others complained.

"Disgusting? You all will fart too after a good meal, it's just that you will do it secretly. I have a large body, where am I going to hide? So what if I let out a big one?" The dragon strongly retorted.

"This is unbearable." The old fortune-teller shook his head and chuckled.

"There's an even worse stench." The young master commented.

Bringing up this topic caused everyone to stare at him with hostile eyes.

"Forget that I said anything." His neck shrunk as he let out an awkward laugh.

"May I join you?" At this time, a quiet voice asked the group from a distant corner. It was none other than the old man who took the whole trunk.

"No!" Everyone shouted in unison, displaying the same teamwork they had when taking out the slingshots.

"Alright then..." The old man kept to himself in the corner and continued to enjoy his meal.

Li Qiye smiled faintly after seeing this. He lay down and basked in the sun as well.

"I think that when I die, it'll be nice if I can hang out in this city with everyone." Li Qiye casually remarked.

"Tsk, that won't do." The dragonslayer said: "If you die, everyone else will be dead then. Only ghosts will be around, competing for food."

"You cannot die or there won't be a place for ghosts to gather anymore." The old fortune-teller said.

"Everyone in the world can die, except you. There will be no place to play then." The youth shook his head.

"Yes, you need to keep on surviving so that even ghosts can enjoy themselves." The thug said.

"Seems like it's hard being a human these days, even harder being a ghost. Disliked when I'm alive, unwanted when I want to be dead, what a pitiable situation." Li Qiye said.

"Just like me." The old man in the corner spoke again.

"No! There should only be one of you around. No more!" The group said in unison.

"Alright then..." The old man seemed to be sad and lowered his head.

"Death." Li Qiye stared at the sun and said: "When there is no greed within the heart, death is no longer terrifying."

"Greed is inevitable, even ghosts are greedy." The old fortune-teller said.

"Ghosts can learn to let go of it." The dragonslayer disagreed.

"That's why it's good to be small." The little goblin got up and said: "I can't be as greedy as you all."

"Please." The young man stared disdainfully at the goblin and said: "No one comes close to touching you when it comes to greed, small in size but so greedy. You weren't this way when you were alive."

"I'm not talking about my nature, I'm saying that because I'm small, I'm bullied and this prevents me from actually taking too much." The goblin defended his position.

"Choose your words carefully, no one here bullies you." The old fortune-teller said.

"I speak for myself when I say that I haven't bullied him. I don't know about the others." The thug said before patting the goblin's shoulder: "Tell me about these bullies. I'll protect you from them once you pay the protection fee."

“No thanks, I prefer being bullied over paying.” The goblin wasn’t interested.

“Everyone is equal under the light.” The ascetic commented.

“Can you stop already? You didn’t believe in the light at the very end, stop spewing this crap.” The dragonslayer said.

“Hahaha, I can testify to that.” The thug gloated and said: “You, who claim to be with the light, were the first to fall.”

“That is false.” The ascetic responded with conviction: “I didn’t abandon the light or join the darkness. It was merely a trial, using my own body to chase away the darkness...”

“Are you guys hearing this?” The youth sneered: “Those are some flowery words for the best backstabber here. I bet you’re hiding a dark dagger right now and thinking about stabbing us.”

“I apologize for my previous sin. That is why I choose not to reincarnate in order to atone for my sins.” The ascetic said.

“What’s the point of reincarnation? Things are fine now instead of experiencing cycles of suffering and hardship. It doesn’t make sense.” The dragonslayer said.

“I agree. I prefer to be here instead of joining the cycle.” The fortune-teller nodded.

“Not necessarily.” The youth said: “It would be nice to be born into a noble family as a prodigal son. Doing nothing all day except flirting with noble girls. That’s my old expertise.”

“And if your family fails in the political struggle, decapitation for everyone.” The goblin poured cold water on his dream.

“Nothing good can come out of a dog’s mouth.” The youth glared at him.

“Well, I do wish to be reborn as a tall and majestic man, destined for greatness.” The goblin said.

“More like destined to cause calamities.” The voice from the corner answered.

“That’s still fine, as long as I survive.” The goblin replied with a mischievous laugh.

Chapter 5279: Disappeared

What could be better than basking in the sun after filling one’s stomach? Life and death didn’t seem to matter that much if one could live like this even after death.

The group forgot their reason for coming here. Perhaps it no longer mattered.

After a long while, faint cries could be heard, seemingly coming from a little girl. Everyone heard it clearly, unable to restrain their emotion.

“I think a girl is crying.” Li Zhitian stood up.

“Little grandson, don’t go anywhere.” The man in crimson stopped him.

“Uh...” Li Zhitian didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. This man kept on addressing him with disrespect. Nonetheless, he obeyed and sat back down.

The cries continued. The old servant listened carefully, not wanting to miss a single detail.

Li Qiye only smiled and didn’t care, still relaxing like the rest of the group.

“I have to sunbathe too.” The old man in the corner lay down and enjoyed himself while keeping a distance from everyone.

The gentle warmth of the sun was unforgettable. Worries and other attachments were no longer important - only this moment.

The group fell asleep. After an unknown period of time, Li Qiye slowly got up.

He told the old servant, Li Zhitian, and True Bear to leave quietly, not wanting to disturb the sleeping group.

As they walked through the city, they found a serene silence. All the inhabitants seemed to be taking a nap as well.

They made it to the gate and left for the desert once more - a land of sand with no end in sight, only scattered gigantic skeletons.

The sun outside was somehow different than the one they enjoyed back in the city. This intense heat scorched their skin and could make them faint.

After taking a few steps, Li Zhitian looked back and no longer saw the city.

"It's not there anymore." He only saw endless sand behind him: "The entire city is gone."

If he hadn't spent time there, he could have considered it as a mirage. However, it felt so real to him.

"Of course it is not there, it doesn't exist." Li Qiye didn't bother turning around.

"Doesn't exist? We were inside just now." Li Zhitian became startled.

"Experience doesn't mean reality." Li Qiye responded and continued onward.

In reality, Li Zhitian suspected as much during his time there. Nonetheless, this was still a shocking confirmation.

"Truly bizarre." He murmured.

“This might be one of the most memorable events in your life, and it will help you understand many things.” Li Qiye added.

“I see.” Li Zhitian responded and agreed regarding these strange occurrences.

“Do the spirits remain after death?” The old servant spoke more than usual.

“You’re giving me goosebumps, Uncle.” Li Zhitian smiled.

“You weren’t scared hanging out with a bunch of dead people, why are you afraid now in broad daylight?” Li Qiye chuckled.

Li Zhitian couldn’t answer because everything prior felt so real even when he activated his heavenly gaze.

However, the cries of the little girl still echoed inside their eyes.

“You guys all hear this too, right?” Li Zhitian stopped and said.

“Yes.” The old servant said.

“Is she actually alive?” Li Zhitian became curious.

“The living does not dwell here.” Li Qiye said.

“Why is it crying? And what is it?” Li Zhitian asked while having an ominous feeling as if something was staring at him.

“If it’s here, it’s nothing good.” Li Qiye responded.

The cries continued regardless of how far they have gone.

“Shouldn’t we take a look?” Eventually, Li Zhitian couldn’t handle it any longer after having a guilty conscience. He knew that these cries in this desolate desert weren’t normal but they were calling him.

Chapter 5280: Hideous Visage

The sand beneath and those scattering to the wind were unbearable all the same. Travelers became restless, unable to bear the extreme weather.

Li Zhitian convinced the others to trace the source of the cries. They eventually found it - a girl whose hair draped down her white dress.

It was unclear whether she was injured or for some other reason, but she couldn’t move away from the spot.

Her soft cries pierced the heart and made everyone feel distressed, wanting nothing more than to hug and protect her.

She didn't seem to notice their presence and continued to cry.

Li Zhitian couldn't endure this any longer. He approached and crouched down, speaking with a gentle voice: "Lil Sister, why are you crying?"

The girl turned around, revealing something that could barely be considered a "face", more resembling a blood-filled gaping mouth with spiky teeth.

Li Zhitian immediately stepped back but suddenly found himself frozen. Something controlled him and his true fate, fully immobilizing him. The mouth aimed for his head with lightning speed.

He knew that something like this was going to happen. However, he was confident in his cultivation, thinking that he would be able to escape in time.

Alas, his current state left him horrified. He wanted to scream but no sound came out.

'It's over.' He thought and closed his eyes, only capable of waiting for death.

Fortunately, Li Qiye was countless times faster than lightning and lifted the mouth away from Zhitian.

"Raa!" It let out a chilling roar and opened wide toward Li Qiye instead.

His eyes flashed brightly as he summoned lightning to strike the creature, causing it to be ravaged by this mighty affinity.

“Crackle!” Lightning surges repeatedly struck the mouth, causing it to tremble uncontrollably. Eventually, it couldn’t move any longer.

Zhitian watched the entire thing but still couldn’t move until Li Qiye tap him on the shoulder.

He shuddered and thought that a spell had just left his body. His true fate finally worked again.

“Shit, that was close.” His knees buckled after the fact. That would have been the end for him if it wasn’t for Li Qiye.

“You were told to not go.” Li Qiye smiled and said.

Li Zhitian remembered back in the city, the rude man in crimson told him to not go anywhere. Unfortunately, he was caught from the very start by this mysterious creature.

“What is this monster?” He shuddered after recalling his near-death experience.

“It has a few names, ghost face or nightmare.” Li Qiye casually picked up and tossed the “mouth” to Zhitian.

He caught it but wanted to throw it away. Nonetheless, he still curiously took a look.

The thing had been sealed by Li Qiye but its appearance was still horrifying.

"I didn't know such things exist in our world." Zhitian remarked.

"They don't, only in dreams." Li Qiye chuckled.

"Dreams?" He became surprised but the group was moving on already.

Zhitian hurried to catch them while still holding the creature.

"Should I throw it away?" He asked, not wanting to be exposed to it for too long.

"No, keep on carrying it, I have uses for it." Li Qiye said.

Zhitian had no choice but to carry the nasty creature while following Li Qiye.

The journey was not difficult for cultivators at their level. It was only a matter of time before they crossed through the desert.

The next area consisted of magnificent shooting stars. They flowed like rivers, emitting colorful auroras, stardusts, and flames. As they streaked across the sky, they left behind pleasant echoes...

"A surging galaxy." Zhitian murmured.

"No, it's the ground that is moving. The stars are not in motion." The old servant corrected him.

Zhitian observed the scenery carefully and found that this was indeed the case. He realized that the desert was nothing more than a gigantic vessel with a curved front. It carried the sand through this galaxy.

To the front was someone controlling the ship with a large oar, rowing left and right. His shoulder was incredibly broad, capable of shouldering three thousand worlds without any difficulty.

Even if the heaven were to collapse, he would be able to raise it and allow a pure land to exist underneath.