

Ghost 140

Chapter 140: human breeding

Morning fog drifted over the barbaric camp.

Bodies of unconscious warriors lay tied in rows.

Tents smoldered lightly from last night's spiritual fire.

The air smelled of ash, sweat, and leftover ghost energy.

The undercover group stood around the largest tent where the barbaric leader was tied to a wooden post.

His eyes were bloodshot.

His veins glowed faintly purple — a sign of excessive ghost infestation.

The Empress, Emperor, Yao Qing, twins, New Man, and three ghosts formed a circle.

The leader lifted his head.

"You think you won... but the ritual has only begun."

The Emperor stepped forward.

Cold. Controlled. Dangerous.

"Speak clearly," he commanded. "Who is controlling you?"

The leader laughed — a haunting, broken laugh.

"You cannot stop what is already born."

Li Shen's ghostly voice echoed beside the Empress: "He is half-possessed. His soul is corrupted."

Wei Rong cracked his knuckles. "Just let me punch him until his ghost leaves."

Fen Yu gasped, horrified. "General, that is not how exorcism works!"

The leader gave them all a mad smile.

Truth Begins to Spill

The Emperor tightened his grip on the man's collar.

"Tell me who enhanced your strength. Who gave you ghost power?"

The man whispered, "The North."

The Empress's heart trembled. The North was vast, mountainous, and rarely visited.

"A cult..." the man continued, "...hidden in the far northern forest... where even the sun hesitates to shine."

The Emperor narrowed his eyes. "What cult?"

With a shiver, the leader spoke:

"The Cult of the Crimson Night."

Even Fen Yu shuddered at the name. "It sounds like expensive makeup brand but evil."

Li Shen smacked her ghostly head. "Focus!"

The Ritual Explained

The leader strained against his ropes, veins pulsing.

"You don't understand... Humans and ghosts can be fused... not naturally... but through ritual!"

The Empress stepped forward. "How? How do they breed?"

Silence.

Until—

"Once a year..." the man whispered, voice shaking, "...when the blood moon rises."

The tent fell silent.

Even the ghosts froze in air.

Yao Qing paled. "Blood moon?! You mean—"

"In nine months..." the leader growled, "the next blood moon will appear. We were preparing."

Twin Lin gulped. "So... like a baby shower but demonic?"

Twin Lian whispered, "Shut up..."

The leader's head fell back, eyes rolling.

"Under the blood moon... ghost souls descend. Humans chosen by the cult drink the ghost wine... their bodies change... their womb mixes with ghost essence... and then—"

Fen Yu fainted dramatically in midair. "TOO MUCH INFORMATION—"

Wei Rong facepalmed. "Useless."

The leader continued, voice cracking:

"A ghost-human infant is born at dawn... stronger than any demon or warrior. Impossible to kill. Impossible to track."

The Emperor's expression darkened.

"How many exist already?"

The leader's lips curled.

"Dozens... raised in the North... hidden... training..."

Yao Qing nearly dropped her sword. "Dozens?!"

The leader laughed weakly.

"Tonight's raid... was to gather warm bodies... to offer to the cult. We weren't stealing gold... we were stealing people."

The Empress's fists shook.

Who Leads the Cult?

The Emperor asked the most important question:

"Who is your leader? Name him."

The leader's breath caught.

"I... do not know."

The Emperor's eyes sharpened dangerously. "You expect us to believe that?"

The barbaric leader trembled so violently the ropes creaked.

"No barbaric has seen his true face... not once.

He hides behind a mask of bone...

Some say he is human...

Some say he is a ghost...

Some say he is something born from the blood moon itself!"

Fen Yu whispered, "Okay I'm definitely NOT sleeping tonight."

Li Shen frowned. "But why stay hidden?"

The leader answered softly:

"Because his power... is incomplete.

He is waiting for the next blood moon...

Nine months from now...

To ascend."

The Emperor and Empress exchanged a grave look.

A Map of Horror

The leader suddenly twisted, trying to reach his pouch.

The Emperor held him still as the man spat out a blood-covered scrap of leather.

A map.

Drawn with dried ghost ink.

The Emperor unrolled it slowly.

Yao Qing gasped so loudly a bird flew out of a nearby tree.

Twin Lin covered her mouth. Twin Lian whispered, "This is bad..."

The Empress stared.

On the map:

A circle marking their current barbaric camp.

A line leading north.

A large blood-red handprint marking the cult's hidden land deep inside the northern mountains.

Next to it, written in crude characters:

"Crimson Night Temple — birthplace of the Ghost Children."

The Emperor spoke in a low voice:

"This... is worse than we expected."

The Cult's Next Move

The leader, now exhausted, whispered:

"We were ordered to gather...

as many villagers as possible...

before the seasonal snow blocks the northern path.

All must reach the temple before the Blood Moon."

"How many more barbaric groups are there?" the Emperor demanded.

The leader laughed weakly.

"Hundreds..."

"We were only one small group."

The Empress's heart dropped.

Yao Qing covered her mouth. Twin Lin muttered a prayer. Twin Lian looked like she might faint.

Ghost Wei Rong floated behind them, tension in his jaw.

"We need to act fast," Li Shen said gravely.

Fen Yu raised her ghost fan.

"We should run. Far away. Very far."

The Empress glared. "You're helping whether you like it or not."

Fen Yu pouted but nodded.

Realization Hits Them All

The Emperor looked at his group:

A cultivator Empress

Three awakened humans

Two chaotic twins

One clumsy New Man

Three half-enlightened ghosts

And himself—an Emperor hiding among commoners

They were the only ones who knew this secret.

The only ones who had fought the barbarics up close.

The only ones with spiritual power strong enough to fight ghost energy.

He spoke slowly, each word heavy:

"We cannot wait nine months.

We must stop them before the next Blood Moon."

Everyone stiffened.

The Empress nodded firmly.

"Yes.

If ghost-human breeds become fully grown, no army will stand against them."

Fen Yu whimpered. "So... we save the kingdom again?"

Wei Rong muttered, "You haven't saved it even once—"

Li Shen pushed his glasses up. "We start planning today."

Even the twins stepped forward bravely.

"We'll help!"

New Man nodded fiercely. "Me too!"

Yao Qing raised her blade. "We don't run from danger. We crush it."

The Emperor looked at them — truly looked — and felt the weight of destiny settle on their shoulders.

Final Words From the Barbaric Leader

Before he passed out, the leader whispered one final chilling sentence:

"The master already knows you live.

He smelled you in the wind."

Everyone froze.

Even the ghosts.

The Empress felt a cold shiver down her spine.

The Emperor tightened his grip on his sword.

War had begun.

Not against humans.

Not against ghosts.

But against something born between.

Something unnatural.

Something unstoppable.

Something coming in nine months.

The barbaric leader lay unconscious, tied to a thick wooden pillar.

The camp was quiet now, only the crackling of dying fires echoing through the air.

Beyond the tents, the Emperor stood with his back straight, face cold, aura sharp.

He waited until the others — Empress, Yao Qing, twins, new man, and ghosts — stepped aside.

General Xie approached from afar, followed by the four elite soldiers and their wives who were part of the undercover group. Dust clung to their clothes. Their expressions were tense.

"Your Majesty," General Xie said quietly, bowing, "we heard the fighting... what happened?"

The Emperor's face remained unreadable.

Behind him, the Empress watched silently.

She knew what he was about to do.

He wasn't going to tell the truth.

Not about:

The shaman

The enlightenment

The swords

The ghost-human breeding cult

The blood moon

The northern temple

The hidden leader

The spiritual battle they just fought

Nothing.

Some truths were too dangerous to spread.

Some would cause fear.

Some... could spark the collapse of the entire empire.

So the Emperor gave them a calm, practiced smile — the smile of a ruler who controlled every detail.

"There was no danger," he said steadily.

"It was only a small barbaric group — unorganized, undisciplined. They tried to raid a nearby village. We stopped them."

The soldiers exchanged looks.

"But, Your Majesty... the energy we felt—"

"Campfire smoke," the Emperor replied instantly.

"Confusion. The barbarics tried to scare us with fire tricks. Nothing more."

General Xie frowned slightly.

"Are you certain? None of them resisted for long... it was almost like they collapsed from fear."

The Emperor nodded once.

"They realized who they were facing."

His tone held finality — the kind that allowed no questions.

General Xie accepted it immediately, bowing deeply.

As did the soldiers.

"As expected from the Emperor," one murmured.

"You resolved it before dawn."

Another soldier added proudly, "We stood guard, but His Majesty did everything alone."

Behind them, Yao Qing almost snorted.

The twins bit their tongues to stop laughter.

The new man bowed with an awkward stiff back, trying not to look guilty.

The Empress simply lowered her gaze, letting the Emperor handle it.

The soldiers' wives, dressed as refugees, looked relieved.

"So there's no more threat?" one asked timidly.

The Emperor softened his expression.

"None. You can lower your guard. The group we encountered was small. Their leader has been captured. They have no reinforcements nearby."

General Xie let out a breath he didn't know he was holding.

"That is... excellent news, Your Majesty."

The Emperor nodded.

He didn't mention:

The glowing sigil

The map

The crimson handprint

The truth of villagers being taken as offerings

The upcoming blood moon

The ghost children

The dozens that already existed

The terrifying leader watching from the North

No.

Not yet.

The empire was not ready.

Not even his soldiers were ready.

For now — silence was protection.

He looked at the general.

"Take the men and clean the battlefield. Burn whatever cannot be carried. We leave at dawn."

"Yes, Your Majesty!"

"And," the Emperor added firmly, "speak to no one of this incident. Report only that a barbaric scouting party was neutralized."

The soldiers saluted.

"Understood!"

As they walked away, their excitement echoed:

"Did you see His Majesty's stance? Unshaken!"

"He defeated them so fast, we barely joined!"

"He is truly the strongest in the empire."

"Long live the Emperor!"

Their pride filled the air.

But once they were out of earshot...

The Emperor finally exhaled.

His shoulders eased, the mask slipping slightly.

He turned to the Empress.

She raised a brow as if saying:

"You lied beautifully."

He replied with the barest smirk:

"It was necessary."

The twins and new man huddled close.

"We didn't even get to brag about our new powers," Twin Lin whispered.

Yao Qing smacked the back of his head. "Idiot. If they knew, we'd be locked in the palace like caged chickens."

Fen Yu, floating behind them, pouted with her arms crossed.

"They get praise and credit... when WE did the work! Typical."

Wei Rong flicked her forehead. "We fight in the shadows. That's our role."

Li Shen adjusted his glasses. "Knowledge hidden is sometimes safer than truth revealed."

The Empress watched her three ghosts bicker, then looked back at the Emperor.

"You think they believed everything?"

He nodded.

"They believe what they want to believe. Soldiers trust strength, not spiritual truth."

"Good," she said softly. "The last thing we need is panic."

He glanced at her abdomen — padded with the fake pregnancy pillow — and sighed internally.

So many dangers. So many lies. So many unknowns ahead.

Yet strangely...

He felt calmer with her standing beside him.

"Rest for now," he told her. "Tonight, we continue the investigation."

She rolled her eyes. "Yes, Your Majesty."

The undercover mission was far from over.

The cult was still hidden.

The blood moon was still coming.

And in the shadows of the northern mountains...

The real enemy was watching.