

## Immortal 181

### Chapter 181: Paradox

In view of the help the villagers had offered her earlier on, Qiao Xueying rushed over to help them put out the fire and transport the casualties. From time to time, she would even use her powers to prop up collapsing roofs.

Unexpectedly, Zu An didn't step forward to help her but headed to the fields instead. Qiao Xueying wanted to call him over to aid her, but looking at his departing silhouette, she clicked her tongue in annoyance.

What a petty man he is. Is he still holding a grudge against the villagers over what had happened earlier?

Zu An headed toward the brightest place on the field, wanting to verify something in his memories.

The earlier meteor had shattered into many pieces, and the largest one had fallen around half a kilometer away from the village, smashing a huge crater into the ground. Even from a distance away, Zu An could already feel the heat gushing toward him, forcing him to channel his ki in order to ward it off.

Even so, he was still unable to approach the center of the crater due to the limitations of his cultivation. There were still traces of burning embers around, keeping him at bay. Nevertheless, he had managed to find what he was looking for.

A line of words was written on the largest meteor, leaving a bizarre expression on Zu An's face. He raised his head to look at the stars above, wondering if heaven really was a sentient existence.

He returned to the village with a heavy heart. Qiao Xueying immediately headed to his side to drag him over. "Where did you go earlier? Since you're back, you should lend the village a helping hand."

However, Zu An shook his head and replied, "What's the use of it? We can't change the conclusion anyway. It'll be all in vain."

Qiao Xueying immediately lost her cool. "How could you be like that? Yes, they did treat you badly earlier, but you should know that it's the result of this country's strict laws. What happened afterward showed that they have kindness in their hearts. In the end, they still offered us water and medicine, no?"

"To you, that is," corrected Zu An.

Qiao Xueying was stunned. "You can't really be holding a grudge over that, are you? Can you stop being so petty as a man?"

"That's not the issue here. It's just that it'll all be in vain. You'll know soon enough," replied Zu An. "Let me give you a word of advice—don't bother wasting your strength here either."

"I can't be bothered with you!" Qiao Xueying harrumphed before diving back to aid the villagers.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +11 +11 +11...

Zu An couldn't help but let out a chuckle upon seeing the Rage points he was receiving. She really is holding a grudge against me, huh?

A while later, the clobbering of horse hooves suddenly sounded in the distance. Following that, an official led a platoon of soldiers over to their side.

An uneasy commotion broke out amongst the villagers. After all, this was an era where encountering an official usually meant nothing good. The village chief quickly rushed forward and greeted the official humbly, "Lord Wang, what brings you here?"

"How could I not come here after the earlier meteor shower? I need to report this matter to the imperial court right away!" Paying no heed to the village chief, Lord Wang gestured for his subordinates to search the area with a wave of his hand.

The village chief hesitated for a moment before asking, "Lord Wang, you see... Our village suffered a huge calamity, and almost every single family has suffered great damage. Is it possible for the magistrate to spare some money so that we can tide through this crisis..."

However, Lord Wang interjected before he could finish those words, "The imperial court is tight on its finances at the moment. We're fighting the foreign races over on the northern border at the moment, and the construction of palaces and imperial mausoleum all require money too. You should be able to resolve something as simple as this by yourselves. Don't trouble the imperial court over mere trivialities!"

The village chief grew more agitated as he replied, "But our harvest is bad this year, and many of our houses have been burned down..."

A soldier suddenly rushed over anxiously and interrupted him with an urgent report, "Bad news, Lord Wang!"

Lord Wang angrily kicked the soldier and bellowed, "Show some propriety!"

The indignant soldier rubbed where he was kicked while pointing in the direction of where the fragments of the meteor had fallen. "Over... Over there! T-there are words on the meteor!"

"Words?" Lord Wang's eyes lit up. He immediately made his way over where the soldier was pointing.

If it's an auspicious omen and I report it upward, His Majesty might just promote me in a spur of joy!

What was written on the meteor actually wasn't too important at all. That was where scholars came in. With their glib tongue, they could turn even the most ordinary words into the greatest blessings for the Qin Dynasty! After all, the fact that these words had come from the sky accorded great significance to them!

A group of soldiers quickly followed Lord Wang's footsteps to take a look, and some of the curious villagers tagged along as well. Chen Wei rushed forward to support his father as the two of them trailed behind the procession. He asked softly, "Father, why did you beg that darned official? It's obvious that there's no way he would donate any money to us to help us through this crisis! You're just asking to be humiliated!"

The village chief sighed deeply and said, "It was at least worth a try. For the sake of the villagers, what do my pride and honor mean?"

Chen Wei sighed deeply before glaring at Lord Wang's back with eyes filled with hatred.

Lord Wang was still dreaming of being promoted and rising to the peak when he finally saw the words on the meteor and froze up. He felt a chill engulfing his entire body, and his legs suddenly turned so wobbly that he could hardly remain standing.

His subordinates had to massage his chest before he finally recovered from the shock.

"W-who is the one who carved these words?!" bellowed Lord Wang. He pointed his finger at the villagers as he roared furiously, "You better confess to your crime, or else none of you will be getting out of here alive!"

The village chief was perplexed as to what was going on. So, he walked through the crowd to take a look at the meteor, only to see the following words inscribed on it—"The Founding Sovereign Emperor shall die and divided his land will be."

"This... This..." He began trembling fearfully before suddenly collapsing to the ground. It was fortunate that Chen Wei quickly reached forward to help him up.

"Hah, do you think that this will be all over just because you fainted?"

Lord Wang was far too infuriated to let this matter off easily. Had it been any other words, he could have easily twisted the meaning of the message to turn it into an auspicious omen. However, what was inscribed on the meteor stone was clearly a desecration to the emperor. He wouldn't dare to interpret it in any way no matter how brazen he was!

"My father has really fainted!" argued Chen Wei.

"I don't care whether he really fainted or not. You better get to the bottom of this matter, or else I'll make sure every single one of you suffers for this!"

After saying these words, Lord Wang took out a mirror to report this matter to his superior.

Meanwhile, Zu An simply looked on by the side calmly. He noticed that the mirror was similar to video calls in his previous life, and he couldn't help but marvel once more at how amazing the world of cultivation was. The lack of scientific advancement didn't hinder them from going globalized at all!

Lord Wang lowered his head and back subserviently to the man in the mirror as he reported the matter. After reporting the matter, he stowed away the mirror before turning to the villagers with a hostile look on his face. "Interrogate every single one of the villagers. If we don't find out who carved those words, all of you are going to die for this!"

A huge commotion broke out upon hearing those words. They were here just to watch the drama, yet who could have thought that they would end up getting implicated in this mess?

"It's not us! We were all busy trying to extinguish the fire earlier on!"

"We can't even read, let alone write!"

“We’ve been wronged! Everyone knows that I’m blind!”

...

The villagers immediately began crying for mercy.

Qiao Xueying pulled Zu An’s hand and asked, “Did you see who carved those words? I was too busy trying to put out the fire that I didn’t pay attention to what’s going on on the other side.”

Zu An shook his head with a heavy heart.

A villager suddenly pointed to Zu An and exclaimed, “I think I saw that man walking toward the meteor earlier!”

“Indeed! Those two people are of doubtful background. They must be the ones who did it!”

Many people quickly spoke words of agreement. With their lives at stake, they were desperate to blame anyone they could.

...

Qiao Xueying was stunned. She had helped them out of goodwill earlier, but they actually repaid her in such a manner.

“This is just how humans are like. Treat it as a lesson,” remarked Zu An.

Qiao Xueying shot a peculiar glance at Zu An. “Hmph, you talk as if you have already reached enlightenment. You aren’t even that old yet.”

“What does wisdom have to do with age? There are people who have lived for decades only to remain as fools,” replied Zu An as he kept a lookout for the movements of the soldiers. He was ready to break out of the encirclement if required.

Hearing the testimony of the villagers, Lord Wang immediately turned his attention to the two of them. Their soldiers also quickly scattered in the surroundings, encircling the area so as to prevent them from getting away.

Just as Zu An was about to make a pre-emptive move to curb the two of them, a hint of doubt suddenly flickered across Lord Wang’s eyes before he burst into laughter, “Ah, Lord Censor! I’ve been looking for you over the last few days! I never thought that you would actually be here!”

“Lord Censor?” Zu An was dumbfounded. He thought that Lord Wang was spouting nonsense so as to catch them off guard, but he soon realized that that couldn’t possibly be the case. There was no reason for the other party to spout such a meaningless lie.

Having played plenty of games in his previous life, he soon figured that this mission was like an RPG where he took on an alternate identity for the sake of progressing the storyline.

Lord Wang glared at the villagers who had spoken up earlier and spat, “What nonsense are you spouting? This man over here is a censor of the imperial court, so how could he inscribe such desecrating words on the meteor? Watch your mouth before you speak!”

After berating the villagers, he turned to Zu An and said, "Lord Censor, the imperial court ordered us to find the culprit within a day, or else we would be stripped of our positions and sentenced to death. You have the highest seniority here, so I'll heed your command for this matter."

Zu An knew that the other party was basically dumping the responsibility on him, but he figured that this was the crux to overcoming the Heaven Seal, so he accepted the role. "Very well, I'll take responsibility for this matter. Interrogate every household individually lest they collude on their testimonies!"

"Yes, Lord Censor!" With a wave of his hand, Lord Wang ordered his soldiers to split up and interrogate the villagers separately.

After relaying the instructions, he turned to Zu An fawningly, only to be cast away as an annoyance. "Why are you still dawdling here? Can't you see that there's a lack of manpower here too? Hurry up and get to work too!"

"Y-y-yes!" Lord Wang nodded with his back bent respectfully.

Despite being treated like an underling, he was still gladdened that he managed to dump this matter on someone else. Even if something went wrong later on, the person who would take the brunt of the impact would be the Lord Censor.

Once Lord Wang left the area, Qiao Xueying couldn't hold back her curiosity anymore and asked, "When did you become a censor here?"

"This is the role the Heaven Seal has allocated to me. Most likely, we have to find the culprits who inscribed those words in order to clear this trial," replied Zu An.

"Hm? That sounds quite easy. It doesn't seem as dangerous as the Human Seal or the Earth Seal." Qiao Xueying heaved a sigh of relief.

"You're letting your guard down too soon. If we fail to solve this crime, it's very likely that we'll be put to death under the Qin Dynasty's laws. Lord Wang is only serving as an assistant at the moment, so his punishment would only be limited to being stripped of his position. Why else do you think he would be so happy to see me here?" replied Zu An.

"But that's the worst-case scenario, right? This case doesn't seem too difficult since there are only so few people in the village. Besides, there are plenty of skilled interrogators amongst the constables, so they should be able to get some information out," replied Qiao Xueying. "Also, I'm able to clear quite a few people too. Those who were trying to put out the fire with me earlier shouldn't have the time to approach that meteor fragment to carve those words."

"If only it's that easy... There's actually no solution to this problem." Zu An heaved a deep sigh.

He finally understood why this was the Heaven Seal. It had something to do with the stars in the sky, and it was a trial that would lead to certain death.

"Why so?" Qiao Xueying was perplexed. "If I recall correctly, you headed in the direction of this meteor earlier on. You should have been able to see who it was that approached the meteor!"

“That’s the very reason why I’m saying that there’s no solution to this problem...” Zu An paused for a moment before continuing on. “The words were inscribed already on this meteor when it fell from the sky.”

## **Chapter 182: The Way Out**

“How could that be possible?” Qiao Xueying was stunned. However, her face soon lit up in delight as she replied, “Isn’t that even better? You just have to speak the truth, and the villagers will all be cleared of suspicion!”

“How dumb do you have to be to actually say those words aloud?” Zu An looked at Qiao Xueying with scorn in his eyes. “Don’t you know what the implications of speaking the truth are? That’s basically affirming the fact that heaven has decreed the emperor’s death! There’s no way the emperor would let us off if we report it in such a manner!”

“What do we do then?” exclaimed Qiao Xueying. “We can’t say the truth, and the villagers here are innocent too. We can’t possibly force one of them to confess to it so as to be the scapegoat here, right?”

“It won’t be easy to pull that off even if we want to do so,” replied Zu An coldly. “The Qin Dynasty has extremely strict laws. Such grave disrespect to the emperor warrants nine familial exterminations! Who would possibly admit to such a grievous crime, not to mention that they are wronged here!”

“Doesn’t that mean that it’s impossible for us to find the murderer within the span of a single day?” Qiao Xueying felt her heart plummeting.

“There’s a way out of this.” Zu An turned his sight toward the villagers as his voice started turning chillingly cold.

“What way?” asked Qiao Xueying.

“If no one wishes to admit to it, we just have to kill all of the villagers living in the vicinity of the meteor. The culprit has to be one of these villagers anyway, and the emperor doesn’t care too much about the livelihood of his people. With that, we can successfully conclude this case without a hitch,” replied Zu An deeply.

This was how the ‘Antares Occupying the Heart’ incident in the 36th Year of Qin Shihuang’s rule unfolded in history. No one in the village admitted to inscribing those words, so the officials eventually had all of the villagers killed. They would rather exterminate everyone than let the murderer run free.

Zu An was glad that he knew about this piece of history, so he knew the way out of this paradox, allowing him to clear the Heaven Seal far easier than the earlier two trials.

However, Qiao Xueying immediately objected to it, “That won’t do! It’s too cruel. I won’t agree to it!”

Zu An frowned. “You should be aware that everything you see is just an illusion produced by the Heaven Seal. They aren’t real people at all, so what’s so cruel about this?”

Qiao Xueying shook her head vehemently and said, “But from our earlier encounter with them, they feel no different from living humans to us. Even if it’s just an illusion, I can’t bring myself to take the lives of

so many innocent people for my own selfish goals. You can say that I'm naive and foolish, but this oversteps what my conscience allows."

Zu An scoffed in response, "But you sure were decisive when you chose to take my life, huh?"

Qiao Xueying's face immediately heated up. "That's a different story! You were bound to be an enemy, not to mention that you're very hateful too. You can't possibly expect me to show mercy to you."

Zu An touched his own face and remarked, "Such a handsome face, and you actually found me hateful? Looks like your eyes are nothing more than adornment on your face."

"..." Qiao Xueying.

It was then that Lord Wang rushed over and whispered to Zu An in a suppressed voice, "Lord Censor, we've interrogated all of the villagers, but none of them admit to knowing how to write. I think we should just..."

He pulled his thumb over his neck, gesturing to kill off the villagers. "The murderer won't be able to get away this way, and we'll be able to remain accountable to His Majesty."

Before Zu An could reply, Qiao Xueying had already interjected, "That won't do!"

Lord Wang's face darkened. "Young miss, if you have objections to how I do things, why don't you propose another solution then? If we don't kill these people, the ones to die would be us! Lord Censor, you must be decisive at times like this!"

Qiao Xueying tugged Zu An's sleeves, seeking his support for this matter.

Zu An sighed deeply and said, "Lord Wang, interrogate them once more. If there are still no clues, we'll figure out another solution."

"I understand, Lord Censor," replied Lord Wang with a nod.

Just as he was about to leave, a soldier suddenly rushed forward and reported, "Bad news, my lord! The village chief died in the midst of the interrogation, and his son is causing a ruckus right now. He turns out to be a fairly powerful cultivator, and he has already injured quite a few of our brothers!"

Lord Wang huffed in anger. "Preposterous! How dare he mess around at a time like this? Anyone who tries to obstruct public order ought to pay with his life. Kill him!"

"Yes!"

The soldier was just about to leave the area when Zu An suddenly stopped him. "Wait a moment! How did the village chief die?"

"Lord Censor, the village chief was already ailing in health and the earlier shock worsened his condition. Our brothers might have used a bit of torture on him during the interrogation, but we made sure not to go too far! All the other villagers were able to take it without any problems; the village chief was the only one who suddenly dropped dead!" the soldier hurriedly replied as he wiped off his cold sweat.

Zu An nodded in response. Considering that the village chief was already in poor condition earlier on, it wasn't too surprising for him to die in the midst of interrogation. It was the standard practice in this era to torture the suspects in order to get them to confess, so the soldiers couldn't really be blamed for this.

"For the time being, capture his son and lock him up. I'll deal with him later on."

"Yes!"

The soldier quickly left the area to carry out Zu An's order, and soon, Chen Wei found himself surrounded by a platoon of soldiers. No matter how violently he struggled, it was hard for him to deal with so many enemies at once. Soon, his hands were shackled in chains, and he was locked up in a room.

"Are you really intending to kill them?" asked Qiao Xueying anxiously.

Zu An turned to look into her eyes for a moment before asking, "Do you really intend to save them?"

Qiao Xueying nodded right away.

He pondered for a moment before saying, "If you promise to call me 'big brother' from now onward, I'll consider helping you."

"I..." Qiao Xueying's face reddened. She was only able to call him that back then because she thought that she was already on the verge of dying and didn't want to die ignorant. There was no way she could bring herself to call him 'big brother' under normal circumstances.

Zu An sighed deeply and remarked, "Looks like you're all talk. You spoke as if you really wanted to save all of these people, but in the end, you can't even lower your pride to call me 'big brother' for their sake."

Qiao Xueying huffed angrily. "You're taking advantage of me!"

Zu An shrugged. "Have I ever claimed to be a saint before? Why would I bother helping a bunch of people unrelated to me if there are no benefits on the line for me? Not to mention, they even tried to backstab me earlier on."

Qiao Xueying gritted her teeth. "Will you really save them if I call you big brother?"

"Just to be sure, I'm expecting you to continue calling me that in the future," corrected Zu An. "Also, I'll only be trying my best. There's no guarantee that I'll be able to save them."

"You can't even guarantee success, why should I continue calling you big brother? That's ridiculous!"

Qiao Xueying protested.

"Well, you can stop calling me big brother if I fail to save them, but you should at least call me that at the start, no?" asked Zu An with a smile.

"Alright then. I hope that you can hold to the end of your promise." Qiao Xueying pursed her lips as her face blushed bright red. It took her a while before she finally murmured softly, "B-big brother."

Zu An leaned a little closer as he asked, "What did you say? You were too soft that I can't hear you clearly."



“Don’t go too far!” Qiao Xueying glared at him angrily.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +33 Rage!

“What can I do? Your voice was too soft.”

Zu An was a little disappointed by how few Rage points Qiao Xueying was contributing now. She used to be like a barrel of gunpowder, providing an explosion of Rage points at the slightest jab. Yet, it felt like her gunpowder had started to run low, such that her contribution of Rage points was getting pathetically low.

“You’ll be dead meat if you dare to lie to me!” Left with no choice, Qiao Xueying could only call out once more with a reddened face, “Big brother!”

Zu An burst into laughter. “Yes, my good little sis. How obedient!”

After saying those words, he began making his way toward where Chen Wei was imprisoned.

On the other hand, Qiao Xueying remained rooted to the spot. She subconsciously touched her own cheeks and realized that it was burning hot. I must be going mad!

Meanwhile, Zu An stopped outside the room where Chen Wei was locked in as he fell into deep contemplation. It should go without saying that he didn’t choose to save the villagers just because Qiao Xueying called him big brother. He was someone who had come from the modern world after all. His values didn’t allow him to let so many innocent people die for his own selfishness.

His logical mind told him that these villagers were just illusions created by the Heaven Seal, but his senses were telling him a different story. All of these felt far too real to him, and he couldn’t differentiate the villagers from anyone else he had met before. He wasn’t willing to take this gamble, and he didn’t want this to become a trauma that would haunt him for life.

As such, he had been racking his brain to figure a way out of this quandary ever since he saw those words on the meteor. Even if Qiao Xueying hadn’t called him ‘big brother’, he would have still tried his best to save them.

If Qiao Xueying knows about this, she would probably provide an explosion of Rage points, right?

However, Zu An still decided against telling her. As compared to several thousand Rage points, he thought that it was much more worth it to have that lass call him ‘big brother’ in the future. The knowledge that she used to be an enemy who made an attempt on his life made the entire thing even more so exhilarating.

He quickly adjusted his mood before pushing the door open to enter the room. Inside, Chen Wei was tied tightly to a pillar.

“Scum of an official, I knew that you looked suspicious from the very start! This must be your scheme!” Chen Wei’s eyes immediately reddened upon seeing Zu An, and he struggled to free himself from his rope to pounce at the latter, only to no avail.

You have successfully trolled Chen Wei for +444 Rage!

“Hold still!” One of the guards swung his pole down on Chen Wei to silence him before glancing at Zu An fawningly. “Don’t you dare disrespect Lord Censor!”

Zu An nodded in response before saying, “I have questions to ask him. Wait outside.”

“Yes, of course!”

The guards quickly made their way out of the room.

By then, Qiao Xueying had finally caught up with him, and she closed the door behind her before keeping a wary watch outside so as to ensure that no one came close.

Only then did Zu An finally start speaking, “I know that you have been framed.”

“You scumbag, it was indeed you!” Chen Wei’s eyes gleamed in hatred. Just thinking about his father’s death and the hardships the other villagers were going through made his anger flurry.

You have successfully trolled Chen Wei for +999 Rage!

“There’s no need to get so agitated. I’m here to save you,” replied Zu An.

“Save me?” Chen Wei sneered with a frown. “Should I thank you for that then?”

“Chen Wei, my... my big brother is really here to save you!” persuaded Qiao Xueying.

Hearing those words, Chen Wei shot a deep look at Zu An before finally falling silent.

“I know that you have been framed because I ran over the moment the meteor fell. The words were already inscribed on its surface by then,” said Zu An.

Chen Wei’s body jolted in horror upon hearing those words. “Doomed. Our entire village is doomed!”

Zu An was surprised to hear those words from the other party. “What makes you say that?”

The horrified Chen Wei stared blankly in front of him as he murmured, “I thought that we might just be able to survive this ordeal if we find the culprit who inscribed those words, but if those words are really a decree from heaven... There’s no way the emperor would stand for something like this! He’ll surely push the blame to us so as to put down the unease stirred by this matter!”

Qiao Xueying couldn’t help but glance at Zu An. Those words were surprisingly similar to what she had heard from him earlier.

Zu An also didn’t expect this brawny man to be so sharp-witted as to figure out the implications right away. “It seems like you’re quite a smart man. I do know of a way for you to get out of this, but I’m not sure if you’ll have the guts to carry out.”

### **Chapter 183: The Real Way to Unlocking the Heaven Seal**

“I have never feared anything in my life, not even the heavens!” declared Chen Wei proudly.

Zu An was impressed by how that fellow was able to speak so confidently despite being in a bad situation himself. His mental fortitude indeed far surpassed that of normal people.

“Very well. I want you to plead guilty and admit to having inscribed those words,” said Zu An.

Qiao Xueying was still intrigued as to what kind of idea Zu An might have when she froze up upon hearing those words. Wait a moment, isn't that as good as pushing him right into hell?!

“Hahaha!” Chen Wei also snorted in laughter. “I reckon that you were unable to find the real culprit either, so you want to coax me into being the scapegoat here?”

“I thought that you are a smart man, but it seems like I was mistaken. I should have described you as ‘short-sighted’ instead.” Zu An shook his head.

“You!!” Chen Wei flew into a state of anger. There was no one who would be happy at being described as short-sighted.

You have successfully trolled Chen Wei for +256 Rage!

“Think it through properly. Even if no one admits to this crime, you're already doomed for death. However, if you admit to it, the only one who needs to die here is you. Is that logic hard for you to comprehend?”

Chen Wei was enraged. “But that's a grievous crime that warrants nine familial exterminations! How can I possibly admit to it lightly?”

“Nine familial exterminations? Based on what I know, your mother died in your younger years, and you have been living alone with your father all of these years. Your father has just died, so who else would be implicated by the nine familial exterminations?”

Chen Wei was stunned. It was at this moment that he realized that he was the only one left in his family.

After a moment of contemplation, he shook his head and said, “That won't do. There are plenty of villagers who are at loggerheads with us here, and we frequently have conflicts with one another. I can't bear the notion of dying for those bastards. Why should I sacrifice myself for their happiness? I'd rather all of us die together!”

This really put Zu An in a spot. He thought that Chen Wei was the type of righteous person who would be more than willing to sacrifice himself for the rest of the village, but it turned out that his evaluation was completely off.

“I don't fear death, but I'm not content with dying in such a humbling manner. A true warrior should go down with a bang! If our villagers are destined to die, I'd rather inform them about the implications of this matter and have them raise their arms in rebellion! The world has been suffering under Qin's tyranny for some time now. I trust that many would heed my rally!

“You seem to be a righteous person as well. Why don't we join forces and do something great together? By then, you can become whatever you want, be it a king, a duke, or a marquess. You won't be tied down to being just a humble censor!”

Chen Wei's words were so passionate that they made Zu An's heart race.

It seems like some people are born with the charisma of a leader. Their words naturally rouse the emotions of others, and Chen Wei is one such person. If not for the fact that I don't belong to this world, I might just be persuaded by him.

"How dare you spout such disrespectful words before an official of the imperial court? You must be tired of living!" sneered Zu An.

However, Chen Wei didn't look intimidated at all. He puffed his chest up and said, "I reckon that you're dissatisfied with the Qin Emperor's tyrannical rule as well, considering how you bothered saying so much to me. Since that's the case, why don't you take a leap of faith and try for the huge one? Are kings and nobles given their high status at birth?"

"..." Zu An.

Hearing that famous quote coming from several thousand years ago, Zu An suddenly felt his mouth drying up a little. "By any chance, is it possible that you go by another name, Chen Sheng[1]?"

"Chen Sheng?" Chen Wei fell into deep thoughts. "That's a good name. I've been wanting to change my name for some time now. Very well, I shall be known as Chen Sheng from this day onward!"

"..." Zu An.

H-hold on a moment, what's going on here? How in the world did Chen Sheng pop out here?!

Zu An felt his mind being plunged into disarray.

If this fellow was really Chen Sheng and he ended up getting killed together with the other villagers, wouldn't there be no more 'Uprising of the Poles'[2]?

If so, the Qin Dynasty wouldn't have fallen so quickly, which means that... history is changing?

Zu An was stunned. The most important rule of anyone transmigrating back in time was to not change history, or else it could lead to all sorts of bizarre changes in the plotline!

It looks like I can't allow Chen Wei—ah, it should be Chen Sheng now—to die!

Cold sweat began trickling down Zu An's back as he finally understood how devious the Heaven Seal was. Most people wouldn't be able to find the culprit who inscribed the words and end up dead. Those who were more vicious would attempt to kill all of the villagers to silence them, but Chen Sheng's death would inadvertently change the trajectory of history and stir to a series of unpredictable changes that was unlikely to lead to anything good.

To put it in simpler terms, there were two requirements he would have to fulfill here in order to clear the Heaven Seal: He would have to punish the culprit and remain accountable to the imperial court while ensuring Chen Sheng's survival.

Now that he thought about it, the record on the 'Antares Occupying the Heart' incident might not be fully accurate. It was indeed stated that everyone in the village had been killed, but it was possible for some of them to escape, most notably, Chen Sheng.

If I had blindly trusted the historical records, I would have been done in just like that!

Now that he thought about it, Snow was really his star of fortune. If not for her insisting on it, he probably wouldn't have been as determined to save the villagers. Once Chen Sheng died, it would become impossible to overcome the Heaven Seal, and he would end up dropping dead somehow.

Zu An quickly sorted out his thoughts and replied, "I'll pass on that. You shouldn't bother trying to rally the villagers on your side either. All of them have families to take care of, so how could they possibly throw in their lot with you and risk facing nine familial exterminations? Besides, you also mentioned that some of them bear grudges toward you, so there's a possibility that they might stab you in the back after refusing your offer. Now is not a good time for you to make a move yet."

Chen Sheng's face darkened. He was overcome by passion earlier that he failed to think things through carefully. Zu An's analysis brought him back to his senses, and he remarked in frustration, "What should I do then? Am I to wait for death here?"

"If you trust me, you should admit to inscribing the words, and we can conclude the case like that. I'll find a way to save you afterward, and by then, you'll be free to do whatever you want," replied Zu An.

Chen Sheng didn't respond right away. He stared at Zu An intently for a moment before asking, "Why are you helping me?"

Zu An knew that Chen Sheng wasn't the type to trust others easily. He took a while to consider the matter before answering, "To be frank with you, I wasn't intending to get involved in this matter at the start. Things would have been much simpler for me if I simply killed all of you. However, my little sister pleaded on your behalf, and I'm not too fond of killing the innocent either. That's why I'm taking this risk to help you all."

Qiao Xueying nodded in agreement. "Indeed! Chen Sheng, you can trust him. He might have a suspicious-looking face, but he's not a bad person at heart."

Zu An clicked his tongue. Are you praising or insulting me here?

Seeing that Chen Sheng still wasn't saying a word at all, Zu An decided to give it one last hard push. "If you aren't going to agree with it, I'll kill you right away. I'm not going to risk you revealing the content of our conversation to anyone else."

Those words made Chen Sheng heave a sigh of relief instead. "Alright, I'll accept your request."

The few of them continued to sort out the details before Zu An finally brought Lord Wang over.

"He has already confessed to the matter. He was the one who secretly inscribed those words on the meteor."

Lord Wang was overjoyed to hear that. "I never thought that Lord Censor would actually have a way to deal with this. I'm impressed!"

He beckoned his subordinates over and ordered, "Men, execute that miscreant right now!"

"Wait a moment!" Zu An hurriedly stopped Lord Wang before pulling him over to one side. "Are you intending to kill that suspect just like that?"

“What else do we do if not execute a man who has committed such grievous crimes?” asked Lord Wang in bewilderment.

“You should send him to Xianyang<sup>[3]</sup> and have His Majesty judge him personally. Perhaps, His Majesty might be delighted by your merits and reward you handsomely,” said Zu An.

“Wise indeed!” Lord Wang’s eyes twinkled in delight. “Men, tie that man up and place him inside the cage! I shall personally escort him back to the capital! Lord Censor, do you want to come along with us?”

“I still have other matters to attend to, so I’ll have to pass,” Zu An rejected with a shake of his head.

Lord Wang was overjoyed to hear that. “Lord Censor, I’m truly grateful for your guidance. I’ll never forget the grace you’ve shown to me today.”

“Lord Wang, you’re too humble,” replied Zu An. I’ll already be more than thankful if you don’t hate me for this.

When the villagers found out that it was Chen Wei who inscribed those words on the meteor, even those who were close to him usually began pointing fingers at him, criticizing him for his actions. Everyone had just been taken on a trip to hell’s gate, so all of them were incredibly irritable at the moment. Naturally, they would vent their wrath at the culprit who nearly cost them their life.

Chen Sheng was infuriated to see how he was criticized by the villagers despite saving their lives. He was just about to act up when Zu An walked over to his side and communicated with him discreetly through ki transmission, “Commoners tend to be ignorant, so don’t hold it against them. Think about it optimistically. They rallied against you easily today, but this also means that you can also easily rally them in the future to help you with your ambition.”

A glint flashed across Chen Sheng’s eyes as he nodded discreetly. He lowered his head silently and obediently followed the guards into the cage.

Both Zu An and Qiao Xueying exchanged glances before quickly leaving from another direction. Once they were out of everyone’s sight, they made a huge detour and laid in ambush at where they knew the convoy would have to pass by in order to get to the capital, Xianyang.

In the end, they managed to save Chen Sheng without too much of a hassle. In the first place, the guards weren’t too strong, and Lord Wang was too anxious to claim his reward that he barely brought anyone along with him. He would have never thought that someone would be so brazen as to attempt to save a criminal of the imperial court.

“Lord Wang, what do we do now?”

The floored subordinates quickly gathered around Lord Wang’s side as they asked anxiously. It was an absolute death penalty for them to actually let such an important criminal escape under their watch!

“How am I to know what to do?!” Lord Wang was incredibly vexed too. Not only had he lost his chance at a promotion, but it seemed like his head was going to be lopped off at this rate too.

“Why don’t we return to the Chen Village and kill everyone? We can claim that no one has confessed to inscribing those words, so...” one of the subordinates suggested

“You fool!” Lord Wang smacked the subordinate’s head. “I’ve already reported the matter to the royal court! I would be asking for trouble if I suddenly changed my statement!”

Another subordinate spoke up, “What if we claim that Chen Wei tried to break free and ended up harming some of our brothers, so we killed him on the spot as punishment?”

“That’s a good idea. But how do we deal with the issue of the corpse then?” Lord Wang nodded in approval.

“One of the prisoners have died in the yamen yesterday, and we haven’t reported it upward yet. We could use his corpse in place of Chen Wei’s. Those of the imperial court won’t recognize him anyway,” replied the subordinate.

Lord Wang’s eyes lit up. “That’s a good idea. Quick, let’s get to action then! We’re all tied on the same boat right now, so you better make sure to keep your mouth shut! Understood?”

The others nodded in agreement.

...

Meanwhile, Zu An and Qiao Xueying brought Chen Sheng to a remote place and said, “You won’t be able to return to the Chen Village anymore. What are your plans now?”

“What about my father’s corpse? I can’t just leave him there...” Chen Sheng frowned.

“Don’t worry, I’ve already ordered some of the men to bury your father,” replied Zu An. “Of course, it won’t be anything glorious. It can’t be helped since you’re a fugitive right now.”

“Thank you, benefactor. I’m thankful for your help.” Chen Sheng bowed deeply to Zu An out of gratitude before saying, “Please do not worry. I shall change my name from this day onward so as to not implicate you. Like I’ve said before, I shall become known as Chen Sheng from this day onward. I’m thinking of heading over to Yangxia City to seek refuge with one of my good friends.”

“By any chance, is it possible that your friend is named Wu Guang?” asked Zu An.

Chen Sheng was stunned. “How do you know that?”

“It was just a random guess. Well, I wish you all the best for the future,” replied Zu An sheepishly.

Chen Sheng clasped his fist and said, “I’ll surely repay the grace you’ve shown me today. Farewell!”

With that, he bade the two of them farewell before taking his leave. For some reason, his departing silhouette looked rather stalwart.

As Qiao Xueying watched as Chen Sheng left, she asked the man beside her, “Are you hiding something from me?”

#### **Chapter 184: The Woman in the Crystal Coffin**

Zu An clicked his tongue. “Isn’t it normal for me to be hiding things from you? It’s not as if you’re my wife. You sure are nosey for an outsider.”

“...” Qiao Xueying.

You have successfully trolled Qiao Xueying for +666 Rage!

Damn it, I really want to beat this fellow up!

Qiao Xueying summoned her inner nirvana to suppress her rage before asking, “How did you know that he went to look for Wu Guang? It’s almost as if you know what’s going to happen next.”

“Oh? Why are you calling me ‘you’ instead of ‘big brother’?” remarked Zu An in dissatisfaction. “Anyway, regarding your question, it’s simply because I’m smart. In time to come, you’ll realize that I have many more wondrous abilities in store.”

“Look at how gleeful you are acting!” Qiao Xueying harrumphed. Despite her sharp words, she was still in a good mood after how Zu An had stood forward and saved the Chen Village at her request, so she decided not to hold this against him. “I wonder when the seal will be removed.”

“We might need confirmation from the imperial palace’s side first.” Zu An was still a little uneasy about this. He wasn’t sure whether his plan would really work out or not.

Meanwhile, Lord Wang had finished falsifying the crime scene. He activated his Communication Mirror to relay the statements he had prepared beforehand to the imperial court.

A short moment later, the area around Zu An suddenly began to distort as the familiar feeling of weightlessness enveloped him. By the time he snapped out of it, the two of them were already back at the familiar underground palace.

“The two of you are actually unharmed... You were actually able to overcome the Heaven Seal so easily!” Mi Li’s surprised yet delighted voice sounded in Zu An’s ears. It would appear that she had never thought that they would be able to overcome the difficult trials posed by the three seals.

Easy? Was it really easy?

Zu An thought about the process he had gone through in order to overcome the Heaven Seal. To be fair, it was indeed not as difficult as the previous two seals. This trial challenged not one’s cultivation or combat prowess but one’s sharp judgment and... luck.

Zu An was extremely lucky that he chose to help the villagers in the end and was aware of the fact that Chen Sheng mustn’t die there, or else there was no way he could have figured out the only way to survive the ordeal.

Had it been another cultivator who was unaware of the history involved—no, even if it had been another transmigrator who possessed the same knowledge as him—there was an almost certain chance that he would have ended up dying there.

While Zu An was still brooding over this matter, the seal formation on the ground opened up, revealing a pitch-black hole.

“The three seals have been breached. You should be able to head out now, right?” asked Zu An.



“My coffin is in the next level. I need you to pull out the sword on my coffin in order to fully release the seal,” replied Mi Li.

Zu An was just about to head down when Qiao Xueying pulled his hand and warned, “Be careful.”

Zu An nodded in response. “You should wait for me here. If anything happens, lure the black-armored general here right away so as to get those two dogs to bite one another... Ah, that won’t work either, huh? If she really intends to harm us, I reckon that you wouldn’t have time to run away either. Let’s do this instead. For the time being, you should return to Chuyan’s side to stall for some time. If you don’t see me after an incense’s time, you should inform the black-armored general of what’s happening down here.”

Qiao Xueying was reluctant to heed Zu An’s words on this. “No, I’ll accompany you down there. At the very least, we’ll be able to look out for one another.”

“That won’t do. You won’t be a match for her even if you follow me down there. Haven’t you heard of the saying ‘don’t put all of your eggs in one basket’?” said Zu An with a shake of his head.

Qiao Xueying fell silent. She wasn’t a match for Zhang Han at all, let alone Mi Li. If Mi Li really intended to harm them, her presence wouldn’t make a difference at all. The wiser move was indeed to have her stay on top so that they would have a card to deal with Mi Li if the worst-case scenario occurred.

“Alright then. Take care of yourself.”

Zu An replied with a nod before carefully jumping down to the next level. It was a small, enclosed area with a luminescent crystal coffin sitting at the center.

He was just about to head over when a cold voice suddenly echoed in his ears, “Who did you say was a dog earlier?”

“Ah, you heard it all?” Zu An’s face heated up in embarrassment. It was always awkward to be caught speaking badly about someone else.

Mi Li sighed deeply and said, “Old people tend to have sharp ears. Somehow, I’m always able to hear it when someone talks bad about me.”

Zu An reverted back to his usual shameless self and rambled, “As expected of Your Majesty, your cultivation has indeed reached an unprecedented level where I can only look up to. Ah, my respect for you gushes like the relentless tides of the Yellow River. I can’t even begin to fathom anyone else coming close to your greatness!”

“...” Mi Li.

“Hmph. Your glib tongue reminds me of Zhao Gao[1]. It’s displeasing,” snorted Mi Li.

Zu An was rendered speechless. He never thought that a day would come where he would be compared to Zhao Gao, and the blow was doubled at the knowledge that the latter was a eunuch.

That’s a low blow, a low blow!

“Enough! Hurry up and retrieve the sword floating in mid-air,” said Mi Li. “That sword is the energy source of the Soul Suppression Seal. Anyone else who approaches the sword would have been pierced

by its sword ki before they could even come close, but as you've managed to breach the Soul Suppression Formation and obtained its recognition, you won't face any threat from it."

"This isn't another trap, is it?" Zu An was intimidated after hearing how formidable the sword was.

"What do I have to gain from fooling you? I'm hoping to break out of this seal too. Besides, you don't have time to spare. Zhang Han has already successfully suppressed the dead spirits and would soon be returning to your wife's side to conduct the blood ritual," said Mi Li.

Recalling how Chu Chuyan was still lying helplessly on the altar, Zu An gritted his teeth and made his way toward the crystal coffin. He noticed that there were nine ropes made out of some sort of metal coiling around the crystal coffin. These ropes were connected to an ancient sword that was floated, its tip pointing downward at the coffin.

Even before walking close, he could already sense a powerful pressure gushing in his direction, feeling his heart with deference. He gathered his willpower and resisted the urge of kneeling down.

You must be kidding me! As a proud transmigrator, how could I kneel to a mere sword?!

Standing above the immortals, gazing loftily upon the world, I shall dominate heaven with my keyboard in hand. Millions of keyboard warriors there may be in the world, but all shall lower their heads in my presence, for none can hope to match I, the Keyboard Emperor.

Zu An murmured these words to cheer for himself. Perhaps it was a psychological effect, but the pressure weighing down on him actually began lessening, eventually reaching a point where it was neglectable.

"Hm? You're actually able to withstand the pressure of the Tai'e Sword?" exclaimed Mi Li in surprise.

"Tai'e Sword?" Zu An was surprised by how familiar the name of the sword was. Isn't this one of the ten most famous swords in history?

"Indeed. The Tai'e Sword is a Sword of Kingship existing since the inception of the world, just that it was formless and unnoticeable. However, its sword ki is already existent all over the world, merely awaiting an opportune moment to gather. At the hands of the right person at the right time in the right place, this sword will be formed. It was in the hands of two master swordsmiths of our Chu Country that this sword was coincidentally forged. One of our kings has once slain thousands of soldiers with this sword in hand..."

Mi Li's voice reflected her admiration for her ancestors.

"It's just that when the Chu Country was finally defeated by the Qin Country, this sword ended up falling into Ying Zheng's hand. Ironically, he ended up using this sword to seal me off."

Looking at the sword floating above the coffin, Zu An was convinced that the sword before him was different from the one he read about in his previous life. This sword didn't seem to belong in the mortal world; it felt more like a weapon that had come right out of a legend or a novel.

Instead of retrieving the sword right away, he said, "To be frank with you, Your Majesty, I'm a little hesitant about this. I'm worried that you might renege on your promise to save my wife after I let you out. After all, we have no way to curb you given your cultivation."

“You don’t have a choice here. Zhang Han is already walking to the altar at this moment. Your wife is going to die if you don’t free me soon,” sneered Mi Li.

“I don’t deny that I’m anxious to save my wife, but aren’t you even more anxious than me? I wonder how long have you been sealed here for. A thousand years? Two thousand years? Or maybe ten thousand years even? When will your next opportunity come if you fail to grasp this one?”

Mi Li fell into a state of silence. She was clearly not as calm as she appeared to be. “Indeed, this is a rare opportunity for me too. What do I have to do in order to earn your trust then?”

It was Zu An’s turn to be put in a spot. He had no idea what he could use to bind Mi Li to her agreement. He recalled the lines he had heard in the novels in his previous life and tried asking, “Why don’t we sign a master-servant contract? You won’t be able to hurt me anymore in the future as long as you acknowledge me as your master.”

“Hahaha!” Mocking laughter echoed in the room for a moment before Mi Li sneered coldly, “Who do you think you are to make me acknowledge you as your master? Even Ying Zheng was unable to make me submit back then, let alone a kid like you!”

Black lines streaked across Zu An’s face as he exclaimed, “Hey, that’s too much over there! You’re the one who told me to suggest something, and now you’re getting angry at me for proposing an idea. What do you say we should do then?”

Mi Li pondered for a moment before replying, “Let’s do this instead. Grab a piece of paper and we’ll seal a contract with our respective terms. In exchange for helping me out of this coffin, I’ll promise to save your wife and not hurt you and the other two women. You should also be aware that contracts have binding power in this world. Not even I am able to renege on it.”

This was not the first time Zu An had heard of that, so he nodded his head in agreement. “Very well! But where am I supposed to find paper here?”

“You fool! There’s no reason why paper is absolutely needed here. Can’t you write on your clothes too? As for ink, you have plenty of wounds on your body. You can just use your blood in replacement,” remarked Mi Li coldly.

Zu An was irritated by her snappish tone.

This old woman sure is cranky. If not for the fact that you’re an elder, I would have...

Unfortunately, he was unable to think of anything significant he could have done to a person far stronger than he was.

Anyway, he quickly penned down the terms of the contract before frowning. “There’s only my palm print here. The contract wouldn’t be binding without yours, right?”

“You just have to bring it over for me to press my palm down on it,” said Mi Li.

“Where are you?” asked Zu An. He searched the area around him, but the voice sounded like it could have come from anywhere.

“You really are a thorough fool. Aren’t I in the crystal coffin right in front of you?!” bellowed Mi Li.

“...” Zu An.

Damn it, it's all because of this cranky old woman that I'm getting a bit dumb here!

He sullenly walked over to the crystal coffin as he wondered how Mi Li handled her daily needs inside the coffin.

Wouldn't she need to pee and shit too? Ah, but she's already dead, right? All that's left of her is probably just a dried-up corpse. Eesh, I've always stayed away from horror stories and films in the past. Damn it, I hope that whatever that's in the coffin won't be too scary...

However, he froze up upon walking over to the coffin's side. He found that what was lying inside the crystal coffin wasn't a terrifying dried-up corpse but a woman far more beautiful than his wildest imagination.

### **Chapter 185: A Descent of His Sword, And All Nobles Shall Rush Westward!**

The woman was dressed in a black dress, and her hands were placed gracefully on her abdomen. She lay quietly inside the crystal coffin. There was a hint of redness on her lips, making her appear seductive but, at the same time, dangerous as well.

She had an impeccably beautiful face. Her skin should have been unnaturally pale from being holed up in this dark underground cavern for many years, yet such wasn't the case. Perhaps it was due to the contrast with her black dress, her skin gave off a luster reminiscent of white jade.

Her nose was curved in a shapely angle, and her lips glistened alluringly. Her delicate lower jaws and her slender neck further accentuated her moving face, making it hard for anyone to resist her charms.

Zu An had never seen the black dress she was wearing before, but the first thought that crossed his mind was that it was the phoenix robe worn by the empress. There were golden embroideries of auspicious beasts on the black silk dress, making it look grand and graceful. It granted its wearer an inexplicably imposing air.

The dress wasn't fitted perfectly; it was slightly on the larger side. Nevertheless, her beautiful curves were still vaguely showing through the dress, hinting at just how great her figure was.

She was covered fully in cloth, such that only her head, hands, legs, and a small part of her ankles were peeking out. Zu An couldn't help noticing that there were red bangles locking her hands and legs in place.

He had expected to see a mummy or a skin-and-bones old granny. Even in the most optimistic situation, he thought that she would be a middle-aged auntie or something. After all, she was Fusu's mother, and Fusu was already an adult when he died.

Through that calculation, it wasn't too hard to figure that she had to be at least thirty to forty years of age when Ying Zheng sealed her off. Even if her aging had slowed due to the seal, surely being sealed for thousands of years should have done something to her.

Yet, she miraculously managed to retain a youthful look. One could easily mistake her for a young lady in her early twenties.

What the hell? Isn't she a bit too young? On top of that, how is she so beautiful?

"Have you seen enough yet?"

The woman lying in the crystal coffin suddenly opened her eyes to gaze at him coldly.

Zu An's heart jolted in fright. It was just a moment ago that she looked alluringly beautiful, the type of woman who would become a man's fantasy, but the moment she opened her eyes, her disposition changed altogether. Her sharp eyes carried an indescribable authority that made her feel lofty and unapproachable. It felt like it was only right for all beings to prostrate before her.

"Of course not. Do you know how pretty you are?" Zu An leaned against the coffin as he propped up his chin with his hand, continuing to gaze at her with a smile on his lips.

He disliked how she was acting as if he was a mere ant before her presence.

You might be an empress in the past, but the Qin Dynasty has already fallen from grace. Stop putting on airs here!

"..." Mi Li.

She was a little taken aback by Zu An's response. All other men, with the exception of Ying Zheng, were terrified by her presence, not daring to even breathe loudly. It was rare that a man actually dared to smile and even tease her.

"Stop talking nonsense and hand the contract over so that I can seal it," said Mi Li. I'll punish this fellow later on for his insolence.

"Alright." Zu An was also worried about Chu Chuyan's safety, so he dared not to delay this matter at all. He pushed the lid of the crystal coffin away, and a chilling air immediately gushed his way, making him shudder uncontrollably.

"What the hell! You were actually lying in a place like this for several thousand years?! It must have really been tough on you!" Zu An rubbed his own shoulders as he exclaimed in horror.

"Yes, it has indeed been tough..." murmured Mi Li with a brooding look on her face.

She had been stuck here so long that she had forgotten most of her emotions, so Zu An's sudden concern left her feeling a little wistful.

However, she didn't allow her emotions to show through. Instead, she scoffed coldly, "If you want to know, you can try lying in here yourself."

"Really? This crystal coffin doesn't look big enough for two though. I'll probably end up crushing you if I come in as well. Are you sure that you don't mind?" asked Zu An with a hint of delight in his voice.

"..." Mi Li.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +444 Rage!

She had no idea how Zu An was able to twist her provocation in such ridiculous manners to tease her.

“Do you know what’s the consequences of teasing me?” Mi Li’s voice turned cold as she looked at Zu An severely.

“It’s only normal that I react this way after witnessing your beauty. What can I do when you’re that good looking?” replied Zu An with a smile. “Besides, are you really thinking of killing me over this?”

“Death would only come as a solace to you. I’ll dig out your eyeballs and sever your tongue,” threatened Mi Li coldly.

“But aren’t you going to sign a contract with me? You won’t be able to harm me by then.” Zu An shrugged away her threats nonchalantly.

Mi Li was stunned. “Is that why you’re acting so fearlessly?”

Zu An nodded. “Of course. I need to test if your contract is reliable or not. How can I trust you if you’re going to threaten me each time I casually drop a remark?”

“...” Mi Li.

Zu An’s argument sounded so solid that she was actually unable to find a rebuttal to it for a very long while. In the end, she harrumphed impatiently and said, “Stop wasting time and bring the contract over.”

Zu An passed the contract over to her, only to see her remaining completely motionless, not reaching to receive the contract at all. The two of them ended up staring at one another blankly.

“You can’t move?”

“You don’t say!”

Zu An chuckled sheepishly, “Ahahaha, I’ll help you then.”

He reached out to grab her hand, only to be shocked by the sheer coldness of her body. The coldness was so biting that it seemed to seep right into his bones.

“Are you a human or a ghost?” asked Zu An with a gulp.

“What do you think?” Mi Li looked at him with a menacing smile.

After finally adapting to the shocking coldness, Zu An’s attention was soon captured by the astonishing elasticity of her hand. He couldn’t help but pinch her hands a little. Then, his gaze slowly trailed over to her chest, and he murmured softly, “I guess I need to try it to find out.”

However, the sheer murderous intent in her eyes was enough to make him back down fearfully. He grumbled in complaint, “You were the one who refused to answer my question first.”

Then, he dabbed some blood on her finger before imprinting it on the contract.

Mi Li was just about to say something when her body suddenly shuddered. Her gaze fell upon the bloodstains on his body, and her eyes grew contemplative.

However, Zu An didn't notice her reaction at all. He heaved a sigh of relief before stowing the contract away in his robes. Then, he turned to the sword above the coffin and asked, "I just have to take the sword down, right?"

"That's right. Be careful, and make sure that you don't let it slip down. I have no wish of being stabbed to death at the final moment," replied Mi Li.

Zu An was perplexed. "If this sword could kill you, why didn't Ying Zheng do it back then? It's really weird that he went through the trouble of sealing you."

"You sure have a whole lot of questions. Your wife will really be dead if you continue dawdling here," remarked Mi Li.

Zu An's heart palpitated in unease when he recalled the situation Chu Chuyan was in. Not daring to waste any more time, he leaped into the air and grabbed the metal chain with one hand and the Tai'e Sword with the other.

The moment his hand came into contact with the sword's handle, his entire body suddenly jerked, and his mind was plunged into chaos. By the time he finally snapped out of it, he realized that he was no longer in the underground palace but a resplendent hall.

He couldn't construe words that could aptly describe just how grand the hall was. It made him feel incomparably insignificant, as if he was no more than a speck of dust before everything else.

"You're here," an authoritative voice suddenly sounded.

Zu An immediately turned his gaze over. A Dragon Throne was placed at the forefront of the hall, and a black-robed man was seated upright on top of it. His very presence was overpowering, as if everything in the world was under his thumb.

Woah, his disposition is indeed top-notch. He's able to look cool just by sitting there. If only I could learn half of his skills—no, even 10% would suffice—I would be the coolest kid on the street!

"Who are you?" asked Zu An with narrowed eyes.

The man seated on the Dragon Throne had his appearance veiled by a layer of mist, making it impossible to discern his looks. However, Zu An soon noticed the Five-clawed Golden Dragon<sup>[1]</sup> embroidered on the man's black robe, and a thought surfaced in his mind. "You are the Founding Sovereign Emperor?"

"It matters not who I am," replied the name donned in the dragon robe. "What's important is that you're here."

Zu An gulped.

What the hell is going on here? Has he found out that I'm intending to save his empress, so he's going to kill me now? Wait a moment, I even teased Mi Li earlier on! Could he have been spying on me all this while? Goddamnit, I'm a goner then!

The man wearing the dragon robe rose to his feet, which sent Zu An retreating several steps out of fear. It was just that this hall was freakishly huge, such that he was unable to find the exit even after scanning the area.

“You need not fear. I don’t plan to take your life.” Seeing right through Zu An’s worries, the man wearing the dragon robe said. “A man who can overcome the Human, Earth, and Heaven Seal is one who is wise and blessed with luck. You’re worthy of the undertaking.”

“Regarding that... I’m still lacking in terms of training, so I fear that I’m going to let down your expectations. Why don’t you find another person instead?” asked Zu An hesitantly.

Given how gravely the man wearing the dragon robe was speaking, he figured that the other party was going to issue an incredibly difficult mission. It’s probably something that will require me to charge through the fields of hell or something. No way I’m going to do that!

“Very well,” replied the man in the dragon robe.

Zu An was surprised, not expecting the other party to be so easy to negotiate with. He quickly added, “Since that’s the case, I’ll be taking my leave now.”

After saying those words, he turned around and quickly speed walked away.

However, the resounding roar of a dragon suddenly sounded—the man in the dragon robe had drawn his sword. Puffs of smoke was stirring in front of Zu An, and vaguely he seemed to see an entire army staring quietly at him.

A descent of his sword, and all nobles shall rush westward[2]!

For some reason, Zu An couldn’t help but remember a poem he had read in his previous life.

It was then that the man spoke with cold authority, “No one in the world can reject me. The only fate that awaits those who dares is death!”

“I-I was just joking earlier! Elder, please feel free to ask anything of me! Be it scaling a mountain of swords or descending in a sea of flames, I’ll do it without batting an eyelid!” Zu An immediately changed his words right away.

A black object suddenly flew in Zu An’s direction, and he subconsciously reached out to grab hold of it. It was only after catching it that he realized that it was a sword. When he raised his head once more, he realized that the man in the dragon robe wasn’t holding onto anything anymore.

The sword Zu An was holding right now was the same one that the man in the dragon robe had unsheathed earlier, and upon closer examination, he realized that it was actually the Tai’e Sword!

“With Tai’e in hand, seek out West Houndhill[3], and you’ll know what you must do,” said the man in the dragon robe.

## **Chapter 186: Primordial Origin Sutra**

“West Houndhill?” As a keyboard warrior who used to hang out in forums in his previous life, Zu An had some impression of this name. It seemed to be an auspicious ancestral land for the Qin Royal Family.

But still, why can’t you just tell me what I’m heading to the West Doghill for? Why are experts like you fond of playing it secretive? Do you actually think that doing this makes you appear wise?



“Remember, you must bring Tai’e with you to West Houndhill,” instructed the man in the dragon robe.

“Why?” asked Zu An.

“Tai’e is the key into the West Houndhill.”

“Key?”

Zu An looked at the sword in his hand as he wondered just how large the door must be to require such a massive key.

“Of course, I won’t make you work in vain. Sealed in Tai’e is the first half of the Primordial Origin Sutra. It can temper your body and has a strong cleansing and recovery effect. It should be of great help to you.”

“Primordial Origin Sutra?” repeated Zu An.

Just from the name itself, he could tell that it was likely to be something formidable. He could care less about the tempering and cleansing effect, but the recovery effect was something that he direly needed at the moment.

The Phoenix Nirvana Sutra’s ability to strengthen his body when he was low on health was indeed formidable, but it was very dangerous too. If he failed to keep a close eye on his health bar and accidentally overstepped his limits, it would really spell the end for him.

On top of that, most recovery medicines took quite some time to take effect, including Divine Physician Ji. If he was in a critical condition, it was unlikely that those medicines wouldn’t be able to save his life. In the end, the only one that was truly reliable was ‘Faith in Brother Spring’, but it was simply too hard to draw it from the lottery.

“How do I cultivate the skill?” asked Zu An.

“Immerse your consciousness on the sword, and you’ll be able to feel it,” replied the man in the dragon robe.

Zu An was worried that the other party would try to possess him, so he made sure to keep a sliver of his consciousness in his surroundings. After all, it was a common plot in the drama series and novels he had seen in the past.

He tried focusing his consciousness on the Tai’e Sword, and a series of words emerged in his mind.

“Heaven and earth yet severed in the primordial, bleak and unseen. Everything originates from the primordial...”

It was then that the Keyboard’s voice sounded, “Detected: Westhound Hill’s Secret Scroll - [Primordial Origin Sutra]. Consume it to activate a keyboard function?”

Zu An was overjoyed. What an unexpected surprise! I actually managed to find another secret art here?

He quickly accepted the option. Black mist swiftly gushed into the F3 key, forming a mysterious imprint on it.

“Begin tempering your body?” prompted the Keyboard.

Tempering my body? What does this mean?

However, fearing that he would miss this opportunity if he rejected the option, he quickly selected ‘Yes’.

Following that, he saw a surge of black mist gushing out from the Keyboard and embracing his body. He had a feeling that the world’s ki—no, it was a power that was much purer and nourishing than ki, something that he had never sensed before—gushing into his body.

Is this the ‘primordial ki’ which books often talk about?

He could sense that his body and meridians were being reforged by the primordial ki gushing into his body. It felt like he was soaked comfortably in a warm spring, but from time to time, there would be a sharp tearing sensation as if someone was sawing him up.

It was fortunate that the pain receded swiftly, and there was a vague feeling of exhilaration after each burst of pain. If not for that, he would have thought that he had fallen into the other party’s trap.

“Detected sealed ki core under the abdomen. Dispel the seal?” prompted the Keyboard once more.

Zu An was stunned for a moment there before ravenous joy soaked his entire being, and he nearly leaped up in excitement. “Yes, dispel it!”

The primordial ki gushed toward his abdomen in order to break open the seal, similar to how the energy from the petal of the Evanescent Lotus did earlier. However, what was different was that the primordial ki was much more concentrated and powerful. The energy from the Evanescent Lotus might not be enough to knock down the seal, but under the forceful ramming of the primordial ki, the bottleneck that stood in his way earlier began loosening.

As if sensing the commotion over here, the primordial ki in the other parts of his body was swiftly channeled over to lend a helping hand. It didn’t take long for all of the primordial ki to be concentrated in his abdomen, leaving Zu An feeling deeply nervous.

He remembered hearing from Old Mi that the region was extremely fragile, and even the slightest mistake could easily result in irreversible damage.

The primordial ki better not make a mistake here! I might be sealed right now, but at least I’m still a man! If this primordial ki were to strike too hard and accidentally knock ‘it’ off, I might just ram my head into a pillar and end my life right here right now!

It was fortunate that the primordial ki was far more formidable than he had expected. Soon, there was a vague ‘pop’ sound. Zu An sensed something which had been blocked for many years had finally opened up, leaving him refreshed and invigorated. His body suddenly felt lighter than ever.

He might not know much about the seal, but he knew that whatever that was planted on him previously had finally been undone.

What made things better was that the primordial ki didn’t dissipate after breaking the seal down. It continued to circulate around his body to temper it.

Zu An lowered his head to take a look, and his eyes swiftly reddened from sheer excitement. The little chick which he had been feeling greatly insecure about had finally unfurled its wings and matured into a grand roc!

That very feeling that he would wake up every morning to in his previous life was finally back!

Zu An was tempted to raise his head and howl like a wolf to vent the overflowing feelings welling up in his heart.

Finally, finally! I've finally managed to get back what I've lost!

All this while, everyone thought that I've been living the high life. Suave, handsome, kind, and having a wonderful wife; I'm the very embodiment of a winner in life! Yet, only I know the best that it was all just a facade. If I can't even work it down there, everything else is meaningless.

Rejoice, for all those days of wallowing in despair over my impotence is finally over!

Were it not for the fact that it was too embarrassing to tell others that he used to be impotent, he would have clanged the gongs and went around announcing this joyous news to everyone!

Then, he lowered his head to take another look, only to jolt in fright. "But this... isn't this a little too exaggerated?"

Watching as the remaining bits of primordial ki continued to temper his body, he felt a little embarrassed but gleeful at the same time. By the time the tempering came to an end, his body had already fully recovered from its previous wounds, and he was overflowing with energy. He felt stronger than ever.

It was then that the Keyboard's voice sounded once more, "Unable to unlock the new function due to the incompleteness of the Primordial Origin Sutra."

"Hm?" Zu An was stunned for a moment before realizing that he only had the upper half of the Primordial Origin Sutra.

"You're blessed with talent and luck. It's unexpected that you're able to complete the first level of tempering so quickly. Your strength, resilience, and recovery ability have been greatly enhanced from before," said the man in the dragon robe.

"Every level you advance in the Primordial Origin Sutra, your body will undergo transformative changes. Cultivators of the same rank will find it hard to hurt you, and the damage you receive from the attacks of higher rank cultivators would be greatly reduced too. If you're able to reach the highest level of the skill, as long as you aren't ground to ashes, your body will be able to regenerate back to its original state. By then, you'll become the strongest man in the world!

"However... can you stop pointing that thing at me?"

Zu An was flustered. He squirmed around uncomfortably as he tried hiding his own body, saying, "My apologies. I have only just finished tempering my body. This is a natural reaction, a natural reaction!"

The man in the dragon robe harrumphed coldly as he said, "Of course I know that! How else do you think that you're still able to speak to me?"

Zu An scratched his head sheepishly as he changed the topic, "Speaking of which, why is there only the upper half of the Primordial Origin Sutra here? May I know where the lower half is?"

"The lower half is in the West Houndhill," replied the man in the dragon robe. "You'll be able to obtain it when you get there in the future."

Zu An couldn't help but doubt if that man was doing it intentionally. You're giving me a taste of the Primordial Origin Sutra in advance before telling me that it's split into half so as to force me to do your bidding.

In any case, it was all worth it since he was able to release the seal on his little brother, not to mention that this skill was able to be used together with the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra. One needed him to be severely injured and the other allowed him to recover quickly. This was the perfect combo!

"The Primordial Origin Sutra requires you to practice it often. The more you use it, the easier it is for you to advance to the next level. Protect yourself well. Don't die before managing to find the West Houndhill," said the man in the dragon robe.

"Thank you for your advice, elder. May I know how I can find the West Houndhill?" replied Zu An.

The man in the dragon robe fell silent for a long while before finally replying, "I don't know."

"Is there no writings, maps, or anything that serves as a clue?" asked Zu An.

"There's nothing at all." The man in the dragon robe shook his head.

"Nothing at all?" Zu An was alarmed. Isn't this a darned trap? Given how big the world is, how am I to find a single location without any clues at all?!

The man in the dragon robe continued, "I am just a sliver of a soul at the moment. My knowledge is limited, and much time has passed since then. The West Houndhill might not be at the same place it used to be. You can only count on yourself for that."

His figure began to turn faint, looking as if he would vanish at any moment.

Zu An anxiously asked, "Is there a time limit to this mission?"

"None at all. However, my memories tell me that you should accomplish this mission as soon as possible," replied the man in the dragon robe.

Zu An heaved a sigh of relief. He was glad that there was no time limit here, so he could take his time to look for the West Houndhill.

The aura of the man in the dragon robe grew even fainter as he said, "I'm about to vanish soon. Ask if you have any other questions, and I'll answer you."

"How should I deal with the woman in the crystal coffin?" asked Zu An carefully.

A sharp glint flashed across the eyes of the man in the dragon robe as he replied, "Kill her!"

“Kill her?” Zu An was stunned. The two of you used to be a couple after all, is there a need to be so vicious? Not to mention, it’s such a pity to kill a woman as beautiful as she is... “But she’s much stronger than me. How can I bear to kill her?”

“You can do it... Use the Primordial Origin Sutra... purify...” The man in the dragon robe finally dissipated, leaving just a few murmurs behind.

The sight before Zu An blurred, and by the time he snapped out of his daze, he was already back in the underground palace. Held in his hand was the Tai’e Sword.

“What are you dazing off up there for? Hurry up and get down here!” shouted Mi Li.

## **Chapter 187: Accident**

Zu An released the rope and leaped down from mid-air, saying, “You are more anxious than I thought.”

Mi Li’s face darkened. “Are you taking advantage of me?”

“How could I dare to do that?” Zu An was in a good mood at the moment. “Alright, I’ve retrieved the sword now. Are you able to move now?”

“Use the Tai’e Sword to sever the shackles on my limbs...” Mi Li suddenly gasped when she noticed the monster that was growing beneath his abdomen. Her face reddened as she bellowed, “How dare you harbor that sort of filthy thoughts of me!”

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +678 Rage!

Zu An was immediately placed in an awkward position. He quickly turned his body around as he said, “Sorry about that. Something happened earlier on.”

Mi Li slowly calmed down after the initial outburst. She was still counting on the other party to save her, so she didn’t want to turn against him yet. So, she changed the topic and said, “What happened earlier? How did you manage to overcome the Heaven Seal?”

She didn’t think much of the Human Seal and the Earth Seal, but she had heard things about the Heaven Seal. Back then, Ying Zheng boasted before her that no one would be able to breach it, saying that it had nothing to do with one’s cultivation at all.

Zu An was stunned to hear that abrupt question. It seems like she thought that I was referring to the Heaven Seal... I guess that’s fine too. She’s probably going to get angry again if she knows that the man in the dragon robe told me to kill her

So, he went along with the flow and answered her question frankly, “We were teleported to a village in the Dong Commandery when a meteor suddenly fell from the sky...”

After going through the details, Zu An couldn’t help but ask, “Actually, there is something that I don’t get about the Heaven Seal. If it was constructed by Qin Shihuang, why would he make saving Chen Sheng the crux of overcoming the seal? Chen Sheng played a huge role in the eventual downfall of the Qin

Dynasty, so no matter how I look at it, Qin Shihuang should have desired his death more than anything else.”

Hearing that question, Mi Li sighed deeply and said, “I finally understand why Ying Zheng was confident that no one would be able to breach the seal. He constructed the seal out of a snippet of history, using the fate of the Qin Country as its lynchpin. The seal is bound to the natural laws of the world, and it isn’t something that a human’s will can influence.

“Regarding the question you asked, it’s because it’s heaven’s will at play here, not Ying Zheng’s. The Qin Dynasty was eventually overthrown by the revolutionaries backing Chen Sheng. Since the Heaven Seal was constructed with the fate of the Qin Dynasty as its lynchpin, the key to resolving it is to guide the snippet of history toward the downfall of the Qin. Ying Zheng probably would have never imagined that things would turn in such a manner!

“How unexpected it is that a moment of compassion actually ended up saving you! There’s nothing more ironic than that to a tyrant like Ying Zheng! Hahaha!”

Hearing her frenzied laughter, Zu An asked curiously, “Do you hate him a lot?”

“That’s not something you should concern yourself with.” Mi Li harrumphed in response.

Zu An shrugged nonchalantly. This old hag sure has quite the temper.

“You’re indeed a person blessed with great luck. Despite your low cultivation, you were able to venture to the depths of the underground palace and decipher the Soul Suppression Seal. It looks like it was all the work of fate!” remarked Mi Li deeply.

“Oh? Doesn’t that mean that our meeting is also the work of fate?” asked Zu An with a chuckle.

“You have been making fun of me time and time again. Are you that tired of living?” Mi Li’s expression turned cold.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +345 Rage!

Zu An thought nothing of her threat. “You can’t harm me anyway; we’ve already signed a contract on that! Besides, what’s the big deal in me talking a bit more casually? I reckon that you must not have too many friends back then.”

Having hit the nail on the head, Mi Li’s face reddened. “I don’t need any friends!”

“Humans are social creatures, so how could you possibly not need any friends?” Zu An remarked as he made his way back to the crystal coffin. With the Tai’e Sword, he severed the shackles binding her limbs. “Since fate brought about our meeting, why don’t we make friends with one another?”

The moment she was freed from her shackles, Mi Li leaped out from the crystal coffin onto a stone sculpture by the side. She glared at him coldly and said, “I’ll sever your tongue if you dare run your mouth once more!”

Zu An replied with a beaming smile, “I don’t believe that.”

Now that she was standing at a high point, she looked even taller and more graceful than before, as if a beauty who had walked out of a painting. Her presence breathed some life into this dingy underground cavern.

“Ignorant!” Mi Li’s eyebrows shot up as she slowly floated into the air. Her robe fluttered furiously as a powerful aura burst out from her.

The powerful aura crushed on Zu An, leaving him suffocated. This force was many times stronger than what he had felt from the Tai’e Sword earlier on!

If not for the fact that his body had been tempered by the primordial ki earlier on and that the Tai’e Sword was warding off half of the pressure for him, he might have been forced into a kneeling position by now.

Even so, Zu An felt that he couldn’t hold on for too long. He wanted to say something, but the immense pressure made it impossible for him to even open his mouth at all.

Floating imposingly in mid-air, Mi Li swept her hands behind her back as she gazed down on Zu An with an air of majesty. She remarked coldly, “Someone like you wishes to befriend me?”

Zu An drove his Primordial Origin Sutra to its limit, using its prowess to help him withstand the powerful pressure on him. He could already feel his bones creaking under the force, on the verge of succumbing.

“Looks like you do have some guts. What a pity that you’re too weak,” remarked Mi Li coldly. She was just about to raise the pressure a notch further when she suddenly felt a gust of cold air battering on her body. Perplexed, she lowered her head, only to be stunned in the next moment.

Similarly, Zu An was in the midst of fending against the pressure exerted on him when it suddenly vanished without a trace. His pride disallowed him from lowering his head, so he ended up seeing everything that could be seen.

Even when he was faced with the terrifying pressure, he was still able to stand his own against it without suffering any injuries. However, the sight he was seeing right now left a heated sensation in his nose. He had to quickly stifle his nose in order to prevent blood from gushing out.

It was hard to tell what really happened, but Mi Li’s clothes suddenly burst apart without any warning. It was reduced to little fragments that scattered swiftly with the wind, exposing her perfect figure.

Her body really showed how biased heaven could be at times, taking care of some people far more than others. Every single line on her body seemed to be carefully sculpted, and her skin glistened warmly like precious jade.

“Ah!” Mi Li soon snapped out of her daze, and a hint of fluster finally cracked her lofty expression. She quickly darted behind the sculpture to hide as she screeched, “Cover your eyes! Don’t look!”

Zu An obediently covered his eyes, just that there was a slight crack between his fingers that allowed him to take a little peek. Watching her hiding her body in a panic, a bizarre smile crept on his lips as he remarked, “It really is fate at play here. Heaven must have seen how you were bullying me, so he’s giving you a stern warning for it.”

“Shut your mouth, or else I’ll kill you!” Mi Li quickly twisted her finger to weave her ki around her body, forming a black cloak around her. It was just that the black cloak made out of ki didn’t feel as reassuring as real clothes.

Thinking about how her body was actually exposed to Zu An, she nearly fainted from anger.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +999 Rage!

Zu An couldn’t help but retort, “I heard that items produced in the Qin Dynasty, be it weapons or bricks, have to be labeled with the craftsmen’s name. If there were any defects with an item, the craftsman would have to take responsibility for it. Due to that, items from the Qin Dynasty are supposed to have quality reassurance. What can I say? It seems like rumors can’t be trusted after all.”

“Nonsense! No matter how well made my robe was, how could it possibly last for several thousand years without degrading?!” Mi Li cursed Zu An. I was in too much of a rush to deal with him that it actually slipped my mind!

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +813 Rage!

Zu An felt a little pained by the large amounts of Rage points popping up in his system.

Damn it, it’s all going to waste!

He still remembered the vow he made in order to save Qiao Xueying. He said that he would rather not draw anything good for the next three times as long as he could obtain ‘Faith in Brother Spring’.

Of course, he had thought of a countermeasure beforehand. He thought that as long as he drew the lottery as soon he got any Rage points for the next three times, he would be able to nullify the consequences of the vow without suffering too much of a loss. Due to that, he couldn’t help but feel pained at the huge contributions Mi Li was making to his Rage points account.

“Do you have any clothes I can change into?” asked Mi Li.

Zu An had to exert all of his self-control in order to stop himself from bursting into laughter. “I do, but it’s my clothes. If you don’t mind...”

“Throw it over!” shouted Mi Li.

Zu An took out a fresh set of clothes from his luggage and tossed it over. He knew that he would be in the dungeon for ten days or so, so he made sure to bring a change of clothes too.

Now that he thought about it, he was pretty pathetic as a transmigrator. The other transmigrators he had read of in the novels were usually equipped with storage rings and all sorts of cool artifacts, allowing them to travel around coolly. Yet, he had to lug around a lame bag with him everywhere he went. It was really ruining his cool reputation here!

A snowy arm shot out from behind the sculpture to catch the clothes before swiftly retracting behind it. “Turn around. If you dare to look in my direction, I’ll dig out your eyes even at the risk of breaching the contract!”

“It’s not like you have anything I haven’t seen yet...” grumbled Zu An in irritation.



“What did you say?”

Mi Li’s face was so red that it looked almost as if she was on the verge of erupting.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +684 Rage!

“Nothing!” Sensing that the other party’s tolerance was already at its limit, Zu An quickly turned his head around. There’s no meaning in me earning more Rage points now anyway. It’s not worth taking the risk now.

Rustling sounds echoed behind the sculpture as Zu An made use of this opportunity to draw the lottery. He noticed that he had accumulated a total of 7434 Rage points in total, and he was quite impressed at how quickly he was earning Rage points.

Wow, it hasn’t even been a long time since the last draw, but I’ve already amassed so many Rage points. I’m almost like a Rage points harvester! I’ll be able to draw the lottery 74 times... Surely I can’t be so unlucky as to not draw a single item at all, right?”

Zu An nervously pressed the spacebar, only to see ‘Thanks for participating’, ‘Thanks for participating’...

Even up to the 74th time, he actually didn’t get anything at all, not even a single Ki Fruit!

What the hell! How in the world is my vow so effective?!

Zu An gulped down his saliva as he made up his mind to never make any casual vows anymore. There was really something sinister about making promises in this world.

“I’m done!”

Mi Li suddenly shouted, her voice returning back to its usual coldness. It seemed like she had managed to recover from her earlier embarrassment.

## **Chapter 188: Blood Tribute**

Zu An quickly turned his head over, and his eyes lit up in excitement. If Mi Li looked graceful and seductive in her earlier court robes, her menswear made her look valiant and imposing. She was gallant like a man, yet tender like a woman.

“Woah, you look a bit suaver than me, though you’re still lacking in the masculinity aspect. Overall, I’d say that you’re just a bit beneath me. At least the girls on the streets will barely notice your presence when you’re standing next to me,” remarked Zu An.

Mi Li was already starting to get used to his foul mouth by now. She shot him a glare and said, “About what happened earlier on...”

Before she could finish her words, Zu An had already interrupted right in, “Hm? Did anything happen? I didn’t see or hear anything at all.”

Mi Li's lips crept up upon seeing how Zu An had decided to feign ignorance. Heh, looks like he still has some tact after all. However, she soon suppressed her smile and returned back to her usual imposing look.

"Ah right, big sis empress, you need to follow me right now to save Chuyan! I'm afraid that they won't be able on for too long!" exclaimed Zu An.

"What did you call me?" Mi Li's eyebrows shot up.

"Big sis?" asked Zu An. "I mean, you seem to be just that teeny little bit older than me, so I can't call you little sis... Or would you prefer me to call you auntie or grandma?"

"Grandma..." Mi Li's eyelids twitched as cracking sounds echoed from her knuckles.

You have successfully trolled Mi Li for +256 Rage!

She took in a deep breath to calm herself down before remarking coldly, "Let's go and save your wife."

Zu An immediately looked upward, only to realize that every level of the seal was tens of meters tall, and the walls were too smooth to provide any support. He might have managed to fall his way down here, but he had no way of getting back up. So, he could only turn to Mi Li sheepishly and say, "Big sis empress, help me."

"Someone of your cultivation rank wouldn't even be qualified to serve me tea back then!" Mi Li harrumphed coldly. Still, she grabbed him by his clothes and flew all the way up to the top.

Looking at how deep this cavern was, Zu An couldn't help but wonder how Qiao Xueying was able to get back up. However, he soon remembered those extendable vines of hers and figured that it wouldn't be a problem for her at all.

For a moment here, Zu An wondered if he could feign acrophobia here as an excuse to wrap his arms around Mi Li's body. It was just a brief glance earlier on, but her body was really as incredible as one could imagine.

But then, he thought about the terrifying pressure he suffered earlier and swiftly dispelled that thought. Safety comes first!

...

After Qiao Xueying parted with Zu An, she headed all the way up to the topmost layer, where Chu Chuyan was still bound to the altar. Upon seeing that she was still surviving thus far, she heaved a sigh of relief.

"Snow!" Chu Chuyan noticed the commotion and turned her head over, only to see that Qiao Xueying was all by herself. She immediately asked hurriedly, "Where's Ah Zu? Is it possible that he..."

Just thinking about the terrible fate that might have befallen Zu An choked up Chu Chuyan's voice, causing her eyes to redden.

Qiao Xueying sighed deeply. She sure is beautiful. She looks like a fairy even when tearing up. It's hard for me to resist her charms even though I'm a woman too.

“Miss Chu, didn’t you abhor in the past? Why are you so concerned about him now?” asked Qiao Xueying. As she asked those questions, she couldn’t help but glance in the direction of the seal as she wondered how Zu An was faring at the moment.

Chu Chuyan was a little taken aback by how differently Qiao Xueying was addressing her, but she understood that there was no way the latter could consider calling her ‘young miss’ since she was serving a different master. “He has made such a huge sacrifice for me. He could have escaped safely if he had chosen to abandon me.”

“Is that all there is to it?” asked Qiao Xueying as she sat down by the altar.

Chu Chuyan was stunned by Qiao Xueying’s question. Indeed. Is the reason why I’m feeling so worried really because he has saved my life?

She thought about how Zu An continued to hold onto her even while fighting with the zombie warriors, even unhesitatingly using his body to shield her multiple times. Afterward, he even bravely challenged the danger Soul Suppression Seal just for the sliver of hope that she could be freed from the altar.

Most importantly of all, he was willing to even give up the Evanescent Lotus, a crucial ingredient he needed to cure his impotency, so as to save the dying her...

Recalling the pained look on his face afterward, a smile unknowingly crept onto Chu Chuyan’s face. However, she soon snapped out of her thought when she remembered that Qiao Xueying had returned without Zu An by her side.

“Snow, where is he right now? Did something happen in the seal?” asked Chu Chuyan anxiously.

“Don’t worry, he’s fine. We’ve managed to overcome all three of the seals together,” replied Qiao Xueying.

“It looks like you’re quite formidable to be able to overcome those seals. I’ve really underestimated you all this while,” remarked Chu Chuyan with a sigh.

In her view, even though Zu An possessed all sorts of mysterious means, he was still, after all, a third rank cultivator. She naturally believed that it was the Qiao Xueying who had the higher cultivation rank here who contributed more.

Qiao Xueying sighed deeply and said, “Miss Chu, it looks like you really don’t understand him.”

Chu Chuyan blinked her eyes in confusion, not understanding the reason behind the other party’s words. “Snow, you seem to have changed. You used to detest Ah Zu a lot, and the two of you always argued over everything. But now... I can’t really put it in words, but your attitude toward him has changed greatly.”

Qiao Xueying’s heart skipped a beat. She quickly exclaimed, “You’re thinking too much into it! That fellow is still as hateful as ever to me!”

Just thinking about how that man had angered her time and time again over the last few days was more than enough for her to gnash her teeth in anger.

“Snow, you still haven’t told me where he is yet,” said Chu Chuyan with a frown.

“He went to save that mysterious woman. Who knows? Maybe he’ll get enchanted by her too.” Qiao Xueying thought about Mi Li’s voice and guessed that the latter must be quite a beautiful woman.

“This powerful seal was used to seal that woman, which means that she must be an incredibly dangerous individual. I really don’t know whether saving her is the right thing or not,” said Chu Chuyan out of worry.

Qiao Xueying was a little displeased by Chu Chuyan’s response. “Miss Chu, instead of worrying about the peace and prosperity of the whole of humankind, why don’t you worry a little more about that fellow first? It’s already approaching the time the both of us agreed on, but he still isn’t out yet. I really don’t know whether he has met with danger or not.”

Chu Chuyan was a little stunned to hear those words. A contemplative look appeared on her face.

“What are the two of you talking about?”

A sinister air suddenly gushed in their direction, causing the two women to turn their heads over. The black-armored general, at some point in time, had returned back to the altar.

They quickly glanced at the lake, only to see that it had already calmed down. All of the evil spirits who had escaped earlier were either destroyed or resealed.

Qiao Xueying immediately leaped to her feet and stood in front of Chu Chuyan, protecting her. Her heart was pounding in unease as she was aware that she couldn’t stop the black-armored general due to the vast difference in their cultivation.

“Snow, hurry up and leave. You aren’t a match for him!” exclaimed Chu Chuyan.

“That won’t do! We went through so much in order to save you, so how can we give up right now? Besides, I’ve already promised that fellow to protect you!” Qiao Xueying pursed her lips tightly together.

“Hm? Where’s the other man?” The black-armored general took a look around, but Zu An was nowhere to be seen.

Qiao Xueying was worried that Zu An hadn’t saved that mysterious woman yet—if so, luring the black-armored general would undo their efforts—so she replied, “He has already left.”

“Left?” The black-armored general was stunned. “He thinks that he can escape from my grasp after daring to impersonate the Founding Sovereign Emperor in my presence?”

Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan’s face paled. The mysterious woman was right; Zhang Han had really seen through Zu An’s lies.

“Forget it. I’ll settle the score with him after I mend the seal.” The black-armored general looked at Qiao Xueying as he asked, “Are you intending to stop me?”

Without bothering to respond to that question, Qiao Xueying raised her hand and summoned innumerable green leaves around her before tossing them over to the black-armored general like razor blades. After consuming Zu An’s ‘Faith in Brother Spring’, she had regained at least half of her strength by now.

However, in the face of her attacks, the black-armored general didn't even bother to dodge at all. Those green leaves simply withered in the face of the black fog shrouding him.

Qiao Xueying clenched her fists tightly as she began spurring the growth of her hair. This time around, however, she didn't launch an attack. Instead, she created a bush of thorns around the altar, hoping to stall the black-armored general as long as possible.

"Scram!" Zhang Han manifested a spear in his hand and swept it horizontally, splitting the bush of thorns into half right away.

Qiao Xueying had already mentally prepped herself for the worst, but even so, she didn't think that her strongest defensive skill wouldn't even be able to last a second before the enemy.

She tried to dodge the attack, but she was still a split second too late. She, too, was struck squarely by the impact of the spear, causing her body to fly across the air like a sandbag before crashing heavily by the side of the cavern.

Zhang Han had no intention of letting Qiao Xueying off just like that. He flitted over to the place where Qiao Xueying was going to land at in advance and held his spear up high in position. With a cold sneer, he said, "Since you're the companion of that wretched fool who dared to impersonate His Majesty, I'll send you on your way as well!"

Qiao Xueying knew that there was no way for her to escape anymore. Left with no choice, she prepared herself to activate Moon's Reflection in order to block this fatal attack, but a voice suddenly sounded in the room.

"Stop it right there, or else I'll bite my tongue and end my life right now!"

It was from Chu Chuyan. She knew that the value of the tribute would be greatly reduced once dead, allowing her to use this against Zhang Han.

Her efforts worked out. Zhang Han paused for a moment before instantaneously returning back to the altar. "It's good that you reminded me. I might have bound your limbs, but you're still able to move your tongue."

After saying those words, he tapped his finger on her chin and sealed off all of her movements.

"Forget it, there could be complications if I drag it out. I shall handle the tribute first."

Zhang Han began to chant in some sort of obscure language. Black fog gathered from the surroundings to converge around the altar, causing the air to become as viscous as ink. Demons of all shapes of sizes seemed to be hidden within the black fog, slowly clawing their way toward Chu Chuyan.

No matter how mentally resilient Chu Chuyan was, she couldn't help but feel creeped out by those monsters. She wanted to run, but the shackles on her arms disallowed her from moving at all.

Qiao Xueying bit her lips as she charged forward once more in an attempt to save Chu Chuyan.

"Since you're courting for death, I'll allow you to die with her!" sneered Zhang Han.

A hand manifested from the black fog rushed forth and clasped tightly down on Qiao Xueying, trapping her in place. Her strength seemed to fade in the presence of the black fog, rendering her helpless.

The hand lifted her up in an attempt to toss her into the black fog, only for a severe voice to suddenly echo across the hall. "Audacious! How dare you hurt this Sovereign Emperor's woman?"

### **Chapter 189: Trump Card**

Zhang Han's hand quivered from the abrupt booming voice, and his airs seemed to deflate a little. He quickly turned his gaze toward the direction where the voice had come from, only to see two suave boys walking in his direction.

Zu An and Mi Li.

Mi Li shot a surprised glance at Zu An. The latter's shout actually caused her heart to tremble. For a moment there, the imposing air he emanated that very instant actually carried some of Ying Zheng's flair. However, recalling that it was Zu An they were talking about here, she quickly evicted that thought from her mind.

Similarly, Zhang Han was stunned for an instant too, but he quickly snapped out of it and sneered coldly, "I thought that you've escaped, but who could have thought that you would be so foolish to return. I still haven't settled the score with you for impersonating His Majesty!"

However, Zu An harrumphed coldly and said, "Insolence! How dare you speak so arrogantly to me? Do you want your nine families to be exterminated?"

Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan were shocked by those words. They knew Zu An's background well enough to know that it was an empty scare, but his disguise had already been seen through!

Putting them aside, even Mi Li couldn't help but direct a glance at him. This fellow's skin is really thicker than the city walls!

"Just how long more do you intend to impersonate His Majesty? I didn't have the time to pursue the matter earlier, but you really are trying to climb over my head, aren't you?" A powerful pressure burst forth from Zhang Han, crushing down on everyone including Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan.

Zu An also felt his breathing suddenly becoming laborious under the pressure, but fortunately, he had already thought of a countermeasure beforehand. He quickly hid behind Mi Li's body, and just as he had expected, the pressure immediately alleviated significantly. So, he gleefully continued his mockery, "Audacious! Even if you don't recognize me, shouldn't you at least recognize her?"

"Who's that?" Zhang Han took a look at Mi Li, but he was unable to recognize her due to her menswear. "You won't be able to escape death no matter whom you bring out here!"

"Zhang Han, I never thought that you would have already forgotten about me!" sneered Mi Li.

Zhang Han was stunned. He might not be able to recognize Mi Li's appearance, but the voice sounded extremely familiar to him. He began assessing her intently before exclaiming in horror, "Mi Li!"

Mi Li stepped forward and scoffed, "Looks like you still do remember me."

Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan began assessing Mi Li curiously. From her voice, they could tell that she was the woman sealed down there, but they didn't expect her to be so gorgeous.

However, what caught Chu Chuyan's attention more was the fact that she was wearing menswear, presumably Zu An's clothes. Was she naked when Zu An saved her from the seal?

While all sorts of thoughts filled up the two women's minds, Zhang Han's complexion turned a little awful, and even his voice began quivering in fear. "H-how did you get out?"

"In the first place, it was only a matter of time before I managed to break the seal. What makes you think that I won't be able to escape?" asked Mi Li coldly.

Zhang Han turned to Zu An furiously and shouted, "You were the one who set her free!"

You have successfully trolled Zhang Han for +999 Rage!

Zu An shrugged casually, saying, "Do I need your permission to save my own woman?"

"..." Qiao Xueying.

"..." Chu Chuyan.

"..." Mi Li.

Does this fellow really think of himself as Ying Zheng? Who do you think you're saying is your woman?

"Do you know what a grievous mistake you have made by setting her free?!" roared Zhang Han in agitation.

Before Zu An could ask about it, Mi Li had already interjected with a harrumph, "Zhang Han, you have served as Ying Zheng's guard dog for so many years. It's about time for me to settle the scores with you."

Zhang Han swung his spear sideward and sneered coldly, "I was assigned to look after this place and keep you sealed under His Majesty's orders. Since you managed to escape, I'll just have to imprison you back into your seal!"

"You want to seal me back?" Mi Li burst into laughter. "You?"

Instead of responding to Mi Li's taunt, Zhang Han thrust his spear forth like a formidable dragon toward Mi Li, generating formidable momentum that horrified Zu An and the others. They knew that they would surely be torn apart if that attack had been directed toward them.

However, with a cold harrumph, Mi Li rushed forward to confront him, and it didn't take long for her to unravel his offense.

With no one maintaining the altar anymore, the black fog filled with vile demons slowly began to dissipate. Zu An made use of this opportunity to sneak over to the altar and help Qiao Xueying up. Looking at the two women, he asked worriedly, "Are the two of you fine?"

"I'm fine," the two women replied in unexpected unison, which shocked the two of them.

Zu An was surprised by it as well. All of a sudden, he had an inexplicable feeling that he was caught cheating by his wife.

In the end, it was Chu Chuyan who snapped out of it first and said, "You should take a look at Snow. Her injuries are far more severe than mine."

As a seal had been placed on her mouth, her words were a bit muffled.

Zu An turned to Qiao Xueying and asked, "How are you feeling?"

Qiao Xueying pushed him off and said, "I won't die."

Noticing the trail of blood trickling down the corner of her lips, Zu An quickly pressed her down and said, "Don't move, you've sustained significant injuries. You should quickly channel your ki to alleviate your condition."

Qiao Xueying instinctively wanted to refute him, but sensing the concern in his voice, she eventually decided to hold her tongue.

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan was a little perplexed by their unnatural interaction. The two of them usually devolved into heated arguments as soon as they encountered one another, but the atmosphere between them felt a little different at this very instant, almost tender even.

Bam!

A dull thud suddenly sounded. The three of them immediately turned their heads over, only to see Zhang Han collapsing heavily on the ground.

Mi Li slowly made her way toward Zhang Han and said, "In the years I've been sealed, I swore that the first thing I would do when I'm free is to make you suffer a fate worse than death!"

Zhang Han climbed up from the ground as he raised his hand, beckoning to the terracotta soldiers behind him. They immediately drew their weapons and aimed it at Mi Li.

Mi Li glared at them fiercely and roared, "I am the empress of the Great Qin Dynasty! Who dares to disrespect me?"

The terracotta soldiers immediately put down their weapons and turned around as if nothing had happened at all.

I swear in my goddamned life I've never seen more spineless soldiers than that!, retorted Zu An in his head.

Zhang Han also didn't expect to encounter such a situation either. He roared at the terracotta soldiers furiously, "She has been stripped of her position by His Majesty! What are you afraid of her for?!"

Despite his infuriated howls, the terracotta soldiers didn't respond at all, playing dead.

Mi Li stopped her footsteps and waved her sleeve in front of her. A streak of red light flashed across the air, and the hands which Zhang Han had been holding his spear with suddenly plopped to the ground.



Zu An and the two women beside him nearly popped their eyes out. Zhang Han was an opponent they were completely helpless before, even when he was taking them lightly. Yet, Mi Li was actually able to sever his hands with just a wave of her sleeves?

The disparity in prowess was so great that the three of them were struggling to come to terms with it!

Mi Li flung her sleeves outward, disgusted as if she had gotten something unclean on her hands. She gazed at Zhang Han coldly as she uttered impassively, "Now, what else should I sever?"

Zhang Han quickly retreated a few steps back, but unexpectedly, he wasn't as frightened as Mi Li thought he would be. "I admit that I'm indeed not an opponent for you, but did you think that His Majesty wouldn't have prepared anything to deal with you in case the seal got broken?"

### **Chapter 190: Recovery**

Mi Li's eyes turned steely. "He prepared a hand?"

"It was out of reminiscence of his ties with you that he chose to seal you instead of killing you..." said Zhang Han.

Before he could finish his words, Mi Li had already interjected with a sneer, "As if he could have really killed me!"

"Indeed, His Majesty was unable to kill you at the start. However, he soon found something that could do it. However, in view that you're already sealed, he entrusted the item to me in case a mishap occurred. I never thought that a day would come where I would really have to use it!" replied Zhang Han.

"I'd love to see what you have that could kill me!" sneered Mi Li, thinking nothing of his threats at all.

"Have you ever heard of 'Red Tears of Lady Xiang'?"

"Red Tears of Lady Xiang?" Mi Li frowned. She had no impression of this at all.

"It's only natural that you don't, for this is something that happened after you were sealed." Zhang Han began reminiscing about the past. "There was once when His Majesty was traveling around when he encountered a gale at the Mountain Xiang Shrine and was unable to cross the river. So, His Majesty asked the high priest what kind of god 'Lord Xiang' was, to which, the high priest replied that she was 'Yao's daughter' and 'Shun's wife'[1], and she was buried here.

"His Majesty was extremely angry at 'Lord Xiang', believing that she was intentionally acting against him. So, he ordered his men to chop down all of the trees of Mountain Xiang.

"But all of a sudden, a red droplet suddenly fell from the sky and swiftly dyed the ground around Mountain Xiang red. All of the soldiers who came into contact with the red ground would dissipate into dust. That single encounter killed over half of His Majesty's imperial guards, and even His Majesty himself almost got done in as well. Speculations later arose that the red droplet was a symbol of Lord Xiang's rage, a divine retribution toward those who had disrespected her.

“His Majesty ordered the high priest to lead a group of cultivators into Mountain Xiang and extract three droplets of the lethal poison from it. The poison became known as ‘Red Tears of Lady Xiang’. His Majesty has used one himself, and he entrusted the other two to me in case you ever broke out of your seal.”

Mi Li sneered in response, “You make it sound amazing, but I don’t believe that any poison in the world would be that amazing.”

Zhang Han sighed deeply before glancing in the direction of the lake, saying, “The defeat in the battle of Zhangwu resulted in the death of 200,000 Qin soldiers, but you should also know that those soldiers were the elites of our Qin Dynasty. There were many experts amongst them; they couldn’t possibly have been defeated so easily even if they had laid down their arms.”

Mi Li’s heart jolted in astonishment, and she blurted out in astonishment, “You used that poison against them?”

“Indeed,” replied Zhang Han with a nod. His voice was quivering out of fear. “It was just a droplet. A single droplet, and 200,000 elite soldiers of the Qin Dynasty were reduced to dust.”

Mi Li’s face darkened. She raised her right hand, only to suddenly notice the presence of a red droplet on her palm. There was a red thread connecting from the bottom of the red droplet all the way to her elbow, and it was still streaming upward.

“Scram!” bellowed Mi Li coldly.

A powerful aura gushed outward as she channeled her ki toward that red thread, hoping to force it out of her body. At her cultivation rank, most poisons could no longer hope to threaten her any more.

However, a deep frown soon formed on her forehead. The red thread might be thin, but it was unstoppable. Her ki swiftly dissipated in the face of the poison, such that the most she could do was just to barely slow the spread of the poison by a little.

“It’s no use. ‘Red Tears of Lady Xiang’ is a poison which could even kill Earth Immortals, so how could you possibly be able to withstand it?”

Zhang Han’s voice carried no joy, just fear and wistfulness. Clearly, the poison had reminded him of the past, causing guilt and all kinds of emotions to swiftly rush up his mind.

Meanwhile, the other three watching the commotion were stunned. It was just a moment ago that Mi Li made an awe-inspiring entrance and subdued Zhang Han with ease... but who could have thought that there would suddenly be such a huge turnaround?

Zu An knew that they would become Zhang Han’s prey if Mi Li were to be done in. There was no way he could accept this outcome after everything he had done to free Mi Li. He immediately shouted, “Sever your hand and stop the spread of the poison!”

“The ‘Red Tears of Lady Xiang’ wouldn’t have been able to kill an Earth Immortal if it could be dealt with that easily. From the moment she was afflicted with the poison, it had already spread throughout her entire body. It wouldn’t do a thing even if she severs her hand now.”

Mi Li turned her head over and looked at Zu An in surprise. “You don’t wish for my death?”

“How could I possibly wish for big sis empress’ death? Even if we were to just look at this from an aesthetic point of view, you look far more pleasing than that Zhang Han.”

Chu Chuyan and Qiao Xueying glanced at one another. That fellow sure is brazen. How in the world does he find the courage to tease that powerful female zombie?

In her view, a normal human couldn’t possibly live for that long, so they assumed that Mi Li was a zombie like Zhang Han and the others, albeit a beautiful one.

Zhang Han was also rendered speechless. Wait a moment, did he just indirectly say that I’m ugly?!

You have successfully trolled Zhang Han for +444 Rage!

“You’re asking for it!”

Zhang Han morphed into a bundle of black aura and charged toward Zu An. He might have lost his hands, but the difference in their cultivation ranks was absolute. Even if he had lost his legs on top of that, he would still have been able to kill Zu An easily.

Zu An could have possibly dodged the attack with his movement skill, but what would happen to Qiao Xueying and Chu Chuyan behind him if he were to do that? So, he chose to grit his teeth and attempt to fend off the attack with the Tai’e Sword.

On the other hand, Mi Li waved her sleeves, and the Tai’e Sword suddenly flew out of Zu An’s hands and pierced right into Zhang Han’s chest as swiftly as a bolt of lightning. The impact pushed Zhang Han back all the way to the opposite end of the underground hall and pinned him right onto the wall.

Zhang Han lowered his head to look at the Tai’e Sword. Disbelief filled his face first before swiftly being replaced with resignation. He murmured feebly, “This is fine too. It’s good that it’s all over. I’ve already been tortured for several thousand years now, and it’s about time for me to return to the earth...”

His voice gradually grew softer and softer before his head finally hung limply off his neck. He had breathed his last.

Zu An shot a thumbs up at Mi Li and said, “Woah, you were actually able to kill that powerful Zhang Han in a single blow! My respect for big sis empress gushes forth like the relentless tides of the river...”

“Gush your head!” Mi Li interjected even before he could finish his bootlicking. “How could it be that easily to kill him? He has simply given up on himself.”

Those words made Zu An direct his gaze toward Zhang Han, and all of a sudden, he felt some sympathy for the latter.

He was the general who had stood forward in the Qin Dynasty’s times of crisis and turned the tables on the rebels. Many thought that he would be the savior who would breathe life back into the dying Qin Dynasty, but he ended up surrendering to the enemy after a huge defeat. As if that wasn’t enough, he even plotted the deaths of their final 200,000 elite soldiers.

He had fallen from a hero into a criminal in an instant. The sheer guilt must have been gnawing away at his heart over the years.

His desire to live pushed him to continue existing in such a wretched state to this day. Most likely, Zu An's impersonation of Ying Zheng, the return of Mi Li, and the vengeance of the 200,000 evil spirits had dredged up his memories of the past, something which he had been trying to ignore to this day, and it finally crushed his heart and compelled him to choose death.

Perhaps it was because his feelings had been heard, Zhang Han's body suddenly began disintegrating along with the wind.

Along with his death, the black ropes binding Chu Chuyan finally disappeared as well. Zu An quickly pulled her down from the altar and exclaimed, "Honey, are you alright?"

"I'm fine." Chu Chuyan was still unable to move properly due to her devastated ki meridians, so she could only collapse feebly in his embrace. A trace of redness surfaced on her cheeks.

Noticing how limp her body was, Zu An quickly moved her over to Qiao Xueying's side before rushing over to Mi Li. "Big sis empress, are you fine?"

"You just want to ask me how your little wife can be saved, no?" Mi Li saw through his thoughts right away and harrumphed coldly.

Zu An smiled sheepishly and said, "I'm also concerned about you too. Is there anything I can do to help you?"

He leaned in closer, intending to see how the situation with her arm was.

However, Mi Li waved her hand and pushed him off, blocking off his gaze. She uttered coldly, "How could such mere poison hope to faze me?"

"That's good, that's good." Zu An heaved a sigh of relief. "Big sis empress, can you fulfill your promise and tell me how to heal my wife?"

Mi Li alternated her gaze between Zu An and Chu Chuyan for a moment as her expression flickered a little. She seemed to be making an extremely difficult decision.

"What's wrong? Is there a problem?" Zu An's heart skipped a beat.

However, Mi Li simply shook her head as she looked at him with a bizarre gaze.

Chu Chuyan spoke up feebly, "The collapse of my ki meridian is not something that can be solved easily; you shouldn't make things difficult for her. Don't worry, I promise you that I won't try to end my life in the future."

After how Zu An and Qiao Xueying had done everything they could to save her, even if she found her life meaningless, she wouldn't undermine the sacrifices they had made for her by ending her own life.

Mi Li harrumphed coldly. "There's no need to use such tricks on me. Saving you is no big deal for me. I'm just contemplating on something else."

Zu An was overjoyed to hear that. "Big sis empress, please enlighten us!"

A glimmer of hope surfaced in Chu Chuyan's eyes too. Despite her nonchalant words, she had been known as a prodigy even from a young age. There was no way she would be content with living as a cripple for the rest of her life.

Meanwhile, Qiao Xueying was intrigued by Mi Li's words. Based on her knowledge, there was nothing in the world that could recover destroyed ki meridians. She couldn't help but wonder what kind of method Mi Li was intending to use here.

"Didn't you learn the Primordial Origin Sutra? Primordial ki is the purest ki in the world, born at the inception of the world. Aside from tempering your own body, you can also use it to heal the injuries of others," said Mi Li.

Zu An's heart skipped a beat. "Wait a moment... how did you know that I've learned the Primordial Origin Sutra?"

"Do you think that I wouldn't know that Ying Zheng sealed off the Primordial Origin Sutra in the Tai'e Sword? Hmph! Even if I didn't know that, I could also tell as much from the moment I saw you. A body that has been tempered by primordial ki is greatly different from that of an ordinary human."

"I see!" Overjoyed, Zu An quickly made his way over to Chu Chuyan, hoping to infuse his primordial ki into her body to heal her.

However, Mi Li soon interjected, "Infusing the primordial ki into another person's body won't work as well as it did with yours. It'll only allow her to barely regain her mobility and become self-sufficient, but she won't regain her ability to cultivate."

Zu An's face paled. "That's different from what you said!"

"What are you panicking for?" Mi Li glared at him before continuing on, "Not too long ago, I learned another thing that should make it easy for her to fully recover."