

Multiverse 312

Chapter 312: The Female Emperor Who Stands Alone at the Pinnacle

Gentle moonlight cascaded down from the night sky, illuminating the dim forest.

The young man standing on the ground and the celestial maiden descending from the heavens—one looked upward, the other looked downward, their gazes meeting in midair.

Time seemed to freeze at this moment, no longer moving forward.

A breeze blew from the distance, lifting the boy's coat and the celestial maiden's feathered robe.

This fleeting eye contact felt like an eternity, yet also like an instant.

This was a reunion with a familiar presence in a foreign land.

This was a gaze exchanged across a thousand miles.

Amidst such an atmosphere, Luo Hao was the first to speak, breaking the silence.

"Compatriot, why do you not offer a salute?" Luo Hao spoke as though interrogating someone, "Even if you are in a foreign land, upon encountering a senior, you should offer a greeting. That is the way of humanity, and even more so the way of kings."

Her voice remained as celestial as ever, but the aura of reigning over the world that accompanied it completely changed the impression given by this martial king of China.

If one were to say that earlier she was like a fairy descending from the Jade Pool, then now she was the female emperor who stands alone at the pinnacle, brooking no rival.

And this was the true Luo Hao—the alliance leader who ruled over the martial world of China for more than two hundred years, the sect master of the Holy Cult of the Five Mountains.

"...It is indeed somewhat discourteous."

Kaiser finally snapped out of his astonishment at unexpectedly encountering Luo Hao. After closing his eyes for a moment, he reopened them with his usual calm restored.

"To meet a compatriot in a foreign land is something that should bring joy—especially when the one I've met is a revered senior from my homeland."

In this world, Luo Hao was someone who followed the philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi, adhered to the Quanzhen Taoist school, and incorporated Buddhist elements into Daoist culture. She ruled the martial world for over two hundred years, founded the Holy Cult of the Five Mountains, and left behind many martial legacies. Calling her a pioneer and sage was absolutely justified.

Many famous martial arts and esoteric techniques in modern-day China originated from Luo Hao. The entire martial world of China could be said to have inherited her martial philosophy, creating a thriving Eastern martial realm not inferior in the slightest to the birthplace of Western magic in Europe.

To Westerners, this island nation in the Far East might seem like a backwater countryside, but the ancient Eastern nation was viewed as a land of mystery by the global magical community, a place revered and coveted by countless individuals.

If not for Luo Hao, if not for the Holy Cult of the Five Mountains she led protecting China, then the Celestial Empire in this world would likely have suffered the same fate as the one in Kaiser's original world—ravaged by countless Western powers.

But because Luo Hao existed, although not entirely without incident, at least the forces on the mystic side dared not act recklessly.

What a joke—this was the domain of an unparalleled figure on par with Marquis Voban, one of the oldest and most fearsome of the Campiones. What faction would dare stir up trouble there?

Therefore, Kaiser believed that calling Luo Hao a pioneer, a sage, a senior—none of it was an exaggeration.

However...

"Before that, let me first understand the senior's intent," Kaiser said calmly, arms folded. "At the very least, let me first determine whether you come as friend or foe."

"I see." Luo Hao looked at the calm-faced Kaiser and suddenly smiled. "You believe I have come as an enemy?"

There was no denying it—Luo Hao was indeed beautiful. When she suddenly smiled like this, the effect was anything but trivial.

Looking at that smile, Kaiser even thought that had this woman been born in the era of King Zhou of Shang, there probably wouldn't have been a place for Daji.

Having experienced so many fantasy worlds, Kaiser had encountered all kinds of beautiful women—many of whom could be remembered for all of history—but even among them, Luo Hao's beauty was nearly unmatched.

Perhaps Kaiser's personal bias played a part in this?

After all, he was a Chinese through and through. His favor for classically beautiful women from the East was surely greater than that for foreign beauties.

So it was undeniable that Kaiser harbored little hostility toward Luo Hao in his heart.

But that was separate from the matter at hand.

"I've been a Campione for not even a month, yet I've already encountered two fellow Campiones, each of whom I fought," Kaiser said factually. "You're the third I've met, and like the others, you appeared uninvited and out of nowhere."

"Moreover, even in a foreign land, I've heard that the Sect Master Luo Hao has long resided in seclusion in the Lushan Hermitage, rarely stepping into worldly affairs."

"And now, you've suddenly appeared here, right before me—surely I can't just assume you've come to make friends?"

Even if Luo Hao did wish to befriend Kaiser, given her domineering and self-centered nature, it might be possible if Kaiser had visited her in person to pay respects. But for her to take the initiative to seek him out to make friends? That was absolutely impossible.

Sure enough...

"My coming to find you does indeed involve important matters."

Luo Hao, as if weightless, lightly tapped a branch with her toes and gracefully descended before Kaiser.

"Though I am a senior, and it would be reasonable for me to instruct an outstanding junior, you've already proven your capabilities. There is no need for such a gesture."

As she spoke, her gaze toward Kaiser was filled with admiration.

"To have become a king for less than a month and yet to have already slain five gods and repelled Marquis Voban—your performance exceeds even my expectations."

"Though I am a few years older than Ying'er, your potential is clearly far greater than his."

"What a pity I didn't meet you before you became a Campione. Otherwise, I certainly would have taken you as my final disciple, conferred upon you the title of Holy Son of the Holy Cult of the Five Mountains, and passed down my legacy to you."

To be praised to this extent by the domineering Luo Hao—perhaps only Kaiser in the entire world could receive such honor.

"You flatter me."

Kaiser didn't feel particularly honored. After all, he was no longer the person he used to be. He now stood on the same level—or even higher—than Luo Hao. Why should he feel honored just because she valued him?

"What is this important matter that prompts the Sect Master herself to come in person?" Kaiser was indeed curious.

As mentioned earlier, Luo Hao was essentially a recluse—more plainly put, a shut-in. She rarely left home.

Having become a Campione over two hundred years ago, she sometimes stayed in the Lushan Hermitage for years or even decades at a time.

For her to suddenly come meet him now, how could Kaiser not be curious?

To this, Luo Hao did not hide anything.

"I originally intended to have Ying'er give you a little guidance and let you learn of this matter. But your repelling of the Marquis greatly exceeded my expectations and stirred my curiosity, so I decided to come in person."

Though she rarely left her abode, for Luo Hao, traveling far wasn't difficult at all.

Because she was a Taoist nun who had mastered many strange divine arts.

Among them was a teleportation technique known as "Shuukuchi"—a Taoist art for instant movement.

Ordinary people using this technique would need significant preparation time and a solution for the massive energy cost—but Luo Hao was an exception.

She had cultivated her Shuukuchi to the point that she could travel anywhere in the world with a single thought. She really had just decided on a whim to come personally.

Just a few minutes ago, Luo Hao had still been in Lushan. That was proof enough.

Even her disciple didn't know she had come here. If Lu Yinghua discovered that his master had disappeared, it would likely cause quite the uproar.

What's scarier was—even if Lu Yinghua didn't notice his master's absence, once Luo Hao returned, she would still give him a good scolding.

Failing to notice his own master had gone missing was a dereliction of duty—and proof that his training was insufficient... Luo Hao would definitely think this way and then beat Lu Yinghua severely.

All one could say was—being Luo Hao's disciple was Lu Yinghua's blessing...

Given Luo Hao's unreasonable personality, it was a good thing Kaiser hadn't met her before becoming a Campione—let alone become her disciple. Who knows what his life would have turned into?

"Sect Master, please speak freely."

Kaiser awaited Luo Hao's words.

"Do you know of the Western Heaven Palace?"

Though overbearing and unreasonable, Luo Hao never dragged things out, and thus went straight to the point.

"Western Heaven Palace?" Kaiser raised an eyebrow. "You came here because of the Monkey King?"

"Oh?" Luo Hao looked at Kaiser with some surprise. "So you already knew?"

"I've known for a while." Kaiser shrugged. "It's a part of the Nikkō Tōshō-gū—the shrine on Mount Nikkō in Tochigi. That is the Western Heaven Palace."

"It's said to be an important sacred site guarding the Divine Lord—one that the Kuhoutsuka family has safeguarded for generations."

The Kuhoutsuka family he referred to was naturally one of the Four Great Families, alongside the Sayanomiya and Seishuuin families.

Unlike those other two families, which wielded great influence on a national level, the Kuhoutsuka family didn't hold such lofty positions, but within the world of sorcery, they held very high status and extremely important responsibilities.

They had always protected the Western Heaven Palace, worshipping the Divine Lord enshrined there. They acted low-key and adhered to secrecy, concealing most information about the Western Heaven Palace.

Because of this, most people only knew that the place existed, and that a Divine Lord was enshrined there—but why this was the case, and the true nature of that deity, was known to almost no one.

But among the two Campiones present, both Kaiser and Luo Hao knew the secret.

Because the deity enshrined in the Western Heaven Palace was a hero god of their homeland.

And this deity was not being honored—but sealed, used.

"Since you already know of the Divine Lord's existence, why do you turn a blind eye to it?" Luo Hao frowned in displeasure. "A hero of our nation is being imprisoned by the Yamato people. As the king of China, you ought not to ignore it."

At these words, Kaiser laughed.

He laughed heartily.

"I never had any intention of turning a blind eye."