

My System 141

Chapter 141: So You Want to Play Role-Playing with Me, Brother? _2

His muscles, tendons, and bones all exerted force in a special posture.

The various key points of Heavenly Gang Star Fight also infused into his mind.

The next instant.

Cheng Guang swiftly dodged to the side, his stance as firm as if rooted to the ground, securely anchored.

The moves of Heavenly Gang Star Fight flowed like drifting clouds and flowing water!

“Heavenly Gang Star Fight, the third move!”

There were no fixed moves in Heavenly Gang Star Fight, so Cheng Guang simply called it the third move as it was the third one he comprehended.

Cheng Guang clenched his fists and, like pushing a falling meteor, struck fiercely at Qiu Zhiman’s flank as he moved past him.

For some reason, Qiu Zhiman’s body had suddenly become extremely tall.

If this were an ordinary time, Cheng Guang attacking him and disregarding cultivation base, but only considering physique, it would seem like bullying the small and lacking in martial virtue.

But now, it was like shaking a mountain, overestimating his own strength.

However, Qiu Zhiman’s body was now in a state of levitation, attacking Cheng Guang with a fearless stance.

Cheng Guang's punches landed on both sides of Qiu Zhiman's flank, causing him to instantly lose balance and crash heavily to the ground.

He bulldozed through numerous shrubs and meadow grass on his way, his body slamming into the ground head-first, his posture violently striking down.

Bang!!

Qiu Zhiman lay on the ground, a dull sound emanating from his body, followed by several jets of blood, his black robe instantly dyed red.

A head of gray-white hair peeked out from the black hood.

The black hood fell.

The amiable and approachable face of Qiu Zhiman was revealed.

It was as if he was smiling in extreme anger.

The friendly smile on his face grew more intense.

Just for a moment, the bloody flank of Qiu Zhiman appeared, Cheng Guang withdrew his fists frowning...

For a time.

The air seemed to grow a few degrees quieter.

In the Capital city, when the face of the tall, black-robed figure was revealed and became clear on the projected image, for a moment almost no one could breathe.

The current Qiu Zhiman differed greatly from what they had imagined.

Not to mention the differences in his body.

But the differences in his image and temperament.

The former Qiu Zhiman, who appeared like a frail old man, although his cultivation and strength were unparalleled, did not seem very powerful.

But the current Qiu Zhiman.

The muscles throughout his body bulged like steel, and his blood surged through his meridians like a fountain.

It was as if he had entered an unparalleled state.

Qiu Zhiman's eyes, red with intensity, stared at Cheng Guang, with an indelible fear in them.

He realized.

The strength of Cheng Guang was shockingly great!

Had he not been a Ninth-order Martial Emperor, with a body long nourished by Qi, he might have perished by now.

At his current age, weakened and with little Qi left to sustain him, he might indeed be no match for Cheng Guang.

Thinking this, Qiu Zhiman's heart clenched.

Without further hesitation, Qiu Zhiman, his hand covered in fresh blood, without thinking further, slammed his palm down with a force that could topple mountains, aiming to strike Cheng Guang.

At the same time.

From within the blood of Qiu Zhiman, a large number of transparent insects burst out.

The transparent insects left his blood, and even in their almost imperceptible state, they radiated a presence of inexplicable ferocity to Cheng Guang.

“Heh!”

Cheng Guang snorted coldly, his palm suddenly raised vertically, and he pushed forward slowly.

Qi flowed from his palms, a dim and obscure star emerged behind him, ghostly and faint.

The star flickered softly in the darkness, as if it had no beginning and no end.

On this star, it seemed as if the concept of time no longer existed.

A star appeared behind Cheng Guang, and in just a moment another followed...

One after another, a series of stars emerged.

A total of seven!

Cheng Guang waved his hands, the seven stars moving with him as if following a certain trajectory, with a certain rhythm, attacking Qiu Zhiman.

“Heavenly Gang Star Fight, Big Dipper of the Northern Sky!”

Cheng Guang roared, his palms turning to fists, his figure moved like a flash, appearing in seven different positions, carrying a terrifying aura and the sound of breaking air, colliding with Qiu Zhiman!

Boom!!

Fist and palm fought.

The transparent insects in Qiu Zhiman's blood were all annihilated by the Qi, with only a small portion surviving, sticking to the surface of Cheng Guang's skin.

A slight vibration of the Qi was all it took for the transparent insects to perish.

Qiu Zhiman let out a painful groan, repelled over thirty feet, standing unsteadily as blood streamed from the corner of his mouth, his pale face filled with shock.

It was unbelievable that, in just a moment, he had sustained serious injuries!

The Martial Arts used by the Princely Heir were not simple!

The movements that felt so unfamiliar to him...

But!!

They also inexplicably felt familiar!

Remembering the words Cheng Guang recited during the battle.

They were like...

Like...

“Heavenly Gang Star Fight!!”

The unique skill of the Tianji Sect, Heavenly Gang Star Fight!?

The Princely Heir had actually learned Heavenly Gang Star Fight!?

Qiu Zhiman found it unbelievable, the shock in his heart growing even stronger.

Why??

The reason is simple!

Although Heavenly Gang Star Fight was not considered the most powerful or the most difficult Martial Arts, it excelled in both complexity and strength.

If your comprehension was high, you wouldn't need to train every day as other Cultivation Technique practitioners do.

Just pondering daily, you could create a Cultivation Technique unique to yourself.

Each Martial Artist who practiced Heavenly Gang Star Fight often possessed different strengths.

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If one's comprehension is exceptional, the power unleashed by the Heavenly Gang Star Fight could very well surpass even that of the master from the Tianji Sect...

And before him, the Princely Heir who had learned the Heavenly Gang Star Fight was now capable of injuring himself...

Even though the majority of his Qi had been bound at this moment, and much of the Qi in the world around them had been similarly restrained.

But!

He was not so easily defeated.

Yet this Princely Heir had managed to defeat him twice in succession with just a simple gesture!

Once might have been fine, but two consecutive times!

The more Qiu Zhiman pondered on this, the uglier his expression became.

However, the Cheng Guang he was currently facing remained calm and composed, as if he had just done something utterly trivial.

At the same time.

Emperor Zhou and the others, who were watching the projected images, also revealed a thoughtful expression.

Emperor Zhou and Cheng Zhihai knew that Cheng Guang had learned the Heavenly Gang Star Fight from Old Deng.

Therefore, they were not particularly surprised to see Cheng Guang using the Heavenly Gang Star Fight.

They were just a little taken aback, and had not expected Cheng Guang's comprehension to be so high that the martial arts technique of the Heavenly Gang Star Fight that he had comprehended could actually defeat Qiu Zhiman.

In contrast to the composure of Emperor Zhou and Cheng Zihai.

Many officials were no longer able to remain calm.

They had not anticipated that Cheng Guang, who in the past was unwilling to practice and lacked cultivation, could at this time behead the man in black and then slay Qiu Zhiman.

In front of Cheng Guang, Qiu Zhiman seemed to have little power to fight back.

Under everyone's silent gaze.

The projected image changed once again, and many watched quietly.

At this moment, Zhao Jin was just a few cups of tea's time away from breaking the prohibition.

Qiu Zhiman was no longer able to stir up much trouble.

Many people breathed a sigh of relief in their hearts and felt that they might as well take this opportunity to admire the Crown Prince's grace a bit more.

Speaking of which.

This was their first time witnessing Cheng Guang in action.

...

On Crane-Crying Island.

Cheng Guang's robes fluttered, and his movement was smooth as drifting clouds and flowing water as he once again attacked Qiu Zhiman.

He did not give Qiu Zhiman the slightest chance to catch his breath.

And at that moment.

Qiu Zhiman, with half-slumped body, suddenly laughed.

“I truly did not expect the Crown Prince to possess such methods, having already mastered the Heavenly Gang Star Fight. I seem to have underestimated you,” he said.

“However, the Different Treasures of my master serve for more than just enhancing one’s cultivation.”

“Master?”

Cheng Guang, upon hearing Qiu Zhiman’s words, furrowed his brows slightly, not quite understanding what Qiu Zhiman meant.

“Who is your master?” Cheng Guang asked.

Asking so.

Was quite foolish.

Qiu Zhiman was very likely not going to tell him, but there was no harm in asking.

Qiu Zhiman chuckled, “The identity of my master, you will soon find out. After all, this Great Zhou should ultimately belong to my master.”

Qiu Zhiman murmured a sentence.

BOOM BOOM BOOM.

It was as if a sound was emanating from inside Qiu Zhiman's body.

And the vibrations grew more and more intense.

"Ha!—"

This sound started off low and inaudible, but in the blink of an eye, it erupted like thunder, as if the entire space were exhaling this long sigh.

Immediately after, a terrifying aura emerged from deep within Qiu Zhiman's body.

This aura was like a ferocious storm and vast ocean, rapidly rolling out.

Even without the aid of Qi.

That pressure still made Cheng Guang's eyes narrow slightly.

What was that?

Cheng Guang saw Qiu Zhiman's body begin to swell.

Transparent insects appeared, starting to gnaw at his flesh.

The transparent insects swiftly grew large and turned pale white.

While the transparent insects fed on Qiu Zhiman's body, becoming corpulent white worms, they also filled his body.

So with a cycle of decrease and increase, Qiu Zhiman's body not only did not shrink but even bulged out more.

Cheng Guang stepped back several paces.

His robe fluttered as he ran backward, never even glancing at Qiu Zhiman.

With the prohibition about to lift, there was no need for him to forcefully kill Qiu Zhiman at all. Delaying time was enough.

"Think you can escape?!"

Just as Cheng Guang was retreating, Qiu Zhiman suddenly bellowed, finally making his move.

His colossal body surged forward in pursuit.

Cheng Guang grinned, "I never thought of escaping!"

Cheng Guang paused in his steps for a moment, then charged towards Qiu Zhiman.

His Qi roared.

His body, with boundless might, lunged at Qiu Zhiman.

Qiu Zhiman let out a low shout and launched his strike simultaneously, their actions almost concurrent.

It was as if they had agreed to strike at the same moment.

“BOOM!”

Two palms, one large and one small, yet both possessing great strength, collided.

Upon contact, Qiu Zhiman’s body, riddled with worm carcasses, instantly shattered.

Without Qi, Qiu Zhiman seemed unable to unleash significant strength.

His final tactic was also effortlessly broken by Cheng Guang.

Qiu Zhiman’s lips twitched slightly, his face showed little change, but a friendly smile became more pronounced.

While the worm carcasses were indeed powerful, what was most important was the spiritual howling they produced upon death.

Martial Artists who had not cultivated their Primordial Spirits were rarely able to withstand it.

Only Martial Artists who were above Second Rank and at a higher realm might have their Primordial Spirits slightly strengthened by the nourishment of their bodies.

But now.

Cheng Guang was merely at the Second Rank Physique Realm, surely his Primordial Spirit couldn’t withstand it.

Qiu Zhiman watched Cheng Guang’s expression, his lips slowly curling into a faint smile.

Even if he had to die here, as long as he could drag Cheng Guang down with him, it would not be a loss.

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At least for him, he had already made a profit.

The master's plan could be completed one step earlier.

His mood also relaxed quite a bit.

However.

It was also here.

Cheng Guang's expression became strange.

"Old Man, what are you laughing at!"

Cheng Guang grabbed Qiu Zhiman's head with one hand, paying no attention to the spiritual screech emitted by the plump white worms upon their death.

That spiritual screech, before it even approached him, was shattered by the Proving Dao Map in his mind.

It was like a gentle breeze on the face.

Without any discomfort.

This Old Man even attempted to attack his Primordial Spirit.

If he had not been practicing Spiritual Martial Dual Cultivation, he might have really fallen for it!

Cheng Guang's expression remained unchanged.

He pounded his fist down again and again.

Bright red blood mixed with white thick paste flowed out, indistinguishable whether it was Qiu Zhiman's blood or the blood from the insect bodies on him.

At first, Qiu Zhiman's body was trembling, struggling incessantly, unsure whether he wanted to beg for mercy or something else.

Cheng Guang didn't bother with him and kept pounding his fists into Qiu Zhiman's body.

Juices splattered.

Cheng Guang's handsome presence somehow held a sense of intimidation.

Not until Qiu Zhiman was silenced.

Did Cheng Guang slowly rise, then suddenly, as if he had discovered something, he took a stone statue, crafted with insects, from Qiu Zhiman's corpse.

The moment he took the statue.

A piece of information appeared in his mind.

[Statue of Ten Thousand Bugs: Raise the body with bugs, feed the bugs with the body, when you can satiate them, they will also bring you immense benefits, but if you cannot feed them enough, you're doomed.]

Ah, so it turns out these bugs that covered his body were transformed by a Different Treasure.

After Qiu Zhiman died, the insect bodies all over him began to degenerate.

The transparent little bugs that existed just a moment ago, lively and jumping, all died.

At the same time, Cheng Guang, sharp-eyed, also discovered a wooden ring on Qiu Zhiman's finger.

Picking up the wooden ring revealed an average-sized space within it.

It contained many skeletal remains of the Human Race, as if all the flesh on their bodies had been devoured, leaving only the skin.

Cheng Guang's eyes narrowed slightly.

This Qiu Zhiman wasn't up to any good indeed.

Considering the function of the Statue of Ten Thousand Bugs.

Over the years, could it be that Qiu Zhiman had been using these bugs to consume the Human Race, sustaining himself?

No wonder it's said.

Qiu Zhiman, who was rather mediocre in the first half of his life, could grow rapidly in just a few decades later, even reaching the realm of the Martial Emperor at one point.

Unfortunately.

If he hadn't activated the restriction that cut off the Heavenly and Earthly Qi, he probably wouldn't have been so easily killed by me.

Cheng Guang sneered, not minding it, his gaze fixed on the wooden ring, looking for clues about the mastermind behind the scenes.

When he saw a Token, his eyes lit up.

This token seemed to symbolize some kind of identity.

It's just that it was somewhat aged, barely recognizable.

This is...

a Crown Prince Token?

Cheng Guang's eyes widened in surprise.

At the same time, a cold voice rang in Cheng Guang's ear.

[Mission completed.]

[Would you like to claim your reward?]

Cheng Guang, with patience, did not claim the reward right away.

Now was not a good time to claim the reward.

He had stayed too long on Crane-Crying Island this time.

It was time to go back.

Cheng Guang found the Crystal Ball inside Qiu Zhiman's wooden ring.

This Crystal Ball seemed to be a powerful one-time use prohibition.

Once used, it's gone.

The way to destroy the prohibition was simple, just destroy the prohibition entity itself.

Cheng Guang lifted the Crystal Ball high and smashed it down forcefully with a bang.

The Crystal Ball shattered.

At the same time.

In the sky above Crane-Crying Island.

Zhao Jin's face was pale, sweat dripped down his forehead, Divine glossiness flickered in his eyes as he frantically decoded, slowly dismantling the barrier.

With only one quarter-hour left before the three-quarter-hour mark, he still had one-tenth of the restriction left to decode.

He was indeed going to fail the mission given to him by Emperor Zhou.

Emperor Zhou was always decisive.

Even though Zhao Jin had given his all, as long as the job wasn't done, it wasn't done.

No one would listen to his explanation.

Just thinking about it made Zhao Jin break out in a huge sweat, his entire red robe completely drenched.

All he could do now was to silently pray.

Pray that he could break the prohibition sooner.

Right at this moment.

Crack!!

A series of cracks suddenly appeared on the purple barrier.

Those cracks spread quickly!

In an instant!

Bang!

Like dazzling Ice Crystals, it exploded in all directions, turning into specks of light.

Zhao Jin was overjoyed.

Did my prayer work??

Before he could revel in his happiness, or open his mouth to say something.

A series of figures appeared beside him.

There was Emperor Zhou, Empress Wei, many strong figures from the Bureau of the Lamp, Court officials, and nobility from all houses.

Almost every figure, large and small, instantly occupied half of the airspace over Crane-Crying Island.

In the air, they searched quietly for those they cared about.

Without a word.

Zhao Jin, seeing everyone silent and not knowing what had happened inside the barrier, joyfully said, "Your Majesty, I've broken the barrier!"

Zhao Jin was quite proud.

In all of Great Zhou, being able to decode such a restriction in just under three quarter-hours, besides himself, Zhao Jin, there probably wasn't a second person capable of such a feat.

As soon as Zhao Jin finished speaking, he attracted many puzzled gazes.

Zhao Jin noticed that several nobles were looking at him strangely, which almost caused him to have a pale face and flip out his orchid fingers on the spot.

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"I've worked myself to the bone," I've finally broken through the prohibition.

Can't I even say a word, to ask the master for some credit?"

However, Emperor Zhou of the Great Zhou wasn't even sparing him a glance, not even for a moment.

This left Zhao Jin feeling somewhat disappointed, but he had grown accustomed to it.

The way of the eunuch and the Emperor.

It's like the relationship between a loyal dog and a goddess.

If you lick well, you might get something to eat; if you don't, you get nothing.

If the goddess wishes not to be licked and you still insist, you lose even the right to be a loyal dog.

Having been a eunuch for hundreds of years, Zhao Jin knew all too well the difficulty of a eunuch's life.

Not everyone could become a eunuch.

Zhao Jin still had a bit of pride.

He followed Emperor Zhou's gaze toward Crane-Crying Island.

Quickly, he spotted a figure.

Was that the Princely Heir?

Zhao Jin noticed that something seemed off about the Princely Heir, as if he had just been through a great battle?

Zhao Jin hurriedly looked around and, before he could search carefully, noticed a body lying on the ground.

The person was dressed in a black robe.

His face, battered beyond recognition, still vaguely resembled someone... was it Qiu Zhiman...?

Was Qiu Zhiman a member of the black-robed ones?

Zhao Jin had only reached this thought when his expression turned incredibly odd.

He hadn't been watching the projection, unaware of what had happened on Crane-Crying Island.

Seeing Qiu Zhiman as a member of the black-robed ones, possibly even the leader, his face momentarily stiffened in shock.

He was utterly stunned.

At this time, Emperor Zhou also spoke.

"Let's go, take a look below."

Emperor Zhou led the ministers, while Empress Wei of the Great Wei didn't follow Emperor Zhou's steps but went instead to find the students from her own Great Wei's Martial Academy.

Emperor Zhou appeared before Cheng Guang.

Cheng Guang vaguely remembered that the last time he met Emperor Zhou was, indeed, the last time.

That time, at the Lakeside of Daming... No, it was by an unknown lakeside where they played a game.

It was exhilarating.

Although he was a substitute then, and still a substitute now.

But not just any substitute—evolved to a substitute max plus pro enhanced version.

Cheng Guang was confident that Emperor Zhou couldn't possibly recognize him as a fake.

Thus, he was very relaxed.

First, he greeted Emperor Zhou respectfully and obediently called out,

“Uncle.”

Emperor Zhou's majestic and icy countenance remained unchanged, still sizing up Cheng Guang as if looking at a stranger.

But Cheng Guang knew that Emperor Zhou just felt the “change” in “himself” was too great, so much that he needed a moment to adapt.

His identity hadn't been exposed at all.

After greeting Emperor Zhou, Cheng Guang was about to greet Cheng Zihai.

But Cheng Zihai couldn't hold back any longer, stepping forward immediately. His usually impartial, stony demeanor softened, his tiger's eyes quivering, tears gleaming in his eyes.

His nose felt sour.

He had truly feared that Cheng Guang had just died.

In his excitement, he wanted to embrace Cheng Guang.

But he felt that Cheng Guang was already grown up.

Taller, even taller than himself.

And in front of so many people.

Cheng Zihai hesitated for a moment, then with a tearful smile, said, "You rascal, if you had such skills, why didn't you use them earlier and make your dad worry so much."

Cheng Guang laughed and took the initiative to hug Cheng Zihai.

Cheng Zihai's body stiffened a little.

His old face turned bright red.

He felt extremely embarrassed by his son's affection.

But at the same time, he was very moved.

Ever since Guanger's body was injured, Cheng Zihai had been either busy with the work of the Bureau of the Lamp or traveling afar to find Spiritual Medicine to treat Guanger's injuries.

They had never before...

Displayed such closeness.

For a moment, Cheng Zihai felt that his child had truly grown up, and he was once again moved to tears.

In public, the unforgiving Cheng Zhihai, who had purged many noble families, in front of Cheng Guang became a sensitive and emotional old dad.

Motionless, he would become sentimental and cry.

Even more like Lin Daiyu than Lin Daiyu herself.

Perhaps Cheng Zhihai should change his name to Lin Zhihai...

That was what Cheng Guang thought inwardly.

But, truth be told, the name Lin Zhihai did sound quite pleasant.

As Cheng Guang and Cheng Zhihai were chatting, other officials dispersed to look for their own children.

Cheng Zhihai immediately wanted to take Cheng Guang home.

Cheng Guang seemed to remember something, handing over the Statue of Ten Thousand Bugs and Qiu Zhiman's Storage Wooden Ring he had acquired to Cheng Zhihai.

"Dad, this is from that Qiu Zhiman. I don't know if there's anything valuable inside, take a look for yourself."

Cheng Zhihai took it over and just glanced at it, his expression changed.

Before he could say anything, Cheng Guang spoke again.

"Dad, Mom doesn't know about what happened here, does she?"

As soon as Cheng Zhihai heard Cheng Guang's words, his expression lightened into a smile.

How could Yuemei possibly not know?

Seeing such an expression on his face, he immediately wished to plead with Cheng Guang to speak on his behalf when they got home. He knew that if he returned home just like this, he would definitely be scolded to death by Yuemei, the kind he couldn't refute.

—The pain of being henpecked.

Cheng Guang helplessly gave Cheng Zihai a look that said he was powerless to help.

Cheng Zihai sighed and, after entrusting the treasures to Emperor Zhou, took Cheng Guang back to Duke Zhen's Mansion in the Capital city.

After bringing Cheng Guang to Duke Zhen's Mansion, Cheng Zihai ultimately did not dare to step inside directly.

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He knew.

Yuemei was so worried about Guanger that she fainted on the spot.

If he went over now, Yuemei would definitely scold him.

If she scolded him, her temper would flare, and if her temper flared, her health would not improve.

Thus, Cheng Zihai decided to hide outside for a while for the sake of his wife's health.

“Guanger, you go back first and comfort your mother. Say some good words for your father!”

Cheng Zhihai wanted to say more but ended up just saying this much, then patted Cheng Guang's shoulder before going to see Emperor Zhou.

The object just discovered on Qiu Zhiman was extraordinary.

Forget the Statue of Ten Thousand Bugs.

Different Treasures come in many forms, including one that could devour the Human Race and enhance cultivation—a fact not unheard of.

However, such Different Treasures were mostly mysterious, also called Mysterious Treasures, or simply, Weird Treasures.

Once discovered, they were to be destroyed.

If not destroyed, they could lead to endless troubles.

That was the law in Great Zhou—anyone who found such Different Treasures had to turn them over without exception.

Still, there were those who did not comply.

And the Bureau of the Lamp of Great Zhou could not monitor everything, so some would inevitably slip through the cracks.

The escape of trivial beings was of no consequence.

But Qiu Zhiman, the head of the Martial Academy of Great Zhou, a colleague who'd worked with Cheng Zhihai for years, had secretly harbored such Mysterious Treasures!

And Cheng Zhihai hadn't noticed it all this time.

Whether to say that Qiu Zhiman hid it too well, or to criticize the Bureau of the Lamp for incompetence, Cheng Zihai could not rightly say.

Feeling conflicted, he hurried toward the Imperial Palace.

...

After Cheng Zihai set off for the Imperial Palace.

Standing in front of his home, Cheng Guang felt hesitant, almost fearful as he drew near his homeland.

Standing outside the residence, he took a deep breath and stepped in.

First, he went to Wu Yuemei's courtyard.

Upon entering the courtyard, he saw Mrs. Xue coming out of a room with a sorrowful expression, not yet noticing Cheng Guang's return.

“Mrs. Xue.”

Cheng Guang called out.

Hearing his voice, Mrs. Xue started, followed by a surge of joy.

She quickly walked up to Cheng Guang, her beautiful eyes brimming with tears.

“The Princely Heir is back.”

She murmured and then pulled Cheng Guang towards the room.

All the while, she called out loudly into the room:

“Madam, Madam, the Princely Heir is back!”

As her voice fell, a commotion came from inside the room.

The door was pushed open.

Cheng Guang looked inside.

Wu Yuemei’s complexion, compared to before, had deteriorated too much. Overwrought with worry and her own frail health, dark circles had formed around her beautiful eyes.

For Wu Yuemei, who always cared about her appearance, this was an unbearable sight.

But now, she had no mind to care.

She propped herself up on the bed, sitting up. When she saw Cheng Guang entering the room, her eyes reddened again.

She beckoned.

“Guanger, come to mother.”

Cheng Guang’s eyes softened, and he obediently went forward.

Wu Yuemei pinched Cheng Guang’s hand, her emotions a mix of wanting to cry and wanting to laugh, her mouth corners at one moment tilting upward, then curving downward.

“You child, really, really don’t make things easy for me!”

A thousand words.

In the end, only this sentence remained on her lips.

Wu Yuemei tapped Cheng Guang’s forehead lightly.

Cheng Guang laughed, “Mom, look, I’m fine.”

Cheng Guang was thus led by the hand by Wu Yuemei, as she inquired about his experiences on Crane-Crying Island.

When she learned that Cheng Guang had knocked out a man in a black robe with one punch and a child with one kick, she couldn’t help but laugh joyously.

“Is that so? My Guanger is so capable.”

Cheng Guang coughed, “It’s alright, it’s alright. Mom, you must keep it low key, I can become even more capable in the future.”

Cheng Guang relied on his girlfriend-trained skills from his previous life to pacify Wu Yuemei successfully, leaving her in good spirits.

In the end,

Cheng Guang didn’t resist taking a jab at Cheng Zhihai.

"Dad just came back, but he was afraid of being scolded by you, Mom, so he left again. You should probably not criticize him when he returns. I'm just a little tired with some minor injuries, nothing else."

Wu Yuemei's expression stiffened slightly, her soft fingers tightening their grip under the covers.

Stepping out of the room,

Cheng Guang sighed, "Dad, I've said quite a few good words for you, but whether or not you'll get beaten later is out of my control."

Cheng Guang returned to his own courtyard step by leisurely step.

Looking into the yard, he saw a delicate and soft silhouette standing under the moonlight, seemingly chilled to the bone, who, despite possessing the powers of the Fourth-grade Divine Realm, appeared inexplicably frail.

Under the embellishment of moonlight, that silhouette seemed like a fairy out of a painting, ethereal and wistful.

"The Princely Heir, who knows how he is now."

"It is said that the matters there have been resolved, and it is rumored to be without incident, but I do not know if he is injured."

"The Princely Heir is right to accompany his mother, after all, I am only a maiden, not a properly wedded wife, how could I expect to see him first thing."

Qing Luan fiddled with the flower petals in her hands, one by one.

"Although if the Princely Heir could come to see me first, I would be very happy, I would still send him to see his mother. But he didn't come."

“Ha, after all, men.”

“What is gained too easily is never treasured.”

“No, that’s not right, how could I speak of the Princely Heir in such a way, I wasn’t so easily won by him either.”

Qing Luan patted her cheeks under the moonlight, which appeared even whiter and smoother, her eyes still brimming with worry and sorrow.

Standing behind Qing Luan, Cheng Guang had only listened to her murmuring for a short while, and dismissed the idea of reminding her of his presence in the face of her sentimental musings.

Now was Qing Luan’s emo time.

She needed a jolt of excitement.

Cheng Guang quietly walked up behind Qing Luan and embraced her abruptly.

Qing Luan started, her beautiful eyes showing panic at first, but soon, from the familiar warmth behind her, she recognized who it was.

“Hehehe, my lady, staying up late without sleeping, could it be you’re waiting for me to come and ravish you?”

Qing Luan’s cheeks turned pink, feeling somewhat like she was caught writing secret essays by a teacher and then having them read out in front of the whole class.

Bowing her head, as if wishing to bury her face in her chest.

“Do, do as you will.”

Cheng Guang's eyes brightened, not expecting the girl to play along so readily.

So you're up for some role-playing with your brother, huh?

Good, good, good.

Cheng Guang swept Qing Luan into his arms and headed for the bedroom.

At the very moment he kicked the door shut with his heel,

Cheng Guang felt as if he had forgotten something.

—"The Tale of the Abandoned Fox"

Chapter 146: Nine Dragons Stealing Sky!

The martial arts tournament between Great Wei and Great Zhou ended abruptly.

It concluded without goodwill.

Black-clad individuals led by Qiu Zhiman disrupted the original course of events.

Great Zhou was shaken to its core by this incident.

No one had expected Qiu Zhiman, a high-ranking official of the Martial Academy, to betray Great Zhou, and to stab both Great Zhou and Great Wei in the back during the much-anticipated tournament.

He even attempted to slaughter all the students, officials, and martial artists from Great Zhou and Great Wei who were participating in the tournament.

Even more shocking to the world,

Besides Qiu Zhiman's betrayal of Great Zhou,

There was another person.

It was the Town-Nation Duke's Heir, Cheng Guang!

Cheng Guang's performance during the martial arts tournament spread far and wide through oral and written accounts from various circles within the Capital city.

As word of his deeds spread, everywhere was shocked.

Many high-ranking officials couldn't help but gasp in astonishment.

The Town-Nation Duke's Heir seldom made a move, and there had been no talk of his cultivation level; they had assumed that Duke Zhen's Mansion had no worthy successor. Yet unexpectedly, at this juncture, Cheng Guang suddenly rose to prominence.

Many secretly felt a surge of alarm.

Duke Zhen's Mansion, already immensely powerful, now boasted an heir, Cheng Guang, with astonishing talent, whose performance in the tournament was dazzling.

Many warriors pledged even stronger loyalty to Duke Zhen's Mansion.

If it came to pass that...

Apart from their royal blood, the Great Zhou Imperial Family had nothing on Duke Zhen's Mansion.

If Duke Zhen's power began to overwhelm the Imperial Family, should he declare his betrayal and establish his own nation, that would truly be a simple matter.

To abduct a few princesses of royal blood could even solve issues of lineage.

Thus, within Great Zhou, tensions rose and turmoil ensued.

After the incident subsided, Empress Wei of Great Wei did not stay long in Great Zhou.

She never intended to stay; she had planned to leave after watching the opening ceremony but hadn't expected an accident to occur during the tournament.

That forced her to remain there for a while.

Now, she also learned of the death of Lin Qingye. The death of the head of Great Wei's Martial Academy on Great Zhou territory, a martial artist of the Ninth-order Martial Emperor Realm, was a devastating loss for Great Wei—it was extremely difficult to cultivate such a talent!

Now that the incident was resolved, and the news had traveled back to Great Wei, she didn't know what kind of turmoil it would cause.

Empress Wei, with a stern face, immediately returned to her country.

The aftermath of this event still required further communication with Emperor Zhou.

For a time, the winds did not cease, and the waves did not calm.

All discussions revolved around Cheng Guang, around Duke Zhen's Mansion, and around the Bureau of the Lamp's negligence in its duties, having failed to detect Qiu Zhiman's covert actions...

Such discussions spread like waves, beginning in the Capital city and sweeping across the land.

...

Late at night, at the hour of the Dog.

The night unfurled like a deep, profound scroll, quietly enveloping everything in its shadow.

The stars twinkled like diamonds against the dark curtain of the sky, emitting a faint and mysterious glow, while the Milky Way stretched across the heavens like a ribbon, adding depth and vastness to the night.

Great Zhou Imperial Palace, Great Zhou Imperial Palace, Taihe Hall.

In the depths of the palace, Taihe Hall was gently shrouded in the tranquil moonlight, appearing dignified and mysterious.

Emperor Zhou stood quietly beneath the great hall, holding a scroll in his hands, his icy countenance bearing majesty, watching the scroll without a trace of a smile.

Tap, tap, tap.

The sound of footsteps disturbed the tranquility of the hall.

Emperor Zhou turned to look behind him and saw Cheng Zihai.

His authoritative expression remained unchanged as he slowly lowered the scroll, gazing at Cheng Zihai.

Cheng Zihai approached Emperor Zhou and with due respect bowed his head.

“Your Majesty, this matter occurred because the Bureau of the Lamp failed to detect Qiu Zhiman’s actions beforehand.”

Cheng Zihai admitted the Bureau’s oversight without delay.

He offered no excuses for its failure.

In Cheng Zihai’s view, a failure was a failure, and there was no need for justifications.

Emperor Zhou responded with a soft “Hm,” examining Cheng Zihai for a long while without speaking.

The air seemed to freeze for a moment as the flame of the Ever-bright Lamp rose slowly, scattering a faint scent.

Under Emperor Zhou’s gaze, Cheng Zihai felt the pressure bearing down on him.

Although they were contemporaries, and his wife was Emperor Zhou’s sister,

That was their private relationship.

At this moment, Emperor Zhou was interacting with him on the basis of a sovereign and subject.

The sovereign was sovereign, and the subject was subject.

On this matter, Cheng Zihai dared not overstep.

Emperor Zhou watched Cheng Zihai for a while longer before slowly picking up the scroll again and continuing to read.

“Have you found anything on Qiu Zhiman?”

Cheng Zihai nodded, took the wooden ring that Cheng Guang had given him from his sleeve, and presented it to Emperor Zhou.

Emperor Zhou glanced at it and his awe-inspiring gaze sharpened as a terrifying aura emanated from him, sweeping around like a tempest.

Standing at the center of the storm, Cheng Zihai turned slightly pale, but he remained upright, respectfully standing in the hall.

The fearsome aura appeared just for a moment before Emperor Zhou retracted it back into himself, and the atmosphere relaxed, reverting to its former ease.

However, Emperor Zhou’s expression remained grim,

Even bordering on unsightly.

The cause of Emperor Zhou’s displeasure was not only the numerous human bones contained within the wooden ring but also a token.

Chapter 147: Nine Dragons Stealing Sky! 2

The Crown Prince’s order...

This appearance of the Crown Prince’s order, Emperor Zhou of Great Zhou knew it all too well.

It was the order of the previous dynasty’s Crown Prince.

The crown prince, the supreme martial prince.

After the crown prince was deposed by Empress Dowager Li back in the day, he still harbored thoughts of making a comeback. He was repeatedly suppressed by the thunderous methods of Emperor Zhou, who even once wanted to eradicate the crown prince completely.

However, it seemed the crown prince might have sensed something because just as Emperor Zhou was about to take action, the crown prince suddenly vanished.

This caused a moment of confusion for Emperor Zhou, wondering if someone was tipping off the prince behind his back.

He even ordered the Bureau of the Lamp to conduct a thorough investigation.

Yet, nothing turned up.

Though Emperor Zhou was perplexed, considering the crown prince no longer had any chance to turn the tables and still bearing a sliver of kinship, he did not insist on a strict watch and let him off the hook.

And now...

Seeing the Crown Prince's order in Qiu Zhiman's hands, Emperor Zhou suddenly connected many dots.

There were still people in the court clinging to the memory of the crown prince.

There were still vassals of the crown prince within the court.

Qiu Zhiman himself was one of the crown prince's men, who had been lurking by his side for many years, even once controlling the extremely important Martial Academy of Great Zhou.

Such a traitor, hidden right at the heart of Great Zhou's power, silent and unnoticed for years, chose this moment to strike him in the back.

Had it not been for Cheng Guang's luck at this time, he might very well have been killed by Qiu Zhiman.

And it's likely all the students from Great Wei and Great Zhou participating in the martial arts examination would also have been killed by Qiu Zhiman.

Should Cheng Guang have perished, the consequences would have been unimaginable.

If all the students from Great Wei and Great Zhou participating in the martial arts examination died, Great Zhou would go mad, Great Wei would go mad, the officials would go mad, and the whole world would be thrown into turmoil.

It was a venomous plot.

A scheme designed to make Great Zhou and Great Wei turn against each other, and at the same time, cause turmoil in the court of Great Zhou and unrest throughout the realm.

That crown prince...

Had not given up.

Emperor Zhou came to this conclusion, his expression darkening, as he silently returned to his Dragon Chair and flipped through the book in his hands.

At that moment, Zhao Jin timely presented a cup of clear tea to Emperor Zhou.

“Your Majesty.”

Emperor Zhou did not take the tea but instead fixed his gaze on Cheng Zhihai.

“Can his whereabouts be discovered?”

Cheng Zihai, with his sword-like brows and cold eyes standing tall, promptly responded, "Your Majesty, given some time, I can find him!"

"How long?" Emperor Zhou's face was expressionless.

Cheng Zihai hesitated for a moment before replying, "One month."

Emperor Zhou nodded slightly, his face revealing not a hint of change, still as calm as water.

He put down the book in his hand, took the tea from Zhao Jin, gently sipped it, and then said to Cheng Zihai:

"One month's time."

"It's about a month until the royal family's sacrificial ceremony. If it's not resolved before the ceremony, the Bureau of the Lamp will be handed over to Zhao Jin."

As he spoke, his voice trailed off.

Cheng Zihai's face showed a hint of shock, his usually composed features betraying a trace of astonishment.

The Bureau of the Lamp was forged by his own hands, and he had always been loyal to Emperor Zhou, clearing many obstacles for him.

Emperor Zhou had always been very supportive of his work, granting him tremendous powers.

Even when the court officials attacked him in unison, Emperor Zhou had not uttered a single word of reproach.

Yet now, he wanted to strip away the Bureau of the Lamp from him over such a trivial matter.

Yes, it was but a minor issue.

The Bureau of the Lamp was not infallible; it made mistakes.

Cheng Zihai allowed his Bureau to err because only by recognizing mistakes could one improve and perform better.

But Emperor Zhou was about to strip away his powers because of these issues, challenging even Cheng Zihai's resilience, which had always been unshakeable like Mount Tai.

But he did not say more and silently accepted it.

Zhao Jin, standing to the side, clearly did not expect Emperor Zhou to say such words. If Cheng Zihai failed to complete the task set by Emperor Zhou and did not resolve the issue of the crown prince within a month, his Bureau of the Lamp would be stripped, and those immense privileges would fall to Zhao Jin.

At the thought, Zhao Jin felt a surge of elation.

The corners of his mouth could hardly be contained, crazily wanting to curl upwards.

Because, as far as he was concerned, the crown prince was so adept at hiding, and having evaded discovery by the Bureau for so many years,

How could Cheng Zihai possibly track him down in this short period of less than a month.

It was almost impossible.

Cheng Zihai noticed Zhao Jin's expression but said nothing.

Emperor Zhou then comforted Cheng Zihai, “Lately, the court officials have much to say about the Bureau of the Lamp, and about you, especially following the events that arose from the martial exam between Great Zhou and Great Wei.”

“I find it difficult to alleviate this discord. If you find the crown prince, it would give me a reason to suppress their complaints. If not, Zihai, you might as well rest for a while, spend time with Yuemei.”

“As for changes in official positions, we’ll discuss it after the royal family’s sacrificial ceremony.”

As Emperor Zhou spoke, Cheng Zihai’s face remained unchanged, and he respectfully acknowledged the words.

Emperor Zhou’s eyes scrutinized Cheng Zihai and suddenly felt a wisp of disinterest, and he waved his hand.

“You may leave.”

Upon hearing the command, Cheng Zihai took his leave.

Emperor Zhou watched Cheng Zihai depart, his expression suddenly showing signs of weariness as he rubbed his eyebrows.

Chapter 148: Nine Dragons Stealing Sky! 3

It made the distance between him and Cheng Zihai seem to have widened again.

The power of Duke Zhen’s Mansion was too great.

Cheng Zihai’s duty to supervise the officials had not been carried out well.

He had just uttered those words, reasonable, yet not reasonable...

Great Zhou's Emperor slowly rubbed his temples, sinking into contemplation.

...

After leaving the Imperial Palace, the once composed look on Cheng Zhihai's face instantly collapsed.

Walking on the road home, his mood wasn't high and he felt somewhat upset.

The Bureau of the Lamp was crafted by his own hands. Although Great Zhou's Emperor had given him the power, he provided neither the resources nor the manpower.

It was completely assembled by him step by step.

The constables of the Bureau of the Lamp were almost indistinguishable from his brothers.

If he left, hardly anyone in the higher echelons of the Bureau would be able to maintain control.

But Zhao Jin could.

Zhao Jin, an old fellow who had lived for hundreds of years, appeared quite young, but his tactics and depth of character were not to be underestimated.

If Zhao Jin were to take control of the Bureau, even if not as firm as Cheng Zhihai's own grip, the difference would be negligible.

Could it be that His Majesty no longer wanted him to be in charge of the Bureau?

Cheng Zhihai silently sighed. Whether a subject stays or goes is determined by a single decree of Great Zhou's Emperor.

Even with Cheng Zihai's high status, he had little room to resist, much less the ability to refute.

The Duke of the State might be able to confront Great Zhou's Emperor, but not him.

He had originally planned to hand over the Bureau to Guanger in the future, but he hadn't expected that, just after overcoming some twists and turns, and finally getting Cheng Guang into the Bureau, such an incident would occur.

Cheng Zihai was truly distressed.

He decided to go home and seek comfort from his wife, to uplift his spirit and quickly locate the crown prince.

As for the crown prince's current whereabouts, Cheng Zihai had no clue whatsoever.

The crown prince had suddenly disappeared years ago, as if he had gone missing, or as if he had died, without a trace for nearly decades.

And now he had suddenly reappeared.

Although it was not the crown prince himself who emerged, Qiu Zhiman was a Ninth-order Martial Emperor Realm powerhouse with extremely high cultivation, a top-tier force not to be ignored by the crown prince.

If it hadn't been for Guanger being there to defeat Qiu Zhiman, even if his plan couldn't have been completely successful, at least half of it might have been realized.

All this, to say there was no manipulation by the crown prince behind it, Cheng Zihai would never believe even if he were beaten to death.

Thinking back, some mysterious people had collaborated with Bai Shuxuan to attempt an assassination on his Guanger but were stopped by him. These two groups might be the same.

They were all underlings of the crown prince.

It seemed that to find the crown prince, he might have to start with those black-robed people.

Some of those black-robed people were still alive.

As Cheng Zhihai pondered, he slowly returned to Duke Zhen's Mansion and went straight to Wu Yuemei's room.

No sooner had he entered Wu Yuemei's room than a wave of disorderly sounds ensued.

Cheng Zhihai seemed to have been hit, followed by an outcry of pain.

"My lady, stop hitting me, stop it, the incident with Guanger was a complete accident."

"Didn't I also not expect such a thing to happen?"

"Alright, alright, next time I'll be completely prepared, to prevent these accidents from happening again!"

Under Cheng Zhihai's soothing voice, the commotion inside the room gradually subsided.

The atmosphere began to shift in a strange direction.

...

In Duke Zhen's Mansion, within the Million Specie Garden.

The moon hung gently in the sky, its hazy light draping the night in a sheer veil. A gentle breeze wafted past, bringing with it the fragrance of distant flowers and the intoxicating shimmer of the lake's surface.

On the bed canopy.

Cheng Guang lay on the bed canopy, holding in his arms Qing Luan, whose black hair was disheveled, her delicate face showing signs of fatigue, her skin as white as snow, as flawless as jade, as tender as coagulated fat, crystal clear.

Midnight.

He suddenly opened his eyes, carefully got up, left the bed, and walked out into the courtyard.

“Claim the reward.”

Cheng Guang sat in the pavilion and silently spoke in his mind.

[Mission Reward: Nine Dragons Stealing Sky (Prohibition)]

[Mission Reward: Heavenly Silk Clothing.]

[Distributing...]

A series of cold, unfeeling voices rang out in his mind.

Suddenly.

Streaks of golden light manifested before him, flowing out like a river from the void, carrying a vague aura, slowly coalescing.

They gradually took the form of two objects.

One was a dragon-shaped piece of wood, and the other was a long garment as white as jade.

As Cheng Guang took the two objects from the void into his hands, at the moment his fingertips touched the items, they became completely solid and slowly fell into his palms.

As Cheng Guang touched the two mission rewards, the information about them emerged in his mind.

[Nine Dragons Stealing Sky (one-time Prohibition): Can erase all changes within a prohibition, cage heaven and earth, isolate all things, and seize a creature's Bloodline Divine Powers within the prohibition for one's own use.]

[Heavenly Silk Clothing: An Earth Grade Treasure, extremely durable, can self-repair minor damages, has a protective effect, warm in winter and cool in summer, can transform into myriad forms, and become any style of robe you wish in this world.]

Cheng Guang examined the Nine Dragons Stealing Sky and Heavenly Silk Clothing, glanced over the system's introduction, and a smile slowly spread across his lips.

Chapter 149: Nine Dragons Stealing Sky! 4

The Heavenly Silk Clothing's effects were pretty good; it could transform into any clothing style one desired. Another point was its incredible toughness, which meant it probably had some defensive abilities and could protect the body...

Cheng Guang dropped a bead of fresh blood onto the Heavenly Silk Clothing, and the blood instantly merged with it, soon establishing a connection with his thoughts.

He put on the Heavenly Silk Clothing.

With just a thought, the Heavenly Silk Clothing could transform into any appearance he desired.

Even if he wanted the Heavenly Silk Clothing to become the attire of Straw Hat boy or of a member of the ninja group Akatsuki, there were no issues whatsoever.

If this Heavenly Silk Clothing had existed in his previous life, it would have unquestionably been a magical artifact that every girl dreamed of.

The ability to change its appearance was fine, but what Cheng Guang was more concerned about was the Heavenly Silk Clothing's body protection function.

The moment he put on the Heavenly Silk Clothing, Cheng Guang felt as if he were enveloped by mysterious forces around him.

At the same time, it was constantly drawing Qi from the heavens and the earth, pouring it into his body, enhancing both his Primordial Spirit and physical body.

The amount of Heavenly and Earthly Qi that the Heavenly Silk Clothing drew from heaven and earth wasn't much, but its advantage lay in its persistence and stability. As long as he wore the Heavenly Silk Clothing, it was as if he were cultivating.

Wasn't this far superior to something like the Statue of Ten Thousand Bugs?

If the Heavenly Silk Clothing were to appear outside, it would likely cause another bloody storm.

Strengthening the body was secondary; the key was that the Heavenly Silk Clothing could enhance the Primordial Spirit.

Everyone in the world knew that only the World Royal Family who practiced Spirit Dao could strengthen their Primordial Spirit.

For the numerous Martial Artists who practiced Martial Cultivation, the Primordial Spirit was a taboo that they could not touch.

Only when their cultivation reached higher levels and their physical body could nourish the Primordial Spirit, would the Primordial Spirit become much stronger. Otherwise, the Primordial Spirit of a Martial Artist was an incredibly fragile being.

That was also why, at that time, Qiu Zhiman believed that attacking Cheng Guang with a Soul Attack was almost a sure-win strategy.

But he had miscalculated.

Cheng Guang was not a solo Martial Artist; if that were the case, Qiu Zhiman might have indeed had a chance to succeed.

Moreover, Cheng Guang also knew that if he had possessed the Heavenly Silk Clothing at that time, even if he had never cultivated Spirit Dao and his Primordial Spirit had not been enhanced, he would have faced no danger from Qiu Zhiman.

No matter how powerful Qiu Zhiman's Soul Attack became, it would be futile.

It likely wouldn't even get close to Cheng Guang before being blocked by the mysterious forces surrounding the Heavenly Silk Clothing.

This Heavenly Silk Clothing...

It's a divine artifact!!

Cheng Guang's heart surged with joy as he carefully stored away the Heavenly Silk Clothing, his gaze then falling on the Nine Dragons Stealing Sky.

The Nine Dragons Stealing Sky could turn heaven and earth into a cage and even randomly extract the Bloodline Divine Powers from someone within its constraints?

Although it was only a one-time use, that was still incredibly powerful.

It was common knowledge that Bloodline Divine Powers were the strongest among the Divine Power forces.

They were exceedingly precious and rare.

When Bai Shuxuan used her Bloodline Divine Power, Charm Eyes, people weaker than her in cultivation had almost no ability to resist; they would become enslaved and controlled by her.

This demonstrated how domineering Bloodline Divine Powers could be.

With that said,

Bai Shuxuan's Bloodline Divine Power was just an incomplete version.

It couldn't hold a candle to the genuine Bloodline Divine Powers that Cheng Guang possessed.

Reflecting on this, Cheng Guang suddenly thought of something, stroking his chin and exclaiming in amazement, "That Princely Heir couldn't have awakened his own Bloodline Divine Powers, and then mysteriously recovered his memory, could he?"

The awakening of Bloodline Divine Powers didn't have a fixed method.

Only if one's ancestors cultivated beyond the level of Sky-Man, there was a possibility that they could condense their Divine Power into the bloodline, allowing their descendants to awaken their own Bloodline Divine Powers.

Although, at that time, the true Princely Heir's bloodline had already been extracted from his body.

But still,

blood remained.

It was just that the concentration of royal blood within the bloodline had become extremely low.

But it was still there.

Similarly, Cheng Guang really did not know whose bloodline the true Princely Heir within carried.

This Princely Heir had begun various blood extractions and transfusions from a young age, and the bloodlines within his body were utterly mixed.

If forced to say which family's bloodline he carried, Cheng Guang could not answer.

In such case, if the true Princely Heir were able to awaken a Bloodline Divine Power, it would truly be more difficult than ascending to the heavens.

But it's always better to fear the possibility, however slim.

Using the Nine Dragons Stealing Sky, at the very least, he could imprison heaven and earth and isolate the phenomenon that killed the real Princely Heir.

Whether or not that real Princely Heir within had any bloodline left was no longer important.

Whether it was there or not,

using the Nine Dragons Stealing Sky on that real Princely Heir was not a loss.

Cheng Guang resolutely decided that he would go to White Deer Manor first thing in the morning and finish off that real Princely Heir.

Right at this moment, yet another system voice unexpectedly echoed in his mind.

[In the thirty-fourth year of the Zhensheng era, on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month, twenty-one days after reaching the Heavenly Human Realm, you found the mastermind behind the black-robed person who disrupted the Great Zhou and Great Wei martial competition years ago, giving them a profound lesson.]

[You truly did not expect that the mastermind behind the black-robed people would be the Crown Prince from those years, the crown prince everyone misses. Wasn't he already dead? How could he, back then, command the likes of Qiu Zhiman?]

[You still remember that Qiu Zhiman had already been a powerhouse in the Ninth-order Martial Emperor Realm, yet he remained fiercely loyal to the crown prince everyone misses. Could it be that the crown prince didn't die back then?]

[A bad premonition suddenly strikes your heart as you recall joining the Bureau of the Lamp shortly after, and encountering an incident outside the Capital city's canal basin, where, inexplicably, a space-time rupture appeared, with a large number of the Devil Clan coming and going through it, and with some people's coordination, infiltrated the Capital city.]

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[Yet unbeknownst to anyone, the Devil Clan had replaced most of the court officials and attended the royal ritual in their stead.]

[The moment the royal ritual commenced, the demons grew restless, plotting to eliminate all the court officials and royal family members present.]

[At that time, demons danced chaotically; the Devil Emperor appeared out of thin air, attempting to eradicate the core strength of the Great Zhou Dynasty during the royal ritual.]

[At that moment, you only thought it was an attack by the Devil Clan, a plot to seize the Human Race's resources, but now, upon reflection, you realize something was amiss.]

[Firstly, the Border Area of the Four Directions Mortal World would have been sealed off, and without precise coordinates, it would have been impossible for the Devil Emperor to shatter the Void and precisely appear in the Capital city.]

[Secondly, the group of demons that appeared beneath the canal basin must have been unable to replace most of the officials and attend the royal celebration right under the Emperor Zhou's nose, not to mention without the Bureau of the Lamp noticing, without someone aiding them.]

[How did they deceive Emperor Zhou?]

[Back then, you didn't think much of it, but now it seems possible that the officials the demons replaced were already underlings of the crown prince; after their consumption by the demons, they took on their forms. With the aid of Different Treasures, even Emperor Zhou was kept in the dark.]

[Thinking of this scene makes your scalp tingle; the crown prince was ruthless indeed, willing to sacrifice his loyal officials to lure out the Devil Clan.]

[And the crown prince succeeded in his goal; from then on, the Bureau of the Lamp could no longer gain Emperor Zhou's trust. The Bureau you now control is but an empty shell, a mere shadow of its former glory under Cheng Zhihai's leadership, no longer the beacon for the Human Race it once was.]

[Meanwhile, Emperor Zhou, during the great battle with the Devil Emperor, was ambushed and seriously injured, throwing the Great Zhou court into chaos. The Duke of the State even had to return to the Capital city to suppress the turmoil.]

[The Martial World's sects also began to fall into disorder from that time on, getting worse each day. The territory of the Great Zhou Dynasty shrunk, now less than one percent of its size during its heyday.]

[Now, under Wu Ling's leadership, Great Zhou has regained some of its Qi, but much of its land has fallen into the hands of the usurper, King of South Ming.]

[The more you consider it, the more you suspect that King of South Ming might be the crown prince of yore, who killed the real king at some point, assuming his identity and secretly allying with the Devil Clan, causing turmoil in Great Zhou to achieve his goals.]

[Just thinking about how everything you have might have been destroyed by that King of South Ming, the crown prince, fills you with a mixture of sorrow and rage, and you long for a fight to the death with him!]

[But you are not capable now; with the support of the Devil Clan, King of South Ming's cultivation realm and strength are beyond what you, a mere half-baked Sky-Man, can match. Great Zhou, led by Wu Ling, seems unlikely to survive much longer under his suppression.]

[For now, you can only hope for a day when you'll either be able to slay King of South Ming or cling to his coattails.]

[Two-star mission: Slay King of South Ming.]

[Mission reward: The famous sword Tongyu.]

[Two-star mission: Align with King of South Ming.]

[Mission reward: A Pug from Hell.]

A series of icy voices echoed in Cheng Guang's mind, unhurried and devoid of any emotion.

As Cheng Guang listened, he felt a slight shock in his heart.

King of South Ming?

The crown prince??

Did the crown prince pull off a switcheroo?

Did he replace his own brother??

Cheng Guang knew that King of South Ming was Emperor Zhou's brother, notoriously inconspicuous, never engaged in power struggles, and simply wanted an unremarkable life in his twilight years.

Cheng Guang had met King of South Ming once and remembered him as a cheerful old man who spent days sitting in the courtyard soaking up the sun and often daydreaming for hours on end.

He showed none of the restlessness and ferocity associated with the crown prince.

Was it all a façade, or had there genuinely been a change in his nature??

Cheng Guang had no idea.

Regardless of whether or not the King of South Ming was the true crown prince, one thing was certain.

That was, the crown prince was no tranquil man.

In the future, he could even take 99 percent of the Great Zhou Dynasty's lands, nearly replacing it entirely.

Cheng Guang even wondered whether, if it were not for Empress Wu Ling's support in the future, Great Zhou would have already perished, trampled into dust by King of South Ming.

The entire Great Zhou Dynasty would vanish utterly, lost to the relentless tide of history.

“King of South Ming, Devil Clan...”

“How could King of South Ming dare to collude with the Devil Clan? To reclaim his position? Betraying the Human Race just to achieve his end?”

Cheng Guang murmured to himself, massaging his forehead, unable to suppress a wry laugh.

It seems that betrayal is a constant, present in any world, any time.

No matter how the crown prince and Emperor Zhou fought, they were still kin.

But to invite a wolf into the fold was pure folly.