

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 301 Fish has taken the bait[1,384 words]

Chapter 301 Fish has taken the bait

Bai Tianheng's heart finally settled.

Well, he was confident that Bai Zihan meant what he said back then, but seeing it with his own eyes was another story.

With Bai Zihan handling the issue with Bai Xinyue and now Bai Xueqings, Bai Tianheng finally felt his heart free.

(Looks like I also need to go into seclusion.)

Cultivating is much effective when one's heart isn't in burden and his final burden has finally been lifted.

But he didn't forget his intention of coming here.

"Where is that brat?"

Bai Tianheng asked, still seeing no sign of Bai Zihan.

"Bai Zihan must have gone back to his room," Bai Xueqing answered, not sure, but it was the only place he would go.

Bai Tianheng pinched his forehead.

He told Bai Zihan to make connections with others, as that would definitely help him in the future as Bai Clan leader.

But he still didn't do that, rather made things worse especially with the group of suitors.

Bai Tianheng knew that Bai Zihan showed exceptional skill in everything and could become the perfect Clan Leader-except for one flaw, which was maintaining good relationships with others.

Rather than making good relationships with future Leaders or powerhouse, he has offended them.

(I didn't think he would stop Bai Xueqing from marrying. Wasn't he rather eager to send her off?)

Bai Xueqing thought.

It was well-known that the two of his children didn't really get along.

And although Bai Tianheng knew that in the deepest part of their hearts they still cared for each other, they weren't close enough to stop one another's marriage.

He might have thought that it could be possible if his son or daughter were overprotective of each other, but it was simply not the case for his children. "Xueqing'er, did Zihan'er really say that unless they defeat him, none of them marry you?"

Bai Tianheng asked skeptically.

Bai Xueqing knew that it was mostly because she would ask him for help if it were to happen again.

But essentially, it was indeed true that he said that.

"Yes! And also told me to inform you that these people don't deserve me."

And by saying that Bai Zihan was the one stopping her marriage, she could also avoid being lectured and pursued by the elders and parents to get married quickly.

Well, as for things becoming annoying for Bai Zihan-it was for him to handle. Bai Tianheng widened his eyes in shock.

Not that he disagrees with Bai Zihan's statement.

Bai Xueqing is most talented in Desolate Heaven Empire and except for Bai Zihan, no one comes close.

Not to mention, her background and appearance. And of course, his one bias for her daughter, there was literally no one that deserved her.

But coming from Bai Zihan?

(He... does he really not want Xueqing'er to be married?)

He just couldn't believe that.

As for whether it was just a real test to screen the candidates, there was no way that could be true.

He had already heard from the guard that Bai Zihan used his Spirit Severing Realm aura to suppress all the suitors.

There wasn't anyone who could beat Bai Xueqing, not to mention his monster son.

He didn't think that even in the coming years anyone of their generation could outpace and grow faster than his son-perhaps his daughter could, but that too would be difficult.

The only ones who might stand a chance were those geniuses from two or more generations older.

And even that might be difficult, since this generation's talent far surpassed them.

(Someone who can defeat Zihan'er and also make a good candidate for Xueqing'er...)

There was hardly anyone in the Empire.

"This son of mine... is just adding headaches. I need to have a good talk with him."

Rather than trying to find someone who can fit Bai Zihan's criteria, better to talk and make that stop.

Otherwise, who would even come here to propose to Bai Xueqing if it meant fighting Bai Zihan?

"Bai Xueqing, isn't there anyone who catches your eyes?"

Bai Tianheng asked. If Bai Xueqing says yes, then there was no need for Bai Zihan's opinion right?

"There isn't any. Perhaps if they could defeat Bai Zihan?"

Bai Zihan was lying down on his bed, but he wasn't asleep.

Instead, his attention was fixed on the scroll before him-compiled reports delivered by Kong Zhanghong.

It was organized and then briefly arranged for Bai Zihan-those of either great importance or that could affect him.

One might even call it a newspaper specifically for Bai Zihan.

Bai Zihan tapped the scroll with a smile.

(Should I start a newspaper company?)

The thought came unbidden, yet the more he considered it, the more sense it made.

In this world, news was nothing more than gossip carried by merchants, wandering storytellers, or traveling cultivators.

If one wanted news, they would go to a place like a tavern, where they could only hope that someone might know something about what they wanted.

For more precise and specific information, there were various Information Sects-but the fee was too big, not to mention their stations were pretty

limited.

However, a newspaper could solve all those problems.

Money was not the only thing he was after. It was the power to have control over information.

Control of information meant control of truth.

And control of truth meant control of narrative.

With that, reputations could be destroyed or elevated, clans could be turned against one another, and public opinion could be bent to his will-all without raising a blade.

Moreover, he already had a large hand in gathering information. All that was needed was to have newspapers made and distributed.

It would take a while for people to trust the information from newspapers, but eventually they would take them as fact.

His smile widened slightly.

A blade of words, sharper than steel.

"I should discuss this with Kong Zhanghong" he murmured.

Truthfully, he had been making that man do all sorts of things lately.

Yet Kong Zhanghong had shown exceptional ability in being able to handle everything quite perfectly.

Perhaps it was because of that, Bai Zihan mused, that he found himself entrusting more and more to Kong Zhanghong.

Still, Bai Zihan didn't think Kong Zhanghong was overworking himself,

otherwise he wouldn't have been able to accompany him in watching the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

Kong Zhanghong was rather good at recruiting people, though in the end, before anything was finalized and sent to Bai Zihan, he would check that

everything was without flaw.

Knock! Knock!

(Speak of the devil.)

Bai Zihan thought.

"Come in!"

Bai Zihan said lazily, not taking his eyes off the scroll.

The door slid open, and Kong Zhanghong stepped in with his usual calm, composed expression. He bowed slightly.

"Young Master!"

Bai Zihan finally looked up.

"What is it?" Kong Zhanghong's lips curved into smiles, though his eyes gleamed with sharp intent.

"The fish has taken the bait."

Black Latern Society which used to do all kind of task as long as it involved money has now befallen under the hands of Bai Zihan.

But rather than falling, it has rapidly expanded under the hands of Bai Zihan.

Of course, not many people knew that it was under the control of Bai Zihan and the work they do was also always the same.

Xie Wanshou was still their Sect Master and many of them who were beaten up

by Bai Zihan thought that Xie Wanshou and Bai Zihan must have come to a

compromise or something.

Anyways, Bai Zihan or Feilian has killed the two Spirit Severing Realm guards or should it be said warden for her by a mysterious organization.

Even searching their soul, there was no answer.

They can only hope that whoever fell in love with Xie Wanzhou would contact

her after the two bodyguards has been killed by Bai Zihan.

Now, it seemed like they were finally doing that.

"It looks like that organization has finally sent someone to come and check on Xie Wanzhou."

Bai Zihan's gaze sharpened.

This Mysterious Organization has certainly made him very curious. Not only because they have sent assassins after him but because of how difficult it is to find their base.

One could tell, from the sheer number of precautions they took to conceal themselves, that this was no weak organization.

"Where is he?"

"The Black Lantern Society's leader has spun some lies to stall him," Kong Zhanghong replied instantly.

"Though for how much longer she can keep him deceived, it would depend on Xie Wanzhuo's ability."

Bai Zihan tapped the scroll lightly against his palm, thoughtful.

"Mmm... looks like we need to go quickly then."

After all, it was easy to catch him. Missing him might mean that there is no more way to contact that organization.

"A fish nibbling at the line is still a fish in the end. Let's not allow it to slip away."

Kong Zhanghong bowed.

"As you command, Young Master!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 302 Zou Shiji! [1,448 words]

Chapter 302 Zou Shiji!

"How much longer do I need to wait?"

An annoyed, commanding voice sounded through Xie Wanshou's office.

"If not for a young master taking a fancy to you, you would have been dead already."

The man warned.

Xie Wanshou didn't argue-she knew she was powerless before him. She wanted to complain;

She was caught between a rock and a hard place. But seeing that the man before her was just another Spirit Severing cultivator, she knew it was wiser to comply with Bai Zihan.

After all, the person called Zou Shiji seemed to have the same strength as the two who had been sent as her watchdogs.

(It looked like they were still unaware that those two were already dead.)

"They should be arriving soon. I didn't expect them to take so long to destroy a middle clan perhaps they're dawdling?"

She lied.

Zou Shiji had come because the two bodyguards-more like watchdogs-sent to Xie Wanshou had stopped sending reports.

Delays happened, but two weeks without word was unacceptable; hence he was sent to check in person.

Xie Wanshou had told him that the two guards had gone to attack a clan that offended her and that they were carrying out her orders.

It wasn't the first time that was done and Zou Shiji believed it.

TAC! TAC!

Zou Shiji stamped his foot in impatience.

"Tsk! Why doesn't the young master just take her away?"

He muttered.

!!!

Soon enough, a message popped into Xie Wanshou's mind.

(Young Master Bai has arrived!)

She stood up, relieved that Bai Zihan had come so quickly. She didn't know how much longer she could have kept deceiving Zou Shiji. Now she didn't need to.

It didn't take long for Bai Zihan to enter Xie Wanshou's office, Kong Zhanghong at his side.

Without so much as a knock, he walked in like he owned the place.

"Who are you?"

Zou Shiji asked, thinking Bai Zihan might be another guest.

"You can come back another time-I have business with Xie Wanshou right now."

Zou Shiji demanded.

"Don't worry, I am not here for Xie Wanshou,"

Bai Zihan declared.

"I am here for you."

One minutes later-

"H-How dare you do this to me? You'll regret this!"

Zou Shiji shouted as his hand was chained and his meridians scaled. He could do nothing but shout.

For current Bai Zihan, Spirit Severing Realm didn't pose any problem unless they have powerful trump cards like protagonists.

"Xie Wanshou, you dare betray us? Even if you're favored by the young master, don't think you can walk away easily"

Zou Shiji spat.

Xie Wanshou's face flushed crimson, but her eyes burned with anger rather than fear.

"You think I'm some prized flower to be kept in a porcelain vase? That Young Master of yours should just rot in hell."

She snapped.

She hated being treated like property-though Bai Zihan didn't care much either way.

"Y-You! Once the young master knows about this, you will regret it."

Zou Shiji stammered, rising from where he had been leaning against a pillar.

"Enough of your useless speeches. Tell me what I want to know or say goodbye to your life," Bai Zihan said.

"Where is your headquarters?" He asked directly.

"You think I'll answer just because you caught me off guard? Unhand me right now or you'll regret it," Zou Shiji replied arrogantly.

Still thinking that he some kind of big shot.

"Is that so?"

Five minutes later-

"I'll talk. I'll talk! Please!"

Bai Zihan had mastered the art of torturing.

Kong Zhanghong and Xie Wanshou watched another performance as Bai Zihan completely made a grown man cry like a baby.

Previously arrogant Zou Shiji had been reduced to someone who only wanted to escape this hell. Not that Bai Zihan intended to let him.

"You'd better start with something useful," Bai Zihan said.

Zou Shiji swallowed, fought for composure, then let the dam break.

"I-I don't know where the headquarter is," he confessed.

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes, glaring.

"I'm telling the truth," Zou Shiji insisted. "I was only sent to check on the two who stopped reporting back to headquarters."

Zou Shiji answered.

Zou Shiji's lips trembled, his pride still fighting against the fear gnawing at his bones.

"Then where do you work from?"

Bai Zihan asked, voice calm but carrying the weight of an executioner's blade.

Zou Shiji clenched his jaw, trying to resist, but the chill of death hovering in the air left him with no choice. His voice came out hoarse, defeated.

"I... I'm not from the headquarters. I'm stationed in one of their branches."

Bai Zihan's gaze sharpened.

"Where?"

Zou Shiji hesitated, but under that suffocating aura, he broke.

"It's... outside the Desolate Heaven Empire. In the Falling Star Empire, west of here. A small, weak place compared to your empire, but-" He swallowed.

"They maintain a branch there. Since it was closest to the Black Lantern Society, I was dispatched to investigate."

Bai Zihan tapped his finger against the table, a faint smile playing at his lips.

"Falling Star Empire, hmm?"

For a moment, he said nothing, only thinking.

Having a branch in another empire meant this organization wasn't a petty shadow sect-they had reach, and the confidence to extend their claws beyond borders.

(An organization with branches in different empires, interfering in my Bai Clan's matters... They might be stronger than any clan or sect here. That, or arrogant enough to act as if they were.)

It was speculation, but not unfounded. And if true, then he'd stumbled onto an opponent whose roots ran far deeper than he first thought.

"Tell me about this branch," Bai Zihan said at last, his tone leaving no room for lies. "Its strength, its numbers, its leaders. Leave nothing out!"

All in all, the branch in the Falling Star Empire wasn't anything to be feared, but within that empire it could still be considered quite powerful.

It was overseen by about three Void Refinement elders, with people like Zou Shiji carrying out orders from headquarters, and the rest comprised mostly of disposable pawns.

Wiping them out might be difficult for Bai Zihan with his current strength, but it was far from impossible.

Zou Shiji didn't know the true purpose of establishing branches, but he speculated it might be to control the Falling Star Empire.

After all, they supported one of the princes and carried out missions to eliminate his rivals.

(So why is there no branch in the Desolate Heaven Empire...?) Perhaps it wasn't that there wasn't one, but that people like Zou Shiji were kept in the dark.

He didn't seem to be in direct contact with headquarters, merely a pawn who had been told this branch was the closest.

That could well have been an excuse to conceal the existence of a branch inside the Desolate Heaven Empire itself.

Or perhaps those within were simply too busy.

Judging by what they were doing in the Falling Star Empire, it was likely they were attempting the same here-and even more likely now, with the Emperor expected to die soon.

As long as they could control one of the princes or princesses and place them on the throne, they could effectively control the Desolate Heaven Empire-at least half of it.

After all, the major clans and sects didn't necessarily have to listen to the royal family. Only by forcing them to submit could true control be established. Otherwise, it would be no different from the current royal family: seemingly at the top, but far from absolute.

For instance, even the Emperor himself could not interfere with a clan like the Bai.

Bai Zihan's gaze sharpened, his fingers drumming idly against the arm of the chair as if he had all the time in the world.

"Is that really all you know?"

He asked softly, the calmness in his voice carrying far more weight than any shout.

Zou Shiji's throat bobbed as he swallowed.

"I swear! I've told you everything-I truly don't know where the headquarters is or who is in the headquarter."

The silence that followed stretched, heavy and suffocating. Then Bai Zihan leaned forward, his smile devoid of warmth.

"Then aren't you almost useless to me?"

Zou Shiji's heart plummeted.

The chains around his wrists rattled as he struggled against them, his fear finally outweighing his pride and loyalty.

"W-Wait! There is someone who might know!"

He blurted out in panic.

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed, but he said nothing, waiting.

"The branch leader," Zou Shiji continued quickly, desperate to prove his worth.

"He frequently comes into contact with people from headquarters. If anyone knows what you want, it's him!"

"Mmmm."

Bai Zihan's hum was faint, noncommittal.

Zou Shiji pressed on, words tumbling out like water from a cracked jar.

"I-I can lead you there! Only I know how to reach the branch. Without me, you'll never find it. Let me take you, and you'll have your answers!"

Bai Zihan thought for a second. There wasn't anything urgent that he needed to deal with.

And who knows, with Zou Shiji missing, it might alert them.

"Sure. I hope," Bai Zihan leaned in, his gaze boring into Zou Shiji's trembling eyes, "that you are not lying to me."

Zou Shiji's breath hitched, a bead of sweat rolling down his temple.

"I-I wouldn't dare! I'll take you there, I swear!"

Bai Zihan chuckled softly, but the sound carried more menace than reassurance.

"Good. Because if I find out otherwise, even death will be too merciful a release for you."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 303 Falling Star Empire! [1,030 words]

Chapter 303 Falling Star Empire!

The continent was vast, divided into great empires, each boasting their own proud heritage, powerful sects, and long-standing grudges.

The Desolate Heaven Empire stood proud, boasting of being the strongest in the region.

But it was not easy for the Desolate Heaven Empire to conquer the other Empires because others would join forces if the Desolate Heaven Empire tried to attack another.

Other Empires were also aware of that and hence, even if they had conflict on their own, they made agreements to become allies if the Desolate Heaven Empire attacked.

This made sure to keep Desolate Heaven Empire, the strongest, in check.

But honestly, if the Desolate Heaven Empire utilized their full strength, they could easily conquer the other Empires surrounding them.

However, there was another problem with that.

And it was that the Imperial Family of Desolate Heaven Empire wasn't absolute and other clans and sects wouldn't help something that could only benefit the Royal Family and not them.

Unlike Desolate Heaven Empire though, in Falling Star Empire, the Emperor's word was absolute.

If the Emperor gave an order, everyone must obey or risk getting destroyed.

Compared to other Empires bordering Desolate Heaven Empire, Falling Star Empire might as well be the weakest.

But thankfully, due to a pact made by other Empires in fear of Desolate Heaven Empire, the Falling Star Empire stood.

But everyone knew that this was just a temporary truce and if one didn't increase their military strength, they could be swallowed whole by another Empire.

However, rather than the outside threat, there was something that threatened the Falling Star Empire's peace, and it was their own internal problems.

Since Royal Family power was absolute, no one could go against them, and if done, it could be considered treason and your family killed immediately. Because of that, the nobility in this place enjoyed privilege like no other place, while common people had to face unfair justice and tyranny of those with higher status.

Falling Star Empire!

The capital's streets bustled with noise, yet the sound was hollow.

Vendors barked half-heartedly, hawking wares few could afford. The stench of cheap wine and unwashed bodies hung in the air.

A sharp crack split through the din.

"Worthless trash!"

A man roared, his fist striking the frail body of a beggar curled on the ground. The beggar coughed blood, yet didn't even lift a hand to defend himself. His eyes were empty, resigned.

The man-his robes marked him as a minor cultivator-kicked again, snarling, "It's all your fault! I lost everything at the tables today because of your cursed face! Bad luck, that's what you are!"

The crowd glanced over, then turned away.

Some laughed under their breath. Others quickened their pace. No one intervened. Scenes like this were common.

Another kick was about to land when a cloaked figure stepped between the man and his victim.

"Stop!"

The voice was calm, but full of authority.

The cultivator blinked, then scowled, his drunken breath sour.

"What the hell are you? Some nosy bitch? Get out of the way!"

The girl didn't move. Her eyes, hidden beneath the hood, met him with quiet defiance.

"There is no honor in beating the powerless," she said softly. "Do you feel stronger, attacking someone who cannot even lift a hand to resist?"

Her words struck like cold water-but instead of shame, they only stoked the man's fury.

"You dare lecture me?"

He spat on the ground, face twisting.

"Fine! If you want to share his fate, don't blame me later!"

He raised his hand, palm glowing faintly with gathered spiritual force. The crowd barely reacted, watching with curiosity.

The slap descended.

But before it could land, the cloaked girl's arm shot up, slender fingers catching his wrist in a grip that was unyielding.

The man's eyes widened-then froze as her hood slipped back.

A face of porcelain beauty, framed by hair like flowing ink. Her eyes, clear and steady, carried both nobility and sorrow.

Recognition slammed into him like a thunderbolt. His knees nearly buckled.

"P-Princess..."

He stammered, horror dawning in his expression.

The cloak slipped further as gasps rippled through the bystanders.

The girl let go of his wrist, her gaze cool and distant.

"You shame this empire!"

She said.

The man collapsed into hurried bows, words tumbling from his lips.

"I-I didn't know! Forgive me! Forgive me, Your Highness!"

Gasps tore through the onlookers. Heads bowed hastily, eyes lowered, as whispers hissed through the crowd.

"It's her..."

"Princess Sun Yaoqing!"

"The beloved daughter of the Emperor himself!"

"They say His Majesty dotes on her more than his sons..."

"After all, she is a genius unlike other princes and princesses. She is already in the Spirit Severing Realm. You know even some commanders are weaker than

her."

"They are saying that she will become the next Emperor!"

The murmur spread like wildfire, awe and fear binding the street.

The drunken cultivator dropped to his knees, trembling. His forehead struck the dirt in frantic bows.

"Forgive me, Princess! I was blind! I didn't know it was Your Highness before me-"

"You are apologizing to the wrong person."

Her words, clear and calm, silenced him as surely as a blade to the throat.

The man froze, then turned stiffly toward the beggar. His lips cracked as he stumbled through the words.

"I... I was wrong. Forgive me!"

The beggar slowly raised his hollow eyes. There was no anger, no gratitude- only the dull emptiness of a man already ground into dust.

Whether this beating ended or another began tomorrow, it no longer mattered. To him, life itself had long since soured. He lowered his gaze again without a

word.

Princess Sun Yaoqing also saw his eyes, eyes that had already given up on life.

A sharp voice cut across the tension.

"Your Highness!"

A harried attendant hurried through the crowd, bowing quickly before rushing to her side. His expression was pale with fear.

"Why did you run off alone? Do you know how dangerous this is? What if assassins were lying in wait?"

The Princess-her hood falling fully now, revealing her ethereal face-inclined her head faintly, contrite.

"I was careless. Forgive me!"

She bent briefly, pressing a few silver ingots into the beggar's shaking hands.

"Live... at least for another day."

She whispered, too softly for anyone but him to hear.

Then, with her attendant tugging urgently at her sleeve, Princess Sun Yaoqing turned and left, her slender back vanishing into the river of people.

The beggar stared at the weight in his palms as if it were a stone from another world. He didn't weep. He didn't smile.

Only silence lingered in his eyes.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 304 Princess Sun Yaoqing! [1,013 words]

Chapter 304 Princess Sun Yaoqing!

In the Falling Star Empire, the peak of cultivation that anyone had publicly achieved was the Great Ascension Realm.

Although there were many, including Bai Zihan's father in the Desolate Heaven Empire, it was very difficult for those in the Falling Star Empire to reach such a realm because of limited resources.

This is the difference between the Desolate Heaven Empire, the strongest and Falling Star Empire, one of the weakest in the region.

The Falling Star Empire also knows that and tries their best not to antagonize their neighbour who can squash them any time.

Anyways, Great Ascension Realm cultivators are considered the most powerful, and very few are able to achieve that in the Falling Star Empire.

Such a realm was considered unreachable for most, a distant dream that could only be worshiped from afar.

Yet Princess Sun Yaoqing had already stepped into the Spirit Severing Realm while still in her youth.

This alone made her future inevitable in the eyes of the empire's people- sooner or later, she would stand at Great Ascension.

And perhaps... even reach beyond, into the Immortal Stage.

For many, she was a hope incarnate. For others, a threat greater than her brothers.

Inside an ornate carriage that rattled softly along the capital's stone-paved roads, the atmosphere was tense.

The velvet curtains muffled the noise of the streets, but not the sharp voice of her attendant, Mingzhu.

"Your Highness, how could you leave without notice again?"

Mingzhu's face was pale with agitation, her voice edged with fear.

She was not merely a servant-she was Yaoqing's personal bodyguard, a cultivator in the Void Refinement Realm.

One can see how much the Emperor loved Princess Sun Yaoqing just by having one of the strongest guards as her personal bodyguard.

"You must understand. Though you are among the strongest in the empire, danger is everywhere. Your royal brothers and sisters would not hesitate to send assassins if they thought it would clear the path to the throne. It has happened before, and it will happen again. We cannot treat such risks lightly!"

Another attendant, Meilin, echoed her words quickly, her voice gentler but no less firm.

"Princess, we beg you. Do not throw yourself into danger. His Majesty treasures you above all. If something were to happen,"

Sun Yaoqing sat quietly, her slender fingers resting upon her lap.

Her expression was calm yet her eyes carried the depth of unyielding conviction.

"I understand your worries," she said, her voice soft but steady.

She knows that two of them are scolding her because they are worried about her, however, there are things that she must do.

"I know well how dangerous the palace is. I know how many eyes watch me, some filled with envy, others with killing intent."

The attendants fell silent.

Sun Yaoqing's gaze turned to the window, where the curtains parted slightly, giving her a glimpse of the capital's streets-the poverty, the despair, the hollow laughter of nobles riding past beggars without so much as a glance. "But if I remain hidden behind golden walls... How will I ever understand the suffering of this Empire? How will I know what must be changed?"

Her hand curled into a fist, the silver-white sleeve tightening around her wrist. "I must see with my own eyes. Only then can I hope to save this rotting empire." Her words silenced the carriage, heavy with the weight of her determination. Outside, the capital's noise faded behind them as the royal procession moved on. The guards riding alongside remained alert, hands always near their weapons.

But inside, Princess Sun Yaoqing sat with her head slightly bowed, eyes filled with both sorrow and steel-already carrying the weight of an empire on her shoulders.

The silence within the carriage lingered, thick as incense smoke. The attendants exchanged glances but dared not press their arguments further. At last, the younger of the two-the one known for her loose tongue and fondness for gossip, Meilin-shifted uneasily, her lips pressing together before she finally blurted out, as though unable to hold the words in any longer:

"Your Highness... have you heard the latest news?"

Sun Yaoqing's eyes slid toward her, bored. Sun Yaoqing doesn't like to gossip and waste her time unlike Meilin.

"News?"

Meilin lowered her voice, though excitement gleamed in her eyes.

"Everyone in the palace has been talking about it. They say the Bai Clan's Young Master, Bai Zihan of the Desolate Heaven Empire, is coming here to the Falling

Star Empire."

Mingzhu's brows drew together sharply.

"Nonsense! What would someone like that be doing in our empire? Don't spread rumors so carelessly!"

But Meilin only shook her head, her tone quick and insistent.

"No! It's true. I heard that the Emperor and officials are quite confused by this sudden visit from the young master of the Desolate Heaven Empire."

After all, it is the Bai Clan, who is said to rival even their empire in strength alone. They can't carelessly reject it when their heir wants to come.

And Bai Zihan wasn't exactly unknown in the Falling Star Empire.

Some of the rumors regarding him have reached the Falling Star Empire, though most of them only know that he is the brother of the one who is said to

win the Dragon and Phoenix Competition.

But it isn't unknown that the Bai Clan is a very powerful clan, perhaps the

strongest in the Desolate Heaven Empire and that is enough to know the

importance of Bai Zihan.

Princess Sun Yaoqing sat still, her expression unchanging at first. Then, slowly, her lips curved into the faintest of smiles-not of amusement, but of intrigue.

"Bai Zihan..."

She murmured, as though trying to understand why such a young master of esteemed status would come to their empire.

Her gaze drifted once more to the window, where torchlight flickered across

the passing streets.

"The Desolate Heaven Empire is powerful," she said quietly.

"If one of the esteemed young masters is hurt... the empire's peace will not last

long

If Bai Zihan is killed or even remotely injured, there is a high chance that the Desolate Heaven Empire can use that excuse to invade their Empire.

(Perhaps that is their goal?)

Princess Sun Yaoqing thought.

In any case, she knew that the arrival of such a character was nothing but

trouble for the Falling Star Empire.

"I just hope it isn't for some sinister scheme!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 305 Entering Falling Star Empire! [1,126 words]

Chapter 305 Entering Falling Star Empire!

"Who would have thought going to another Empire would be this tedious?"

Bai Zihan muttered.

He had naively thought he could simply go to the Falling Star Empire, find the branch of that organization, threaten their leader into revealing the location of their headquarters, and return.

But it wasn't as simple as that.

For one, you needed permission to enter the Falling Star Empire-otherwise, the border guards would apprehend you.

It was easy to get one from the Desolate Heaven Empire but there was also a need from the Falling Star Empire.

Well, it took some time but the permission was given at a condition.

The Emperor of the Falling Star Empire wants to meet with him.

Bai Zihan had treated this as a simple visit to gather information, but for the Falling Star Empire, it had turned into a grand diplomatic event.

(What should I say the reason for my visit is?)

Should he be honest about his purpose?

There was little chance the Emperor would allow him to interfere within their borders.

Yet, considering how weak their empire was, perhaps they might accept it?

He could offer compensation if necessary. But if they refused... he would simply force the matter.

"Young Master, would you like to have tea?"

Luo Qing asked.

Luo Qing was accompanying Bai Zihan on this trip. It wasn't just her, but a group of powerful Bai Clan members as well, including Grand Elder Bai Ren.

This had all been arranged by his father, Bai Tianheng.

After explaining that it might be the organization behind the assassins sent against him and Bai Xinyue, he agreed.

Of course, for safety, a few people were sent along-though they might not be needed, considering Grand Elder Bai Ren's presence.

In truth, it seemed Bai Ren had volunteered himself, valuing Bai Zihan too highly to risk his life carelessly.

That didn't mean sheltering him from all harm. After all, how could one grow without experiencing danger?

The journey from the Bai Clan estate to the border of the Falling Star Empire was long.

Fortunately, they traveled aboard a flying ship equipped with every necessity. When not watching the passing scenery, Bai Zihan would retreat to his room to rest.

The Bai Clan's flying ship cut through the clouds like a blade of silver light, banners fluttering proudly with the emblem of a soaring white dragon.

When the sprawling frontier of the Desolate Heaven Empire finally came into view, the soldiers stationed there stirred.

Rows of armored cultivators stood along the fortress walls, their spears glinting in the sun.

For a moment, a hush fell over the army as the enormous shadow of the ship loomed across the earth.

But then recognition flashed in their eyes.

"The Bai Clan..."

"Look! That's the Bai Clan's flying ship!"

Whispers rippled through the ranks, bewilderment spreading at the sudden arrival of such a prestigious clan.

"Looks like it is true that Bai Clan's heir wants to go to the Falling Star Empire."

"Why does he want to go to such a weak Empire? Vacation?"

"Perhaps he is scheming something against them? You know it is Young Master Bai Zihan after all."

The commander, clad in golden armor, quickly took to the skies, his aura rippling outward.

Bowing deeply midair, he cupped his fists toward the ship.

"Honored guests of the Bai Clan! We have received word from the capital. Permission has already been granted-you may proceed without hindrance." The flying ship glided forward. The

commander and his soldiers parted like a tide, their eyes lingering respectfully as the vessel soared past the border.

But the moment the flying ship crossed into the skies above the Falling Star Empire, the atmosphere shifted.

Here, the fortress walls were just as tall, the soldiers just as numerous-but their faces told another story.

Unease!

Caution!

The cultivators stationed here gripped their weapons tighter, their lines rigid yet faintly trembling as the shadow of the Bai Clan's vessel passed overhead. It was as if the heavens themselves had pressed down upon their empire. One should know-the flying ship of the Bai Clan was akin to a nuclear weapon. It could easily devastate much of the Falling Star Empire before anyone could stop it.

The commander of this post-a middle-aged man in dark steel armor-rose into the sky to intercept.

His eyes darted nervously between the enormous Bai Clan emblem and the scaled slip clutched in his hand.

Even as he tried to stand tall, his aura flickered, betraying the weight pressing upon him.

When his gaze finally fell upon Bai Zihan, standing calmly at the railing of the deck, he froze in an instant.

His breath caught-this was no ordinary visitor.

His hands trembled slightly as he held up the imperial slip, the seal of the Falling Star Emperor pressed upon its surface.

"The... the Bai Clan's Young Master," he said at last, forcing the words out. His voice, though loud, carried the strain of tension.

"Permission has been granted. You may enter the Falling Star Empire.

Furthermore..."

He hesitated, bowing lower, before continuing.

"By the order of His Majesty, I am to personally accompany you as an escort-if you do not find it disrespectful."

The commander's posture remained bent, his head lowered as though awaiting judgment.

The Bai Clan Member didn't answer and waited. The decision lay with Bai Zihan.

"Very well. It is good to have a guide."

It could be said that calling a commander a guide was an insult, but the commander didn't mind.

After all, many of the Bai Clan members aboard the flying ship were equal to him, Void Refinement Realm in Cultivation.

Moreover, there was one individual whose depth of cultivation he could not perceive at all.

"This humble general will serve faithfully."

The flying ship rumbled onward, now with the Falling Star Empire's own commander trailing respectfully alongside-a guide, an escort, and a watchful eye, all in one.

From below, the soldiers dared not even whisper.

Their eyes followed the ship with a mixture of fear and awe, as though a great beast had just stepped into their lands.

The flying ship rumbled onward, crossing fully into the Falling Star Empire and leaving behind the nervous silence of its defenders.

Bai Zihan leaned lightly on the railing, his gaze calm but faintly amused.

"The difference is like night and day..."

He murmured. He was referring to the military strength of the two sides.

The Desolate Heaven Empire had many cultivators at the Core Condensation

and Golden Core Realms, while the Falling Star Empire was mostly limited to the Core Formation Stage.

It didn't help that the Desolate Heaven Empire's weakest and most neglected border was the one facing the Falling Star Empire

While, on the other hand, the Falling Star Empire's border with the Desolate Heaven Empire was the most heavily guarded, where their strongest forces were stationed.

Yet, even the strongest army of the Falling Star Empire could not compare to the weakest of the Desolate Heaven Empire. That was the difference in strength between the two empires.

(What are they even doing in such a small empire?)

Bai Zihan thought. Well, there was no need to wonder for too long, since he was very close to getting the answer.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 306 Courtly Intrigue[1,129 words]

Chapter 306 Courtly Intrigue

The towering gates of the imperial audience hall creaked open, spilling light across the polished floor.

When the summons had come, Princess Sun Yaoqing had expected a routine council, perhaps a handful of ministers, her father the Emperor, and a few key generals.

But as she stepped inside and lifted her gaze, even she was taken aback.

Almost every pillar of the Falling Star Empire stood gathered beneath the vast dome of the hall—ministers in their ceremonial robes, generals clad in gleaming armor, scholars with scrolls tucked under their sleeves.

The air itself hummed with anticipation, heavy with whispered speculation.

(So many... for just an heir?)

Well, it wasn't just an heir, but the heir of the strongest Clan in the strongest Empire, so it was understandable.

Sun Yaoqing thought that Father Emperor just wanted to know the reason for Bai Zihan's visit, but it looked like there was more to it than she had thought.

Well, seeing that every princess was present, along with the daughters of almost all the nobles, it wasn't difficult to guess what the Emperor was thinking.

(Indeed, if a girl from our Empire manages to marry the heir of the strongest Clan in the region, the Desolate Heaven Empire might not attack us.)

Even if that wasn't the case, if there was a strong diplomatic relationship between the Bai Clan and the Falling Star Empire, it could be a great help to them.

After all, it isn't unknown that the Bai Clan is said to rival-or perhaps even surpass the Imperial Family of the Desolate Heaven Empire.

(Father Emperor is making such a big deal out of a simple visit.)

Whether that could be achieved or not, they would soon see.

Sun Yaoqing moved gracefully to her seat among the royal family, her attendants taking their place behind her.

The gaze from her brother and sister wasn't kind at all with hostility hiding behind their gaze.

Sun Yaoqing was used to it and didn't care much.

Her gaze drifted toward the throne where her father, the Emperor, sat in solemn majesty, his expression calm yet unreadable.

Around her, voices whispered like a restless tide.

"Why would the Bai Clan send their young master here?"

"Diplomatic maneuvering?"

"Anyway, if you can manage to get your daughter married to him, your status will reach the top."

Sun Yaoqing lowered her lashes, hiding the flicker of curiosity in her eyes.

Truth be told, she had not given Bai Zihan's arrival much thought when she first heard of it.

A young master from a foreign empire, even one as prominent as the Desolate Heaven Empire, was still a foreigner.

It wouldn't solve any of the fundamental problems the Falling Star Empire was facing, even if they managed to establish a good relationship with him.

But it seemed like it wasn't the same for others, who thought of this as an opportunity to climb the ranks and instantly reach the top.

After all, even the Emperor wouldn't want to offend the in-laws of the Bai Clan, right?

(What is his true purpose for coming here?)

Sun Yaoqing's thoughts were interrupted as the herald's voice boomed through the chamber, clear and sonorous:

"Announcing the arrival of the Bai Clan's Young Master-Bai Zihan of the Desolate Heaven Empire!"

The vast doors parted once more, and the hall stilled as a figure in flowing robes stepped inside, his presence calm yet unyielding.

Princess Sun's gaze sharpened slightly.

Around her, the whispers quieted into a collective breath, waiting to see what kind of man this Bai Zihan truly was.

The great doors groaned open, and from the light of the threshold stepped a young man whose very presence drew all eyes toward him.

His hair was black as midnight, flowing down in a glossy cascade, while his eyes -red, deep, and unyielding-burned like embers beneath the heavens.

That crimson gaze alone was enough to silence whispers, as though it could pierce through pride, pretense, and spirit alike.

Gasps rippled quietly through the gathered nobles.

A few of the younger daughters of great houses clutched at their sleeves, their faces flushing as though bewitched.

Handsome, yes-but not in the delicate way poets would sing.

His features held a sharper beauty, a dangerous elegance that seemed to blur the line between immortal grace and demonic allure.

And it was not just his appearance.

The way he carried himself-calm, self-assured, every step measured yet unhurried-radiated a natural dominance.

He did not bow, nor lower his eyes, but neither did he act in reckless

arrogance.

He walked forward as though the hall itself were his, as though emperors and generals alike were merely witnesses to his stride.

Sun Yaoqing felt her breath catch in spite of herself.

(Eighteen years old...)

Her gaze flicked toward her brothers, princes twice his age who still carried themselves with unease before their father's throne.

Compared to them, this foreign youth radiated a maturity that defied his years.

For the first time, she felt a flicker of understanding for the whispers that had been spreading even before his arrival.

This Bai Zihan was no ordinary heir.

(So... this is the Bai Clan's young master.)

All around her, she could feel the court react-the stir of dresses as noble daughters leaned forward, the narrowed eyes of ministers weighing him, the tense silence of generals measuring his presence like steel against steel.

The silence in the hall was almost reverent, though beneath it ran an undercurrent of unease.

Every step Bai Zihan took across the floor echoed like a drumbeat, steady and unhurried.

He was young-undeniably so-but the way he carried himself bent perception.

The Emperor remained motionless upon the throne, his sharp eyes betraying neither approval nor disapproval.

But Sun Yaoqing had been his daughter long enough to recognize when his interest was piqued.

He was measuring Bai Zihan carefully-no different from how one would weigh the sharpness of a blade fresh from the forge.

Around her, whispers had stilled into breaths held too long.

Bai Zihan stopped several paces short of the Emperor's dais.

His red eyes swept once across the hall, brushing over generals, ministers, scholars, and princesses alike, and in that single glance it felt as though each one of them had been weighed, measured, and quietly dismissed.

(Arrogant? Or simply... too strong to care?)

Sun Yaoqing couldn't decide. Perhaps it was both.

(Weak!)

He thought as he stood still.

Bai Zihan waited for quite some time, but still no one spoke or said anything, which caused irritation to rise within him.

(You call for me, and now you keep quiet? Do they think I am easy to toy with?)

Normally, Bai Zihan would have ignored such a summons. If someone wanted to meet him, he would demand that they come to him.

But considering he was in another empire, and not wishing to cause unnecessary trouble if possible, he had come to the palace.

And yet this was the result. Silence, as though his presence was of no importance, even though he had been generous enough to come here himself.

"Tsk!"

He clicked his tongue, showcasing his displeasure, which did not go unnoticed.

Finally, he spoke, his voice cold and steady:

"Why have you called me?"

Chapter 307 A Walk with Emperor of Falling Star Empire

Chapter 307 A Walk with Emperor of Falling Star Empire

Sun Yaoqing noticed how every gaze in the hall clung to Bai Zihan, as if he were some rare beast on display rather than a guest.

(It's a bit rude...)

They had summoned him here, yet now they only stared.

If it had been her standing alone beneath so many watchful eyes, she wasn't sure she could have endured it.

But Bai Zihan?

"Tsk1"

The sharp click of his tongue cut through the silence. His crimson eyes narrowed, not with nervousness but with clear annoyance.

"Why have you called me?"

The words fell like a stone into still water-ripples of shock spread instantly through the chamber.

Gasps were stifled, sleeves twitched, and several ministers paled with anger. No one-no one-spoke to the Emperor of the Falling Star Empire in such a tone.

A minister could not restrain himself. Face flushed, he slammed his palm against the table.

"Young Master Bai! This is the imperial audience hall, and before you sits His Majesty, the Son of Heaven! Show proper respect-mind your manners before the Emperor!"

The man's voice cracked like thunder, righteous and indignant. Several nobles nodded sharply, their own outrage barely contained.

But Bai Zihan didn't so much as glance at him.

"He is your Emperor, not mine."

The hall froze.

And before the silence could even breathe, he added-his voice low, but cutting through the chamber like a blade:

"Even if he were, I would not tolerate being shown such disrespect."

The weight of those words settled heavy, suffocating.

Sun Yaoqing felt the hairs rise on the back of her neck, though her face remained composed.

(That line... it says everything.)

Until now, the Bai Clan's reputation-equal to, perhaps even greater than, the Imperial Family of the Desolate Heaven Empire-had been spoken of in whispers. Rumors, boasts, exaggerations.

But this... his casual dismissal of his emperor in front of his entire court... proved it wasn't just a rumor.

Bai Zihan stood there, unflinching, unrepentant. Upright, calm, almost bored.

He wasn't going to apologize. That much was obvious.

Sun Yaoqing had never seen anyone treat her father this way. And yet... in a strange way, it was refreshing.

The court erupted into chaos.

"This arrogance-unforgivable!"

"He must apologize!"

"Your Majesty, he insults the Empire itself!"

The storm swelled, until-

"Silence!"

The Emperor's voice split the uproar. The hall snapped still. Ministers ducked their heads, generals straightened, noble daughters pressed their lips tight.

The Emperor's gaze locked onto Bai Zihan, unreadable yet heavy with authority.

"Bai Zihan," he said slowly, measuredly, "this emperor is pleased that you have come to the Falling Star Empire-and even more so that you agreed to have a meeting with us."

His tone calmed the storm but did not dispel the tension. It was the authority of a ruler forcing the waves to still.

"As for why I summoned you..." His eyes narrowed slightly, hawk-sharp.

"It is simple. The Desolate Heaven Empire calls you one of its greatest geniuses. This emperor wished to see with his own eyes... and to know the reason for your visit."

The chamber hushed, breath held, all ears straining.

Even Sun Yaoqing leaned forward slightly.

(Yes... what is your purpose, Bai Zihan?)

The young man's red eyes flickered, but his voice was steady when he finally spoke.

"There is an organization in your Empire that seeks my life," he said bluntly. "I am here to destroy them."

The hall erupted once more.

"What?!"

"He dares-!"

"An outsider cannot simply act as he pleases within our borders!"

The Emperor's hand lifted, silencing them again. His eyes remained fixed on Bai Zihan.

"Do you know the name of this organization?"

Bai Zihan shrugged, one hand spread lazily.

"No. But I know where they are." His tone carried absolute confidence.

That only stirred greater unease.

(He came to our Empire to destroy an organization whose name he doesn't even know...?)

Sun Yaoqing frowned behind her sleeve.

(Such recklessness... or is it absolute confidence?)

A minister could no longer contain himself.

"YOU!"

His voice cracked with fury.

"How dare you enter our Empire with such words! You mask your true intent. Your Majesty, this youth cannot be trusted-he must not be allowed to act

freely!"

The chamber filled again with mutters of assent, rising into a swell of hostility.

The Emperor closed his eyes briefly, then reopened them, gaze cold as frost.

"Bai Zihan," he said slowly, "do you realize your actions could be seen as an act of war?"

A hush fell once more.

All eyes turned to the young heir of the Bai Clan.

And Bai Zihan just... smiled.

Quite a sinister one! The silence thickened, stretching like a bowstring ready to snap.

Then-

"Hahaha!"

The Emperor's sudden laughter boomed through the chamber, startling everyone. The sound was rich, hearty, utterly at odds with the suffocating tension just moments before.

Ministers blinked in disbelief, exchanging confused glances. Was His Majesty.... laughing?

The Emperor rose from his throne, his robes sweeping with regal weight.

His eyes, however, gleamed with something sharp and knowing as they fixed on Bai Zihan.

"This emperor was only testing you, young man," he said, voice carrying amusement that danced with subtle steel.

"And you have not disappointed me. Truly, the Bai Clan raises dragons."

He stepped forward, each stride unhurried yet commanding. The nobles bowed instinctively as he passed, none daring to breathe too loudly.

Stopping before Bai Zihan, the Emperor studied him closely, then smiled in a way that was both genial and calculating.

"You seek an enemy within my Empire? Then this emperor shall ensure you are not hindered. But..." his tone softened, almost warm, "how about you accompany this old man for a walk? Allow me to show you the heart of the Falling Star Empire with my own hands."

Others tried to stop the Emperor but they were all stopped at a wave of a hand.

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed slightly.

A tour of the palace? It sounded like a waste of time. He could already feel the annoyance prickling in his chest. But...

(If the Emperor himself is granting permission, refusing would be needless trouble.)

He gave a faint nod, his crimson gaze steady.

"Very well!"

The Emperor's smile widened faintly. With a wave of his hand, he dismissed the court.

"Everyone else is excused. Matters of state can wait. Sun Yaoqing, you will accompany us. General Wu, Elder Han-you as well."

The ministers and nobles bowed low, though many wore tight, dissatisfied expressions as they shuffled out.

The tension lingered in the air like storm clouds, but none dared object to the Emperor's will.

Soon, the vast audience hall emptied, leaving only a small retinue.

Sun Yaoqing rose gracefully, her expression calm, though her heart stirred with curiosity.

(A walk with Father... and Bai Zihan?)

Chapter 308 Fight with Falling Star Empire's genius!

Chapter 308 Fight with Falling Star Empire's genius!

It was just as the Emperor said-nothing more than a stroll.

The grandeur of the Falling Star Palace stretched in every direction: towering jade pillars, gilded archways, and gardens that seemed to flow endlessly like rivers of blossoms.

Yet, despite the splendor, the conversation remained strangely trivial.

The Emperor spoke of architecture, of the weather, even of palace routines.

Bai Zihan responded sparingly, his crimson gaze sweeping over his surroundings as though none of it impressed him.

Sun Yaoqing walked a step behind them, silent, her delicate hands folded before her. She listened, her curiosity sharpening with each word.

Then, as they passed beneath a pavilion draped with flowering wisteria, the Emperor's tone shifted.

"Tell me, Bai Zihan," he said casually, though his eyes were watchful, "have you found any young lady in this palace who caught your interest?"

"I already have a fiancée, your majesty."

The Emperor chuckled.

"A man of your talent should not be bound by just one. Surely you know- someone of your standing may take many wives and concubines."

At this, Bai Zihan finally glanced back. His gaze, fleeting yet deliberate, landed on Sun Yaoqing.

Her heart skipped. Heat brushed her cheeks.

(Could it be... is he interested in me?)

For the briefest moment, her composure wavered. But then-

Bai Zihan's lips curved, his voice cutting through the air without hesitation.

"No! None I've met are even fifty percent as beautiful as my fiancée."

The words dropped like a blade.

Sun Yaoqing froze, Bai Zihan's words felt like mocking her.

(Fifty percent?)

The sting was sharper than she expected. She prided herself on her bearing, her poise, and yes-even her looks.

She did not care for beauty alone, but to be dismissed so bluntly, as though she weren't even worth half of another woman...

Her lips twitched, and before she could stop herself, the words hissed through her thoughts.

(Love-blinded fool. He can't even see what's in front of him.)

Her expression remained smooth on the outside, but inside she cursed him thoroughly.

Bai Zihan had already turned away, utterly unconcerned with her reaction, his attention sliding back to the Emperor.

Sun Yaoqing, however, could not shake the simmering mix of embarrassment and irritation twisting in her chest.

(How dare he...!)

Sun Yaoqing's nails pressed faintly against her sleeve as she walked behind them, her eyes fixed on Bai Zihan's straight back.

(You are also not perfect!)

She wanted to scoff, to criticize his looks, to find some fault-any flaw she could cling to. But the more she stared, the harder it became.

His face, framed by long midnight hair, bore an austere beauty that was neither soft nor overly sharp.

Every line carried a balance between elegance and menace, like a blade polished to perfection.

A face sculpted by the heavens themselves.

(...Annoying!)

The thought only made her irritation deepen.

(So what if he's flawless on the outside? A man without delicacy, arrogant enough to belittle every woman he meets-his fiancée must be suffering under him.)

She exhaled slowly, smoothing her expression, though her heart was still bristling.

The path opened suddenly, the wisteria shade giving way to the open expanse of the imperial training grounds.

The scent of steel and sweat clung faintly to the air, carried on the crisp wind.

Dozens of figures stood assembled in neat rows, their postures straight, their gazes sharp as blades.

Some wore the uniforms of noble houses, others the colors of great sects, but every single one radiated extraordinary aura.

Sun Yaoqing's breath caught.

(When did Father...?)

She realized with a start that nearly every top genius of the Falling Star Empire was gathered here.

Young heroes whose names resounded across the continent, people the Empire held as its pride and hope for the future.

The Emperor stopped, his hands clasped behind his back, eyes glinting. He turned to Bai Zihan, a smile curving his lips.

"What do you think of them?"

All gazes shifted, the young elites standing taller under the weight of the question, as though silently declaring-measure us if you dare.

Bai Zihan's crimson eyes swept over them, slow and indifferent.

It seems like he was really measuring them with his eyes.

Finally, he spoke.

"Weak!"

Just one word.

And yet, it cracked across the training ground like thunder, leaving silence more deafening than any uproar.

Sun Yaoqing's lips parted slightly in disbelief.

She didn't know whether it was because of his arrogance or ignorance.

Mixed in them were Nascent Soul Realm and Soul Formation Realm Cultivator under the age of 40 which is considered pretty rare in Falling Star Empire.

They were all the Top geniuses of the Empire yet Bai Zihan dared utter such words.

Sun Yaoqing knew that the Desolate Heaven Empire had a stronger cultivator but still, their Top geniuses weren't someone one could call weak. The gathered geniuses stiffened, rage flashing in their eyes, but none dared speak-not while the Emperor watched.

The Emperor looked like he was in deep contemplation but finally spoke.

"Bai Zihan, if you don't mind, how about sparring with them?"

The Emperor suggested.

But Bai Zihan doesn't look very thrilled.

"It would be just a wastage of my time. They don't stand a chance."

Bai Zihan said arrogantly.

The words hung in the air like an insult thrown at a shrine. The gathered geniuses bristled-pride turning to fury in an instant.

One of the foremost among them, a young man whose reputation alone could rally troops, stepped forward.

He wore the sigil of a great house on his breast and the steadiness of a Soul Formation cultivator in his carriage. His jaw was tight, eyes blazing.

"Young Master Bai!" he called, voice ringing clear over the training ground. "If you think us weak, then grant us the honor of proving you wrong. Come-test yourself against us."

A ripple of agreement followed, sharp and eager.

"Yeah-show us that pride of yours isn't just talk!" "Or are you afraid, Young Master Bai?"

Mocking laughter spat from a few quarters; other challengers stepped forward, all of them eager, all of them ready to gamble reputation on a strike.

Their fingers twitched toward blades and formation talismans; they had waited their whole lives for a moment like this.

Sun Yaoqing's heart lurched. She had seen anger flare before, but not this-an entire host of the empire's favorites itching to dismantle an outsider's arrogance with their own hands.

A petty duel could become something far worse: an insult turned into a blood feud, a diplomatic incident, a pretext for half the court to demand vengeance.

She swallowed hard.

(Father-please don't let this get out of hand.)

The Emperor watched them all with an unreadable expression.

"Young Master Bai, can you grant them their wish?"

"I don't want to!" This further fueled the anger, thinking that Bai Zihan was running away after running his mouth arrogantly.

"If you win against them, I will grant your permission and even help you destroy the Organization. How about that?"

Bai Zihan's crimson eyes lifted to meet the Emperor's. A slow smile ghosted his lips-almost amused, almost bored.

"Sure!"

He said simply. Then, with a final glance at the assembled geniuses, his tone dropped into something colder, sharper.

"But don't blame me if you get severely hurt!"

Chapter 309 Confidence of the Falling Star's Genius

Chapter 309 Confidence of the Falling Star's Genius

"Father Emperor-why make our top geniuses fight him?"

She asked quietly, positioning herself close enough that only the Emperor and his nearest aides could hear.

The Emperor's expression was unreadable for a moment, but his voice was low and matter-of-fact.

"Because these young men and women are our future, Yaoqing'er. They will be the ones who defend this Empire when its hour comes."

The Emperor's gaze fell on Bai Zihan.

The Emperor realized that the information about Bai Zihan must be correct.

The way he carried himself and the confidence he exuded was that of a powerful person.

He wanted the geniuses of his Empire to know what a Desolate Heaven Empire genius was capable of.

Sun Yaoqing frowned.

"You risk angering the Bai Clan."

He smiled-no warmth, only calculation.

"Do you think I do not know that? But I think it would be worth it."

Sun Yaoqing blinked. Her father's meaning settled on her like a chill.

"You just want to see how strong he really is."

Sun Yaoqing muttered.

Although it seemed like her father had some grand intention in mind, it was probably more because he was curious about Bai Zihan's power.

The Emperor's gaze swept the training ground as if he could still picture the assembled geniuses.

His daughter wasn't wrong, since he also wanted to see whether the rumors about Bai Zihan were true.

Could such a monstrous genius really exist?

Someone who was said to have defeated the Spirit Severing Realm while still in the Soul Formation Realm, at the age of sixteen?

It didn't seem possible. At least by his common sense, it shouldn't be possible.

"You know Bai Xueqing, the winner of the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, is said to have reached at least the Mid Soul Formation Realm at the age of nineteen. He is her brother, and some say he is on par with her-or even surpassed her though I have no idea why he didn't participate, if the information is true"

Sun Yaoqing's face tightened; she had also heard about such things in the palace.

While she too was considered a monstrous genius in the Falling Star Empire, she couldn't comprehend just how such a feat was possible.

Soul Formation Realm below the age of twenty-she didn't know what kind of talent was needed to achieve such a result.

And you say that Bai Zihan who is younger than Bai Xueqing has achieved the same, she can't believe that.

"Anyways, if that is true, it is a good opportunity to test our own genius against theirs."

While that was true, the age gap between them was quite huge to be called a genius of the same age.

Bai Zihan was eighteen years old, while on the other side their Empire's geniuses called here were mostly in their thirties, with some even in their forties.

But well, if they brought a genius at the same age as Bai Zihan, everyone knew it wouldn't even be a fight.

After all, most of their geniuses at that age are still in the Golden Core Realm.

"So this is... a measuring stick?"

Not only Bai Zihan, but also to gauge the talent of the Desolate Heaven Empire. Such an opportunity was indeed rare and precious.

"Exactly!"

He inclined his head.

"It could be a learning opportunity for our geniuses if they lost, but if they won, it could boost the confidence of geniuses throughout the Empire!"

Sun Yaoqing understood the reason. Whether they win or lose, it was good for them.

"Watch closely, Yaoqing. This is an opportunity for them-and for you."

The geniuses of the Falling Star Empire were full of confidence.

Although they knew that Bai Zihan's potential and talent were far higher than theirs, at the moment their cultivation was similar, but they had more experience, making them stronger-or so they thought.

"I will go first!"

One of them declared confidently, who happened to be in the Soul Formation Realm.

No one objected since he was one of the strongest and most experienced among them.

Even those who thought they were stronger than him wanted to see him test Bai Zihan first, so that they could be the ones to defeat him.

One should know that defeating a genius from the Desolate Heaven Empire could bring a lot of prestige, and there was also Princess Sun Yaoqing watching -a chance to impress her.

Who knows? If the Emperor was pleased, he might even give them her hand in marriage.

Well, they could dream.

The Soul Formation cultivator stepped forward, chin high, his steps ringing with confidence as he entered the center of the training ground.

His aura flared out, steady and oppressive, a clear declaration of his realm.

He clasped his fists toward the Emperor first, then turned to face Bai Zihan.

"I am Lu Feng," he announced, his voice carrying across the ground. "Age thirty-five. Mid Soul Formation Realm. Today, I ask for Young Master Bai's guidance!"

A ripple of murmurs spread among the gathered geniuses and officials.

"When did Lu Feng advance to the Mid Soul Formation Realm?"

"No wonder he is so confident."

"Damn! Bai Zihan shouldn't be defeated right? I will lose my chance to show off!"

It seemed Lu Feng had hidden his advancement well, keeping it a secret even from the closest of his friends.

Thirty-five years old and already at the Mid Soul Formation Realm-he was undoubtedly among the shining talents of the Falling Star Empire.

Many younger cultivators looked at him with admiration, convinced that Lu Feng could at least put Bai Zihan in his place.

Lu Feng felt all the stares at him, some envious, others admiring, which he took with relish.

This was what he had been waiting for-a chance to show off!

Bai Zihan, however, stood still, arms folded loosely behind his back. His crimson eyes slid lazily over Lu Feng, as though weighing him on an invisible scale.

Then, with a faint tilt of his head, he spoke.

(Mid Soul Formation Realm? Not even worth my time.)

But what could he do? He just wanted to finish this quickly and get on with his business.

Lu Feng's lips curved into a self-assured smile, his aura swelling even more as if to remind everyone just how vast the gap was between him and most others

present. "Since you're still so young," he said, voice laced with mockery, "should I give you some chance? Perhaps you'd like to take back your arrogant words from earlier? If you admit you were wrong, I won't mind going easy on you."

The crowd stirred, some smirking, others nodding. To them, Lu Feng's words sounded reasonable-even generous.

It was true, Bai Zihan was only eighteen. Even with his talent, his foundation couldn't possibly match decades of cultivation experience.

Bai Zihan, however, merely tilted his head slightly, his crimson gaze glinting

with amusement.

"Go easy?"

He let out a soft chuckle, the sound cutting sharp through the murmurs.

"Come with your full strength."

His smile sharpened, cold and arrogant.

"Otherwise, don't complain later about not getting the chance later."

The mocking reversal struck like a whip.

Lu Feng's expression hardened, his earlier smirk fading into a sharp, focused glare. His qi surged, twisting the air around him with heat and pressure.

He drew in a deep breath, steadying himself, and his eyes gleamed with battle

intent. "Good! Then don't blame me for showing no restraint. Since you seek humiliation, I'll be glad to provide it."

A ripple of excitement swept the crowd-battle was inevitable now.

"Let me show you," Lu Feng declared, his voice booming, "the strength of a genius of the Falling Star Empire!"

Bai Zihan didn't even shift his stance. His smile remained, faint and dismissive, as though watching a child throw a tantrum.

"Well then," he said lightly, crimson eyes narrowing ever so slightly, "come!"

Whoosh!

Lu Feng truly didn't hold back, instantly charging at Bai Zihan with his full speed and brandishing his sword.

He carefully observed Bai Zihan, trying to guess just how he would defend against him.

But Bai Zihan stood there lazily, not even trying to fight back.

(He is really underestimating me!)

Since that was the case, Lu Feng felt no pity and wanted to show what happened when one underestimated him.

But just as he thought he had won, Bai Zihan casually disappeared from his sight, appeared behind him, and pulled his leg, sending him crashing down.

BANG!

Lu Feng fell and was knocked unconscious.

This wasn't just a win, it was a humiliation.

Bai Zihan, without even revealing much of his strength, had defeated Lu Feng- who was twice his age and had decades of experience.

Yet, defeating him was as easy as casually walking.

There was a moment of silence, a moment of realization for the others to understand who they were facing.

Many even felt embarrassed at how easily Lu Feng got defeated.

Even Sun Yaoqing couldn't help but widen her eyes in surprise.

(That speed...)

"Next, I'll go!"

They were not going to give up so easily. Another genius of the Falling Star Empire stepped forward, someone even stronger than Lu Feng.

He thought Lu Feng had overestimated himself and made a huge mistake, costing him the match.

Unlike Lu Feng, he wouldn't make such a mistake.

"I will properly show you the power of the Falling Star Empire!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 310 Salvaging the Empire's Dignity[1,705 words]

Chapter 310 Salvaging the Empire's Dignity

What unfolded next was a series of humiliations with everyone clearly seeing that Bai Zihan was just toying with them.

It wasn't a battle anymore.

The Emperor was fuming with anger.

He had hoped for either making the geniuses of the Empire confident if they won, or determined to work harder if they lost.

But this?

This was completely crushing their spirit and making them feel hopeless. This was not the result he expected.

If this continued, it would completely shatter the confidence of their geniuses. The gap was undeniable.

It wasn't that Bai Zihan was merely stronger. It was that he treated them as if they were ants crawling on the ground.

Sun Yaoqing closed her mouth with her hands as her eyes widened in shock.

Bai Zihan was obviously someone who stood at the Peak of the Soul Formation Realm-or perhaps even higher.

With him not even needing to show much strength, it was difficult to discern.

But from the way he completely toyed with Soul Formation geniuses, it was certain.

Her father was right. Whether win or lose, this was supposed to be a lesson. But this wasn't a lesson in motivation. This was despair.

The murmurs around the hall grew louder.

"Impossible... is this truly someone under twenty?"

"Is this the true strength of the Desolate Heaven Empire? Even their teenagers are more powerful than our full-fledged adults who went to the battlefield."

"I knew there was a big difference between us and the Desolate Heaven Empire, but this... this is on a whole other level."

They all thought they understood the Desolate Heaven Empire's power, but Bai Zihan had just given them a new realization.

The Emperor frowned harder as doubt and fear began sprouting within everyone.

The geniuses once eager to showcase their strength now cowered in fear.

No one was willing to step forward and experience the humiliation their fellow geniuses had suffered.

"It seems like we are done here."

Bai Zihan spoke.

He had obviously guessed the Emperor's intention by having him fight their geniuses.

He didn't think much about whether the Emperor succeeded or not.

But of course, one needs to have ability if they think they can use him as a lesson for others.

Obviously, the Falling Star Empire's geniuses did not have that ability.

The Emperor clenched his hand in anger.

Not only were things going in a different direction than he anticipated, his Empire's geniuses were embarrassing him by not even coming forward. You can lose, but you shouldn't lose your courage.

This was a huge embarrassment to him and his Empire.

"Yaoqing'er!"

The Emperor called out.

"Yes, Father Emperor!"

Sun Yaoqing responded immediately.

"It seems our geniuses are lacking. You, go and try to entertain Young Master Bai!"

The Emperor ordered.

Sun Yaoqing inhaled slowly, calming the storm in her chest.

The Emperor's command left no room for hesitation. She bowed gracefully, her long sleeves trailing across the polished jade floor.

"As you command, Father Emperor!"

When she raised her head, her expression was serene, but her heart beat faster than it ever had before.

This wasn't just about her-it was about the pride of the entire Falling Star Empire.

Her steps rang clear as she walked toward the center of the training ground. The murmurs of the court fell silent, and every pair of eyes followed her.

The darling of the Empire. Their unrivaled genius. The one they had nurtured with all their hope.

If anyone could salvage their dignity, it would be her.

"Princess Yaoqing..."

"She's in the Spirit Severing Realm. With her, there's no way Bai Zihan can toy with her as he did with the others."

"Finally. Now we'll see where this Bai Clan monster truly stands."

Even the defeated geniuses straightened in their seats, relief and hope sparking

in their eyes. If Sun Yaoqing won, their shame could be washed away.

Sun Yaoqing stopped a few paces from Bai Zihan. Her gaze met his-those crimson eyes that seemed to pierce through flesh, bone, and soul.

She had never seen a pair of eyes more fearsome. Eyes that looked down on everything and everyone.

As if all others existed only to amuse him.

"Princess Sun Yaoqing of the Falling Star Empire," she said clearly, her voice echoing across the ground. "I ask Young Master Bai for guidance."

A ripple passed through the crowd. Even the ministers, who had long since grown cynical, looked forward to this match after all the embarrassment.

Sun Yaoqing was, after all, in a league of her own. They believed she would still be a top genius even if placed in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

Bai Zihan, meanwhile, tilted his head slightly, crimson eyes gleaming. His lips

curved into a faint smile.

(She seems a bit strong.)

Though he knew that as someone in the Spirit Severing Realm she should definitely be stronger than others, for Bai Zihan-who had already defeated a Void Refinement Realm cultivator-it didn't seem like much of a difference.

Still, despite being in the Spirit Severing Realm, Bai Zihan had a feeling she was quite strong.

"Very well, Princess," Bai Zihan said, his voice calm but sharp as a blade.

"I hope you don't disappoint me like the others."

This was clearly mocking her defeated peers, but it was also the truth.

Sun Yaoqing tightened her fingers, drawing her qi inward.

Her cultivation surged-an ocean of qi crashing outward as her Spirit Severing aura blanketed the ground.

Fire bloomed behind her like a living inferno, licking the air in violent tongues.

Her qi surged, flames rippling around her as her aura spread across the arena. Then, with a flick of her wrist, a streak of crimson light shot out from her

storage ring.

A magnificent artifact bow appeared in her hands-an Earth-Grade spiritual weapon, its surface engraved with runes that pulsed like molten lava, radiating

heat and destructive power.

The crowd gasped.

"The Vermillion Sunfire Bow!"

"She's truly going all out from the start!"

Sun Yaoqing raised the bow high, qi threads coiling into a fiery arrow that

hummed with destructive force.

Boom!

The arrow screamed across the training ground, splitting the air with blistering

heat.

The wave of pressure alone made nearby elders tense and circulate their protective qi. This wasn't some testing strike-it was a killing blow.

And yet-

Bai Zihan didn't even move. His crimson eyes glowed faintly as he raised one

hand, his fingers snapping together with a lazy motion.

Crack!

The blazing arrow shattered into harmless sparks the instant it reached him,

scattering into a rain of embers that burned no one.

Gasps echoed throughout the hall. "What... he blocked it with just two fingers?!"

"That arrow could incinerate a mountain range!"

Sun Yaoqing's heart clenched, but she didn't stop. With a flick of her bowstring, three arrows formed at once, each more ferocious than the last.

They shot forward in rapid succession-piercing, twisting, exploding mid-flight to catch him in overlapping destruction.

The ground quaked. Fire swallowed the arena. The sheer force cracked the barrier formations protecting the onlookers.

But when the smoke cleared-

Bai Zihan was still there. Hands still clasped lazily behind his back. His robe was unscorched, his expression untouched.

Only the faintest smile lingered on his lips.

"Is this all, Princess?"

He asked softly, his voice carrying over the crackle of fire like a cold wind.

A murmur rippled through the court-equal parts awe and dread.

Sun Yaoqing bit down on her lip. Her qi surged again, this time burning brighter, heavier.

Her vermilion hair shimmered with each flicker, her red eyes narrowing with sharp focus.

The Vermillion Sunfire Bow thrummed in her grip, its runes glowing hotter and hotter as she poured more qi into it.

Arrows burst forth like rainstorms of fire, curving, exploding, cascading across the arena in brilliant arcs of destruction.

Each strike shook the ground. Each detonation roared like thunder.

But Bai Zihan stood unmoved, his figure cutting an almost mocking silhouette through the inferno.

With casual flicks of his hand, waves of qi snuffed out her fire as if it were candlelight.

Sometimes he brushed his palm through the air and the arrows disintegrated before reaching him.

Other times, he casually sidestepped them like it was nothing.

The difference was suffocating.

Yet one truth was undeniable-his aura, his qi fluctuations, the sheer oppressive might he exuded.

"He... he's in the Spirit Severing Realm!"

"What?! He's not even twenty!"

"To reach Spirit Severing before forty is already legendary. Before twenty? That's unheard of!"

The defeated geniuses, moments ago drowning in humiliation, now clenched their fists with bitter comfort.

So that was it. Against a Spirit Severing cultivator, what could they have done?

Their shame, while not erased, was at least explainable.

Still, the fact gnawed at their hearts: Bai Zihan, not even half their age, had crushed them.

On the arena floor, Sun Yaoqing's breath quickened. Sweat beaded her forehead, not from fear but from the sheer expenditure of qi.

(This is the first time.)

Apart from those in the Void Refinement Realm, she had never faced such difficulty.

In her generation, she was considered absolute, with no one even close.

Now someone younger and stronger stood before her, easily dismissing all her attacks.

(Fine. If raw strength cannot touch him... then I'll use guile.)

The bowstring pulled taut, glowing white-hot. Five arrows of condensed flame materialized in the air, orbiting her like blazing stars.

Each arrow pulsed with killing intent, their aura shaking the barrier that kept the ministers safe.

The audience leaned forward.

"She's going all out!"

"Five arrows at once-her Vermillion Firestorm technique!"

She shot them.

Five streaks of crimson tore through the air, weaving unpredictable paths, exploding and reforming mid-flight to press Bai Zihan from every direction.

Their combined heat distorted the very space around him.

Bai Zihan's smile didn't fade.

He raised one hand, crimson qi swirling lazily around his fingertips. His palm pressed forward-

Boom!

All five arrows shattered in a spectacular explosion of fire and sparks. The arena quaked, the air blazed, the smoke rolled outward in waves.

But in that blinding chaos, a single arrow-thin, sharp, silent-slipped free from her bowstring.

Hidden in the shadow of the five. Cloaked in her qi. A whisper of flame honed to a needle.

It pierced through the haze and struck.

A sharp crack split the air as the arrow slammed directly into Bai Zihan's chest, flames erupting outward in a dazzling inferno.

Gasps filled the hall.

"She hit him!"

"She did it-Princess Yaoqing landed a direct strike!"

Even the Emperor rose slightly forward, his eyes burning with expectation.

Ministers surged to their feet. The defeated geniuses, their pride broken for so long, felt their spirits ignite again.

Finally!

Even if he wasn't dead, even if he wasn't crippled, Bai Zihan had been struck. A wound inflicted. Proof that the Falling Star Empire's light still burned strong. The flames raged, covering Bai Zihan's form entirely, hiding him from sight. For the first time, the possibility of his defeat seemed real.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 311 Bai Zihan Vs Sun Yaoqing! [1,619 words]

Chapter 311 Bai Zihan Vs Sun Yaoqing!

The inferno raged, a sea of crimson flame engulfing the center of the arena.

All eyes fixed on the blaze.

Sun Yaoqing's chest rose and fell, her slender fingers trembling on the bowstring.

Sweat beaded along her brow.

"Phew!"

It was her first time having to rely on her trick rather than her overwhelming power.

She swallowed, her heart pounding.

(It hit... it must have hit.)

But then-

A soft sound echoed from within the inferno.

Step! Step!

Slow and casual footsteps.

The raging flames parted like curtains before an unseen will.

From within their depths, a silhouette emerged-straight-backed, leisurely, unhurried.

The hall fell utterly silent.

Bai Zihan walked forward with little injury save for some faint burn marks.

His body, tempered through refinement beyond mortal comprehension, was nearly immune to fire.

Yet Sun Yaoqing's flames, though ultimately unable to truly harm him, had carried a heat unlike any he had faced before.

Bai Zihan narrowed his eyes slightly, crimson light flashing within.

He had to admit-while the attack could not injure him, it had managed to deceive his perception and strike true.

For the briefest instant, the heat had seared against his skin.

He, who was almost immune to fire-who had endured even the flames of Void Refinement cultivators without issue-had been burned by Sun Yaoqing.

And for him, that was noteworthy.

(Looks like she has something quite interesting.)

The crowd's breaths caught in unison. Some staggered back in disbelief, as though the sight had physically struck them.

"Impossible..."

"It definitely hit him, yet there's no effect? What kind of body is that?"

The Emperor's face darkened, his earlier spark of hope extinguished in an instant. His knuckles whitened as he clenched his hand.

Sun Yaoqing's lips trembled. Her bow quivered slightly in her hands.

She had even resorted to tricks she never thought she'd use-yet it was as if none of it mattered.

Bai Zihan looked at her.

"You are quite strong. I will give you that," Bai Zihan acknowledged.

"For that, I must respond in kind!"

With a flick of his wrist, a streak of cold light shot from his storage ring.

A sword appeared in his grasp-the Eternal Spirit Sword.

It was clear he was finally acknowledging Princess Sun Yaoqing.

Sun Yaoqing never thought she would feel excitement just because her opponent recognized her strength.

After all, with her talent, there was no one who dared look down on her.

But she also knew that Bai Zihan would now be stronger than ever, and she had to find a way to win.

The Vermillion Sunfire Bow flared to life in her hands, flames bursting across the arena as she poured her qi into it.

Arrows rained down like meteors, each one shrieking with lethal power.

But Bai Zihan did not dodge.

"Eternal Flowing Water Sword!"

At once, sword qi surged outward like a boundless river.

The first volley of fiery arrows streaked toward him-

Shhhhhh-!

With a sweep of his sword, the river of qi swallowed them whole, redirecting their force as if her flames were mere leaves drifting on the current.

A sudden twist of his wrist, and those arrows of flame, instead of being extinguished, were carried by the sword's flow, redirected and hurled back at their creator with even greater force.

"What?!"

Sun Yaoqing's eyes widened as her own arrows came screaming toward her, now amplified by his sword qi.

She spun gracefully, her bow whistling as she loosed more shots, detonating the redirected arrows before they reached her.

The crowd was trembling, unable to keep up with the exchange.

To them, even defending against Sun Yaoqing seemed impossible-let alone

turning her attacks back upon her like Bai Zihan had.

What kind of martial technique was this?

But it did not end there.

Before she could steady herself, Bai Zihan moved again.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword!"

To the crowd, it was as if Bai Zihan had vanished completely, leaving only

flickering illusions in his wake.

Arrows whistled from Sun Yaoqing's bow, one after another, detonating with force enough to melt stone. Yet none struck true.

Each arrow cut through a fading afterimage, the real Bai Zihan always just

beyond her reach.

A cold presence brushed past her neck. A faint ripple of qi slid across her bowstring before vanishing.

Her heart clenched.

(This... this is Bai Zihan. The true genius of the Desolate Heaven Empire.)

The court fell into stunned silence, all eyes fixed on the duel.

To them, it looked as if Bai Zihan was finally serious.

But to him, this was still only testing.

He had drawn his Eternal Spirit Sword not to end the fight swiftly, but to see what made Sun Yaoqing's flames different-what had allowed her to burn him,

if only for an instant.

His crimson eyes gleamed with sharp curiosity as his nine shadows circled her, the Eternal Flowing Water Sword rippling around him like endless tides. "Her strength isn't higher than Azure Sun's Elder, yet he never managed to burn me-while she did," Bai Zihan muttered, still unable to discern what was special about Princess Sun Yaoqing.

"Perhaps I should take an attack head-on and feel it again."

Bai Zihan's smile was small, almost amused.

With a casual flick of his wrist, the Eternal Spirit Sword slid back into its sheath, disappearing into his storage ring with the faintest chime.

The motion was so effortless that many in the court scarcely noticed-except for the look it left on their faces.

Confusion rippled through the gathered nobles. Sun Yaoqing's brow furrowed, eyes narrowing.

(He stored his sword? What is he planning?)

Bai Zihan spread his arms wide, palms open and exposed as if offering himself.

His posture was relaxed, almost inviting.

"Come then," he said, voice calm and clear so that every ear could hear. "Hit me with everything you have. Don't hold back."

A hush fell so heavy it pressed against the skin. For a heartbeat no one moved-then outrage flared like fire on dry grass.

"How insulting! To stand bare-handed before a princess and ask to be struck?" Some took it as mockery; others saw it as provocation.

Sun Yaoqing felt the insult like a hot blade at her throat.

His deliberate exposure-his apparent invitation-felt less like a challenge and more like a dare to humiliate her.

Anger swelled inside her, hot and unforgiving.

The careful composure she had worn all day shattered. What remained was a woman furious at being toyed with before her people.

Her face flushed, eyes blazing.

"You want full strength?" she snapped, voice low at first-then it broke into a roar.

"Fine. I'll give you every last bit of it!"

Her calm was gone, replaced with fury.

"I'll kill you!"

The cry tore across the training ground like a war-cry.

It shocked the court into silence and sent a ripple of fear and exhilaration through those watching.

No one had ever seen such words from the elegant and prim princess before. It seemed Bai Zihan had completely infuriated her.

Qi surged in a violent, hungry wave. The Vermillion Sunfire Bow flared in her hands as if answering her wrath.

Flames ignited across the string; the very air shuddered.

Sun Yaoqing poured every shred of her pride, fury, and cultivated power into the shot.

Arrows-dozens-exploded into being, searing with concentrated heat; behind them, a pillar of fire condensed, a living spear of sunlight aimed true.

The audience could only watch as the princess-red hair like a flare, eyes like molten rubies-loosed her fury.

The world narrowed to a single, violent line from her bow to the man who stood with arms spread: Bai Zihan.

The shot landed.

When it struck, the arena shook, tiles splintering beneath the sheer force.

A column of fire engulfed Bai Zihan whole, the blaze clawing upward like it meant to consume the heavens themselves.

The crowd cried out in shock, shielding their faces from the heat.

Within that inferno-

Bai Zihan felt it.

Unlike before, this fire was no trick. This was pure, unrestrained rage forged into flame, and it carried a heat that bit into his flesh.

His refined body, which had endured tribulations of fire that could melt gold and break void, now felt scorched.

His skin tingled, then burned. For the first time in years, he felt pain.

His crimson eyes narrowed as he steadied himself in the center of the blaze. The sensation was eerily familiar.

Not flame exactly-but the raw, invasive heat that sought to overwhelm his body.

And then realization struck him like lightning.

(Heavenly Body... This sensation-it's the same as Jin Yuelin's power!)

Indeed, those with Heavenly Bodies intensified their element many times over.

Like Bai Xueqing, who could magnify the strength of every Ice Technique, it might be the same for Sun Yaoqing if she possessed a Heavenly Body related to fire.

"Could it be..."

He muttered, half in awe, half in suspicion.

Without hesitation, he called inward to the Immortal Emperor.

"Immortal Emperor," Bai Zihan's voice was steady even as flames licked his body.

"Tell me does that princess possess the Heavenly Body related to Fire?"

A pause.

The Immortal Emperor's voice, ageless and heavy, resonated.

"I cannot say. There is one Heavenly Body related to fire and that is Heavenly Fire Body. But I have never seen nor met one who bore the Heavenly Fire Body."

Indeed, the Immortal Emperor had already witnessed two such bodies-yet even she could not claim to know them all.

And Bai Zihan, not yet twenty, had already met two.

If Princess Sun Yaoqing also had one, that would make three.

(How is this possible?)

Such coincidences, it shouldn't be possible unless...

Outside, the crowd roared as the flames raged, many convinced Bai Zihan had finally fallen.

Seeing that he was not walking out as before, many believed he had underestimated Sun Yaoqing and paid the price.

Sun Yaoqing stood tall, chest heaving, every drop of qi poured into that strike.

At first, satisfaction flickered in her heart-thinking Bai Zihan must finally know her power.

But as the silence stretched on, worry crept in.

"He isn't dead... right?"

She whispered in fear.

One should know-this was Bai Zihan, the esteemed Young Master of the Desolate Heaven Empire.

If she had truly killed him, then by tomorrow, the Desolate Heaven Empire would march on the Falling Star Empire.

But there was no need to wonder for long.

The flames parted.

Bai Zihan stepped out, utterly unscathed.

Sun Yaoqing sighed in relief. But she also knew she had lost.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 312 The Crimson Flame Beside Him[1,471 words]

Chapter 312 The Crimson Flame Beside Him

"How did he survive?"

"Is his body truly indestructible?"

Onlookers watched with shock on their faces.

Bai Zihan had deliberately taken the attack head-on, and yet it hadn't done anything to him.

If that was the case, then wasn't it impossible for anyone to win if Bai Zihan refused to go easy on them?

At least, people below the Spirit Severing Realm had no chance at all.

However, if they brought out Void Refinement Cultivator, most of whom are over 100 years old, even if they won, it would be a humiliation.

A battle of forty against eighteen was already unfair-but if someone over a hundred years old were brought to fight an eighteen-year-old, it would be nothing but humiliation.

Victory would bring disgrace, and defeat would only magnify that humiliation even further.

"Your Majesty," Bai Zihan said. "It seems I have won. Tell me-are there any other opponents you wish me to face?"

The Emperor's jaw clenched. For a heartbeat, everything remained deathly quiet.

Finally, the Emperor's voice rumbled, low and heavy.

"No! There are no more."

Not to mention, after this fight, there couldn't possibly be someone who had the will to go against Bai Zihan-and even if they did, they would obviously lose as well, since their greatest genius Sun Yaoqing had lost so easily.

His plan had failed, and the only result was Bai Zihan's dominance and the realization of the gap between the Falling Star Empire and the Desolate Heaven Empire.

In the future, perhaps if they were ever to go to war with the Desolate Heaven Empire, these so-called geniuses might think twice before having the courage

to do so.

Bai Zihan inclined his head ever so slightly. His lips curved into a faint smile that did not reach his eyes.

"Good!"

This had taken him longer than he wanted. Now, finally, he could go and teach those bastards of that Mysterious Organization a lesson.

He only hoped they had what he was looking for-otherwise, who knew what he might do, given the trouble he had gone through just to reach them.

The Emperor's fingers drummed once against the jade armrest before he rose to his feet.

His face was calm, yet beneath that mask lurked the simmering frustration of humiliation.

"Young Master Bai, his voice carried across the hall, measured, deliberate. "You may go. I am a little exhausted. I will retire and rest for the day."

He turned, the golden hems of his imperial robe swaying as he prepared to leave the training arena.

Of course, it wasn't because of exhaustion, but because of the embarrassment and humiliation that had been brought upon him by his Empire's geniuses.

But before he could take more than a few steps-

"Wait!"

Bai Zihan's interrupted before he left.

"There is one thing I would request of Your Majesty," Bai Zihan said.

The Emperor's brow furrowed ever so slightly.

"Speak!"

"May I take her with me?"

By her, he meant Princess Sun Yaoqing. The words dropped into the court like a thunderclap.

Murmurs broke out instantly among the gathered ministers. Everyone is discussing just what Bai Zihan is planning.

The Emperor froze mid-step, his eyes narrowed. He also thought about what Bai Zihan was scheming.

"And what reason do you have for making such a request?"

Bai Zihan's faint smile returned. His eyes, calm and unreadable, swept once across the silent crowd before returning to the Emperor.

"In truth, Your Majesty, I am a guest in your empire," he said. "There are places I must go, matters I must attend to. For such things, I require both a guide and someone whose presence guarantees my identity. Princess Sun Yaoqing, as your empire's brightest pearl, would serve both roles perfectly. With her at my side, there will be none who dare question me."

His words were courteous, logical-difficult to refute.

In reality, however, Bai Zihan's crimson eyes lingered briefly on Sun Yaoqing, narrowing ever so slightly.

(She has a Heavenly Body or something similar.)

He was just curious and wanted to know about Sun Yaoqing's power.

The Emperor's lips pressed into a thin line. His silence stretched long, heavy with unspoken refusal.

Before he could speak, Sun Yaoqing's voice cut across the hall.

"Father Emperor, let me go with Young Master Bai!"

Sun Yaoqing also thought of this as a perfect opportunity to observe Bai Zihan.

"He is a guest of our empire, and as princess, it is my duty to extend hospitality. Besides..."

Her ruby eyes flicked to Bai Zihan's.

"I would like to show Young Master Bai the Falling Star Empire myself."

The Emperor thought for a while and nodded.

"Mmm. Very well," the Emperor said at last. "Since the princess herself is willing, i will not stop her."

His eyes locked with Bai Zihan's for a long, unreadable moment-it was for sure that the Emperor had now become wary of Bai Zihan, not because of who was behind him but because of his power itself.

Bai Zihan merely inclined his head, crimson eyes flashing faintly with amusement.

"Good," he said softly.

The grand flying ship of the Bai Clan was quietly stationed at the Royal Dock. Within, Bai Clan members stood waiting-their faces filled with ease. There was no need to worry about anything in the Falling Star Empire with their strength.

They didn't follow Bai Zihan because he was the only one invited, and following him might displease the Emperor and others.

As for safety, with Grand Elder Bai Ren on board, there was no need to worry. At the moment Bai Zihan was in danger, he could immediately go and protect him.

"Young Master Bai, wouldn't he be fighting with the Emperor?"

"Phew! Haha, who knows? It is Young Master Bai after all!"

"Well, the Emperor shouldn't be stupid enough to pick a fight with Young Master Bai."

They discussed and knew that Bai Zihan, despite whatever new reputation he had gained, was very keen on making trouble.

The prospect of making trouble with the Emperor of the Falling Star Empire didn't seem impossible if it was Bai Zihan.

Just then, the massive gates of the Palace opened and a figure emerged.

Bai Zihan!

He strode forward with his usual calm elegance, robes unstained, his bearing untouchable.

But this time, walking beside him was the radiant Princess Sun Yaoqing, her crimson hair catching the sunlight like flowing fire.

Two attendants followed behind her, their wary gazes scanning the Bai Clan ship with silent caution.

Mingzhu had seen many flying ships of the Falling Star Empire, but nothing could compare to the size of Bai Zihan's.

(How can the Bai Clan allow their Young Master to just take such a massive flying ship?)

She considered that something like this should be considered a treasure, to be protected and used only in an emergency.

At least, that was the understanding and common sense-yet Bai Zihan had brought it into another Empire.

Meilin also looked around in awe.

The Bai Clan's flying ship loomed like a floating fortress above the Royal Dock, its jade-and-gold hull gleaming faintly with protective runes, every inch of it radiating quiet dominance.

The gangway unfurled, and Bai Zihan stepped aboard.

Princess Sun Yaoqing followed, her crimson hair spilling behind her like a silken flame, her two attendants trailing close at her side.

Both girls cast sharp, curious glances at the interior, their delicate brows faintly furrowed.

The interior of the flying ship was no less majestic than its exterior-polished spiritwood floors, glowing lanterns lit with steady blue flame, and corridors etched with flowing array lines that pulsed with soft light, channeling qi throughout the vessel.

Awaiting them at the threshold was a slender figure.

Luo Qing!

The girl bowed gracefully, her braid sliding over one shoulder as her misty brown eyes lifted toward her young master.

Her movements were simple yet practiced, her bearing unassuming yet dignified-one could see she was accustomed to standing quietly at Bai Zihan's side.

"Young Master," Luo Qing said softly, her voice like clear water, "would you like me to prepare tea?"

Bai Zihan nodded, his gaze calm as always.

"Mn. Prepare some for me, and also for our guests."

His crimson eyes flicked briefly toward Sun Yaoqing before returning to Luo Qing.

"Make it the spirit tea from the Misty Jade Garden"

"As you command."

Luo Qing inclined her head, her expression as tranquil as moonlight upon still water.

With a single step, she turned and departed deeper into the ship to fulfill his order.

The exchange lasted no more than a few breaths. To Bai Zihan, it was ordinary.

To his clan members, it was familiar.

But to Sun Yaoqing and her attendants-

It was odd.

They could clearly see that Luo Qing was just a mortal with no shred of cultivation at all.

In the Falling Star Empire, such people were treated worse than animals.

For such people, becoming a personal servant of someone as esteemed as Bai Zihan would be a pipe dream that would never come true. Yet, here it was-a mortal who was the personal servant of Bai Zihan. Not only that, they also noticed that other Bai Clan members treated Luo Qing with quite a bit of respect despite her being just a servant-and a mortal at that. In Falling Star Empire, such a scene would almost be impossible.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 313 Chongsheng![1,592 words]

Chapter 313 Chongsheng!

In the Falling Star Empire, far from the gleaming palaces and grand flying ships, there existed another world.

Broken cobblestones. Rotten timber shacks. The stench of filth and despair.

And among them was him-a commoner so lowly his name barely mattered to those around him.

He was a servant in the Quan household, a Cultivator Clan, respected by many.

His job was simple: sweep the floors, scrub the stables, polish the boots. A dog's duty. And yet, even dogs were often treated better.

His wages were nothing-just enough gruel to keep him from starving.

His back bore the scars of years of lashes. He had long since stopped counting. What else could he do?

This was his fate. A commoner's life, worth less than mud.

That day, however, was worse than any before.

The young master of the Quan family, infamous for his cruelty, had lost a wager.

His fury demanded an outlet, and who better than the worthless servant who stood closest at hand?

The first strike sent him sprawling. The second cracked ribs. The third left him coughing blood.

He did not resist. He never did.

Each kick drove him closer to death, until his vision dimmed and his breath came in ragged gasps.

(Perhaps it's better this way,) he thought faintly.

(Better to end here than live another day like this.)

The beating dragged on until the servant's body was nothing more than a sack of broken bones and torn flesh.

At last, the young master of the Quan family drew back his foot.

"Hmph!"

He spat to the side, glaring down with disdain.

"You're lucky I am feeling benevolent today. Consider this mercy."

With those words, he flicked his sleeve and strode away, his attendants trailing behind with mocking laughter.

The servant lay there, blood seeping from his lips, his breath shallow.

(Mercy?)

He wanted to laugh, to curse, to spit back the hatred he carried in his heart. But even at the end of his life, he couldn't summon the courage to voice it. His lips trembled, but no sound came.

He realized then-he had truly become a dog, enduring everything thrown at him without resistance, without pride, without even the dignity of defiance.

His eyes closed. His life faded, the final thread of his existence unraveling into nothing.

A sudden jolt tore through him. His chest convulsed as if dragging in a breath that should not exist.

"-What!?"

A voice gasped, foreign and bewildered.

Eyes snapped open, hazy, bloodied, but no longer the same.

"I... I didn't die?"

The soul muttered, his voice hoarse with disbelief.

"Haha... F**King Sovereigns! You all failed!"

For a heartbeat, happiness and excitement reigned. Then-

"Argh! Ouch! What the hell-!?"

He clutched his ribs, grimacing as agony exploded through his battered frame. "Why does it feel like every bone in my body's been shattered? Damn it, this hurts!"

The soul twisted, dragging himself up an inch before collapsing again with a pained groan.

"What... What is this place? This body? Don't tell me..."

He stared at his bloodied hands, trembling, the calluses of a lifetime of servitude etched into the flesh.

"I've... reincarnated?"

His mind reeled, caught between panic and dawning realization.

Indeed, looking around, the place wasn't anything remote close to where he was. His toilet was better than such a dirty place.

He groaned, pain still stabbing through his ribs like hot needles.

"Tch... damn it. Out of all the places I could've reincarnated, it had to be this filthy pit?"

His nose wrinkled at the sour stench of rot and unwashed bodies that clung to the air.

The wooden walls around him were crumbling, more like a pigsty than a room meant for humans. His toilet back home was far cleaner than this excuse of a

dwelling.

But still-he was alive.

A crooked smile pulled at his bloodied lips.

(At least... I lived. That means I have a chance. A chance to settle my grudges.

To rise again and get my revenge.)

He tilted his head, inhaling deeply.

The qi in the air here was thin, diluted-nothing like the rich spiritual energy he once bathed in. Still, it was not completely barren.

"Hmph. By my senses, this qi density is... at best a quarter of the Abyssal Fiend

Sect. So this backwater is called..."

His eyes narrowed as fragments of knowledge surfaced in the mind he now occupied.

"The Falling Star Empire."

So this was his new cage.

(If this is where I've landed, then so be it. Even mud can be molded into stone with enough fire.)

But first-he needed to know exactly who he had become.

Closing his eyes, he dove inward, sifting through the fractured remnants of the soul that once owned this body.

Memories surged-half-formed images, broken moments, bitter emotions.

He saw a child, thin and alone, abandoned on a roadside. A hand dragging him to the gates of the Quan family.

Laughter, commands, beatings. Years of servitude-scrubbing floors, mucking stalls, polishing boots until his fingers bled.

He saw the bratty young masters, sneering as they struck him again and again.

Their cruelty only worsened as their cultivation grew, every casual blow laced with qi, every strike leaving wounds that festered for weeks.

And yet no one stopped them.

Servants turned their eyes away. The elders ignored it. Even guests of the Quan family barely blinked.

Because this was common in the Falling Star Empire. The strong trampled the weak. The weak endured until they broke.

A bitter chuckle slipped from the new soul's lips.

"Heh. This is familiar. This world, this family-it's no different than the sects I knew. Power rules. The weak are dogs. Nothing more, nothing less."

His crimson gaze flickered with something darker.

"I am a demonic cultivator who has reigned over all the Demonic Cutlviator."

His palm pressed against his chest, blood sticky beneath his fingers.

"But since I've taken this body, I'll honor its last will."

His voice lowered, sharp with promise.

"Chong Sheng, I'll carry your name and hatred for you. I'll repay every lash, every blow, every humiliation... with blood."

The air trembled faintly as his killing intent surged, a predator's promise whispered into the shadows.

"Rest in peace. From here on, your enemies are mine."

The night dragged on in silence.

Chong Sheng sat cross-legged on the filthy straw mat, his back hunched and trembling. His ribs ached with every breath, but his focus was unshaken.

He closed his eyes.

Inhale! Exhale!

The air of the Falling Star Empire was thin, the qi within it weak-barely a quarter of what he once had in the Abyssal Fiend Sect.

Moreover, Chongsheng being a servant barely crapping by has no pill for Cutlviation.

But it was okay. It might be slow but he knew that he could do it.

Slowly, steadily, he guided strands of Qi into his battered body.

They were faint and impure, yet with each cycle, the pain in his ribs dulled. Bruised flesh knit together grain by grain, torn vessels sealed drop by drop. Hours passed. Sweat soaked his tattered

clothes, but when dawn finally spilled through the cracks of the rotting walls, Chong Sheng opened his eyes.

He could breathe without coughing blood. He could clench his fists without wincing.

It was far from recovery, but at least-he could stand.

"Good," he muttered, voice hoarse. "At least I won't die crawling like a worm."

The following day, he slipped quietly from the servant quarters, moving with the obedience expected of a slave. None spared him a glance.

The Quan clan's estate sprawled across mountains and valleys, their territory vast.

Cultivators guarded the main halls and training grounds, but the deeper forests and cliffs remained largely unexplored-too insignificant for true disciples, too dangerous for ordinary servants.

For Chong Sheng, it was an opportunity.

With careful steps, he ventured into the outer mountain forests.

His senses, dulled by this weak body, still carried the instincts of a Sovereign.

He recognized bitter stalks of Ironroot Grass, leaves of Moonlit Orchid, and a patch of Blood Marrow Vine clinging to jagged stone.

Each herb had value. Each carried a trace of spiritual energy-meager, but not useless.

"No disciples come here for scraps like these," he mused, collecting them into a bundle. "But in the right hand, they are treasures."

Back in his shack, he set to work.

A cracked iron pot became his furnace. Stones served as pestles.

With calm precision, he crushed roots, ground leaves, and mixed them with spring water he fetched at dawn. The crude concoction simmered, qi bleeding faintly from the herbs.

He guided the process with thin threads of his own qi, purging impurities, coaxing the medicinal essence to remain.

By nightfall, three rough, misshapen pills lay cooling on a broken shard of pottery.

They were ugly, uneven, their surfaces marred with cracks-but they pulsed faintly with medicinal light.

For a servant, they were priceless treasures.

Even if sold for the lowest price, the money would be enough to feed a family for a month without problem.

Chong Sheng swallowed one whole. At once, bitter heat exploded through his chest, flooding his veins.

He clenched his teeth, seizing control of the rampaging energy, and forced it into his meridians.

The pain was excruciating, but he endured.

One night. Two. Three.

He swallowed the second pill, then the third. Each time his body writhed and burned, but each time he tamed the pain.

His bones hardened. His muscles grew firm. The scars on his back faded into faint lines.

By the seventh night, his body had shed its mortal frailty. His dantian stirred like a newly awakened beast, hunger endless.

Then-

BOOM!

A muffled surge of qi erupted from within him. The hut trembled, dust falling from the rafters.

Chong Sheng opened his eyes, crimson light flashing in the darkness.

The frail servant of the Quan family was no more.

He had stepped onto the path once more.

Qi Refining Stage.

A small realm, a weak beginning-but enough to separate him from mortals.

Enough to make those who had trampled him bleed.

Rising to his feet, he clenched his fists, qi humming faintly in his veins.

"The first step is done," he whispered, a cold smile spreading.

"Now, Quan family... you will learn what rises from the mud."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 314 Palace in the Sky[1,418 words]

Chapter 314 Palace in the Sky

The Bai Clan's flying ship sailed smoothly across the skies, leaving a trail of faint golden ripples in its wake.

Inside, it was as if they had stepped into another world entirely.

Polished spiritwood halls gleamed under the soft light of qi-lanterns, silken drapes swayed gently with the motion of the vessel, and every corridor exuded quiet grandeur.

The floors, the walls, even the furniture-everything bore subtle inscriptions, harmonizing qi through the ship in a way that made it feel less like a vessel of war and more like a palace afloat in the heavens.

Meilin's eyes sparkled as she leaned closer to Mingzhu, whispering in awe.

"Sister Mingzhu... this ship... it's basically a palace in the skies! Look at those runes-this isn't just protection, it's also formation-linked heating and cooling. And that-"

She giggled softly, cheeks still faintly flushed from her earlier indulgence-

"It even has a bath! Can you believe it? A flying ship with a bath carved of jade stone, with water flowing nonstop, I swear, I could live on this ship and never complain."

Mingzhu gave a small nod, her lips curving faintly.

She too had been impressed-though unlike Meilin, she was more reserved in showing it.

For them, flying ships were synonymous with weapons of war.

Heavily armed vessels, bristling with spirit cannons and filled with explosive formations, their sole purpose was destruction.

To see such a vessel instead dedicated to comfort was shocking-almost wasteful.

Sun Yaoqing, sitting across from Bai Zihan, let her gaze drift across the surroundings with a calm expression, but her thoughts betrayed a different story.

This is too extravagant!

To use such a treasure only for comfort and travel-it was arrogance.

And yet, as she leaned back against the cushioned seat, the faint fragrance of the Misty Jade Garden tea lingering in the air, she found herself liking it. (If traveling could always be this comfortable, I wouldn't complain either...) She hid the small curl of her lips behind her teacup.

However, her eyes also quietly glanced at Luo Qing, who was talking with Bai Zihan with a smile on her face.

Bai Zihan showed more respect to her than he did to the entire court of the Falling Star Empire.

After some time, her ruby eyes shifted back toward Bai Zihan, who sat in composed silence, as if this luxury meant nothing to him.

"Young Master Bai!"

She said suddenly, her tone polite but edged with curiosity.

He glanced at her.

"Mm?"

Her lips curved slightly.

"Did you not say you needed a guide? We've been traveling for so long... and yet you haven't asked me where you wish to go."

Her attendants exchanged puzzled glances.

It was true-if Bai Zihan needed her to act as a guide, why hadn't he consulted her even once?

They had traveled as if Bai Zihan already knew where they were going in the Falling Star Empire.

"I already have a guide, though I don't know whether to trust him or not."

He replied.

At that moment, Bai Zihan lifted his hand, and with a snap of his fingers, the sound of chains rattled through the cabin.

From a side chamber, two Bai guards dragged a figure into view and threw him down onto the polished floor.

The princess and her attendants turned sharply, their eyes narrowing as the man was revealed.

His body was bound in heavy chains, bloodied bandages wrapped tightly around his face and torso. Bones jutted at unnatural angles, his skin mottled with bruises, one eye swollen shut.

He looked barely alive, his breathing ragged, yet still clinging stubbornly to existence.

Sun Yaoqing's brows furrowed.

"...And who is he?"

Bai Zihan's crimson gaze glinted coldly.

"The man is from the same organization that tried to kill me," he said lightly, as if speaking of the weather.

"He knows the location I need. But if he dares to deceive me, well, then I would have to ask him kindly again."

"No no no, I am telling the truth, Young Master Bai."

Zou Shiji replied, scared out of his wits when he heard Bai Zihan's words.

The attendants froze, their expressions turning grim as they studied the half-dead man who twitched faintly under Bai Zihan's gaze.

A chill ran down Sun Yaoqing's spine-not from the captive, but from the calm, casual way Bai Zihan had spoken, as though torture, death, and pursuit were simply part of his daily routine.

She nearly forgot who Bai Zihan was, just because of how kindly he treated his servant.

(There were rumors that he annihilated one clan just because they somewhat offended him. I guess that's true!)

Princess Sun Yaoqing thought.

At the time, many didn't believe that a clan would move to destroy another powerful clan just because of the whim of a sixteen-year-old.

But looking at Bai Zihan, it seemed like he commanded power far beyond his age.

On the other hand, look at her. Despite being the most talented among the Royal Family, much less doing something so huge, even when going out, she had to be cautious.

Even when she knew who had sent assassins after her, she couldn't confront them because of lack of evidence-and perhaps because she still wanted to believe in her siblings.

"I believe you, for now!"

Bai Zihan answered as he looked at the horizon.

The flying ship descended steadily, the golden ripples in the sky fading as vessel lowered into a vast stretch of rugged mountains cloaked in mist.

Zou Shiji, still chained and trembling, forced out a weak laugh between ragged breaths.

"There... that's the place."

He lifted a trembling finger toward the valley below, where there was nothing but a small establishment.

"It may look like nothing, but don't be deceived, Young Master Bai. That place down there only appears small and inauspicious. In truth, it is a front. Inside, it's vast-layers of underground chambers."

His one good eye flickered with fear, but also a desperate will to survive.

Bai Zihan's gaze lowered, crimson eyes reflecting the shabby cluster of stone huts nestled in the valley below.

At first glance, it looked no different from a commoner settlement-broken walls, smoke rising from crooked chimneys, the faint bustle of farmers returning with their oxen.

"They really spent quite a bit to hide well."

If not for Zou Shiji, even if one came across this place, nothing would look out of place.

"Very well, Zou Shiji. Let's see if your tongue speaks the truth-or if I must ask you again."

He rose to his feet, folding his hands behind his back.

Just as he was about to descend, a voice, deep and steady like a mountain, echoed inside the cabin.

"Zihan'er, I'll accompany you."

The air shifted.

A figure materialized near the edge of the cabin, not with the sound of footsteps or the ripple of qi, but simply appeared-as if he had been there all along, hidden in plain sight.

Mingzhu reacted instantly. Her arm swept in front of Princess Sun Yaoqing, her eyes narrowing sharply as she released a protective wave of qi.

Even Princess Sun Yaoqing's eyes widened, her grip tightening on her teacup as her pupils trembled.

To say Bai Ren appeared out of thin air would be exaggeration-but not by much.

None of them had sensed his approach. None of them had noticed him until he spoke.

And now that they did, they realized-his presence wasn't just unfathomable. It was impossible.

The aura radiating from him was not of any realm they knew.

It was deep, vast, and terrifyingly still-like an abyss that swallowed every attempt to measure it.

(Could he be in the Immortal Realm?)

A realm unknown to the Falling Star Empire-yet not unknown to the Desolate Heaven Empire.

Immortal Ascension... or perhaps even beyond that.

They couldn't even sense much cultivation from Bai Ren, and even if they did, it would overwhelm them.

"Grand Elder, looks like you were getting bored," Bai Zihan said.

He knew that Grand Elder Bai Ren, who spent most of his time in the Bai Clan just to protect it, was quite bored without much to do. After all, who in their right mind would attack the Bai Clan?

Moreover, even if one attacked-like the Li or Zhao Clans-unless they deployed their own Grand Elders or posed a threat to the Bai Clan's existence, he was not allowed to interfere.

"Hmph! Who said that? I was just worried that our heir might die because of those insolent fools."

Grand Elder Bai Ren justified it, though it was clearly a lie.

Well, Bai Zihan didn't care much.

With Bai Ren, there was no need for other Bai Clan members to accompany him.

"You all stay here. The Grand Elder and I will go and take care of this."

Bai Zihan commanded.

The Bai Clan members, of course, nodded. With the Grand Elder going, they were no longer worried about Bai Zihan being in danger. "Now then, shall we see whether they have the answer I seek?"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 315 The Masked Village[1,399 words]

Chapter 315 The Masked Village

The village carried on as if nothing were amiss-farmers leading their cows out to graze, women hanging herbs to dry, children chasing each other through the dirt paths.

On the farm, a man's hoe struck the earth with steady rhythm, dull thuds echoing against the mountain breeze.

Beside him, a woman knelt in the soil, plucking weeds from between rows of green shoots.

Her laughter was soft, carrying the warmth of a simple life.

"Husband, if you work any harder, the land will complain."

The man chuckled, wiping sweat from his brow.

"Haha, If I don't, how will we have enough for winter? Our son eats like a starving ox."

The woman shook her head, smiling as she tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear.

For a brief moment, it was the perfect picture of peace-two villagers, husband and wife, tilling their humble fields beneath the sun.

But the illusion shattered the instant a shadow fell across their crops.

The earth trembled.

High above, two figures stepped down from the prow, robes stirring with qi, their presence so sharp it was like a blade pressed against the throat of heaven and earth.

Bai Ren's cold eyes swept the fields like a storm. Beside him, Bai Zihan's crimson gaze landed on the couple.

Several villagers exchanged glances, a flicker of panic flashing in their eyes before they smoothed their faces again.

One look was enough to recognize Bai Zihan as someone of high status. Additionally, Cultivators were all revered in the Falling Star Empire.

The man stepped forward and bowed respectfully, his voice trembling just the right amount to sound genuine.

"L-Lords, what brings such esteemed guests to this humble village?"

The wife picked up her basket of herbs and with a face full of fear, said.

"We are but simple folk. If we have offended you in any way, please forgive us..."

Their act was flawless to ordinary eyes. But Bai Zihan didn't even blink.

He clasped his hands behind his back, his gaze sharp enough to flay skin from bone.

"Take me to your leader and you might live."

The silence that followed was suffocating.

"L-Lord, I don't understand. Do you want to meet with the Village Head?"

The man asked.

"Don't let me repeat myself."

Bai Zihan declared.

It was enough from this word that Bai Zihan already knows about their secret organization.

The tall man's smile froze. The woman's hands trembled ever so slightly, the herbs in her basket scattering onto the dirt path.

Their eyes darted, meeting each other for the briefest instant.

Then-murderous intent flared.

The man's body blurred as a dagger coated with venomous qi shot from his sleeve, aimed straight for Bai Zihan's throat.

At the same instant, the woman's herbs scattered into a poisonous mist, her fingers weaving seals as she unleashed a hidden talisman, streaking like lightning toward Bai Zihan.

The moment the two strikes flew, the farm's peace tore like paper.

"Since, you already know, then die!"

The dagger sang through the air-swift, lethal, a glint of black qi trailing its edge.

The talisman hissed and blossomed into a choking green mist that curled toward Bai Zihan like a living thing.

Bai Zihan didn't even move and just watched.

The dagger never reached his throat-his Qi barrier intercepted it, stopping the blade in midair as if it had struck an immaterial wall.

The black qi sizzled and died, collapsing into harmless motes that drifted to the ground.

As for the poison that the woman used, there was no effect at all. There was no way that weak poison as such would work against his body.

This made the two who were acting as husband and wife wary.

"Our attack has no effect. Our enemy seemed quite powerful. Good thing, they are stupid!"

Around them, the false villagers shed their masks.

Seamed sleeves slipped away to reveal hidden knives, belt pouches spilled out more talismans and vials, and men who had pretended to mend roofs pulled

short spears from beneath straw mats.

Where moments ago had been harmless laborers were assassins, eyes cold and merciless.

"Cover blown," the man snarled, voice raw,

"Capture the boy-he seemed to have some status and we can ask how he knew

of this place. As for the old man, kill him!"

A dozen furtive nods passed among the revealed assassins.

They scattered into motion with practiced efficiency; this was no amateur banditry but an organized operation, coordinated and ruthless.

Bai Ren, who had stood silent and still. He did not move to help; he didn't need

to.

He just watched Bai Zihan take care of everything by himself with admiration. (He has grown even stronger.)

An 18 years old Spirit Severing Realm heir, he couldn't help laughing when he

heard that.

There was also Bai Xueqing who wasn't bad at all.

With such a generation, Bai Ren felt quite relieved and positive about the future

of the Bai Clan.

He will protect Bai Zihan but didn't think it was needed for such a group of

trash.

The assassins closed in at once, a ring of blades and flashing talismans. They struck from all sides, a coordinated burst meant to overwhelm.

Bai Zihan took it as if it were a summer breeze. Spears struck air; knives were met by a palm that barely moved.

A talisman exploded a hand's distance away and died like a spent firework. Where dozens had lunged, only scattered cloth and groans answered.

Men who had trained years to move as one found themselves tripped, disarmed, or knocked unconscious in pairs and threes. It took him no longer than a slow breath.

When the dust settled, the field was scatter of bruised bodies and broken weapons. Only one man still breathed, curled up and trembling where he'd

been thrown.

Bai Zihan stepped forward and crouched until his face was level with the survivor's. His crimson eyes were cold and bored.

"Lead me to your base," he threatened. "Or you'll suffer the same fate as the others."

The man choked, saliva and blood at his lips, eyes blown wide with fear.

He could not tell if the command was mercy or the promise of worse. Behind Bai Zihan, Bai Ren's shadowed profile watched, approving-There is no need for mercy for enemies, especially those who are after your life.

The survivor staggered to his feet, clutching his ribs where Bai Zihan's strike had cracked bone.

His eyes darted to Bai Ren, then back to the crimson gaze boring into him.

"I-I'll take you," he stammered, his voice hoarse. "Just... just spare my life, young master. I beg you."

Bai Zihan rose, hands folded neatly behind his back.

"So long as you lead us there, you may keep your pitiful life."

The man swallowed, unable to tell if it was truth or mockery, but he dared not gamble. Nodding frantically, he stumbled down a house in the village which leads to their underground base, every step quickened by fear of the predator following him.

The survivor stumbled ahead, clutching his side as he led them past rows of houses that still looked perfectly mundane-smoke curling from chimneys, tools leaning against walls, drying herbs hanging in bundles.

The man stopped at the farthest house, its door slightly crooked, a basket of grain left out front as if abandoned.

With trembling fingers, he pushed it open. Inside was nothing but a bare, dusty room, a cracked table, and a rug spread across the floor.

He kicked the rug aside.

A wooden trapdoor lay beneath. He hesitated, glancing back at Bai Zihan with pleading eyes.

"I've brought you... please, young master... my life, as promised?"

Bai Zihan's red eyes lingered on him for a moment.

"Lead the way!" The man nearly collapsed with relief, pulling open the trapdoor. A stale draft wafted up, thick with blood and cold metal.

The descent was long and steep, torchlight flickering along carved stone walls.

Strange glyphs glowed faintly in the dark, forming layers of defensive formations.

Yet none of them triggered, as if permission had already been granted.

By the time they reached the bottom, the air was heavy with killing intent.

The underground chamber stretched vast and wide, carved into a network of tunnels that converged into a central hall.

There, dozens of assassins waited-robles black as ink, weapons in hand, masks hiding every trace of humanity.

And above them all stood a man.

Void Refinement Realm! The assassins parted before him like shadows retreating from flame.

He studied Bai Zihan and Bai Ren with cold, measuring eyes. His voice, when it came, was slow and steady, as if he were already tightening a noose around their necks.

"Looks like they already know."

Bai Zihan murmured under his breath. eyes narrowing.

The elder's eyes locked on Bai Zihan and Bai Ren. His tone was calm, but it

carried the weight of one accustomed to commanding death.

"You've come far enough." His gaze sharpened. "Now tell me who are you? And how did you find our base?"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 316 Objective in Falling Star Empire[1,441 words]

Chapter 316 Objective in Falling Star Empire

The survivor who had led them down collapsed to his knees, groveling at the Void Refinement Elder's feet.

"E-Elder... they forced me! I had no choice!"

He sobbed, forehead slamming against the stone floor hard enough to split the skin. Blood trickled, yet he dared not stop.

"Please... forgive-"

A shadow moved.

The elder's sleeve flicked.

The survivor's body stiffened; his scream was cut short as a crimson mark flared at his throat.

The next moment, his head rolled to the floor, eyes still wide in terror, while his body slumped lifelessly.

The elder's cold gaze returned to Bai Zihan.

"Young one," he said softly, "answer me when I am nice-otherwise you will not have an easy death."

Bai Ren smirked.

"Threatening our Clan's heir before me? How dare you!"

A single yell brought most of them to their knees and even shook the Void Refinement Elder's confidence.

The Elder couldn't sense Bai Ren's cultivation realm at all.

(Is he in the Great Ascension Realm? No... Immortal Ascension!)

He wasn't sure, but he had dealt with Great Ascension cultivators before and their qi didn't feel as oppressive as the man before him.

"It can't be!"

He muttered. He had thought the strongest in the Falling Star Empire were only in the Great Ascension realm.

There are rumors that there are hidden Great Elders who have managed to reach the Immortal Ascension Realm but he shouldn't be so unlucky to run into one, right?

"Don't be scared. This must be some kind of technique. There are only two of them. Kill them!"

The Elder commanded.

"Heh! Look at that ignorant fool. It would only take a second."

Bai Ren spoke with a tone far more excited and cheerful than his actual words suggested.

"Grand Elder, don't kill him."

Bai Zihan said.

That Elder must be the one with the most information here, and if the Grand Elder killed him by chance then all their effort up to now might be wasted.

"Haha... I will try my best."

"Please do!"

By then, the group of assassins seemed to have recovered their spirit and were ready to attack Bai Ren and Bai Zihan.

Most of them were in the Nascent Soul realm, some in Soul Formation, and only four in the Spirit Severing realm.

Bai Zihan only had to handle those in Nascent Soul and Soul Formation; the others appeared intent on working with the elder to take care of Bai Ren, whom they believed to be in Great Ascension.

The battle was intense or so one would think but it ended in a matter of seconds.

"P-Please, I will tell you everything. Just spare me!"

The once proud elder begged at Bai Zihan's feet.

Against Grand Elder Bai Ren, with their level, even standing might have been difficult if he went all-out.

Yet Bai Ren did not go full strength-he merely toyed with them and waited for Bai Zihan to take care of the others.

Bai Zihan likewise didn't need to expend much strength to deal with these trash who mostly relied on sneak attacks.

"That would be great, but don't you dare try to deceive me," Bai Zihan said with murderous intent.

Gulp!

While the elder was in the Void Refinement Realm and the boy before him in the Spirit Severing Realm, the elder knew Bai Zihan was not to be underestimated.

It took Bai Zihan less than a minute to deal with the elites he had trained for so many years.

Even he hadn't been confident he could accomplish that.

And there was Bai Ren-the old monster whose strength was unfathomable.

"First of all, let me introduce myself. I'm Bai Zihan. You should have heard my name."

The elder's eyes widened as he stared at Bai Zihan; indeed, his appearance is that of Bai Clan.

He had heard reports that the Bai Clan was trying to gain permission to enter the Falling Star Empire, but he hadn't expected them to be here for them.

(It must be Zou Shiji!)

He connected the dots and realized it must be Zou Shiji, whom he had thought was late to complete the mission to Desolate Heaven Empire.

(But why is the Young Master of the Bai Clan after us?)

No matter what, he didn't think they or even Zou Shiji would have dared to offend the heir of the Bai Clan.

"Hahaha... It was Young Master Bai. No wonder you are so strong despite being so young. Forgive me for not recognizing you."

The elder immediately went into submissive acting.

Why?

He had heard Bai Zihan call the man who defeated him, Grand Elder.

The title Grand Elder of the Bai Clan is given only to those above the Immortal Ascension realm.

Given the power he had seen, it was certain. There was no escaping this; his only hope was to satisfy Bai Zihan and be spared.

"Can you tell me how we have offended you? I will definitely make amends."

The elder said. He seemed to be desperate to do anything to please Bai Zihan. "No need. I just need to know where your headquarters are and I can spare your life!"

Bai Zihan demanded.

The elder became cautious the moment he heard that.

(Looks like Zou Shiji spilled everything.)

He could only blame Zou Shiji, though it was not even his fault. However, he didn't know that.

"Young Master Bai, why are you looking for our headquarters?"

"Just answer what I asked!"

Bai Zihan said sternly.

The elder scratched the back of his head and replied awkwardly, "Young Master

Bai, it is not that I don't want to answer, but I don't know."

"Don't know?"

Bai Zihan asked angrily.

"I-It's true! Only a few people even get invited to headquarters. I am merely looking after this place, the elder quickly explained.

Bai Zihan looked at him and it seemed like he was telling the truth. Bai Ren would have also said something if he had detected lies from him.

(Looks like that organization is being really secretive.)

"You are really useless!"

Bai Zihan said angrily, almost as if he wanted to end the elder's life.

"B-But I know someone who might know."

The Elder immediately said, trying to make himself be useful so as to be spared by Bai Zihan.

"Speak!"

The elder trembled, eyes darting left and right, until finally he forced the words out.

"Elder Shuhai..."

He began.

"He is one of the Three Elders of this branch. Among us, he has the deepest ties to headquarters. Everything-reports, missions, orders-passes through his hands. If the headquarters speaks, it is Elder Shuhai who listens, and delivers their will to us."

"He definitely knows the location of the headquarter!"

The elder said firmly.

Bai Zihan's eyes narrowed.

"Where is he?"

The elder hesitated, lips trembling as if to hold back the words. But one glance from Bai Ren-cold, suffocating, impossible to resist-drove the answer from his throat.

"A-At the Royal Palace!"

Bai Zihan's brows lifted.

"The Royal Palace? What is he doing there?"

The elder's throat worked; every instinct screamed to stay silent, but in front of

Bai Ren he had no choice. His head would roll before he could even blink.

"To...to help the Second Prince seize the throne!"

A flicker of intrigue crossed Bai Zihan's face.

Why would this shadowy branch plant itself in the Falling Star Empire? What purpose did it serve? The answer, at last, had come.

Bai Zihan leaned forward, voice sharp.

"Why is your branch here at all? What is your objective in the Falling Star Empire?"

The elder bit his lip. Under that oppressive killing intent, the truth spilled out like a flood.

"Our purpose...is to control the empire from the shadows. And what better way than to place an emperor of our choosing on the throne?"

The elder hadn't thought much about it when he spoke. After all, Bai Zihan wasn't from the Falling Star Empire and wouldn't care who became emperor of the Falling Star Emperor.

He was right-Bai Zihan didn't care. Not until he heard the plan.

After all, he considered the Organization an enemy for daring to try to kill him.

There was no way he would let their scheme succeed.

Even if they controlled the Falling Star Empire, the power they would gain wouldn't trouble him- but he wouldn't allow them to operate unchecked, not when he knew their plan.

"Hehe... I just have an interesting plan."

Bai Zihan couldn't help but let out an evil laugh that sent shivers down the elder's spine.

"Grand Elder, tie him up and seal his cultivation. We might still need him. Who knows whether he told us the truth or not."

Bai Zihan said.

The elder was caught completely off guard.

"Young Master Bai, we had an agreement! As long as I answered your questions, you would spare me!"

He couldn't help but cry out in injustice.

Even though he had committed countless crimes, he still thought a young master from a prestigious clan would keep his word-or perhaps it was only a false hope he still clung to.

"I know. But I must first verify what you've said. Who knows if you've tried to feed me lies?"

"Naturally, I will let you off if what you said were true!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 317 The Empire's Hidden Rot[1,423 words]

Chapter 317 The Empire's Hidden Rot

On the Flying Ship, Princess Sun Yaoqing was worried and concerned about Bai Zihan.

After all, if something were to happen to him, it would become a political issue that the Falling Star Empire couldn't handle.

But it was just when she started to have worries that Bai Zihan was already back.

"Young Master! Congratulations!"

The Bai Clan member greeted him and already seemed to know that Bai Zihan had returned victorious.

Bai Zihan gave a casual nod and said,

"Keep him with the other prisoner."

Obviously, he was pointing at the Elder.

Bai Clan Members obeyed without any question.

The elder was thrown beside Zou Shiji, the two captives chained to opposite corners of the reinforced cell deep within the Bai Clan's flying ship.

The heavy door shut behind them with a metallic clang, leaving only the faint hum of spiritual formations scaling the space.

Zou Shiji sat cross-legged, face pale and gaunt, his once-pristine robes now tattered and stained with dried blood.

His eyes were closed, but the moment he heard footsteps and sensed the elder's presence, they snapped open-cold, sharp, and filled with suppressed fury.

The elder, still trembling from his earlier humiliation, turned his glare toward Zou Shiji.

His restraints prevented him from releasing his killing intent, yet his eyes burned with venom.

"You..."

He hissed, voice trembling with rage.

"All of this... all of this is because of you!"

Zou Shiji frowned.

"Me?"

"If you hadn't provoked Bai Zihan, why would the Bai Clan seek us? If you hadn't led them here, do you think they would have found this place?" The elder spat.

"Our entire branch is gone! Years of foundation, wiped out because of you."

Zou Shiji's expression darkened, but he said nothing at first.

The elder continued, voice growing shriller with each word.

"You were just supposed to check on some members in the Desolate Heaven Empire! Instead, you failed and led the Bai Clan straight to us! The blood of every man who died today is on your hands!"

A sharp laugh escaped Zou Shiji's lips, humorless and bitter.

"My fault?"

Zou Shiji lifted his head slowly, eyes glinting under the dim light.

This was a false accusation that he was not willing to take.

Zou Shiji still felt horror when he remembered the torture and suffering he went through despite having done nothing himself to Bai Zihan.

Zou Shiji knew that Bai Zihan had an agenda against the Organization because of the headquarters that messed with him.

He suffered because of that, but the elder was now pinning the blame on him- how could he take that lightly?

"Hmph! Trying to make yourself sound righteous. Yes, I betrayed you all, but are you not the same? Otherwise, how come you are here alive?"

Zou Shiji understood by now that if Bai Zihan were to deem someone useless and from his enemy's side, he would never show mercy.

So, the only reason the Elder was brought here meant that he was willing to betray them and give Bai Zihan the answer he seeks.

The Elder was caught off guard, and it was indeed true that he wasn't someone who could lecture someone on loyalty when he, too, betrayed his organization to stay alive.

Still the elder blamed Zou Shiji for everything that had happened.

"If not for you, the branch wouldn't have fallen. The organization will never forgive this."

Zou Shiji's lips curled faintly.

"The organization? Do you still think they'll come for you? You're a liability now. A failed elder with nothing left. If I were them... I'd assassinate you."

The elder's eyes widened slightly, but he quickly masked it with anger.

"You dare-"

"Dare?"

Zou Shiji cut in, his voice low and edged with scorn.

"What's left for you to threaten me with? You're already finished."

(Well, that goes for me as well.)

Under normal circumstances, the elder before him was someone he needed to respect and bow to.

But now, they were of the same status-both prisoners of the Bai Zihan. That was why he dared to argue with him, something that would have been utterly impossible otherwise.

The two glared at each other, hatred burning equally bright-born of fear, failure, and betrayal.

In truth, neither of them was wrong.

Both had been caught in the web of the same hand-their organization that dared to assassinate Bai Zihan.

Now, stripped of power and pride, all they could do was curse one another in the dark.

Outside, Bai Zihan was thinking about going back to the Royal Palace of the Falling Star Empire.

Princess Sun Yaoqing stood near the railing, her silken robes fluttering lightly in the wind.

Her gaze was fixed on the vast horizon, yet her mind was far from calm.

Though it was difficult to tell what happened after Bai Zihan and Bai Ren went to the underground basement, they had seen and felt Bai Zihan's incredible strength once again when fighting those who were acting as normal villagers. When Bai Zihan approached, she turned, the worry on her delicate face easing only slightly.

"Young Master Bai Zihan," she said softly.

"Have you accomplished what you came here for?"

She asked politely.

Previously, Bai Zihan said he was here to destroy some organization, and it should be the one.

Since it was an unknown organization that she knew didn't really have a connection with the Royal Family, she was relieved.

She had previously been skeptical whether Bai Zihan was sugar-coating his words and perhaps wanted to destroy a precious vessel of the Royal Family.

Fortunately, that didn't come true.

"The branch is dealt with," Bai Zihan answered.

A wave of relief crossed her face.

"So it's over, then?"

Bai Zihan shook his head.

"Not yet. There is still a person that I need to catch. After catching that one, I will leave immediately."

Bai Zihan replied, knowing what Princess Sun Yaoqing was worried about.

The Elder had said that the man who knew of the headquarters was manipulating the Second Prince and helping him win the throne.

But was that really all?

Not at all-there should be a few nobles who also supported him as well.

Perhaps he would need to deal with them as well, and it might mean that he would have to go against the Falling Star Empire.

At least, he should be prepared to go against the Second Prince.

Though he didn't know much about the Falling Star Empire and their Royal Family.

"I'll help you," Princess Sun Yaoqing said.

It was not to curry favor with Bai Zihan or anything like that, but for her own interest.

She thought that the organization she had never known or heard of would be insignificant, but just by Elder captured, she could tell that it was one the strongest organizations in the Falling Star Empire.

Such an organization, operating unnoticed, was truly dangerous-and who knew what kind of crimes they had committed?

It was better for the Empire to uproot such an organization as soon as possible.

Therefore, she was willing to help Bai Zihan as long as she could eliminate such a threat from the Empire.

Bai Zihan looked at Princess Sun Yaoqing. If she were truly willing to help him, then he might be able to take care of the man behind the Second Prince without needing to handle others.

Well, that would depend on Princess Sun Yaoqing's position in the Royal Family.

And who knows, perhaps she wouldn't help at all if she knew that he was going to go against her brother.

He didn't know her relationship with the Second Prince to fully know what might happen if he were to tell her.

"Sure! However, we will be returning to the Royal Palace!"

Bai Zihan said.

Princess Sun Yaoqing nodded, then turned her head and looked down for a moment at the place Bai Zihan had gone-it was almost completely razed to the ground.

It looked like a normal village no matter how one looked, but hidden underneath was such a dangerous organization.

(How did they make something like this unnoticed?)

Considering the scale of their place, it didn't seem like it could be built immediately, and it would inevitably attract attention.

Yet, no such report was made, and they seemed to have operated without any notice from the Royal Family for many years.

There was no way that would be possible unless there was someone covering for them.

Princess Sun Yaoqing widened her eyes as she thought of a possibility.

"Young Master Bai, do you suppose that you have some time to spare?"

"Yes?"

"There is somewhere I need to go and check something," Princess Sun Yaoqing said with killing intent.

To allow such a dangerous organization to be operated without Royal Notice, that was the same as betrayal.

And for one to betray the Royal meant death in the Falling Star Empire.

Looking at the Princess, Bai Zihan was amused.

(Did she find something?)

He thought. Normally, Bai Zihan didn't like wasting time but it seems like it might be related to what he wants.

"Sure, why not!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 318 Quan Clan[1,002 words]

Chapter 318 Quan Clan

The village where the organization had been operating fell under the jurisdiction of the Quan Clan, a mid-sized noble clan responsible for overseeing that entire region.

Naturally, Princess Sun Yaoqing knew about this and she was not pleased.

The Quan Clan might not have been one of the Empire's great houses, but they were responsible to monitor their lands and report irregularities directly to the Royal Court.

Yet, such a massive underground structure had been built and maintained for years without a single report. That was no mere oversight.

Whether it was intentional collusion or gross negligence, Princess Sun Yaoqing did not care-the fact remained that such a threat had grown right under their supervision.

And for that, the Quan Clan could not be allowed to escape responsibility.

Without delay, she politely asked Bai Zihan to alter the Flying Ship's course toward the Quan Clan's territory.

The wind howled against the Formation barriers of the vessel as it sped through the clouds, the Falling Star Empire's vast lands sprawling below.

The two attendants were tense as Princess Sun Yaoqing frowned and headed toward the Quan Clan.

They knew that Princess Sun Yaoqing wasn't going to let the Quan Clan off easily.

What Princess Sun Yaoqing hated more than corruption was incompetence.

Even if it was a saint with the noblest of souls, if the said person was incompetent, he or she would be responsible for thousands of deaths.

Hence, it didn't matter that the Quan Clan had been loyal to the Royal Family for a thousand years-once they had shown their incompetence, they were no longer qualified for the position they held.

She knew that those nobles had been neglecting their responsibilities for many years now and only knew how to enjoy the benefits.

And this time, she intended to make an example.

'With great benefit came equally great responsibility'

The Bai Clan's great flying ship soon cast its vast shadow over the City of Quan, its gleaming hull blotting out the sun.

Below, panic rippled through the streets.

Merchants froze mid-call, children pointed upward in awe and fear, and even cultivators stopped what they were doing to stare in the sky.

The ship was enormous-larger and grander than anything they had ever seen. It was even bigger than the Royal Family's Flying Ship.

"Could the Royal Family have bought a new Flying Ship?"

"This... this isn't the Sun Family's crest!"

"What clan could afford such a vessel?"

Murmurs spread like wildfire, curiosity and dread mixing in equal measure. Even the cultivators of the Quan Clan trembled slightly as the ship descended lower, hovering just above the clouds that touched the city's highest spires.

When it finally stopped, the Quan Clan Mansion was directly beneath its shadow.

The guards stationed at the mansion gates immediately took up defensive positions, weapons drawn and formations activated.

Despite their fear, they were disciplined-trained to defend their clan even in the face of overwhelming power.

The Captain of the Guard, a sturdy man in armor, raised his voice, shouting over the roaring wind that the ship's presence stirred.

"Who dares intrude upon the territory of the Quan Clan?! State your name and purpose!"

The air shimmered for a moment.

Then, from the ship's upper deck, a figure stepped forward-her silken robes billowing, her bearing dignified and serene.

Princess Sun Yaoqing!

Her royal sigil glimmered faintly on her shoulder as her cold gaze swept over the guards below.

"I am Sun Yaoqing, Princess of the Falling Star Empire. I wish to speak with the Head of the Quan Clan."

The moment her name fell, the tension snapped like a bowstring.

The captain's face went pale.

"P-Princess Yaoqing...!"

He immediately dropped to one knee, his men following suit in a clatter of armor.

"Forgive us! We did not know it was Your Highness who had arrived!" Princess Sun Yaoqing waved her hand lightly, her tone calm but distant. "There's no need for apologies. It was my fault for arriving without notice." Her gaze shifted toward the mansion gates, her voice cooling by a degree. "However, inform your Clan Head that this visit concerns the Empire's security. He would do well not to keep me waiting."

The captain bowed deeply, sweat beading on his brow despite the cool air.

"At once, Your Highness!"

He turned and sprinted toward the inner courtyard, barking urgent orders. Within moments, the entire Quan Clan estate was in motion-servants rushing to prepare the reception hall, elders hastily assembling, and the Clan Head himself being summoned from his meditation chamber, heart pounding as he learned who awaited him above.

Servants rushed through the corridors of the Quan Clan Mansion, their hurried footsteps echoing against the polished stone floors.

The entire estate was in a frenzy.

Banners were straightened, the reception hall dusted in haste, tea prepared with trembling hands-all while whispers rippled through every corner of the

household.

"Why is Princess Sun Yaoqing here of all places?"

One servant murmured, glancing nervously toward the courtyard where elders were gathering.

"I heard she's the Emperor's favored daughter," another whispered back, eyes wide. "If she came here personally, it must be serious. And she seemed to be accompanied by an unknown clan."

"I know, right? That clan seemed quite powerful. Even the Royal Family's own Flying Ship isn't that massive."

"Hehe... There was a handsome young master among them. Perhaps he is Princess Sun Yaoqing's fiancé."

All kinds of gossip were being discussed, but there was no slowing down in their work.

"Sheesh! But why did they have to show up when we're already busy with an important event of the Quan Clan?"

"Prioritize this. This is much more important!"

By the time the echo of footsteps approached from the front courtyard, every high-ranking member of the Quan Clan had already gathered in the grand hall- elders and the Clan Head himself, all waiting with uneasy hearts.

They were all wondering just why the Princess had decided on such an unannounced visit to their clan.

The grand doors opened slowly.

Golden light spilled across the marble floor as Princess Sun Yaoqing entered,

her presence calm yet commanding, followed by two attendants in ceremonial robes.

And then was Bai Zihan who casually walked last.

The air seemed to grow heavier.

Every member of the Quan Clan lowered their heads in respect.

Whatever reason had brought her here-it was no ordinary visit.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 319 The Price of Incompetence[1,105 words]

Chapter 319 The Price of Incompetence

The head of the Quan Clan arrived in a rush, though not a trace of disorder could be seen on his face when he entered the grand hall.

He was Quan Lingshu, a man in his early sixties, his black-and-silver hair neatly tied, his robes embroidered with the clan's golden insignia of twin clouds and a rising sun.

His eyes were sharp and composed-those of a man who had long managed both nobles and cultivators alike-but the faint sheen of sweat along his temples betrayed the tension beneath his calm exterior.

"Your Highness, Princess Sun Yaoqing!"

He bowed deeply, lowering himself until his forehead nearly touched the floor. "This unworthy servant, Quan Lingshu, greets the favored daughter of Heaven. The Quan Clan is deeply honored by Your Highness's presence in our humble city!"

Princess Sun Yaoqing gave a faint nod, her expression serene yet distant. However, one could tell that she wasn't here for any pleasant discussion. "There is no need for excessive formality, Patriarch Quan," she said, her tone courteous but devoid of warmth. "I am here merely on official business."

That made everyone even more cautious and nervous. It seemed they had truly done something to incur the Princess's displeasure.

She stepped further into the hall, her two attendants following closely.

Behind them walked Bai Zihan, casual and unhurried.

Though he said nothing, his mere presence drew subtle glances from the elders lined along the sides of the hall.

Since he came with the Princess, he must be a renowned young master of a prestigious clan-yet none could recall ever seeing him before in any of the major events.

Meanwhile, in another part of the mansion, the Bai Clan members were being received in a lavish side hall.

Exquisite spirit tea, rare fruits, and the clan's best servants had been prepared to ensure no displeasure would arise.

Even though the Quan Clan had no idea who these people truly were, their connection to the Princess alone demanded nothing short of perfection in hospitality.

Of course, the Bai Clan members weren't overwhelmed-rather, they found it. normal. With their name, wherever they went, such treatment-or better-was expected.

Back in the main hall, Quan Lingshu straightened his back slightly, a warm but careful smile on his lips.

"Your Highness's visit brings glory to our humble clan. If I may be so bold to ask... to what do we owe the honor of your arrival?"

Princess Sun Yaoqing regarded him steadily for a moment, her eyes like polished jade-calm, yet sharp enough to cut through pretense.

"The honor?" she said softly, almost to herself. "That depends on your answer, Patriarch Quan."

A faint chill spread through the room. The smile on Quan Lingshu's face stiffened slightly, though he quickly bowed again.

"Y-Your Highness, if this humble one has committed any oversight, I beg forgiveness. Please, enlighten me."

Princess Sun Yaoqing's gaze turned toward the ornate map of the Quan Region hanging behind him on the wall-the symbol of their authority.

"It has come to my attention," she said slowly, "that an organization of considerable scale has been operating freely within your jurisdiction-beneath one of your villages."

Quan Lingshu's expression froze.

Her voice was calm, but each word landed like a hammer blow.

"Tell me, Patriarch Quan-how does a structure of such size and secrecy flourish for years under your supervision, without a single report reaching the Royal Court?"

The hall fell utterly silent.

The elders exchanged alarmed glances; even the attendants standing by the pillars held their breath.

Quan Lingshu's mind raced, but his expression remained composed. He forced a strained smile, lowering his head again.

"Your Highness... I swear upon the name of my ancestors, this is the first time I've heard of such a matter. If this is true, then it must have been the result of grave negligence by those below me. I shall-"

"Negligence?"

Princess Sun Yaoqing's interruption was soft but razor-sharp. Her eyes seemed to gleam faintly, reflecting the light of the chandeliers above.

Her voice hardened, each syllable cold as a drawn blade.

"Patriarch Quan," she said, eyes boring into him, "this is your jurisdiction. Those lands fall under your watch. If you could not detect an organization large enough to hide so many assassins beneath a village, then you have failed in the one duty a clan like yours must never fail."

She stepped forward until the space between them felt suffocating.

"Tell me if you cannot protect the people and report such threats, what use is your title? Step down, Patriarch Quan. Let someone capable take your place. The Empire cannot tolerate this kind of incompetence."

A murmur ran through the hall like a passing wind. Quan Lingshu's face drained of color; the elders behind him shifted nervously.

For decades, Quan Lingshu's rule had been steady-but none had ever imagined seeing him publicly stripped of authority by a royal command.

"Your Highness-" he began, voice strained but controlled. He dropped to one knee again, palms pressed to the floor.

"This is indeed a grievous matter, and I do not deny my failure," Quan Lingshu said, voice heavy yet carefully measured.

"But please, allow me to explain. These past years, the southern borders have been turbulent-raids from the mountain tribes, unrest among the outlying villages, even demonic beasts breaching the outer wards. I have personally overseen countless crises to keep the region stable. It is possible..."

He hesitated, then bowed his head deeper.

"...that this organization exploited those very distractions, deliberately drawing my attention elsewhere while they built their foundation in secret. If so, then I have been deceived-but not idle, Your Highness. My efforts were spent

safeguarding the people, not in negligence."

Princess Sun Yaoqing's gaze did not soften.

"Responsibility is not merely a position, Patriarch. It is the lives entrusted to you. If you cannot safeguard them, you cannot lead."

Her eyes narrowed slightly.

"Not to mention, that organization was quite powerful-one that might even rival the top clans of the Falling Star Empire."

Quan Lingshu swallowed. He straightened just a fraction, though his hands still trembled.

"I will find the truth. I swear on my clan and on my ancestors-I will root out whoever aided that organization. I will strip corrupt officers, I will open my records to the Court, I will-"

He hesitated, then forced the next words out. "I ask only for time to prove my loyalty."

While the exchange unfolded, Bai Zihan remained silent-an almost indifferent -yet his senses were working.

He watched the Patriarch's and elders' gestures.

A thought formed and tightened like a knot in his chest: the Quan Clan had not been wholly ignorant.

They had known-some of them, at least-more than they admitted. This was not the clumsy negligence they professed.

However, Bai Zihan has no intention of intervening or getting involved here.

He only needed one thing now: Elder Shuhai-the man who connected that branch to the headquarters, the one who surely knew the location of the organization.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 320 A Golden Opportunity for the Quan Clan[1,486 words]

Chapter 320 A Golden Opportunity for the Quan Clan

The confrontation ended without an official judgment.

Despite the mounting tension, Princess Sun Yaoqing found herself without solid evidence directly linking the Quan Clan to the hidden organization's operations.

Their involvement-if any-was buried beneath layers of plausible deniability and excuses polished by decades of political experience.

Thus, she had no choice but to settle for a stern warning.

The Quan Patriarch, Quan Lingshu, swore before his ancestors and clan seal that he would personally oversee an investigation, root out the culprits, and deliver them to the royal authorities.

His words were humble, his demeanor contrite-but to Sun Yaoqing, it all rang too perfectly rehearsed.

She suspected he would find a scapegoat soon enough-a few unfortunate officials or minor cultivators to shoulder the blame while the true players vanished deeper underground.

Yet, with no concrete proof, there was little she could do here and now.

All she could do was chastise him for negligence and failure of duty-hardly enough to shake the Quan Clan's foundations.

But there was no way Princess Sun Yaoqing would simply let the matter rest.

Her decision was clear: once she returned to the capital, she would report everything to the Emperor.

The Quan Clan's influence over the southern territories had lasted long enough -perhaps it was time to consider their replacement.

Having said what she intended, Princess Sun Yaoqing prepared to leave the Quan Estate, accompanied by Quan Lingshu.

Just as they were stepping out, a burst of cheers and applause echoed through the courtyard.

Princess Sun Yaoqing paused mid-step, her brows knitting slightly. She turned toward the sound, her gaze calm but curious.

"...Is something happening?"

She asked, her voice light but tinged with quiet authority.

Quan Lingshu, who had been accompanying her to the gates, looked momentarily startled-then quickly understood what she referred to.

"Ah! Your Highness mustn't have heard about our clan's competition. Today happens to be the opening of our annual Young Scions Gathering-a friendly contest among the younger generation of the Quan Family. It is a long-standing tradition meant to encourage growth and unity among our disciples."

His tone carried faint pride.

Seeing this as a chance to mend the earlier tension-or at least display the clan's prosperity before the Princess-Quan Lingshu added eagerly.

"If Your Highness is not pressed for time, it would be our greatest honor to have you witness the competition. It would surely inspire our youths to know that the Princess herself watched their display of talent!"

Princess Sun Yaoqing shook her head.

She had little interest in the small spectacles of the Quan Clan.

Moreover, she can't have esteem Bai Clan waiting for more than needed. She already felt guilty for taking their time for her request.

"It seems interesting," Bai Zihan intervened, eyes half-lidded, a faint glint of amusement flickering within them.

"Since we are here, we might as well take a look."

He hadn't thought deeply about it-only that the excitement in the air might mean there were some noteworthy individuals worth observing.

If it proved otherwise, he could always leave whenever he desired.

The Princess glanced sideways at him, surprise flickering in her usually composed gaze.

Since Bai Zihan was interested and was in no hurry to rush to the Royal Palace, she had no reason to object.

She exhaled softly and nodded.

"Very well. Lead the way, Patriarch Quan!"

Quan Lingshu's expression brightened at once. "An honor beyond measure, Your Highness!"

He declared, bowing deeply-but from the corner of his eye, he regarded Bai Zihan with renewed curiosity.

Earlier, he had barely paid attention to the quiet young man beside the Princess, assuming him to be a retainer or a guard of noble birth.

But now, watching how even Princess Sun Yaoqing's decision shifted with his words, curiosity stirred within him.

There was no way this youth was an ordinary noble-he had spoken contrary to the Princess, and she had agreed.

It was clear his status was comparable to hers, perhaps even greater.

As they walked, Quan Lingshu ventured carefully, his voice low and respectful. "If I may be so bold to ask, Your Highness... this distinguished guest accompanying you-might I know whom we have the honor of welcoming?" His tone carried the perfect balance of deference and intrigue-befitting a man who suddenly suspected the youth before him was far more than he appeared.

Princess Sun Yaoqing did not pause long before answering. Her tone remained calm and even, but there was a subtle shift-just enough to make the introduction feel deliberate.

"He is Young Master Bai Zihan," she said. "Heir of the Bai Clan of the Desolate Heaven Empire. You must have heard of him, Patriarch Quan."

Quan Lingshu froze mid-step.

For a heartbeat, he thought he had misheard. But when he saw the faint smile on Bai Zihan's lips and the serene expression of the Princess, the truth struck

like thunder.

His composure cracked-just slightly-but to a man seasoned in diplomacy, that was already saying much.

"Of... of course I have heard of the esteemed Young Master Bai!"

He said quickly, forcing a smile that trembled at the edges.

"The Bai Clan of the Desolate Heaven Empire is known throughout the continent for its unmatched heritage and power. I did not expect that such a distinguished guest would grace our humble city."

He bowed again, deeper than before, his hands almost trembling as he clasped them before his chest.

To think the heir of the Bai Clan-one of the ancient, unfathomably powerful families said to rival their entire empire-was here, it was beyond anything he

could have imagined.

Inside, his mind churned in disbelief and awe.

(So that's who he is... No wonder even Her Highness listened to him.)

In terms of status, Bai Zihan status was way higher than a Princess of the Falling Star Empire.

After all, the value of one's status depends on their backer-and in terms of power between the Falling Star Empire and the Bai Clan, the Bai Clan was the clear winner.

Quan Lingshu's pulse quickened. Fear and opportunity warred within him.

(If I can form even the slightest connection with Bai Zihan, then even the Royal Family wouldn't be able to touch me.)

His expression smoothed into one of reverence and composure, concealing the greed and calculation that had begun to stir beneath.

"Truly, this is an honor unlike any other," he said smoothly.

"Young Master Bai, please permit my clan the privilege of offering our

hospitality in full measure. If there is anything the Quan Family can provide during your stay in the Falling Star Empire, we will do so without reservation."

Bai Zihan only gave a faint, indifferent nod, as though such deference were expected-no more than a passing breeze.

Quan Lingshu's eyes gleamed briefly, though he quickly hid it beneath a courteous smile.

What had begun as a disastrous royal visit was now turning into a golden opportunity for them to rise.

The grand arena of the Quan Clan was alive with energy.

Rows upon rows of disciples filled the viewing stands, their excited chatter creating a wave of sound that echoed beneath the high, open sky. The air shimmered faintly with spiritual energy-young cultivators had been clashing since morning, their duels leaving the stage marred with shallow

cracks and residual qi.

At the highest platform overlooking the entire arena sat Quan Lingshu, flanked by Princess Sun Yaoqing and Bai Zihan.

It was a seat usually reserved for the Patriarch alone, but today, even the most senior elders stood respectfully to the side.

Servants hurried quietly behind them, setting tea and light refreshments, though none dared make unnecessary noise.

As the three figures appeared at the dais, murmurs rippled through the crowd like wildfire.

"The Patriarch himself has come!"

"Wait-who's beside him? That woman... that's Princess Sun Yaoqing!"

"The Princess? Here? Watching our competition?"

Cheers erupted, the younger disciples practically glowing with excitement. To be seen by the Princess of the Empire was already a glory few could imagine.

As for Bai Zihan, nobody recognized him nor they cared since Princess Sun Yaoqing was here.

Below, on the wide expanse of the arena, multiple battles were unfolding at once.

The air thrummed with spiritual energy-waves of heat, lightning, and sword qi intermingling as cultivators clashed across the numerous platforms.

Dust and sparks danced in the air, the roar of combat blending with cheers and gasps from the spectators.

Some duels were already at their peak, fierce exchanges shaking the reinforced stages, while others were just beginning-disciples bowing, summoning their weapons, or measuring one another with sharp, calculating eyes.

Among them, one particular youth stood out-not because of power, but because of his loud, unrestrained excitement.

"Hahaha! Who could've imagined that Princess Sun herself would come here to watch me fight?"

He boasted, voice rising above the surrounding noise.

His grin stretched wide, arrogance dripping from every word.

"Not only did I draw such a weak opponent, but I also got the chance to show off before royalty. Looks like my moment of glory has finally arrived!"

A few nearby disciples laughed along, either out of flattery or mockery-it was hard to tell which.

The youth, however, paid them no mind. His self-satisfaction was absolute, his spiritual aura already flaring as if the fight were decided before it began. Across from him stood his opponent-a lean figure, hands resting calmly at his

sides.

He neither smiled nor reacted to the provocation. He was simply focused on one thing and that was victory.

He was Chong Sheng!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 321 The Quan Clan Competition[1,454 words]

Chapter 321 The Quan Clan Competition

The dawn sun rose over the sprawling Quan Clan estate.

For most, it was the start of another day for most people.

For Chong Sheng, it was the beginning of something far greater.

He stood before the cracked mirror in his shack-a faint reflection staring back at him.

The bruises and open wounds were gone, replaced by skin tight with faint vitality.

His frame, once gaunt and sickly, now carried traces of strength.

His eyes gleamed faintly red beneath the morning light, an echo of the power that once made the Abyssal Fiend Sect tremble.

A quiet smirk curved his lips.

"Not bad," he murmured. "I already advanced to the Mid Qi Refining Stage in a week."

It has been almost a week since he has been reincarnated.

He flexed his fingers, feeling the thin yet vibrant flow of qi run beneath his skin.

(If I had more resources, I would have already reached the Peak Qi Refining Stage.)

At least, he knew Alchemy and made pills using the herbs found in the

mountains. Otherwise, if not for that, he wouldn't even be able to reach the Mid Qi Refining Stage.

While sorting through the last of the withered herbs he had gathered, Chong Sheng's mind wandered.

His crude pills had served their purpose-barely enough to restore his body and awaken his qi-but if he wanted to advance further, he needed rarer ingredients, stronger pills.

Yet within the Quan estate, such things were tightly controlled. Servants like him had no access to the clan's true resources.

He frowned, fingers tapping lightly against the rough wooden floor as he pondered.

Then a memory surfaced-faint but clear, drawn from the body's past.

The Quan Clan Competition!

It was held once every year, a spectacle where servants, outer disciples, and the clan's younger generation competed before the elders.

For most, it was a display of talent. For a servant, it was the only path out of their misery.

He remembered how he had joined every time before, bruised and hopeless, hoping to be chosen as a disciple.

Each attempt had ended the same way-getting beaten before everyone else.

But this time, things were different.

He wasn't the same Chong Sheng who had crawled through the mud.

And the upcoming competition... might just offer exactly what he needed. To the Clan's disciples, it was an opportunity for prestige, rewards, and advancement.

To a slave like him, it was something else entirely.

If they managed to attract attention from the elders, they could be given the opportunity to become disciples of the Quan Clan and start their Cultivation journey.

Then there were rewards which included pills, weapons, and techniques.

He didn't need technique since he knew far superior techniques than the Quan Clan but he was in desperate need of Cultivation resources.

"Becoming a disciple, hm?" he muttered, narrowing his eyes. "Not that I care for their oaths or their so-called loyalty."

Still, he could not deny reality.

The Quan Clan was the undisputed ruler of this region. Their resources, influence, and control over the southern territories made them almost

untouchable.

If he wanted to rise fast, then having support of the Quan Clan would be good. Not to mention, the prizes for getting to the top weren't too bad either.

Fortunately, there were still a few days a week, to be accurate-for him to cultivate further and perhaps try to reach Peak Qi Refining Stage, which would increase the chance of him winning the competition.

On the day of the competition, hundreds had gathered-servants, disciples, elders, and guests.

Flags bearing the Quan Clan insignia fluttered proudly as sunlight spilled across the arena's polished stone floor.

Rows of contestants lined the outer ring-young men and women dressed in training robes, their faces a mix of nervousness, confidence, and ambition.

Among them stood Chong Sheng.

His tattered clothes had been washed clean, though they were still humble compared to the silk robes of the disciples.

(I still failed to advance to the Peak Qi Refining Stage.)

Without proper resources, it was indeed difficult to advance to the next stage

simply relying on his knowledge.

Still, he wasn't too far from advancing to the Peak Qi Refining Stage.

He could feel the faint hostility in the air-servants sneering, disciples whispering.

"Isn't that the servant who got beaten half to death last week?"

"He's still alive? Tch! Probably here to get beaten again."

"Some people never learn their place."

Chong Sheng ignored them all.

He had once faced Monarchs and devoured ancient beasts-what were a few barking dogs compared to that?

A loud voice rang out from the platform.

"The annual Quan Clan Competition begins!"

The crowd cheered as elders took their seats, their expressions a blend of boredom and detached superiority.

"Participants," the announcer continued, "will face elimination matches. The top sixteen will be rewarded and elevated in rank. The top three shall receive

treasures of immense value-and those with potential may be personally accepted as a disciple of the Quan Clan!"

Murmurs surged through the crowd. Even the disciples turned serious.

After all, this was the rare platform to showcase what they were made of.

And in the chance that their performance was very good, the Quan Clan also sent them to the Sect in the Capital where they could get better Cultivation Techniques and resources.

Of course, the chance of that happening was very few-perhaps once in a decade-since sending someone to become a disciple of such a sect meant

immense expense.

It was only meant for heirs or the most promising members of the Quan Clan.

As the matches began, the arena erupted into chaos and excitement. Dozens of battles unfolded at once-servants fighting servants, disciples clashing with fiery techniques, qi flaring in every direction. Dust and cheers filled the air.

Chong Sheng waited for his turn but it would be quite a while before it was his turn.

He spent that time watching and trying to gauge the level of participants in the

competition.

There were many servants and slaves without cultivation who were trying to show their endurance and talent.

But of course, against those with Cultivation, they stood no chance, while when against the same opponent, they showed their crude fighting style.

They were no match for him who now had Cultivation.

It was the same for those in the Qi Refining Stage who had barely begun their Cultivation journey.

For those with talent, they were in the Foundation Establishment Stage.

They were considered talents of the Quan Clan and had also learned a few Techniques of the Quan Clan.

Despite them being considered powerful in the competition and also one stage higher than Chong Sheng, he didn't think that they would pose much problem

for him.

After all, compared to his refined fighting and experience, closing the gap of cultivation wasn't very difficult.

Of course, it would be a different story if the opponent was in the Core Formation Stage.

Fortunately, there was none-or at least, no one had yet to show cultivation of that stage.

While in the middle of the competition, something seemed to have occurred as Chong Sheng noticed.

A servant anxiously came to Quan Lingshu, and the Quan Head immediately left, making Chong Sheng and those who noticed puzzled.

Since Quan Lingshu left, it meant that something significant had occurred.

While interested, there was no way that he could find out. His main focus was on the competition.

Soon, his turn came and his opponent was none other than the young master of the Quan Clan who killed the original Chong Sheng.

While he referred to him as Young Master, he wasn't an heir or anyone of significance in the Quan Clan.

He was just a direct descendant and possessed the blood of the Quan Clan.

Apart from that, his talent was mediocre, and he wasn't treated any differently than other disciples of the Quan Clan.

This was one of the reasons why he was always frustrated and angry, and Chong Sheng became the outlet of his anger.

(Looks like I can avenge this body faster than I expected.) Chong Sheng thought with a smirk as he walked to the arena.

Just when he was walking towards the arena, a commotion broke out and finally the answer to why the Quan Head left was revealed.

Princess Sun Yaoqing!

She had visited. No wonder the servants and even the Quan Head were nervous

and left the competition which held considerable importance. Chong Sheng looked at Princess Sun Yaoqing with mild interest. Indeed, even considering all the beauties he had seen, she could give them

quite a competition.

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Suddenly, he felt a shiver like a predator looking at its prey. He looked left and right, trying to find out who it was, but with his weak senses, he wasn't able to.

(Was that my imagination?)

He thought.

He didn't think that he had done something to catch anyone's eyes yet.

He walked to the arena, where his first opponent and someone who looked down on and tormented him was waiting for him.

"Not only did I draw such a weak opponent, but I also got the chance to show

off before royalty. Looks like my moment of glory has finally arrived!" Chong Sheng smiled at his statement.

(Indeed, getting humiliated before Quan Head and the Princess would be good lesson for you!)

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 322 Chong Sheng, Heaven Chosen One! [1,501 words]

Chapter 322 Chong Sheng, Heaven Chosen One!

Bai Zihan didn't think much when he considered attending the Quan Clan Competition for their younger generation.

"Please come this way!"

Quan Lingshu led the way toward the elevated VIP pavilion.

The area was clearly reserved for the most distinguished guests.

Delicate silk curtains framed its open sides, allowing a perfect view of the competition grounds below.

At the center rested a broad, cushioned seat carved from spiritwood and inlaid with jade a seat clearly belonging to Quan Lingshu himself, the Clan Head.

However, that very seat had now been respectfully offered to Princess Sun Yaoqing, its surroundings freshly arranged with golden trays of tea and spiritual fruits.

Beside it, another elegant chair had already been prepared-its placement and quality making it obvious it was meant for Bai Zihan.

Quan Lingshu had both seats prepared with equal elegance and care-crafted from the same spiritwood, draped in fine silks, and accompanied by trays of rare spiritual fruits.

However, a discerning eye would notice the subtle difference.

Bai Zihan's seat was positioned slightly higher, its backrest adorned with a faint golden embroidery that caught the light just so-an understated yet deliberate gesture.

It was a silent acknowledgment from Quan Lingshu that, between the two, Bai Zihan's status stood above even that of Princess Sun Yaoqing.

Princess Sun Yaoqing didn't think much about it and even if she noticed, she would also need to agree.

On the other hand, Bai Zihan noticed that but also gave no damn. Quan Lingshu isn't the first person trying to kiss his ass.

Just then-

[Heaven Chosen Detected!]

The System had unexpectedly detected a Heaven's Chosen One.

Bai Zihan's eyes widened in surprise.

[Scanning...]

[Heaven Chosen Profile Unlocked]

Name: Chong Sheng

Age: 19

Fate Grade: ★★ (Three Stars)

Cultivation Base: Qi Refining (Mid)

Destiny:

Once known across the world as the Abyssal Monarch, he was a supreme demonic Immortal cultivator who unified countless demonic sects beneath his will.

For centuries, his name alone made the heavens tremble and righteous cultivators unite out of fear.

It was said his blood refined legions, his soul devoured saints, and his Dao- built upon slaughter and chaos.

Betrayed by his Sect and besieged by the so-called righteous coalition led by Immortal Sovereigns, he perished at the brink of ascension.

Yet his hatred refused to fade. His soul clawed through the void, tearing through the wheel of reincarnation until he awakened in the mortal body of Chong Sheng.

Now reborn within the Quan Clan as a lowly servant, Chong Sheng's demonic core slumbers beneath mortal flesh, sealed yet simmering with wrath.

His destiny burns with vengeance-a soul destined to rise once more and drench the heavens in retribution.

Unexpectedly he has encountered another Heaven Chosen One.

And the Heaven Chosen One didn't seem weak either.

The only issue was that he was very weak at the moment and seemed to have reincarnated recently.

Otherwise, if given a year or two, he would very likely grow far stronger- perhaps even surpass Nie Fengzhuo, since he had previous experience of

advancing through Cultivation Realm.

But then why was his Fate Grade only three stars while Nie Fengzhuo, whom he deemed less dangerous, was a four-star Heaven Chosen One?

(Just what does this grade represent?)

It definitely didn't represent current power-if that were the case, Chong Sheng wouldn't even be a one-star Fated Heaven Chosen One.

Potential?

That might be the case, but he didn't think that was entirely accurate either.

In any case, the Supreme Immortal, as Bai Zihan remembered, is said to be at the highest cultivation realm currently in the world.

It was the same as Du Changsheng, master of Nie Fengzhuo's.

However, Chong Sheng was considered only three stars while Du Changsheng was five stars.

Both of them are formerly Supreme Immortals yet they are given two different Fate Stars by the System.

(Why?)

Perhaps it was something he couldn't understand for now.

But anyway, Chong Sheng was definitely not a low-level threat considering he was formerly a Supreme Immortal who walked the Demonic Path. What demonic cultivators prized most was power, and for that they were willing to do whatever was necessary-different from righteous cultivators.

They were also good at scheming and deceiving others.

Bai Zihan hadn't heard of the Abyssal Monarch who was said to have reached Supreme Immortal, but that should be normal.

Since his cultivation was so high, he must have originated from the Central Continent or nearby.

Information about those regions is extremely rare in the Desolate Heaven

Empire.

Anyways, one thing was for sure: Chong Sheng was extremely dangerous.

He didn't mean dangerous in raw strength-right now Chong Sheng was like an ant compared to him-but dangerous in mindset.

Those from demonic paths, especially someone who had become their leader, would be shrewd and merciless-unlike the Heaven Chosen Ones he had met previously, who were somewhat naive except for Du Changsheng.

(In any case, such a person would be better off dead.)

Even if he did favors to Chong Sheng, Bai Zihan feared whether Chong Sheng

would repay the favor with kindness or take advantage of him.

Such people-whether you helped them or not-were the ones who might

backstab you later.

Better to kill them off to cut off future trouble rather than do favors that might

invite betrayal.

Chong Sheng wasn't like Lin Xuan, who might be impressed and grateful by some Earth-Cultivation techniques.

Perhaps if Bai Zihan gave him Saint-grade techniques he might react similarly- but then who knew whether he would show loyalty or scheme behind his back.

Not to mention, he wasn't in a situation where he could buy Saint-Grade

technique.

Doing nothing wasn't an option either.

If left unchecked, Chong Sheng had the potential to grow faster than him.

After all, as a former Supreme Immortal, he could take advantage of all his prior knowledge and experience.

He wouldn't need to worry about risks while cultivating, for he already had the essential knowledge.

No need to worry about Technique as he must have learned many when he was the leader of Demonic Cultivator.

If there is something that Chong Sheng was currently lacking, that is Cultivation Resources and Artifact.

(He must be participating because of the rewards.)

It didn't take a genius to figure that out.

(Now then how shall I deal with him?)

In the arena, young master Quan Zhiyang was still full of confidence, no shred of doubt in his mind.

"Begin!"

The elder's voice fell, and the air between the two seemed to tighten.

Quan Zhiyang smirked, drawing his wooden practice sword.

"Chong Sheng, Princess Sun is watching my fight. Don't you dare get knocked out in one move."

Quan Zhiyang announced.

"Sure!"

Chong Sheng replied with a smirk which got on Quan Zhiyang's nerve. "Hmph!"

Quan Zhiyang lunged forward, his sword sweeping down in a sharp arc. Whoosh!

The blade sliced only air.

Chong Sheng had already moved, his body twisting aside with an almost casual grace, his steps flowing like ripples across still water.

Another strike came, then another-slashes and thrusts that carried the faint ripple of Qi Refining cultivation.

The spectators murmured, impressed by Quan Zhiyang's speed and power. But then it quickly changed.

Because every single blow of Quan Zhiyang has missed.

Chong Sheng moved with the ease of someone who had fought through countless battlefields.

His movements were precise and minimal-as if he knew exactly where each attack would land before it even began.

"What's wrong?"

Chong Sheng asked sarcastically.

"Perhaps the Young Master is holding back for my sake? Don't worry about this slave and come at me at full strength."

The remark made Quan Zhiyang's face flush red with anger. He is already using his full strength yet failed to land a single strike.

"Y-You bastard!"

He roared, Qi flaring violently around his sword.

"Stand still if you dare!"

Laughter erupted from the crowd.

"Hahaha! Did he just tell his opponent to stand still?"

"Who in the world says that during a fight?"

"Even the servants are laughing at him!"

"Tsk! Tsk! That trash. He couldn't even defeat a Slave. What's the use of having Quan Blood in his body?"

Quan Zhiyang's expression twisted with rage.

"Dammit! It's all your fault!"

He swung wildly, his sword cutting through the air again and again, but it was like trying to catch smoke.

Chong Sheng slipped past every strike-ducking, leaning, sidestepping-his movements fluid and almost taunting.

At times, it looked as though he was moving at the very last instant-letting the blade brush past his clothes without ever touching skin.

It wasn't just speed. It was how easily Chong Sheng controlled the fight.

Every motion was deliberate, every dodge calculated to humiliate.

"Is that all?"

Chong Sheng's faintly amused voice drifted across the arena.

"Damn you!"

Quan Zhiyang shouted, his eyes bloodshot. He gathered his qi, forming a glowing are of energy along his blade.

"Take this!"

The strike descended with a sharp hum, slicing through the air toward Chong Sheng's chest.

The servants gasped.

But Chong Sheng only stepped forward. One foot-precise, measured-shifted him just an inch to the side.

The sword brushed past him harmlessly.

THUD!

With a loud thud, the wooden sword slipped from Quan Zhiyang's grasp, the force of his own overexerted strike throwing his balance off.

For an instant, his body froze-muscles locking from the recoil of misdirected strength.

It was as if his limbs refused to obey him, leaving him momentarily stunned in place, eyes wide with disbelief at how easily his attack had failed.

How could such an opportunity miss Chong Sheng's eyes?

"Haha... It seems like the Young Master is giving me an opportunity to shine. If so, then it would be rude of me to refuse."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 323 Chong Sheng Vs Quan Zhiyang! [1,393 words]

Chapter 323 Chong Sheng Vs Quan Zhiyang!

"Haha... It seems like the Young Master is giving me an opportunity to shine. If so, then it would be rude of me to refuse."

Chong Sheng's eyes gleamed faintly, the corners of his mouth curving into a cold smile.

He slowly raised his sword, ready to strike Quan Zhiyang.

Quan Zhiyang, who saw everything clearly, wanted to move and dodge, but his body refused to listen.

"Move!"

He yelled angrily, but it yielded no result.

Slash!

Chong Sheng didn't miss.

However, that was just the start of his revenge.

Quan Zhiyang was injured but managed to regain control of his body.

If Chong Sheng wanted, he could have ended the fight right there and then- but how could he?

He was going to thoroughly humiliate Quan Zhiyang before everyone, including the Princess he had tried to show off to.

"You weakling! Don't be happy just because you got lucky there!"

Quan Zhiyang still believed Chong Sheng was a mortal, thinking the only reason he survived was due to sheer luck.

Otherwise, if not for that unfortunate overexertion and his own blunder, Chong Sheng would never have gotten the opportunity to injure him.

(Hmph! He messed up his golden opportunity.)

Quan Zhiyang thought that had been Chong Sheng's only chance to defeat him -but the fool had squandered it.

Although injured, he still believed Chong Sheng was no match for him.

"No more playing around."

Saying that, Quan Zhiyang poured a large amount of Qi into his body to increase his speed.

Whoosh!

He instantly closed the distance between them, confident that Chong Sheng couldn't escape his grasp.

"Got you!"

However, Chong Sheng easily dodged his confident strike. With his thousand of years of experience, how could Quan Zhiyang catch him off guard?

Not only that-before Quan Zhiyang could even process what was happening, a fist slammed into his gut.

Thud!

The young master's body folded instantly, air rushing out of his lungs as pain exploded through his abdomen.

"Argh!"

He tried to breathe, but another blow came-this time across his jaw.

Crack!

His head snapped to the side, blood spraying from his lips as his body staggered backward.

Yet Chong Sheng didn't stop.

His attacks weren't wild; they were measured, efficient-each strike precise enough to cause maximum pain without immediately ending the fight.

He was playing with him.

From the stands, gasps rippled through the crowd.

"What-he's actually beating Quan Zhiyang!"

"Impossible! How can a servant overpower a direct descendant?"

"Just what is happening!?"

Every word only deepened Quan Zhiyang's humiliation.

He couldn't believe the servant he bullied daily had the nerve-and strength-to beat him.

(What's happening?)

Just a few days ago, he had beaten Chong Sheng half to death. Now, he was the one being beaten.

Chong Sheng's fist met his ribs again, then his shoulder, then his stomach-each hit accompanied by a sharp thud that echoed across the arena.

Bang!

The final strike sent him sprawling to the ground, coughing blood, his wooden sword lying several paces away.

Chong Sheng looked down at him, wiping his knuckles slowly against his sleeve.

"Ah... Young Master Quan," Chong Sheng said, his tone calm but his words dripping with mockery.

"You're surely giving me so much face today."

He crouched beside the fallen youth, his smirk widening.

"Otherwise, I'd never have been able to show even my measly abilities for more than three moves."

One might have thought Chong Sheng was being sincere previously, but by now anyone could tell he was mocking Quan Zhiyang.

While some found the situation amusing, others couldn't help but wonder- who gave Chong Sheng the nerve?

Even if he were to be admitted as a disciple of the Quan Clan, Quan Zhiyang was still a direct descendant and far more favored.

He would definitely take revenge for this and make his life miserable.

But Chong Sheng seemed to have no such concerns as he continued to beat

Quan Zhiyang.

Bang!

A kick landed squarely in Quan Zhiyang's side, making him cry out as he rolled across the floor, dust scattering with every impact.

"I wouldn't want to disappoint your expectations, Young Master," Chong Sheng continued, voice low, unhurried-almost conversational-as another strike drove the breath out of his chest.

Each hit was accompanied by precise control of strength-enough to bruise, to hurt, to shame-but never to kill.

Blood trickled from Quan Zhiyang's nose and lips, his eyes wide with disbelief and terror.

The crowd had fallen into stunned silence.

Even the elders seated above found their expressions darkening-none dared to intervene, yet none could deny what they saw.

A servant was thrashing a direct descendant of the Quan Clan.

And doing it with terrifying composure.

The elders might have stopped it, but with the Princess present, they couldn't show partiality toward their own clan members.

They had to show Princess Sun Yaoqing that no matter who, the Quan Clan was fair and just. They were a clan of people who did what was right, no matter what.

There were only two ways to win in this competition: surrender from the opponent, or if the opponent was knocked out.

However, Chong Sheng deliberately prevented either from happening.

"I S-Sur..."

When it seemed like Quan Zhiyang was about to surrender, Chong Sheng struck his mouth, silencing him before he could finish the word.

At the same time, he carefully controlled his strength to ensure that Quan Zhiyang wasn't knocked out.

By then, almost all the other matches had ended-everyone's attention was fixed on the brutal spectacle before them and even those whose matches were next didn't go up to the arena and just watched.

Gasps rippled once more through the stands.

The beating had long since stopped being a "fight."

It was a one-sided beating.

And now, every eye in the arena was locked on the two figures in the ring-the humiliated Young Master groveling in the dust, and the servant standing tall above him, unbothered, composed, and utterly merciless.

Quan Zhiyang's mother, seated among the clan's inner members, had watched the entire ordeal unfold in growing horror.

Her nails dug into her palms, her teeth clenched so hard her jaw trembled.

She would have intervened earlier, but she knew Princess Sun was present- and they had been told to be at their best behaviour.

But as her son's face began to resemble that of a pig, she could no longer contain herself.

"Enough!"

Her voice rang like thunder, shaking the quiet arena.

Before anyone could stop her, she shot down from the viewing platform-a streak of light descending like a falling star.

Boom!

The ground shattered where she landed, dust and spiritual Qi surging outward in a wave.

She appeared between Chong Sheng and her son, eyes blazing with fury.

Her robes fluttered wildly, and the pressure of her cultivation-late Core Condensation Realm-erupted like a raging tide.

"Little beast!"

She spat, her gaze sharp enough to pierce bone.

"You dare harm my son? Courting death!"

The air itself seemed to freeze.

Even the other elders were startled.

The arena was a place of trial for the younger generation-elders intervening was a direct violation of the rules.

But no one dared move, caught between the shock of her fury and the weight of the spectators' eyes.

Normally, no one would have thought much of it if an elder intervened-but this time was different. Princess Sun Yaoqing and Bai Zihan were both present today.

Quan Lingshu's expression darkened instantly. His fingers twitched on the armrest of his seat.

(Fool!) he cursed inwardly.

(In front of Princess Sun and Young Master Bai? You've brought shame to the entire clan!)

But that was only the beginning. Before anyone could react, she struck.

Her palm lashed out toward Chong Sheng, carrying enough force to crush a stone wall to dust.

Boom!

The attack hit squarely-sending shockwaves across the platform, cracking the stone tiles underfoot.

Gasps filled the air once again.

Yet when the dust cleared-

Chong Sheng was still standing.

Not only that his right arm was raised, fingers wrapped around her wrist.

He had stopped her strike.

"What!?"

The crowd's disbelief exploded like thunder.

Her attack should have crippled a Qi Refining cultivator-no, even a Formation Establishment cultivator might not have survived that unscathed.

But Chong Sheng had caught it.

And his gaze... was cold.

He wasn't merely defending himself-it looked as though he wanted to retaliate, even when it was against someone at the late Core Condensation Realm.

In any case, Chong Sheng had used his Qi to fortify his arm, allowing him to withstand the blow.

Murmurs turned to cries of shock.

"That's... Qi!"

"It's cultivation-he's a cultivator!"

"Chong Sheng is a cultivator!"

"Still, how could he block such a devastating attack!?"

Finally, everyone realized that Chong Sheng was no longer just a mortal.

However, the fact that he could defend against Late Core Condensation was still unbelievable even if he has become a cultivator.

After all, there was a huge gap between the Qi Refining Stage and the Core Condensation Stage.

Yet Chong Sheng has done the impossible.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 324 Killing With Borrowed Knife[1,169 words]

Chapter 324 Killing With Borrowed Knife

As soon as Quan Zhiyang's mother intervened, Quan Lingshu's first thought wasn't anger-it was damage control.

He had to minimize the impact of this disaster as much as possible.

A strained laugh left his lips as he rose from his seat.

"Haha... They say a mother's love transcends all reason. She must have been too anxious about her son's safety. Rest assured, I will punish her severely for this."

His tone was calm, almost courteous, but every word was chosen carefully-to defuse the tension, to salvage face.

However, Princess Sun Yaoqing and Bai Zihan didn't even look at him.

Princess Sun's eyes were wide with disbelief.

To stop an attack from someone three major realms above-that wasn't something that should have been possible.

And for it to be done by a slave who had never even studied a proper technique?

(Could he be a genius?)

She wondered.

Bai Zihan, meanwhile, looked unimpressed.

He could tell that while Quan Zhiyang's mother was indeed three realms higher, she hadn't used her full strength.

If she had, no amount of talent or cleverness could have saved Chong Sheng. Against overwhelming power, experience meant nothing.

Quan Lingshu saw that neither of them reacted harshly, and relief began to settle in his chest.

(Phew! Looks like two of them think nothing of this.)

Perhaps this matter could pass quietly after all.

But then-

Quan Zhiyang's mother, her face twisted with fury, raised her hand once more.

This time, the air around her rippled violently; she was gathering her full strength.

(This woman!)

Quan Lingshu cursed inwardly.

If he didn't act now, it would be far worse than before.

In a flash, his figure vanished from the viewing platform and reappeared between her and Chong Sheng.

His hand caught her wrist before she even realized he had moved. "Stop!"

He hissed under his breath, his voice low but sharp as a blade.

"Did I not warn you that we have important guests tonight? How dare you ignore my command?"

The fury on her face faltered, replaced by fear. Her body trembled, and she slowly lowered her arm.

Though her anger hadn't faded, the weight of her brother's authority crushed any further impulse to act.

"But that beast dared to-"

"Silence!"

Quan Lingshu snapped, his eyes narrowing dangerously.

"No matter the reason, you should not have acted now."

He turned then, bowing slightly toward the guests' seats.

His expression was composed once more, his voice steady.

"I apologize for this shameful display. Our Quan Clan will take full responsibility. As for this youth-"

He glanced briefly at Chong Sheng.

"-I will personally see to it that he is made a disciple of our clan. Consider it

both an apology and an acknowledgment of his ability."

Quan Zhiyang's mother opened her mouth to protest, but one look from Quan Lingshu silenced her immediately.

Chong Sheng, on the other hand, said nothing.

He knew he had gone too far.

And he also knew-if Princess Sun hadn't been here, Quan Lingshu would never have spared him this easily.

So he bowed his head and accepted in silence.

Seeing no one object to his decision, Quan Lingshu finally exhaled softly.

"Continue the Competition and I hope there will be no more disturbance, otherwise you will bear the consequences!"

Quan Lingshu gave a stern warning, so that no one thinks that they would be fine even if they pull off something similar to Quan Zhiyang's mother.

Quan Lingshu returned to his seat, his expression composed but the faint sheen of sweat on his brow betrayed his unease.

He smiled faintly, turning toward the guests' section.

"I hope the two of you are satisfied with how this matter was handled."

He said with practiced calm, his voice carrying the perfect balance of humility and confidence.

Princess Sun said nothing, her gaze still fixed on Chong Sheng with quiet curiosity.

Bai Zihan, too, gave no immediate answer.

He merely inclined his head slightly, his eyes narrowing as they lingered on the battered figure standing in the arena below.

Seeing that neither seemed displeased, Quan Lingshu allowed himself a silent sigh of relief.

Around them, the murmuring crowd began to settle, and the next bouts cautiously resumed.

Yet Bai Zihan's attention never left Chong Sheng.

(How shall I take care of you?)

Bai Zihan knew very well that right now was the best chance to take care of

Chong Sheng, who has yet to grow.

However, he also feared that if Chong Sheng were to escape then he would hold a grudge against Chong Sheng.

As Demonic Cultivator that too of Former Supreme Immortal Cultivation, it was for sure that his revenge would be devastating.

Being a target of such individuals is extremely dangerous.

His gaze was unreadable-part curiosity, part calculation.

To any observer, it might have seemed as if the young master of the Bai Clan had taken an interest in the lowly servant.

Quan Lingshu noticed it too. His heart gave a small jolt.

(Could it be... that Young Master Bai wanted to recruit him?)

Suppressing his cagerness, he leaned forward slightly, voice tinged with anticipation.

"If Young Master Bai finds this boy interesting, then our Quan Clan will have no objection. Should you wish to take him under your wing, I will gladly send him to your Bai Clan myself."

But Bai Zihan merely smiled-a small, almost lazy curve of his lips.

"Hmm... there's no need for that," he said evenly. "I was only curious"

His eyes shifted toward the arena once more.

"I'm simply wondering... how could someone at the Qi Refining Stage-and a slave, no less-possibly block the strike of a Core Condensation Realm cultivator?"

The words hung in the air like a blade.

Quan Lingshu's smile froze, while several nearby elders exchanged glances.

Indeed how?

Because of Quan Zhiyang's mother, they almost forget about that.

Princess Sun Yaoqing also nodded, wondering the same thing. No matter how talented, it just didn't make sense to her.

Bai Zihan continued calmly, his tone light but laced with suggestion.

"Unless, of course... he's practicing a forbidden or demonic technique."

A murmur rippled through the stands.

The atmosphere, which had only just begun to recover, thickened once again with suspicion.

Even Princess Sun turned her head toward Bai Zihan, sensing the underlying implication.

Indeed, if one were to practice Demonic Art, it would explain the power of Chong Sheng. However, there was no sign of Demonic Qi from Chong Sheng.

But Princess Sun Yaoqing didn't interrupt. Who knows, Bai Zihan's sense should be stronger than her and she could be wrong, so she just watched without doing anything. Quan Lingshu's expression darkened ever so slightly, though he forced a laugh.

"Surely, Young Master Bai jests. Our Quan Clan would never harbor one tainted by demonic arts."

But Bai Zihan didn't respond. He simply looked down at Chong Sheng, his eyes reflecting a faint amusement-like a hunter watching two beasts tear each other apart.

Inside, he was already calculating.

(Killing with a borrowed knife... is far more convenient.)

The last time, he had reaped reward and recognition merely because Bai

Xueqing defeated Nie Fengzhuo.

If the Quan Clan themselves were to eliminate this "Chong Sheng" under the suspicion of demonic cultivation, it would once again be to his benefit-without him lifting a single finger.

Moreover, it wasn't like he was lying.

Chong Sheng is a Demonic Cultivator, so if the Quan Clan wants to kill him, what can he do?

He as righteous Cultivator shouldn't protect someone who is a Demonic Cultivator.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 325 The Probing of Qi[1,137 words]

Chapter 325 The Probing of Qi

Quan Lingshu's forced laughter faded, but the echo of Bai Zihan's words. lingered in the air like a poisonous mist.

Even Princess Sun Yaoqing thought that while Bai Zihan didn't have any proof, his words made sense.

After all, for a slave to gain cultivation and then be able to defend against a Core Condensation Realm expert was literally impossible-unless he had some forbidden technique or, like Bai Zihan said, practiced demonic cultivation.

Princess Sun Yaoqing, who had remained quiet so far, finally spoke.

Her tone was calm, but her brows were faintly furrowed.

"Clan Head Quan," she said softly, "Young Master Bai raises a fair question. It doesn't hurt to be more cautious. Why don't you check whether he has practiced Demonic Art or not?"

Her words were diplomatic-neither accusatory nor defensive-but they carried undeniable weight.

Quan Lingshu's smile stiffened.

(Princess Sun as well?)

He didn't dare defy her suggestion outright.

To do so would seem like he was hiding something-or worse, protecting a demonic cultivator under his roof.

His gaze flicked toward Bai Zihan, who remained seated, expression calm and unreadable.

A faint unease stirred in Quan Lingshu's chest.

"Of course," he said smoothly, his tone respectful.

"Young Master Bai and the Princess are right. It would be negligent of me not to verify such an extraordinary case"

Then he stood, his robes sweeping softly against the marble floor.

"Stop the matches immediately!"

He ordered.

The fights that had resumed came to an abrupt halt once again. Dozens of participants froze mid-motion, confusion rippling through the crowd.

"What's happening?"

"Why did the Clan Leader stop the competition?"

"Did someone break the rules again?"

Speculation spread like wildfire, but before it could grow louder, Quan Lingshu raised his hand.

"Chong Sheng!"

He called, his voice calm but carrying authority that silenced the noise instantly.

"Come forward!"

Chong Sheng, who had been standing silently near the edge of the arena, lifted his head in surprise.

He looked up toward the viewing platform where Quan Lingshu, Princess Sun Yaoqing, and Bai Zihan sat.

(What now?)

For a moment, confusion flickered across his eyes-but no fear.

He thought perhaps the Clan Leader wanted to recognize his achievement officially, or even grant him the promised disciple status in front of everyone.

After all, Quan Lingshu had already said he would make him a disciple.

So, he stepped forward without much thought.

Dozens of eyes followed him-some curious, some skeptical, some outright hostile.

He reached the center of the stage and bowed respectfully toward the elevated platform.

"This lowly one greets the Clan Leader and Princess Sun."

His tone was calm, neither servile nor arrogant.

Quan Lingshu nodded faintly, masking the tension under his composed expression.

He looked toward the two guests, then back at Chong Sheng.

"Raise your head," Quan Lingshu said, his voice steady but his mind whirling.

Chong Sheng lifted his head obediently, meeting Quan Lingshu's gaze.

For a brief moment, the world seemed to still.

The arena's heat, the whispering crowd, the flickering lanterns-everything fell silent as the Clan Leader's spiritual sense swept over the youth.

It was a subtle, invisible wave of pressure-a probing of Qi.

To most, it would have gone unnoticed.

But to Chong Sheng...

A faint chill crept up his spine.

He instantly realized what was happening.

(They're probing me...)

His mind sharpened, cold and calculating.

Outwardly, he remained still, his breathing calm, his expression unflinching.

Inside, however, his thoughts raced with panic.

(Did someone notice?)

He was confident that although he cultivated using a demonic technique, as long as he didn't deliberately reveal it or use it to its full extent, it would be impossible for anyone to tell it apart from normal Qi.

This was especially true since he was very weak at the moment.

But by the looks of it, Quan Lingshu was suspicious of him and was trying to check his body.

If he succeeded, Chong Sheng's identity as a demonic cultivator would be exposed.

(I need to do something.)

Quan Lingshu's spiritual sense was still brushing faintly over Chong Sheng when he suddenly winced.

His face paled slightly, and he clutched his chest as if in pain.

"C-Clan Leader," he said, voice strained, "forgive me, but my earlier injuries...

they seem to be acting up again. Could the Clan Leader perhaps allow me to rest for a while and report to you later?"

He lowered his head respectfully, masking his rising dread behind a facade of humility.

(If I can just step away for a moment...)

But before Quan Lingshu could respond, Bai Zihan's calm, melodic voice cut through the air.

"It will only take a few seconds."

The words carried effortlessly across the arena, light but with an authority that brooked no refusal.

Bai Zihan's lips curved faintly as he added, "Besides, I will personally reward you with a Grade-4 Healing Pill."

The murmurs that followed were instant-and thunderous.

"Grade-4?!"

"Did he just say Grade-4 Healing Pill?"

"Even those in the top clans can't easily obtain one of those!"

Envy flashed in countless eyes.

Even Princess Sun Yaoqing's brows rose slightly, a hint of surprise flickering through her calm expression.

Grade-4 pills were rare even in royal stores-treasures used to heal serious wounds or even stabilize one's cultivation foundation.

Her gaze lingered briefly on Bai Zihan.

Quan Lingshu, meanwhile, could barely conceal his admiration.

(As expected of the Bai Clan's heir... even his gestures are extravagant. If I can earn his favor here, my Quan Clan will rise!)

His resolve hardened immediately.

"Indeed," he said with a polite smile, glancing toward Chong Sheng.

"Young Master Bai is being most gracious. Endure for a bit and-consider it an opportunity."

Chong Sheng's heart sank. Rather than gratitude, he looked at Bai Zihan as if he wanted to kill him.

But still, he didn't think that Bai Zihan had truly discovered anything about him.

He assumed Bai Zihan only wanted to show off.

He hesitated for a long moment, his fists tightening at his sides.

Then he shook his head slowly.

"I... I appreciate the kindness, but something doesn't feel right."

His gaze swept across the stands, then up to the viewing platform. "There must be some scheme at play here. Why stop the matches and summon

me before everyone just to 'check my injuries'?"

His words were cautious, but his tone carried a faint challenge.

A ripple of shock ran through the audience.

(Did he just question the Clan Leader?) Quan Lingshu's expression darkened instantly.

"Scheme?"

He repeated softly, his voice laced with warning.

"You dare accuse your Clan Leader of scheming, boy?"

Chong Sheng immediately bowed, but his voice trembled.

"I wouldn't dare. I only meant-"

"Silence!"

Quan Lingshu's voice boomed, shaking the arena.

His earlier politeness evaporated, replaced by the cold, imperious weight of authority.

"I was merely checking your condition to ensure your injuries are stable. Yet you question my intentions? Do you take my concern as mockery?"

The crowd went still.

Even the air seemed to tighten around Chong Sheng.

He clenched his jaw, trying to calm the storm within him.

He knew the truth already-the only hope was that Quan Lingshu wasn't certain about him being a demonic cultivator.

He couldn't fight here. Not without exposing himself.

But neither could he stay still and let them probe his body.

His eyes darted briefly toward the side exits-his only escape route.

Quan Lingshu's voice struck again, sharp and final.

"Enough! If you continue resisting, I will take it as defiance against the Quan Clan itself!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 326 End Of Chong Sheng?[1,517 words]

Chapter 326 End Of Chong Sheng?

Quan Lingshu initially thought of doing it for the sake of Princess Sun Yaoqing and Bai Zihan.

However, with how Chong Sheng was resisting, he had become suspicious.

(Could he really be?)

Quan Lingshu didn't care whether a slave had learned Demonic Arts or not, but Princess Sun and Bai Zihan were here-and if it became known that someone under their nose was practicing Demonic Arts, their reputation would collapse. Before that happened, he had to handle the

situation. At the very least, he must show that the Quan Clan had nothing to do with a demonic cultivator.

Chong Sheng's pulse raced.

(If I stay... I'm finished.)

Then-

Without another word, he turned and bolted.

Gasps erupted through the stands.

"He's running away?!"

"Why would he-"

And in that single moment, suspicion turned into conviction.

Quan Lingshu's face twisted with fury as he shot to his feet.

"Stop him!" he roared. "Do not let him escape!"

The Quan Clan immediately reacted to Quan Lingshu's order and moved to stop Chong Sheng, who was heading for the exit.

Whoosh!

He maneuvered and dodged the guards with ease.

Even as the elders moved, Chong Sheng's figure was already blurring at the edge of the stage-darting through the crowd with desperate speed, his body flickering like a shadow.

Still, he didn't use his demonic Qi.

He simply anticipated others' movements and outran them, but obviously that wasn't going to work with more and more guards closing in.

Every muscle burned as he pushed his mortal strength to its limit. He strengthened and increased his speed by channeling all his Qi into his feet.

But in the end, he was just at the Qi Refining Stage, while the guards and pursuers were Foundation Establishment Stage and higher.

Quan Lingshu's voice thundered once more, shaking the great hall.

"Seal the exits! That slave will answer for his crimes!"

The guard did as ordered.

And then-

A furious shriek tore through the chaos.

"You little beast!"

Quan Zhiyang's mother descended from the platform like a storm, her eyes blazing with hatred.

She had been holding herself back since Clan Leader warned her, knowing there would be dire consequences if she disobeyed again.

Who could have expected that, mere minutes later, she would have a chance to avenge her son-and perhaps even be forgiven for her earlier disobedience?

This was a god-given chance.

"I knew it! I knew there was something foul about you!"

Before anyone could react, her palm flared with violent Qi.

A radiant golden light burst forth, gathering into a massive strike that crackled with killing intent.

There was no restraint.

No hesitation.

It was an attack meant to annihilate.

"Die!"

She screamed, thrusting her palm toward Chong Sheng's back.

The pressure crushed the air. The tiles beneath her feet shattered, and the arena roared with wind.

Now, there was no one to protect Chong Sheng.

No Clan Leader to stop her.

The strike fell like divine judgment-unstoppable, absolute.

Chong Sheng's eyes went cold.

If he didn't act, he would die here.

Quan Zhiyang's mother's palm descended like divine wrath, golden light erupting in a blinding flash that swallowed Chong Sheng whole.

The explosion thundered through the arena-stone tiles cracked, shockwaves blasted outward, and several guards were thrown off their feet.

When the light finally faded, silence fell.

Only a scorched crater remained where Chong Sheng had stood.

Gasps and murmurs rippled through the crowd.

"That Slave must be dead!"

"As expected of an Elder..."

But then-

A shadow stirred within the rising dust.

A faint, trembling figure slowly straightened.

Chong Sheng stood there-his robe torn, blood trailing from the corner of his mouth, yet his gaze cold and unbroken.

"What-how is he still alive?!"

The murmurs turned to shouts of disbelief.

And then they felt it.

From Chong Sheng's body, dark mist began to seep out-thick, sinuous, alive. It coiled around him like a serpent, writhing and pulsing with a will of its own.

His aura shifted-no longer that of a mere Qi Refining cultivator, but something older, heavier, tainted.

"That's-!"

"Demonic Qi!"

The black mist surged, forming a jagged sigil of darkness behind him.

It pulsed once, and the lingering golden energy around the crater shattered apart, swallowed by the roiling shadows.

Chong Sheng lifted his head, blood still on his lip but a cold smile curling there.

"Is that all...?"

And around him, black Qi swirled like smoke from a forbidden flame.

Every eye in the arena was fixed on him.

Fear, disgust, and disbelief rippled through the crowd.

"He really used Demonic Power..."

"No wonder he could defeat Young Master Zhiyang!"

"So that's how he did it-vile tricks and forbidden arts!"

Princess Sun Yaoqing's face paled slightly. Her brows knit together as she turned toward Bai Zihan.

(So... he truly was a demonic cultivator. Did Bai Zihan already know?)

Her gaze lingered on the young master beside her.

Bai Zihan's lips curved into a faint, knowing smile.

His eyes gleamed with quiet amusement as he watched Chong Sheng surrounded by terrified gazes-like a spider calmly watching its prey thrash in its own web.

Normally, this would have been the time for the protagonist to lay low, grow, and rebuild his strength.

But with this incident, it was certain-Chong Sheng could no longer stay low-key. From this day forth, he would be hunted to the ends of the earth. After all, demonic cultivators were universally despised. No empire would shelter one, nor risk being seen as defying the righteous path.

(This should be it for him... at least, if he were a normal person.) However, Chong Sheng wasn't a normal person-he was a Heaven's Chosen, one with extraordinary luck. Could he die so easily?

Bai Zihan didn't think so.

Quan Lingshu's shout to seal the exits still echoed through the hall when a hoarse, furious voice cut through the tension like a blade.

The first wave of guards charged forward-Qi blades gleaming, killing intent surging.

"Seize him! Kill that demonic filth!"

Chong Sheng's breathing was ragged, blood still on his lips. Yet his gaze was sharp, cold-no longer the look of a desperate servant, but of a cornered beast.

"Fine..."

He muttered, dark Qi roiling from his palms. "If you all wish for death-then I'll grant it."

He thrust his hand forward.

BOOM!

A black wave exploded outward, swallowing the first few guards whole.

They screamed as the shadowy Qi corroded their defenses, armor sizzling, skin blistering where the demonic energy touched.

"What-what kind of power is this?!"

"Stay back! Don't let that Qi touch you!"

But Chong Sheng didn't stop.

The black mist thickened, wrapping around his arms like serpents. His strikes became faster, wilder-catch blow carrying unnatural weight. The guards' formation broke apart as he darted through them, moving like a phantom, every movement fueled by rage and desperation.

A guard swung down with his saber-only for Chong Sheng's hand to catch the blade mid-swing.

The metal hissed and melted in his grasp.

"Impossible-!"

Before the man could finish, Chong Sheng drove his palm into his chest. The impact sent him flying, blood spraying midair.

Gasps rippled through the hall.

"This strength-he's only at Qi Refining, how can he-?"

"It's the Demonic Art! He's feeding on their Qi!" Indeed-each time Chong Sheng struck, a faint shimmer of absorbed energy flickered around him.

He was devouring their vitality, patching his wounds as fast as they appeared.

But his breathing was becoming heavier. His meridians screamed in protest; his body was nearing its limit.

Still, he refused to stop.

Two more guards fell, their spiritual cores shattered. The remaining cultivators hesitated-fear battling duty in their eyes.

Then, a roar split the air.

"ENOUGH!"

Three powerful auras descended from above-Quan Clan Elders, each one a Core Condensation expert.

Their pressure crashed down like mountains, suppressing the demonic Qi that had filled the arena.

And with them came the golden radiance of pure fury-

Quan Zhiyang's mother.

Her eyes were bloodshot, her hair wild, the grief and hatred twisting her features.

"You dare kill members of my Quan Clan right in front of me?!"

Her hands came together in a seal, golden light blooming around her like a sun.

"Today, you die for what you did to my son."

She struck first.

A pillar of flame surged forth, splitting the air as it tore toward Chong Sheng.

He raised both arms, forming a shield of Demonic Qi-but the clash was brutal. The flame shattered through his defense, slamming into his chest.

BOOM!

The impact hurled him across the hall. He crashed through a stone pillar, coughing up blood, the demonic Qi around him flickering violently.

Before he could even rise, the three Elders attacked together-each unleashing devastating techniques in unison.

The air twisted with power. Swords descended, lightning arcs chained through the ground, and scaling talismans flared in the air to bind him.

Chong Sheng roared, forcing his battered body upright, black veins crawling across his skin as he poured everything into one desperate counterstrike.

"Heavenly Demonic Devour!"

A massive claw of black energy erupted behind him, slashing through two incoming techniques-yet the third tore through, striking him squarely in the chest.

Blood burst from his mouth. The demonic aura faltered, then sputtered like a dying flame.

He fell to one knee.

(This body is so weak!)

His vision blurred, the world spinning. He could hear the triumphant voices of the Quan cultivators closing in.

"It's over."

"His end is here."

"Kill him before he escapes again!"

Quan Zhiyang's mother raised her hand once more, gathering Qi for the finishing blow.

"This is the fate of those who defy the Quan Clan!"

The killing intent in her voice made the crowd flinch.

But even on his knees, battered and bleeding, Chong Sheng lifted his head-his eyes burning with an eerie, defiant gleam.

"Over?"

He coughed, a bitter smile curling his lips.

"No... I'm not done yet."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 327 Chong Sheng Escaped! [1,421 words]

Chapter 327 Chong Sheng Escaped!

There was no way Chong Sheng was going to give up.

Compared to his previous life, this was nothing. For his revenge, he couldn't die yet-at least, not at the hands of such weaklings.

The temperature dropped. The black Qi surged once more-denser, heavier, more vicious than before.

"You'll regret this-every last one of you!"

Chong Sheng's hair whipped in the violent wind, his eyes burning with crimson light. The black mist seethed around him, thick with resentment and defiance. His voice trembled with fury, each word laced with killing intent.

"Quan Clan, remember this well-I'll return. When I do, I'll reduce this clan to ashes!"

The onlookers recoiled.

Arrogant! Suicidal! Mad!

The murmurs surged again.

"Still dares to threaten them?"

"He's lost it-he won't live past today!"

"Demonic cultivators are always so delusional before death!"

A group of Quan Guards lunged forward, Qi blazing, weapons drawn.

"There is no next time for you, wretch!"

One elder shouted.

"Die here and pay for your sins!"

Chong Sheng sneered, blood dripping from the corner of his lips.

"We'll see about that."

Then he raised his trembling hand and-without hesitation-bit down on his fingertip. A droplet of scarlet blood welled up, glowing faintly with an eerie light.

Before anyone could stop him, he thrust that blood into the air, tracing swift, complex sigils that burned into existence with a hiss.

The symbols twisted and rotated, forming an intricate array of runes that pulsed with dark crimson light.

"What is he doing?!"

"Stop him!"

The guards charged.

But the array flared to life before they could reach him.

Shhhhhh-!

A low hum filled the hall as the blood-red formation circle spun faster and faster, expanding beneath Chong Sheng's feet like a blooming flower of death.

In the next instant, the symbols shot upward, enveloping him in a cocoon of black and red light.

The very air warped around him, distorting like ripples on the surface of a pond.

BOOM!

The formation erupted with a thunderous pulse of power, the pressure sweeping through the hall like a storm.

When the light finally faded-

He was gone.

Only a faint scorch mark remained where Chong Sheng had stood. Silence!

The entire arena froze, disbelief written across every face.

"...He disappeared?"

"No, it must be a trick to deceive us."

"Search for him! He can't have gone far!"

But no matter how many guards rushed to and fro, no trace of Chong Sheng remained.

The silence that followed was suffocating.

Quan Zhiyang's mother trembled, staring at the scorched ground with hatred.

Princess Sun Yaoqing was stunned.

"He actually escaped," she murmured.

She didn't recognize the formation Chong Sheng had used, but it seemed like a teleportation formation-or something similar.

Yet it was far too advanced; no formation master within the Falling Star Empire was capable of such a thing.

With her senses, it was almost impossible for someone like Chong Sheng to hide from her. So it was certain-he had been teleported as she couldn't sense his presence in Quan Clan.

But how could a slave know how to use a teleportation formation?

Not to mention, the Qi required to activate one.

(If only he weren't a demonic cultivator...)

Such a person, even disregarding his cultivation, with his knowledge of formations, could have been a tremendous asset to the Falling Star Empire.

But with the revelation of his Demonic Technique, she could no longer recruit him.

Quan Lingshu's face darkened like thunderclouds.

Not only had someone from the Quan Clan learned demonic arts-but that person had also managed to escape before them.

This was humiliation beyond measure.

He slammed his palm into the armrest of his seat, shattering it to splinters.

"Seal the entire compound! Search every inch! I want him found-dead or alive!"

He didn't believe Chong Sheng had teleported. He thought the man must still be hiding somewhere nearby.

And through it all, Bai Zihan merely sat there-smiling faintly, eyes glinting with quiet amusement.

(Looks like killing Chong Sheng isn't as easy as I expected.)

Even if he had joined in to kill Chong Sheng, the man would likely have still found a way to escape.

By staying uninvolved, Bai Zihan had avoided drawing Chong Sheng's hatred. The youth's vengeance was now directed solely at the Quan Clan.

So he had nothing to worry about-at least, not for now.

Instead, he had gained valuable information. Chong Sheng, while weak, had enough trump cards to survive.

It was a cold reminder never to underestimate those Heaven's Chosen types.

It was certain Chong Sheng wouldn't forget this humiliation-and one day, he would return for revenge.

Well, what happens to the Quan Clan didn't matter to Bai Zihan.

Initially, he had intended to destroy the Quan Clan himself, suspecting they had aided the Organization in establishing their base in this region.

But now... it was better to leave that task to Chong Sheng.

With him gone, there was little chance of tracking him. He would surely become a wanted man, forced into hiding.

The only time Bai Zihan might find him again... would be when Chong Sheng returned for vengeance.

(Though I wonder how long I'll have to wait.)

Still, it had been a wise decision not to interfere and draw the ire of such a dangerous person.

Chong Sheng wouldn't be able to live quietly; he would suffer before regaining his strength-but as a Heaven's Chosen, he would inevitably rise again.

The oppressive silence lingered long after Chong Sheng vanished. Princess Sun Yaoqing exhaled softly, her expression unreadable beneath the faint glimmer of shock in her eyes.

Then-

A chair scraped lightly against the floor.

Bai Zihan rose from his seat.

His movement drew every gaze in the hall. Calm, unhurried, yet his presence alone commanded silence once more.

He turned toward Princess Sun Yaoqing, his tone polite but faintly cool.

"Your Highness," he said. "It seems we've seen enough for today. Since the Quan Clan must now tend to its... internal matters, we should take our leave."

His words were mild, but they cut like a blade sheathed in silk.

Princess Sun Yaoqing hesitated, then gave a small nod.

"I agree."

As the two prepared to depart, Quan Lingshu finally broke from his stupor. His composure cracked as he hurried forward, face drawn and anxious. "Y-Young Master Bai, please, wait!"

He bowed deeply, forcing a strained smile.

"This unfortunate incident has shamed my clan. Please allow us to make amends. You and Her Highness have yet to enjoy the banquet prepared in your

honor at least stay a few hours, to show my Quan Clan's hospitality!" Bai Zihan paused, his gaze settling on the kneeling Clan Leader.

"I appreciate the offer," he said softly. "But I believe it would be unwise to linger when the matter before you is so grave. Attend to your affairs first."

Quan Lingshu's expression faltered-humility warring with desperation. Just as Bai Zihan turned to leave, he spoke again.

"If you happen to find any trace of that man-or capture him," Bai Zihan said lightly, "I would like to be informed."

For a heartbeat, silence hung heavy once more. Then Quan Lingshu straightened instantly, a spark of hope igniting in his eyes.

"Of course! Of course, Young Master Bai!" he said fervently. "You have my word-our Quan Clan will spare no effort in finding that traitor! He will not escape us again!" Princess Sun Yaoqing looked slightly puzzled.

(Why is Bai Zihan so interested in that demonic cultivator?) Although she couldn't deny her own curiosity-wondering where Chong Sheng had learned such an advanced formation despite being a slave-for Bai Zihan, the Young Master of the Desolate Heaven Empire, it shouldn't have been that surprising.

Well, it was no use trying to gauge the mind of Bai Zihan since it was impossible.

Bai Zihan's lips curved faintly-a polite smile, nothing more.

"Good!"

He inclined his head, then turned away.

The faint rustle of his robe was the only sound as he and Princess Sun Yaoqing walked toward the exit, the crowd parting instinctively before them.

Only when they were gone did Quan Lingshu finally exhale, his fists clenching at his sides. "Mobilize every scout," he barked. "I want the entire region searched. That wretch won't slip through our fingers a second time!" Outside, under the dimming sky, Bai Zihan's expression changed.

(If you don't find him soon, your Quan Clan is as good as gone.)

He knew that much.

If Chong Sheng lived, the Quan Clan's doom was already sealed.

Perhaps a year at most.

Three months, if Chong Sheng was quick.

That was the time he might need to regain the strength required to destroy the Quan Clan.

So if the Quan Clan wants to survive, they must find Chong Sheng before he regains enough power to destroy them.

(I wonder how quickly he'll rise?)

He wasn't sure when he might encounter Chong Sheng again if he were to go back to the Desolate Heaven Empire. Perhaps he mightn't see him ever again.

He looked up at the blood-colored sky and chuckled softly-the sound almost lost to the wind.

"The heavens also favor the mad, it seems."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 328 Back to Falling Star Empire's Palace[1,733 words]

Chapter 328 Back to Falling Star Empire's Palace

Bai Zihan was back on the flying ship, heading toward the capital.

Mingzhu and Meilin asked Princess Sun Yaoqing about the commotion. Since they had been kept in the guest room, they had no idea what had occurred. Princess Sun briefly explained to both of them about Chong Sheng and how he turned out to be a Demonic Cultivator-a traitor of humanity.

Mingzhu and Meilin were both shocked to hear the situation, especially when they learned that Chong Sheng had managed to escape right before everyone's eyes, including Princess Sun Yaoqing, who was a Spirit Severing Realm cultivator.

On the other hand, the Bai Clan members also heard the news, but they weren't too surprised-or even paid much attention to it.

To them, such a weak person, even if he was able to escape, only succeeded because of the Quan Clan's incompetence.

They didn't even have a simple formation to prevent teleportation.

Of course, most of them weren't aware that the Falling Star Empire didn't have a capable enough formation master to create a teleportation formation in the first place.

So, why would they bother having an extra formation to prevent teleportation?

In any case, since this incident had nothing to do with what Bai Zihan wanted, they didn't care much about it, treating it as a Falling Star Empire affair- nothing to do with them.

The distance between the Quan Clan territory and the Falling Star Empire's capital was quite large.

It took quite some time for them to reach the palace.

The flying ship descended slowly through the night clouds, its silver hull gleaming under the moonlight.

Below, the sprawling capital of the Falling Star Empire came into view-vast, magnificent.

When the ship finally descended over the palace courtyard, servants and guards were already waiting in neat formation.

As the vessel touched down, they bowed deeply in unison.

"Welcome back, Your Highness! Welcome, honored guests of the Bai Clan!"

Their voices echoed across the courtyard, crisp and formal.

The servants guided the group through the palace's vast marble halls, the sound of their footsteps echoing faintly against the gilded walls.

After a brief pause at the entrance to the imperial court, an attendant stepped forward and bowed deeply.

"Her Highness, His Majesty requests your presence. Young Master Bai, His Majesty has also summoned you personally."

Bai Zihan inclined his head slightly.

"Understood!"

Normally, he didn't like taking orders, but this time, he decided to grant the Emperor's request-after all, the Emperor of the Falling Star Empire had permitted him to destroy that organization's branch.

Since he was already here, he didn't care much about granting such a simple request even though he rarely does.

And there was also something that he would like to confirm.

Princess Sun Yaoqing nodded once, calm as ever, and together they followed the attendant.

The great hall of the Falling Star Empire was as imposing as Bai Zihan remembered though it lacked the presence of other princes, princesses, and nobles this time.

At the far end, seated upon a throne carved from imperial crystal, was Emperor Sun Longji, ruler of the Falling Star Empire.

"Your Majesty!"

Princess Sun Yaoqing bowed gracefully.

Bai Zihan, on the other hand, didn't even bother to greet him. He simply looked straight at the Emperor, wondering what he had been called for.

The Emperor's gaze swept over them, lingering briefly on Bai Zihan before he spoke.

"So," he said, his tone measured but heavy, "I assume your journey bore fruit? You have finished what you came for?"

The Emperor Sun asked Bai Zihan.

"To some extent," Bai Zihan answered.

He still had to deal with two more elders-though one wasn't very important, Elder Shuhai was someone he absolutely had to catch.

After all, only he might have a clue to their headquarters, who dared to send assassins after him.

The Emperor's eyes narrowed slightly, though his expression remained composed.

"To some extent?"

He repeated slowly.

"Yes! Not every person of that organization was present today, so I might need to hunt down their remaining members."

Bai Zihan said while also looking at the Emperor's Sun expression.

"Young Master Bai, this time, I tolerated your actions within my borders because of the promise. But should there be a next time-you know I can't just turn a blind eye to it."

Emperor Sun said sternly.

After all, he was the Emperor. No matter what wrongs others had done in a different empire, it should be his final say whether they were punished or not as long as they are within the Falling Star Empire.

But since he had made that bet with Bai Zihan, and Bai Zihan had won, the Emperor had no choice but to keep his word.

However, that was the limit.

If Bai Zihan tried to use that bet as an excuse to go after another clan or person within the Falling Star Empire, it would tarnish the Emperor's image-making it seem as though he allowed foreigners to do whatever they pleased in his empire.

So the Emperor made sure to remind and subtly warn Bai Zihan that there would be consequences if he tried to do something like today in the Falling Star Empire.

Bai Zihan merely smiled.

"Of course," he agreed easily, the faintest hint of amusement touching his eyes.

"Your concern is understandable. But you need not worry, I will not cause unnecessary commotion. And I will be leaving soon."

He tilted his head slightly as he continued.

"So there's no reason for you to be scared."

The chamber fell still.

Princess Sun Yaoqing's eyes flicked briefly toward Bai Zihan, but she said nothing.

The Emperor's expression didn't change, but the faint crack of his knuckles against the throne's armrest betrayed his irritation.

Bai Zihan's words-saying the Emperor was scared-were utterly disrespectful. If it was his citizen, that person might already be dead.

The Emperor was supposed to be the supreme ruler of the Falling Star Empire, yet this young man dared to speak to him that way.

Still, he swallowed his anger. He could not afford to offend someone from the Desolate Heaven Empire-especially not someone with Bai Zihan's standing. And although Bai Zihan's words were disrespectful, they weren't entirely wrong.

The Emperor wasn't necessarily afraid of Bai Zihan-but of the Bai Clan behind him.

"... Very well," he said finally. "Then I shall take you at your word, Young Master Bai."

The Emperor also seemed to know that arguing with Bai Zihan wouldn't do any good and was just glad that Bai Zihan planned to leave.

Otherwise, he would have suspected that Bai Zihan has some hidden agenda part from what he told in Falling Star Empire.

While, on the other hand, Bai Zihan agreed on the surface that he would not cause another commotion, that was only a lie.

He still needed to deal with the Second Prince-whether the Emperor liked it or not.

When the Emperor finished speaking with Bai Zihan, he wanted a private conversation with his daughter and asked Bai Zihan to leave-which Bai Zihan did without objection.

Bai Zihan turned without hesitation, the doors closed behind him with a soft thud, and the oppressive weight in the room lessened.

For a moment, silence reigned.

Then Emperor Sun Longji exhaled quietly, his tone shifting-colder, more private now that only his daughter remained.

"Yaoqinger," he said. "You were with him the entire time. Tell me what do you think of this Bai Zihan?"

Princess Sun Yaoqing lifted her gaze slightly, her eyes thoughtful.

"He's... difficult to read," she admitted. "Powerful, Composed, and surprisingly has unwavering loyalty from other Bai Clan Members."

From how she saw Bai Clan Members treating Bai Zihan, it was certain that they weren't just doing that because of Bai Zihan's status.

"Moreover, he's ruthless," she added. "To his enemies-he shows no mercy. But..."

Her brows furrowed slightly.

"It seems he cares deeply for those who stand by his side."

She recalled the quiet figure of Luo Qing-Bai Zihan's personal servant.

(Even the Bai Clan members treated her with respect even though she didn't have any Cultivation. And Bai Zihan himself... he genuinely seemed to value her.)

Just looking at the way that Bai Zihan was talking with Luo Qing, she knew that he wasn't looking down on her.

It wasn't only that. Toward his clan members and the elders who had accompanied him, he had shown no trace of arrogance.

He never once disrespected them before others. In fact, he seemed particularly close with their Grand Elder.

Sun Yaoqing had thought that Bai Zihan was inherently rude and showed arrogance even toward his own clan members-but she was very wrong.

Bai Zihan seemed to only be rude to them-or perhaps it was because they were rude first?

No matter what, she was now sure that, unlike what she had initially believed, the Bai Clan members had unwavering trust and loyalty toward Bai Zihan.

"Oh? That's surprising" the Emperor said.

Of course, everyone present when Bai Zihan spar with Falling Star Empire's geniuses could see that Bai Zihan was arrogant and selfish, so he hadn't thought that the boy cared much about anyone else.

That could be both a good and a bad quality for someone of his standing. Anyway, the conversation between the two had only just begun, and the Princess gave a full report on the hidden organization and its battle power. "Hmm... I didn't think there was truly such an organization within my Empire. Perhaps it was good that Bai Zihan eradicated it before they could do much harm to our Falling Star Empire."

The Emperor said with relief.

After all, Void Refinement Experts aren't someone that they can just ignore. However, the Emperor was only relieved because he thought that since this was his first time hearing about such an organization-and since there had been no visible signs or reports of them-they hadn't done much so far.

He didn't realize that their influence had already spread even to his Royal Offerings.

"And the Bai Clan... looks like I also underestimated how much they care about their heir," he murmured.

Sending an Immortal Realm Grand Elder to safeguard Bai Zihan spoke volumes, and he hadn't expected the Bai Clan to go that far.

After all, while the Falling Star Empire didn't have anyone of such high cultivation, they had the advantage in numbers and coming to their turf.

So what if the Bai Clan lost their precious Grand Elder?

That meant the Bai Clan was willing to sacrifice their Grand Elder if it meant protecting Bai Zihan.

That was how much importance Bai Zihan held within the Bai Clan.

BANG!

Suddenly, a soldier burst through the door, startling Princess Sun and the Emperor.

The Emperor, clearly displeased, glared at him.

"How dare you enter without my permission? You'd better have a good explanation for this."

"A-Apologies, Your Majesty! B-But it's an urgent matter-Bai Zihan is beating up the Fifth Prince!"

Novel Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! Chapter 329 The Young Master's Killing Intent

Chapter 329 The Young Master's Killing Intent

Outside the imperial court, the night air was calm and cool.

Bai Zihan walked down the marble steps of the palace. The faint moonlight traced his figure-cold, composed, and calm.

He had finished his "business" with the Emperor. Now that his purpose was complete, he had no reason to linger.

And Bai Zihan thought that it was a good opportunity to investigate the Second Prince when the Emperor was busy with Sun Yaoqing.

His steps led him toward the guest hall within the palace compound, where the Bai Clan members awaited.

But the moment he stepped into the hall, his brows furrowed.

Something was off.

Normally, a soft, familiar voice would greet him the instant he appeared.

Yet this time-silence.

No Luo Qing.

No hurried footsteps rushing to greet him.

His gaze swept across the courtyard like a blade. The Bai Clan members who noticed his arrival quickly straightened and bowed.

"Young Master!"

Bai Zihan's eyes flicked over them.

"Where is Luo Qing?"

The one nearest to him blinked in surprise, clearly confused.

"Luo Qing? Didn't the Young Master ask her to come to you?"

He asked confusedly.

Bai Zihan's pupils narrowed.

His expression, calm moments ago, darkened instantly. A chill rippled through the air as killing intent leaked from him unconsciously.

"Who told her that?"

He asked softly-but the edge in his tone made the Bai Clan member's blood run cold,

The Bai Clan Member could tell Bai Zihan was truly angry this time.

The man swallowed. His earlier confusion vanished, replaced by nervous

seriousness.

"A... a palace maid, Young Master," he said. "She said you had ordered it personally and that Luo Qing was to follow her immediately."

For a heartbeat, silence.

Then Bai Zihan's qi exploded.

The ground cracked beneath his feet as Qi surged. His voice, low and sharp, cut through the courtyard like a sword.

"Where did she go?"

The man didn't dare hesitate. He quickly pointed toward the eastern side of the palace.

"That way, Young Master-the maid led her toward the eastern corridor."

Before he could say another word, Bai Zihan was gone. His eyes had turned razor-sharp, filled with unmistakable killing intent.

A streak of light tore through the hall, the air trembling in his wake.

The remaining Bai Clan members looked at one another, alarmed.

"What's going on? Why did the Young Master suddenly rush off after just returning?"

The Bai Clan member who had been questioned clenched his fists, his expression grim.

"Something's wrong" he said quickly, already sprinting after Bai Zihan. "Luo Qing might've been kidnapped!"

That sentence was enough to convey the severity of the situation-and to explain why Bai Zihan had vanished so suddenly.

The rest of the Bai Clan erupted into motion, surging after him like a storm. They knew Bai Zihan.

If Luo Qing-someone he cherished-was harmed in any way...

Then tonight, not even the imperial palace would remain standing.

They also knew this wasn't a simple matter.

Whoever dared to touch Luo Qing had to be someone of high standing, since only nobles were allowed within the inner palace.

Some worried it was a trap set by someone from the Falling Star Empire.

Others, however, pitied whoever had dared to provoke Bai Zihan.

Their ending was predetermined the moment they dared to mess with what was Bai Zihan's.

After all, apart from his parents, Luo Qing was the person Bai Zihan spent the most time with.

Many servants had come and gone under his command-some dismissed, others punished-but Luo Qing had remained.

This didn't necessarily mean he favored her openly, but one thing was clear: Bai Zihan cared for her.

He had once dismissed several servants for bullying Luo Qing and assigning her work that wasn't hers.

That single incident had been enough for even the Bai Clan's disciples to treat

Luo Qing with respect, despite her being a servant.

Especially because Bai Zihan rarely cared about anyone.

Perhaps Luo Qing was more important to Bai Zihan than even the other

Disciples of the Bai Clan.

And the Bai Clan members were well aware of that fact.

In any case, this was now an emergency. They prepared themselves as though for war-because that might not be far from the truth.

On the other hand, Bai Ren remained seated, sipping his tea calmly.

Unless it concerned Bai Zihan's safety directly, Bai Ren didn't intend to interfere.

After all, if every problem was solved for him, there would've been no point in sending Bai Zihan away in the first place.

The Palace Guards and Servant watched all the commotion but stood still.

They were well-aware about their own standing and Bai Clan. Even if they want to stop the Bai Clan, they can't.

Whoosh!

Bai Zihan ran at full speed, his figure flashing through the night corridors.

He knew this could be a scheme-either an attempt to lure him out or to threaten him.

(Could this be the Second Prince? Or Elder Shuhai?)

He tried to speculate but quickly dismissed it.

Rather than wasting time guessing, he spread his spiritual sense, searching for any trace of Luo Qing.

He wasn't particularly skilled in tracking, and he almost thought that it was useless until-

"-Don't get closer!"

(Luo Qing's voice!)

He heard it faintly from ahead.

And standing before the door was a palace maid-the same one who must have

lured Luo Qing away.

Bai Zihan's figure blurred. In less than a second, he was in front of her.

The maid froze, eyes widening in terror.

"T-This is the Fifth Pri-"

She didn't even finish her sentence.

"Get lost!"

Bai Zihan snapped.

His killing intent hit her like a physical blow, and the palace maid collapsed unconscious before she could utter another word.

He didn't even spare her a glance. She was insignificant.

BANG!

Bai Zihan kicked open the door-and his eyes went cold.

Inside, a bloated, pig-like bastard who could only be the Fifth Prince had Luo

Qing by the wrist, his greasy face twisted in lust.

"Looks like you have a death wish!"

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 330 Royal Blood Meets Bai Fury[1,472 words]

Chapter 330 Royal Blood Meets Bai Fury

"Looks like you have a death wish!"

Bai Zihan's voice thundered through the chamber, laced with killing intent sharp enough to freeze the air itself.

Both the Fifth Prince and Luo Qing flinched as his aura crashed into them like a tidal wave.

Luo Qing's brave façade, held together by sheer will, finally broke.

"Young Master...!"

Her voice trembled as tears spilled from her eyes.

Since the beginning of this ordeal, she had fought to stay composed-to uphold the dignity of the Bai Clan and of the man she served.

But she was still just a servant, a mortal girl thrust into a nightmare. Fear and humiliation burned in her chest until Bai Zihan's arrival shattered it all.

For the first time, the face she once feared brought her comfort.

Taking advantage of the Fifth Prince's startled hesitation, Luo Qing tore herself free and ran straight toward Bai Zihan.

"I'm sorry, Young Master!"

She cried, bowing her head in guilt.

Bai Zihan's expression softened briefly.

"Don't worry. You did nothing wrong."

His gaze sharpened like drawn steel.

"It's this piece of trash who crossed the line."

His killing intent coiled tighter around the room, suffocating.

The Fifth Prince-red-faced and sweating but too arrogant to back down- snapped, "Who are you?! How dare you ruin this Prince's happy time! Do you have any idea who you're talking to!?"

The doors burst open behind Bai Zihan as several Bai Clan members rushed in. Their eyes widened at the sight.

"Y-Young Master-!"

Without looking back, Bai Zihan ordered coldly, "Protect Luo Qing and don't let anyone approach. No matter who comes, they are not to disturb me."

"Yes, Young Master!"

Two of them hurried forward, gently supporting Luo Qing as they guided her away.

She looked back, her lips trembling, but Bai Zihan didn't turn. His focus was already fixed on the man before him.

The Fifth Prince, now completely ignored, went livid.

"Do you know what happens to those who offend royalty?! You'll be executed along with your entire clan! Implicated, all of you! All of you!"

He ranted, spit flying, his words echoing off the marble walls.

From the words he spoke, he seemed to have no idea who he was messing with.

Otherwise, even the Emperor would never dare to utter such a ridiculous word of executing Bai Clan.

When he finally stopped to catch his breath, Bai Zihan's calm voice cut through the silence like a blade.

"Are you done?"

Bai Zihan asked, his tone of talking with trash.

The Fifth Prince felt that something was wrong especially since the person before him was still treating him like this despite having already said he was Fifth Prince.

"W-What did you say to me?! How dare you still have such an arrogant tone towards me."

The Fifth Prince yelled.

"Guards! Come and apprehend this man for me!"

The Fifth Prince called out.

Bai Zihan's eyes gleamed with murderous intent.

"Do you even know," he said softly, "what you've just done?"

The Fifth Prince sneered.

"What, that? It was just a little play. She's just a commoner girl. So what? I'll give you five beautiful servants of mine in exchange for yours."

The words dropped like filth in the air.

After all, no matter who the person before him was, the Fifth Prince believed that Luo Qing, a person with no Qi, was that different from an object.

Sure, people would get angry that someone touched their object without permission but with five times the compensation, anyone would agree easily. Well, at least, the Fifth Prince seemed to believe that.

Then-

SLAP!

A thunderous sound echoed as Bai Zihan's palm struck. The Fifth Prince's head snapped to the side, and his body was sent crashing into a pillar.

Teeth scattered across the floor with a spray of blood.

The Bai Clan members near the door froze. Even breathing seemed dangerous now.

Bai Zihan's voice, cold and emotionless, drifted across the room.

"For the compensation of having taken Luo Qing till now without my permission," he said, stepping forward, "it will be your life."

He tilted his head slightly, eyes narrowing.

"Though even that doesn't seem enough. After all, not only that, you dare to lay your filthy hands on her."

A faint smile, chilling and beautiful, curved his lips.

"Tell me, should I add everyone who was involved in this?"

The Fifth Prince lay motionless for a moment, his mind blank.

It took several seconds for him to even comprehend what had just happened.

(He... slapped me?)

No one had ever dared to touch him before. Not even his father, the Emperor himself, had ever raised a hand against him.

Rage boiled up, blinding and wild.

"You-!"

His voice cracked into a shriek.

"You bastard! You dare strike me! I'll make you regret this for the rest of your miserable-"

Slap!

Another sharp sound cut his words short.

His head whipped the other way as a second blow sent him sprawling flat on the floor. A tooth skittered across the marble, spinning before falling silent.

"Keep quiet! I am still trying to think of a punishment."

The Fifth Prince trembled with fury.

"You-! I'll kill you! You think I'm some weakling?"

He roared and lunged forward, his fist glowing with Nascent Soul Realm's Qi as he swung at Bai Zihan's face-fast, heavy, and filled with killing intent.

But Bai Zihan merely tilted his head.

The punch sliced through empty air.

Before the Fifth Prince could even register what happened, a crushing force bore down on him-Bai Zihan's aura exploding outward like a collapsing mountain.

His knees buckled instantly. The marble beneath him cracked as he was forced down, unable to breathe, his limbs trembling uncontrollably.

The Fifth Prince's eyes widened in disbelief.

"J-Just who-?"

SLAP!

Another sharp crack echoed through the hall, louder than before. The Fifth

Prince's words were swallowed as his body spun from the impact and hit the ground with a dull thud.

Blood splattered across the polished floor.

For a moment, he lay there motionless, dazed, before slowly lifting his head. His cheeks burned with pain, swelling grotesquely, and yet his gaze remained fixed on Bai Zihan.

(How... How is this possible?)

He had sparred with Nascent Soul experts before. He had been praised by royal instructors for his potential. He had thought himself strong-untouchable within the empire.

Yet now, before this youth who looks to be in his teens, he couldn't even circulate his qi properly.

The Qi within him quivered like frightened insects, refusing to move under that suffocating pressure.

(What... What kind of monster is this?)

His breath hitched as realization began to dawn. He had underestimated him- terribly so.

Due to Bai Zihan's youthful appearance, and since the Fifth Prince already knew most of the talented individuals in the empire, he assumed Bai Zihan was just a nobody.

Luckily for him-the Imperial Guard has arrived.

"Your Highness!"

The commander's face went pale the moment he saw the Fifth Prince on the ground with the blood, then twisted in fury.

"You dare harm the Fifth Prince in the imperial palace!? Seize="

He stopped mid-order as his eyes fell on the man standing before them.

Cold moonlight outlined Bai Zihan's figure-calm, untouchable, and radiating a killing intent that made even seasoned soldiers' hands shake.

Behind him stood several Bai Clan members, who were ready to fight them.

The commander's anger drained instantly, replaced by grim recognition.

"Y-Young Master Bai..."

He forced a smile, trying to defuse the air heavy enough to crush bone.

"This must be... a misunderstanding. The Fifth Prince may have acted rashly, but we will surely ensure proper compensation. However, you must understand -he is royalty. We have a duty to ensure his safety."

Although he wasn't sure whether it was even the Fifth Prince's fault, he said those words to calm Bai Zihan and to settle this with talks.

However, his last sentence also conveyed that they were more than willing to fight if Bai Zihan were to refuse this.

He gestured to his men, urging them to stay calm, then bowed slightly toward Bai Zihan. "If we may, allow us to take His Highness to safety, and I promise-"

The Bai Clan members at the door shifted subtly, blocking the path. "The Young Master ordered that no one interfere," one of them said coldly. "I ask that you don't interfere until the Young Master says so!"

The commander froze, beads of sweat forming on his forehead. "You... you realize what this could lead to, right? If this escalates-it could mean war between the Bai Clan and the Falling Star Empire!" The Bai Clan member's eyes narrowed, his tone razor-sharp.

"War?" He repeated. "If that happens, shouldn't it be the Falling Star Empire who should worry?"

The implication hung like thunder in the air. The guards shifted uneasily, glancing between the trembling Fifth Prince and Bai Zihan who wasn't even listening. None dared to move forward. After all, like Bai Clan Member has said, it was their Falling Star Empire who was the weaker party here. Moreover, looking at the Bai Clan members, many of them were in the same realm as him. Even if they were to get into a confrontation, they would likely lose.

But wasn't like he could just stand by and watch either. He turned to one of his fastest soldiers and gave an order.

"Go and inform his Majesty!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 331 Repent, Fifth Prince[1,160 words]

Chapter 331 Repent, Fifth Prince

Bai Zihan looked down at the pitiful figure sprawled before him-blood dripping from split lips, face swollen and unrecognizable.

Bai Zihan stepped closer, his boot landing beside the Fifth Prince's face. The marble floor groaned faintly under the pressure of his Qi.

"Tell me," Bai Zihan's voice was quiet now, soft enough to chill bone, "why did you take Luo Qing? Was it to lure me out?"

The Fifth Prince blinked in confusion, stunned that the question was even asked.

"W-What? What are you-"

Bai Zihan crouched, his gaze boring into him.

"Answer me properly. You dared to take her away on the lies that it was me who told her to come. Was that your goal-to provoke me?"

The Fifth Prince shook his head weakly, blood spattering on the floor.

"I don't even know what you're talking about! Lure you? Why would I-"

He coughed hard, grimacing in pain, then managed to speak again, his tone laced with frustration.

"If you're talking about that servant girl, then she was brought to me. She was given to me, wasn't she?"

"...Given to you?"

Bai Zihan repeated.

The Fifth Prince nodded quickly.

He finally realized why Bai Zihan was so angry and beating him. It was all for that servant girl, though he still couldn't understand why.

Sure, Luo Qing was pretty-but for the Fifth Prince, he only thought of her as a prettier flower, not something worth getting angry over for plucking. And It certainly didn't warrant offending a royal.

In any case, the Fifth Prince could see a way to end this torture-by telling the man before him that he wasn't the one who had forcefully taken her away like he seemed to think.

"Yes! That maid said she was sent by a young master as a gift to me. I was deceived as well!"

For a heartbeat, there was silence.

Then-

SLAP!

The sound cracked like thunder. The Fifth Prince's head snapped sideways again, his body spinning as he crashed against the ground.

Bai Zihan straightened slowly, his expression unreadable, but the killing intent around him thickened like a suffocating fog.

His thoughts raced.

(Someone used the Fifth Prince? Or was it me who is being used?)

The palace maid had called Luo Qing by using his name. This wasn't random. Someone had planned this.

Either they knew that I would beat the Fifth Prince, hoping to use that pretense to accuse me or force some kind of deal...

Or perhaps a rival of the Fifth Prince, wanting to use me to get rid of him?

Second Prince, perhaps?

Bai Zihan wasn't too sure, but he understood that the Fifth Prince had been used-but he also didn't regret beating the Fifth Prince.

It didn't erase the sin that he had committed.

If the Fifth Prince were a decent person, he would never have dared to lay a hand on Luo Qing when she had clearly shown no interest.

It only proved that the Fifth Prince was a lecherous bastard who forced himself upon maids and servants.

Bai Zihan normally wouldn't care about such scum-but this time, the man had touched what belonged to him, whether it was because of a ploy or not.

In the end, the Fifth Prince was the one who made that choice. To Bai Zihan, he was just as responsible as whoever was behind this farce.

He glanced at the Fifth Prince, whose consciousness was flickering from the blows.

"A maid, you said?"

The Fifth Prince groaned faintly, nodding.

Bai Zihan immediately glanced toward the place where the maid standing guard had fainted earlier.

She was missing.

(Was she acting? Or perhaps she woke up and escaped?)

There was no doubt that it seemed to be the same maid the Fifth Prince was referring to.

She was definitely under the order of whoever was behind this or perhaps it was her.

In any case, she escaped when he was busy dealing with the Fifth Prince.

Bai Zihan exhaled slowly, his mind sharp and quiet amidst the anger boiling beneath his calm exterior.

He turned away and walked toward the grand chair of the Fifth Prince.

Without hesitation, Bai Zihan sat down.

The Fifth Prince, dazed and barely conscious, stared in disbelief as the young man-his tormentor-sat on his chair as though he owned it.

However, he knew it was understandable.

Even while being beaten, he had clearly heard the Commander mention the Bai Clan-something about a potential war with them.

That alone made him realize who the person before him truly was: someone from the esteemed Bai Clan of the Desolate Heaven Empire.

No matter how ignorant one might be, every Royal was taught about the Desolate Heaven Empire and its strongest forces-one of which was the Bai Clan.

Therefore, he had already abandoned any hope of the Royal Commander saving him. The only chance for survival now was if the man before him chose to let him go.

Bai Zihan leaned back, resting one arm on the armrest, his gaze sharp and commanding.

He had heard the Commander telling one of his soldiers to call the Emperor, so he waited.

Though, of course, it wasn't to apologize.

Rather, he hoped that with the Emperor's arrival, the true perpetrator of this scheme would also show up.

If that person's goal was to implicate him, they would definitely appear to press the accusation.

Otherwise, there was a high chance this was a plot to get rid of the Fifth Prince.

"Fifth Prince," he said calmly, his tone cutting through the thick silence, "I'll give you one order. Stand up."

The Fifth Prince's lips trembled. His pride screamed at him not to obey, but his body refused to move otherwise.

Under that oppressive presence, even breathing felt like a sin.

He struggled onto his knees, pressing a bloody hand against the ground for balance.

"Now," Bai Zihan continued, voice utterly cold, "repent."

The Fifth Prince's head snapped up, fury flickering in his swollen eyes.

"You-"

Although he realized the status of Bai Zihan, it was not like he could simply take such injustice.

He was already slapped several times and now, Bai Zihan demands him to repent if that wasn't enough.

Bai Zihan's gaze met his.

A sudden, invisible pressure slammed down again, forcing the Fifth Prince's words to die in his throat.

His chest heaved, sweat beading along his temples as he felt the weight of Bai

Zihan's spiritual pressure pinning him like an insect.

"I said, repent."

Each word hit like a hammer, infused with Qi that made the marble floor tremble.

The Fifth Prince's last ounce of resistance shattered. His head lowered involuntarily, his voice hoarse and broken.

"I... I repent..."

Bai Zihan closed his eyes briefly, exhaling as though to rid himself of the stench of arrogance and deceit.

"Shouldn't there be someone else you should be apologizing to?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Obviously, it was directed at Luo Qing.

The Fifth Prince looked at Luo Qing, then back at Bai Zihan, as if asking whether he was serious.

He, the almighty Fifth Prince-one of the closest to being the next Emperor- bow and apologize to a mere mortal?

That seemed an even greater humiliation than being beaten.

After all, he could at least understand losing to Bai Zihan, whose strength and status were undeniable.

But apologizing to a mortal?

That was beyond comprehension for someone who has always treated Mortals as lesser being.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 332 Apology to a Mortal[996 words]

Chapter 332 Apology to a Mortal

Bai Zihan asking him to apologize to Luo Qing was similar to one asking a person to apologize to an insect.

"Isn't that going too far? I finally understand. It isn't that you're angry about that servant girl-you just want to humiliate me!"

The Fifth Prince barked angrily, as if he had seen through a scheme.

"What the f**k are you even talking about?"

Bai Zihan was genuinely surprised that the Fifth Prince was more reluctant to apologize than he had been to endure the beating.

No matter what, Bai Zihan had no intention of letting him go unless he did as he had ordered.

"Do you think that if I wanted to humiliate you, I'd even need a reason? Do as I say-or you can continue being beaten."

The Fifth Prince kept silent.

"Heh? Looks like you've got guts, I'll give you that," Bai Zihan said.

After all, how could someone be so arrogant as to refuse to apologize that could end his suffering?

But it seemed the Fifth Prince still hadn't had enough of a beating and wants to be beaten instead of apologizing.

"You three. Beat him up until he apologizes to Luo Qing!"

Bai Zihan ordered the nearest three Bai Clan members.

The three were reluctant but didn't dare to refuse. After all, Bai Zihan had already given the Fifth Prince a way out-it was he who refused.

Thud! Bam! Wham! Thump!

The first blow landed with a thud, followed by another, and another.

The Fifth Prince's groans echoed through the grand chamber, drowned only by the sound of fists striking flesh and the occasional crack of bone.

The Bai Clan members obeyed Bai Zihan's command without hesitation-each strike measured, deliberate, never fatal but excruciatingly humiliating.

The once-proud prince, known throughout the palace for his arrogance, was reduced to a pitiful sight-his robes torn, his face swollen beyond recognition, blood smearing across the marble floor.

"Enough!"

The Commander of the Imperial Guard yelled, his voice trembling between anger and fear.

"Young Master Bai, please-this has gone far enough!"

His plea met only silence.

Bai Zihan didn't even glance his way.

Sitting on the Fifth Prince's chair like a sovereign passing judgment, he looked almost serene-except for the faint glint of killing intent that lingered in his eyes.

"Did you hear me, Young Master Bai?!"

Bai Zihan continued to ignore him. If the Commander dared to act, the Bai Clan Elders could easily deal with him.

Luo Qing stared at the once-arrogant and terrifying Fifth Prince, now reduced to nothing more than a beggar-like person.

Even she felt pity despite being the victim, and wanted to tell Bai Zihan that there was no need for an apology.

However, the Bai Clan guard stopped her and shook her head.

Once Bai Zihan had given his word, almost nothing could change it.

Trying to stop Bai Zihan after he had already given his order would be seen as disrespectful-and might even weaken the fear and reverence the Falling Star Empire held for the Bai Clan.

So, she stopped Luo Qing, who could only accept it helplessly.

As the Fifth Prince's beating continued, the commotion inevitably attracted a crowd of palace servants and maids.

They couldn't believe their eyes when they saw the Fifth Prince being beaten like that.

But they weren't stupid enough to interfere-especially when even the Royal Commander was there and doing nothing.

Servants peeked from behind pillars. Maids whispered anxiously at the doorway.

Word spread through the palace corridors like wildfire-the Fifth Prince was being beaten inside his own hall.

The Commander's heart sank.

This was getting out of hand.

He turned to order the servants away, but before he could, the Fifth Prince's broken cry pierced the hall-raw, desperate, almost animal.

"STOP! I'll I'll do it! I'll apologize!"

Bai Zihan finally raised his hand, signaling the three to stop.

The Bai Clan members withdrew instantly, stepping back.

The Fifth Prince lay there for a moment, trembling, before slowly forcing himself up.

His face was swollen beyond recognition-round, red, and puffed up like a pig's. If not for the royal garments he wore, one might have truly mistaken him for a pig.

Of course, despite the ridiculous sight, none of them dared to laugh at their prince. The Bai Clan members, in particular, maintained perfect composure though some of them seemed to be suppressing their laughter.

The Fifth Prince movements were sluggish, every breath a struggle. Blood dripped from his nose and mouth, splattering onto the marble beneath him. Despite having said he would do it, the Fifth Prince stood there for a moment, perhaps second-guessing his decision-or something of the sort-which only irritated Bai Zihan further.

"What's taking so long?"

Bai Zihan asked coldly.

"Do you want to continue being beaten?"

"N-No!"

The Fifth Prince coughed, his body swaying unsteadily.

"I'll... I'll do it. I just have to apologize to her, right?"

"Correct," Bai Zihan replied.

Every pair of eyes in the hall watched in stunned disbelief as the Fifth Prince- one of the empire's most powerful royals-took slow, uneven steps toward Luo

Qing

Luo Qing shrank back instinctively, clutching the hem of her dress.

The Fifth Prince stopped in front of her, his shadow falling across her trembling form.

For a moment, he simply stood there, chest heaving, blood dripping down his chin. His jaw clenched, muscles twitching as if every word cost him something precious.

He looked at the girl-if not for her, he wouldn't have suffered so much. He wanted to blame her and shout that it was all her fault.

But of course, those words could only remain in his heart.

Then, through gritted teeth, he forced the words out.

"..... was wrong. I apologize. It was my fault for misunderstanding the situation."

The hall went silent.

Dead silent. The servants and maids exchanged wide-eyed looks, whispering in disbelief.

"D-Did he just-apologize?"

"The Fifth Prince... apologized to a mortal girl?"

"Has this ever happened in the history of the Falling Star Empire?"

The Commander himself was frozen, unable to decide whether to be relieved or terrified.

At least, as per Bai Zihan's words, the Fifth Prince would be spared from that torturous beating.

The Fifth Prince-humiliated, trembling, and bleeding-stood before a maid, forced to bow his head.

And then, with the entire hall holding its breath, the words echoed through the Hall:

"What's happening here?"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 333 A Servant's Value[1,084 words]

Chapter 333 A Servant's Value

"...I... was wrong. I apologize. It was my fault for misunderstanding the situation."

Princess Sun Yaoqing, who followed the Emperor, heard those words from her brother as he apologized to a servant.

She couldn't help but widen her eyes in surprise. There was no precedent for a noble-much less a prince-apologizing to a commoner.

It was far more shocking to her than the fact that the Fifth Prince had been beaten black and blue.

The same could be said for the Emperor, who could barely believe what he was seeing.

Even after hearing the report, he had assumed it was a minor conflict-perhaps Bai Zihan had merely struck the prince in anger or something similar.

However, looking at the state of the Fifth Prince-and hearing him apologize to a servant-was beyond shocking.

Initially, the Emperor had thought he would have to make the Fifth Prince apologize to Bai Zihan to avoid any conflict with the Bai Clan.

But now, seeing the condition of his son, no matter what he might have done, it was clear he did not deserve this.

He instantly turned to Bai Zihan, who, like the master of the palace, sat calmly on the chair, seemingly waiting for him without any fear.

"Young Master Bai, what is this?"

The Emperor asked with a frown.

Bai Zihan slowly lifted his gaze toward the Emperor, his expression utterly unbothered.

"It is what it is," he said flatly. His voice echoed through the hall like an iron bell -steady, uncaring, absolute.

The Emperor's eyes narrowed, his fingers tightening around the armrest of his throne-like chair.

For a moment, silence weighed over the hall like suffocating mist.

"Young Master Bai," he began, his tone measured but trembling with suppressed fury, "do you even understand what you've done?"

Bai Zihan simply crossed one leg over the other and leaned back slightly, as if listening to a tedious lecture.

The Emperor forced himself to calm down. He couldn't act rashly-not against the Bai Clan. Not yet.

His gaze turned to his son, lying bruised and pitiful in the center of the hall. "Explain," he commanded.

The Fifth Prince seized the chance like a drowning man gasping for air.

He trembled violently, forcing out his words between ragged breaths.

"F-Fa... Emperor, I am being framed!..."

The Fifth Prince couldn't lie outright, so he twisted the story in his favor- claiming that Luo Qing had come to his room on her own and that he hadn't forced her.

Then, Bai Zihan suddenly barged in, accused him of kidnapping, and beat him until he apologized to the servant girl.

When he hesitated, Bai Zihan ordered his men to continue the beating. So, in the end, he had no choice but to apologize or else be killed.

"Father, I am your son-a prince of the Falling Star Empire! How can the heir of a foreign clan treat me like a dog in my room?! I beseech you to uphold justice for me!"

The Emperor's expression darkened.

He had always known of his son's arrogance and lecherous activities, but seeing him reduced to such a state-beaten, bloodied, humiliated-ignited a fire that reason could not extinguish.

He stood, his imperial aura pressing down on everyone present.

"Although my son may have erred," the Emperor said coldly, his voice like rolling thunder, "it did not warrant such cruelty."

He pointed a finger toward Bai Zihan.

"You have gone too far, Young Master Bai. This act not only shames the royal family-it shows how little regard you hold for the authority of the Falling Star Empire itself."

The room fell into complete silence.

"Give me a good explanation," the Emperor said, his killing intent faintly leaking despite his attempt to restrain it.

"Otherwise, even if your Bai Clan stands tall in the Desolate Heaven Empire, I- will not forgive you!"

The air grew heavy.

For a heartbeat, no one dared to breathe.

Then-

Bai Zihan chuckled.

It was soft at first, like a whisper. But soon, it grew-low and amused-echoing through the vast hall until it filled every corner.

He looked at the Emperor not with fear, nor even respect-but amusement.

As if he were watching a clown performing for his entertainment. The commander grew angry at Bai Zihan for laughing before the Emperor.

Bai Zihan's laughter finally faded. He leaned forward, his eyes sharp as unsheathed blades.

"An explanation?" he said, voice dripping with mockery. "I don't think you're qualified to demand that from me."

The Emperor's eyes widened, fury blazing.

"It seems you still don't understand your own standing," Bai Zihan continued coldly. "Let me tell you this-it is you who should give me an explanation."

"What explanation?!"

The Emperor roared.

His son had been beaten half to death and made to apologize to a Bai Clan servant-and yet Bai Zihan still dared to demand an explanation from him?

He was done trying to be civil.

Bai Zihan's voice cut through his fury like a blade.

"One of your Palace maid brought Luo Qing under the pretense of acting on your order. This lecherous weakling dared to try forcing himself upon her. Tell me, Emperor of the Falling Star Empire-"

Bai Zihan's tone turned razor-sharp-"is this how you treat guests from other empires?"

The Fifth Prince might think himself clever with words, twisting the truth to his favor.

But he had never met Bai Zihan-a man who could kill someone and still make others believe the dead was the murderer.

The Emperor was left speechless.

Yet anger still surged within him. After all, it was caused by merely a servant of the Bai Clan.

"Bai Zihan, she's just a servant! Do you really need to make such a big deal over your servant?"

The Emperor demanded furiously.

"Heh. Just a servant?"

Bai Zihan's tone turned ice-cold.

"Luo Qing's hair is worth more than your prince's life. Those of the Bai Clan-do you think you can offend them without consequence?"

His words struck like thunder.

Even the palace servants felt their hearts tremble with emotion.

They had long been treated as less than human, their deaths easily ignored

even if it was unjust.

One could be killed if a noble was in a bad mood.

If a servant made a mistake, the best they could hope for was torture and being left without food-the worst was death.

Becoming a scapegoat was common.

And if it was someone like the Fifth Prince, then one had to be ready to warm his bed whenever and with whomever he demanded.

They were never treated as human beings.

Yet Bai Zihan's words-his willingness to stand up for a servant-touched them deeply.

Even Princess Sun Yaoqing felt admiration rise within her.

She had always dreamed of an empire where every person was treated equally.

But deep down, she knew-had it been a commoner instead of a prince beaten today, she wouldn't have reacted the same.

She realized that before she could change the Empire's mindset, she herself had to change.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 334 The Second Prince! [1,083 words]

Chapter 334 The Second Prince!

Honestly, Emperor Sun Longji was baffled by how Bai Zihan could shamelessly proclaim that a Bai Clan servant was equal to one of his sons.

He realized that either Bai Zihan really looked down on their Falling Star Empire or was looking for a justification to deceive them.

Just then-

A clear voice echoed from the entrance.

"What's all this commotion?"

The Second Prince stepped in, flanked by several noble youths and armored guards.

"Oh, Father Emperor is also here?"

He exclaimed as he respectfully bowed followed by his followers.

"Has something happened?"

He asked, feigning surprise as his gaze swept across the battered hall... and landed on the Fifth Prince, bruised beyond recognition.

"Younger Brother, what have you gotten yourself into this time? Who dares do this to you?"

Second Prince asked furiously.

The Fifth Prince's face fell with humiliation and anger as his greatest rival for the throne appeared and saw his pitiful state.

The followers of the Second Prince didn't even bother to hide their smirks as they looked down on him.

Even the neutral nobles in the hall seemed to have silently decided which side to support after seeing his condition.

On the other hand, the Second Prince acted angry, glaring at everyone in the room except the Emperor.

He looked as if he wanted to storm forward and avenge his brother.

But before he could take another step-

The Bai Clan members moved to block him and his entourage.

"Who are you? How dare you stop me, the Second Prince!"

The Second Prince roared angrily.

The guards followed Bai Zihan's earlier order and looked toward Bai Zihan to ask what they should do. Bai Zihan gave a calm nod, granting permission for them to enter.

"Hmph!"

The group snorted as they brushed past the Bai Clan members, some throwing hostile glances.

Bai Zihan's gaze locked onto the Second Prince.

Gulp!

"What's this pressure?"

He felt like whatever he had prepared was seen through by Bai Zihan's gaze. As if Bai Zihan was waiting all along.

(Does he know?)

But he forced himself to remain calm, keeping his composure as he turned to face Bai Zihan.

(There is no way.)

Just as he was going to ask what was going on here and who made Fifth Prince like this-

"Second Prince," Bai Zihan said slowly, his tone calm but dripping with menace. "You came rather quickly."

"...

The Second Prince maintained his act, pretending not to notice the hidden accusation.

"What does Young Master Bai mean? I came because some of my friends was disturbed by the noise and wanted me find out the cause."

The Second Prince replied.

Then he turned to the commander, who briefly explained what had happened.

The Second Prince's expression darkened as the story went on. He angrily turned towards Bai Zihan.

"Young Master Bai, we treated you as a precious guest, and this is how you repay us?"

The Second Prince said.

"Second Prince, there's no use talking to such a barbarian. We must teach him a lesson!"

"Even if the Bai Clan is powerful, that doesn't mean they can disrespect the Falling Star Empire and its Imperial Family!"

"Even the Desolate Heaven Empire would agree that Bai Zihan is the one at fault here!"

The Second Prince's followers spoke one after another about punishing Bai Zihan.

They weren't mere nobles, but heirs or important members of powerful clans within the Falling Star Empire.

"Haha..."

Bai Zihan couldn't help but laugh as the Second Prince said that.

"One fool after another. Sigh! I'd love to play along with your farce, but I am not in a very good mood."

His eyes glinted with bloodlust.

With all the actors now gathered, Bai Zihan saw no reason to keep the drama going.

He knew exactly how this would go-the Second Prince had appeared, now he would accuse him, and try to punish him.

And from his actions, it was obvious the Second Prince targets were both him and the Fifth Prince.

The reason for targeting the Fifth Prince was clear-he was a major rival for the throne.

As for targeting him, Bai Zihan had no personal grudge with the Second Prince, so the only conclusion was that Elder Shuhai was behind it.

Since even Xie Wanshou of the Black Lantern Society had seen his wanted poster, it was certain that Elder Shuhai-who frequently dealt with that organization-knew about him as well.

"Second Prince, if you value your life, you'd better tell me where Elder Shuhai is!"

Bai Zihan threatened.

With the Second Prince appearance, it was also certain that the maid who lured Luo Qing is also him.

So, he was really very angry to the point that the only reason why the Second Prince was standing there was because he still holds some value.

The Second Prince's eyes widened in shock. Clearly, he hadn't expected Bai

Zihan to know about his hidden backer.

But he quickly composed himself.

"Young Master Bai, I don't underst-"

Bang!

Bai Zihan didn't wait for an answer that he didn't want.

He moved like lightning, grabbing the Second Prince by the throat and slamming him against the wall, his hand still clutching his neck.

"BAI ZIHAN!"

The Emperor finally lost his composure. His sons were being beaten like dogs, and Bai Zihan acted as though the Emperor himself didn't exist.

But Bai Zihan didn't care. His focus was entirely on his prey.

The Second Prince was utterly bewildered by Bai Zihan's sudden assault.

(He's even more of a madman than I've heard...)

Everyone had heard tales of Bai Zihan-his infamous arrogance, his disregard for rules, his tendency to do whatever he pleased.

They said he had changed. But clearly, he hadn't.

The Second Prince gritted his teeth and forced out a sentence.

"Young Master Bai, you will regr—"

Bang!

Bai Zihan wasn't interested in hearing another word. He slammed him harder into the wall.

"Just answer what I asked!"

Bai Zihan ordered coldly.

"STOP! Please, Young Master Bai!"

This time, it was Princess Sun Yaoqing who cried out. But unlike others, it seem more like a plea.

After all, she knew that if Bai Zihan and Bai Clan wanted to, the Imperial Family or even if it was the whole Falling Star Empire, they couldn't retaliate against them. "I understand your anger toward my Fifth Brother, but what did my Second Brother even do? He's only here because of the commotion that you caused!" Princess Sun Yaoqing had no idea that the Second Prince was the very person Bai Zihan was after since the destruction of the branch of that organization. And from how she defended the Second Prince but not the Fifth Prince, it was clear that she was far closer to him.

But to Bai Zihan- it didn't matter.

The Second Prince had the audacity to use him-and even dared to involve Luo Qing.

His punishment would, of course, be far worse than that of the Fifth Prince.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 335 A Clash in the Palace Hall[1,145 words]

Chapter 335 A Clash in the Palace Hall

The Second Prince struggled violently, his hands clawing at Bai Zihan's wrist as his feet kicked helplessly against the air.

His vision blurred-his face flushed red-and for the first time in his pampered life, he felt the raw, suffocating presence of death closing in.

(He's really going to kill me!)

He had expected intimidation, humiliation, perhaps even a slap-

But not this.

Would Bai Zihan kill him just because of suspicion?

Even if Bai Zihan was certain, can he kill a prince of a neighbouring Empire?

He thought not, but judging from how he was being treated, it was safe to say that he would.

"Y-You dare...!"

He rasped, forcing the words out-but Bai Zihan's fingers only tightened.

A sharp crack echoed through the hall.

The Second Prince's body jerked as his throat constricted, his eyes widening in terror.

"Bai Zihan! Release him immediately!"

The Emperor's furious roar shattered the suffocating silence.

He shot up from his seat, his imperial aura exploding outward in a storm of golden light.

"Guards! Save the Prince! Apprehend Bai Zihan!"

The soldiers surrounding the chamber instantly moved.

But before they could even take two steps-

The Bai Clan members-who had stood silently like shadows-sprang into motion.

CLANG! CLANG!

Steel clashed against steel.

The confined chamber erupted into chaos.

The Bai Clan members didn't even need to be ordered-they already had one.

And nobody tried to stop the situation from escalating, because in the end, although the Royal Family or the Falling Star Empire was powerful, the Bai Clan was far stronger.

They didn't think that someone so weak could retaliate even if they wanted to. As expected from the mentality of the so-called villain clan.

In any case, the fight between the two sides had already grown far beyond what anyone anticipated.

There were three Royal Commanders at the Great Ascension Realm-the strongest of the Falling Star Empire.

However, the Bai Clan had their own Great Ascension Realm elders who easily held them back.

While the three commanders used their full power, trying to overpower the elders and break through to save the Second Prince, the Bai Clan elders weren't even using more than fifty percent of their strength.

After all, even if they were in the same realm, their cultivation techniques and martial arts were on a completely different level.

Not to mention that with Bai Zihan having contributed a Heaven-Level Cultivation Technique to the Bai Clan, those who were previously restricted to learning inferior Cultivation Technique was now allowed to learn the previous Bai Clan's Earth-Level technique, Azure Dragon Breathing-making their Qi far more refined and powerful.

So, even compared to the elders of the Desolate Heaven Empire in the same realm, they were stronger-let alone a weak empire like the Falling Star Empire. It was the same for the lower-ranked soldiers, who were easily taken care of by the Bai Clan disciples.

The powerless servants had already fled far away in fear.

After all, compared to the cultivators, they were fragile mortals who could die from a single shockwave.

The Falling Star soldiers were thrown back in droves, their formation shattering under the overwhelming might of the Bai Clan's elites.

Screams, crashing tables, and the sound of splintering furniture filled the air.

The once-luxurious chamber-lavishly adorned with jade ornaments, rare paintings, and priceless furniture-was reduced to rubble within moments. The Fifth Prince, still bruised and swollen, could only watch in despair as his grand chamber-the pride of his status-was torn apart before his eyes. "M-My room..." he whimpered, his voice trembling. "All my treasures..."

He nearly cried as one of his favorite golden vases shattered under a stray blast of Qi.

Meanwhile, the Emperor's fury only deepened. His aura flared violently, distorting the air around him.

"Enough!" he thundered. "Do you intend to start a war, Bai Zihan?!"

The Emperor thought that if it were only to save the Second Prince, it could

have been done easily-he didn't expect even the Bai Clan elders to support Bai Zihan instead of stopping such a farce.

He couldn't have imagined that even with their Empire's strongest, they still couldn't handle a single clan from the Desolate Heaven Empire.

This was the disparity between the Falling Star Empire and the Desolate Heaven Empire-the very reason why all the nations bordering it had formed alliances with each other.

Bai Zihan didn't even look at him.

His gaze remained fixed on the Second Prince, who was turning pale from lack of air.

The Second Prince gritted his teeth and seemed to make a decision.

"NOW!"

The Second Prince managed to yell.

Just as Bai Zihan's grip tightened to the point that the Prince's bones creaked-

A dark blur shot through the shattered doorway.

"-Young Master, behind you!"

One of the Bai Clan elders shouted.

A thunderous boom split the air as a shadowy figure descended, his palm cloaked in black lightning that reeked of killing intent.

The attack struck where Bai Zihan stood-but he had already vanished, his figure flickering like a mirage.

The blow instead pulverized the marble floor, sending cracks spidering across the ground.

A blast of force hurled the surrounding guards and shattered what little remained of the Fifth Prince's luxurious chamber.

The Second Prince fell to the floor, gasping for air-only to be snatched up by another shadow that appeared beside him.

In an instant, both figures retreated to a safe distance near the Emperor's side.

"Cough! Cough-!"

The Second Prince clutched his throat, wheezing, eyes bloodshot. Then his trembling glare locked onto Bai Zihan.

"You... you'll pay for this."

Bai Zihan said nothing. He stared at the two figures who managed to save the Second Prince from his clutch.

They were in the Void Refinement Realm and looking at Martial Art to increase their speed, it was somewhat familiar.

(Looks like the Second Prince is indeed connected to that Organization!)

The Second Prince straightened his robe, the humiliation on his face replaced by cold confidence.

"Bai Zihan," he spat, his voice echoing through the ruined hall, "you've gone too far. Today you and your Bai Clan dogs will die here."

At his words, new auras began flaring one after another. From every corner of the palace corridor, dozens of cultivators appeared-each exuding terrifying Qi pressure far greater than the previous soldiers.

Even the Bai Clan elders narrowed their eyes. They thought that most of the Falling Star Empire Cultivators were gathered there, but there were more. Even for them, it would be difficult to handle such a huge number.

The Emperor himself frowned, his face turning grim.

"Who are they?"

"They are my guards."

The Second Prince interrupted proudly, raising his hand.

The Emperor's expression hardened, after all, having such powerful guards could also mean that the Second Prince might have been preparing to usurp the throne.

But before he could speak, the Second Prince pointed at Bai Zihan.

"Kill them all!"

The guards released their killing intent, their combined aura twisting the very air.

Still, Bai Zihan didn't move. His calm, disdainful expression made the Second Prince's confidence waver for a split second.

"You think your Grand Elder can save you?" the Second Prince sneered, forcing a smile. "He won't be coming"

The Second Prince smirked.

"You don't know, do you? I've already made preparations for that old monster."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 336 Seven Against One[1,149 words]

Chapter 336 Seven Against One

The Second Prince stepped forward, raising his voice so everyone could hear. "Right now, your Bai Clan's Grand Elder is surrounded by Great Ascension Realm cultivators and several Fifth Formation Masters. Even if they can't kill him, they'll keep him busy-long enough for you and your clan members to be erased."

The Second Prince's smirk deepened.

"So here's my offer, Bai Zihan-surrender quietly, and I might keep you alive. Resist..."

He gestured to his guards as their weapons strengthened with spiritual Qi. "...and not even ashes will remain."

The chamber fell into heavy silence, broken only by the crackling energy of clashing auras.

Then-

A faint, mocking smile curved Bai Zihan's lips.

"Great Ascension cultivators, several Fifth Formation Masters..."

He repeated softly, almost amused.

It was quite the lineup, considering this was the Falling Star Empire-but could that really work against someone like Bai Ren?

Perhaps an Immortal Ascension Realm cultivator might fall under such a lineup. However, Bai Ren was someone above that realm.

Moreover, Bai Zihan didn't need his Grand Elder's help either.

"That's quite the army you've prepared for a banquet, Second Prince"

He raised his head slightly, his voice cold and sharp as a blade.

"Unfortunately for you..."

His eyes glowed brighter, the space around him distorting.

"...they seem a bit weak."

The Second Prince's expression twisted in fury.

That mocking smile-those calm, unbothered red eyes that seemed to look down on him-lit a fire in his chest hotter than any flame.

"How dare you look at me like that, Bai Zihan!"

He roared, his Qi flaring with violent energy.

"Kill him! Leave no one from the Bai Clan standing!"

The chamber trembled as the order echoed.

Dozens of killing intents surged forth at once. Great Ascension Realm experts burst into motion, their combined spiritual pressure shaking the entire palace. The air rippled, and the marble floor began to crack under the weight of their

auras.

Yet before they could even approach Bai Zihan-

"Stand back!"

The Bai Clan members intercepted them.

BOOM!

The two forces collided in midair. The impact was like thunder tearing through the heavens, shaking the entire palace complex.

A wave of destructive energy rippled outward, shattering the walls and sending rubble flying.

The Fifth Prince's chamber-already ruined-finally collapsed completely, leaving only open air and scattered fragments of gold and jade.

"Bai Clan... you dare!"

One of the Great Ascension Commanders roared, locking blades with an elder.

The Bai Elder sneered.

"Dare? That's what I should be saying."

Despite being outnumbered-two against one in most cases-the Bai Clan Member fought with ease, their movements sharp and precise.

Each of their strikes carried refined Qi that sliced through techniques like paper.

They weren't just blocking the enemy-they were winning against them despite being at disadvantage.

The difference in cultivation technique was simply too vast.

Meanwhile, closer to the center of the battlefield-

Several powerful figures burst forward, bypassing the elders who were busy with the Great Ascension Realm.

Void Refinement Realm cultivators-five in total-each exuding terrifying killing intent.

These were no Imperial Guards. Their movement technique was ghostlike, their killing intent sharp and clean-a style reminiscent of professional killers.

The Second Prince smiled coldly.

"It's over, Bai Zihan."

His eyes gleamed with excitement, his confidence returning as the five Void Refinement experts surrounded the Bai youth from all directions.

Along with them were the two who had saved him earlier-both also at the Void Refinement Realm.

"Let's see how arrogant you can be against seven of them!"

To him, the outcome was already decided.

Even if the Bai Clan Elders could hold their own, Bai Zihan was still a junior-albeit a prodigious one.

Facing seven Void Refinement experts at once, he shouldn't stand a chance.

And once Bai Zihan fell, the rest would crumble.

(With this... I'll become the hero who killed the Bai Clan's heir. The future

Emperor of the Falling Star Empire!)

His blood boiled with excitement at the thought.

The destruction of the Fifth Prince's reputation, Bai Zihan's death, and the glory of defeating a genius from the Desolate Heaven Empire-he could already see the world bowing before him.

And as for retaliation...

"My master said he'll handle the Bai Clan."

His lips curled into a confident smirk.

He didn't know his Master Shuhai's full identity, but he knew enough-his power, his reach, his mysterious allies.

If Shuhai could mobilize multiple Great Ascension Realm cultivators and several Fifth Formation Masters just to stall the Bai Clan's Grand Elder, then surely the man's influence exceeded that of any ordinary sect or clan.

With a backer like that... what was there to fear?

The moment the seven Void Refinement Realm experts surrounded Bai Zihan, an uneasy ripple spread through the Bai Clan ranks.

Even amidst the chaos of clashing blades and roaring Qi, their attention wavered-eyes darting toward the center of the battlefield where their young master stood encircled.

"Seven Void Refinement Realm cultivators..."

One disciple muttered under his breath, voice trembling.

Even for Bai Zihan, that number was terrifying.

They wanted nothing more than to rush to Bai Zihan's side-but they were already preoccupied with all the other enemies.

And enemies knew that as long as Bai Zihan fell under their hands, they would win. So, they all desperately tried their best to keep Bai Clan Members from going to help Bai Zihan.

The Bai Clan Member grew a bit impatient. They knew Bai Zihan was strong- far beyond the level of a typical Spirit Severing Realm.

But seven opponents of Void Refinement realm, all trained killers... it wasn't something that they thought that Bai Zihan could handle.

The Emperor, standing in the distance, could see it too-the subtle panic

rippling through the Bai Clan's ranks.

A grim satisfaction flickered in his eyes.

(So even they feel fear...)

For so long, they treated even him as insignificant but now they seemed to be scared.

The seven assassins moved in perfect unison, their killing intent locking onto Bai Zihan from all sides.

The floor beneath them cracked under the oppressive weight of their combined aura.

Each one specialized in a different art-speed, strength, stealth, poison, sword, and two formation masters to seal escape.

They weren't here to fight fairly. They were here to kill.

"Don't let him use a single technique," one of them hissed coldly, his dagger glinting. "End it in one breath."

Their figures blurred-vanishing from sight.

The Bai Clan members froze, eyes widening as seven streaks of light converged toward their Young Master.

"YOUNG MASTER!"

Several voices shouted at once, their desperation cutting through the roar of battle.

Even the elders, despite knowing it was futile, tried to break free-Qi surging as they clashed violently with their opponents.

"Damn! Is the Grand Elder really being held back?"

One of the Bai Clan Elder couldn't help but complain. Now that Bai Zihan's life seemed to be in danger, and they were also being held back, their hope was the Grand Elder.

They too knew that those people mentioned by the Second Prince couldn't possibly hold back someone like Bai Ren.

But what if they had managed to do so?

Otherwise, this is the time for him to show up and protect Bai Zihan, their main purpose of being

But Bai Ren didn't!

here.

Which might mean that what the Second Prince said might be true.

For a heartbeat, all anyone saw was light and motion-seven lethal strikes descending from every direction.

The Second Prince grinned viciously, already imagining Bai Zihan's corpse hitting the marble Floor.

"This is what happens when you defy me!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 337 Blood, Blade, and Bliss[1,395 words]

Chapter 337 Blood, Blade, and Bliss

(Seven Void Refinement Realm cultivators!)

Even for Bai Zihan, he knew this might be too much. But this was also a good opportunity to find out just how he fared against such a threat.

As for the fear of being killed-well, he had already survived the attack from Gou Yao, who was Bai Ren's equivalent, so he didn't think that he would die easily.

So instead of fear, Bai Zihan showed excitement, which completely confused the Second Prince and the Seven Void Refinement Cultivator, who had

expected him to cower in terror.

The seven attacks-which could be said to be impossible to deal with, at least for a Spirit Severing Realm cultivator-launched toward Bai Zihan.

All seven Void Refinement cultivators vanished at once-shadows flickering through the air like ghosts.

Bai Zihan immediately took out the Eternal Spirit Sword from his storage ring. "Eternal Flowing Water Sword!"

Spears of lightning, blades of flame, and slashing winds converged toward Bai Zihan in perfect coordination.

It was the kind of assault that should have left nothing behind.

But-

Whoosh!

Bai Zihan's body moved, and his sword danced.

There was no burst of Qi-only stillness.

The first assassin's spear thrust forward with unstoppable force, aimed directly at his heart.

Yet Bai Zihan's sword curved softly, meeting the blow not with resistance-but with guidance.

The tip of his sword slid along the spear, redirecting it just a hair's breadth off-course.

That tiny motion sent the full momentum of the strike into the second attacker, who had been closing in from the left.

"-What?!"

Before the man could react, his comrade's spear smashed into his own chest, the impact throwing him backward.

Fortunately for him, the attacker managed to hold back at the last second, avoiding what could have been a very dangerous situation.

The third assassin seized the moment, his blade coated in dark venom, slicing downward-only for Bai Zihan's body to sway aside, his movement fluid and effortless, as if he had predicted it from the beginning.

The strike cut through nothing but air.

The fourth and fifth came next, attacking from above and behind-but their strikes clashed against each other as Bai Zihan twisted slightly, letting the flow of their own Qi collide in midair.

Boom!

The resulting shockwave sent dust and fragments flying, but not a single strand of Bai Zihan's hair was touched.

Every movement-graceful, minimal, and precise-turned his enemies' overwhelming power into their own downfall.

The remaining assassins circled him again, faces grim.

They knew better than to underestimate Bai Zihan but still, that kind of technique was truly something that they had never seen.

"What kind of technique is even that?"

One couldn't say that it was overwhelmingly powerful but it was far from weak. After all, it managed to handle attacks from Seven Void refinement Cultivator at the same time.

Every swing, every strike they made somehow ended up feeding into his rhythm-becoming part of his current rather than disrupting it.

From the sidelines, even the Bai Clan Elders momentarily forgot their own battles, eyes wide in awe.

This wasn't their Bai Clan Technique but didn't pale in comparison. It was much better than many of them.

All seven Void Refinement experts-panting, shaken, disoriented-had failed to land a single blow.

Not one scratch.

Bai Zihan raised his gaze slightly, his crimson-gold eyes reflecting the fading light.

"Is that all?"

His tone wasn't arrogance-it was disappointment.

The Second Prince's face twisted in rage.

"What are you doing?!"

He roared, his voice breaking through the clamor of battle.

"You far outnumber him-and your cultivation is leagues above his! Stop playing around and finish him already!"

His words cracked like thunder across the battlefield.

The seven Void Refinement cultivators exchanged brief glances, their expressions turning cold.

To be ordered so brazenly by a pampered prince-one who hadn't even reached Spirit Severing Realm-was an insult to their pride.

But they had no time to waste arguing; their mission came first. Suppressing their irritation, they moved as one again.

Bai Zihan's grip on his sword tightened.

He exhaled once. Calm. Still.

The next instant-

Boom!

The ground exploded beneath him as two assassins struck from opposite sides.

Fire and lightning clashed against Bai Zihan's flowing movements, each deflection harder and heavier than before.

This time, they didn't give him room to breathe.

Their attacks came faster, sharper-each movement calculated to smother his rhythm.

For a moment, Bai Zihan's sword could barely keep up.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Sparks burst in all directions as his Eternal Flowing Water Sword technique deflected each strike by the thinnest margin.

His arms trembled slightly from the sheer weight of power pressing against him.

But his expression-remained bright, almost exhilarated.

"Hah... good!"

Bai Zihan said, laughter echoing between the impacts.

"This is what I was waiting for!"

The Void Refinement experts frowned. Even when they had cornered him, Bai

Zihan was still smiling and laughing.

Bai Zihan didn't care about how he was being seen. He just wants to continue this exciting fight and find out his limit.

"Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword!"

In an instant, his body split into nine afterimages-each one moving independently, fluid as mist and blindingly fast.

The assassins' eyes widened as they lost track of his true position. Sword light streaked across the battlefield, cutting through the air like flowing comets.

"Behind-!"

One of them turned too late.

Slash!

Blood spurted from his shoulder as Bai Zihan's blade tore through his defense.

The man stumbled back, eyes wide with disbelief.

"Don't panic! His attacks aren't lethal to the Void Refinement Realm!"

Normally, even injuring a Void Refinement cultivator would be nearly impossible for someone at the Spirit Severing Realm-yet Bai Zihan had managed it.

Still, they thought it wasn't enough to kill or seriously injure them. Well, they thought that for a moment-until they realized how wrong they were.

Slash!

The one who shouted was struck next, Bai Zihan's sword tearing through his

body almost too easily.

"What-?!" "That's... Sword Intent! Damn it! He comprehended Sword Intent!"

"He's down! Don't let your guard down like him!"

Though shocked as they have lost one of their comrades, the remaining six didn't panic.

Instead, they became more cautious-but not afraid.

Bai Zihan didn't care about anything. He only wanted to keep fighting until the winner was decided.

Slash! Slash!

Two more attacks landed, shallow cuts-but enough to draw blood.

The assassins retaliated in unison, channeling their full might.

The battlefield erupted.

Firestorms, lightning whips, and crushing winds tore apart the ground, consuming the afterimages one after another-until finally, one of the attacks

struck true.

Boom!

A powerful explosion engulfed Bai Zihan. Dust and flame surged skyward.

"Got him!"

One of them hissed, eyes narrowing.

But when the smoke cleared-

Bai Zihan stood there.

His robes were torn, blood trickling from his arm and mouth, his breathing uneven. Yet his eyes burned brighter than ever, a wild grin tugging at his lips.

"Finally," he said hoarsely. "Now it's getting interesting"

The assassins stiffened.

There was no fear in Bai Zihan. Not even pain-only excitement.

"He's smiling... even while burning. What kind of madman is he?"

The others who were fighting couldn't help but glance toward Bai Zihan's battle -and they couldn't believe what they were seeing.

This was the same for the Bai Clan members.

Some were seeing Bai Zihan fight for the first time, while others-though they had witnessed his strength before-were equally stunned by his power and recklessness.

However, worry still crept into their hearts.

Perhaps this madness was just an act to appear strong, and they knew they had to help their young master.

Bai Zihan lunged again, faster than before, each swing heavier, more reckless- but also more unpredictable.

His sword no longer flowed like calm water-it roared like a raging river. They fought back desperately, but the momentum had shifted. Even wounded, Bai Zihan pressed harder, his intent alone suppressing them.

Every time they struck, he countered with equal madness, willing to take a wound if it meant landing one in return.

Clang!

One of the assassins' blades shattered under the pressure of his strike, blood spraying from his chest.

Another screamed as Bai Zihan's sword sliced across his thigh, crippling him instantly.

"Keep going! His recklessness will be his downfall!"

After all, as the injuries piled up, Bai Zihan's body would eventually reach its limit.

The Second Prince, watching from afar, also smiled as Bai Zihan's previous elegance was now drowned in red.

He too believed it was only a matter of time before Bai Zihan fell.

Bai Zihan's sword gleamed again, stained with both his blood and theirs.

"Come on!"

He roared, spiritual energy exploding outward, forcing them back.

"Hahaha... we won't stop until one of us is dead."

And despite the wounds carving across his body, his laughter echoed through the battlefield-wild, fearless, and unstoppable.

It wasn't the sound of a man cornered.

It was the sound of someone alive-burning with the thrill of battle.

Even the assassins felt a chill in their hearts.

He was wounded. Outnumbered. Weaker in cultivation.

Yet it didn't feel like Bai Zihan was fighting to survive-

But rather, fighting for enjoyment.

Chapter 338 Infinite Regeneration, Endless Qi, Never Ending Battle

Chapter 338 Infinite Regeneration, Endless Qi, Never Ending Battle

Everyone thought that Bai Zihan would fall, with injuries piling up.

However, one of the Void Refinement cultivators saw something that left him speechless for a while.

"What? I was sure that I had injured his right shoulder. How is it already healed?"

Yes, the injuries which should have been getting more and more were rather disappearing.

After all, Bai Zihan has a Supreme Dao Bone which not only gives a good Qi recovery ability but also a healing ability.

With that realization, what was once said to be inevitable wasn't inevitable anymore.

If the injuries get healed, then what are they waiting for?

In the first place, even injuring Bai Zihan is a very difficult thing to achieve.

Not to mention, his body doesn't easily get injured, and even against quite powerful attacks, Bai Zihan doesn't get caught off guard and manages to dodge or block their attacks.

Now they found out that their hard work had been for naught.

No wonder Bai Zihan wasn't getting scared and was getting more excited as the battle raged on.

It wasn't an act but rather because those injuries were doing nothing to him in the first place.

They thought of killing Bai Zihan in one swift powerful attack, but those attacks could only cause some injuries which would heal eventually.

On the other hand, the six of them-their bodies were full of injuries.

Despite taking healing pills mid-fight, their healing wasn't as good as Bai Zihan's natural healing ability.

In the first place, it wasn't like the pills healed every part of the body. Perhaps high-ranking pills might, but not the Rank-2 pills that they took.

Not to mention, the effect of the pills decreases the more they are used frequently.

So, as the fight continued, it was the six of them who had more injuries than Bai Zihan.

"What kind of body is that? How can his injuries be easily healed?"

The six of them were getting desperate, and rather than killing Bai Zihan, the battle was slowly turning into a fight for survival.

Moreover, there was one more thing that bugged them.

"And how come his Qi is not yet depleted?"

After all, the six of them were almost out of their Qi after going all out for quite some time.

If that was the case for them, then Bai Zihan, who had been non-stop using high-level techniques, should have been exhausted long ago.

But the reality was that he was still going strong like he didn't even care about his Qi reserve.

Well, with the Supreme Dao Bone, he doesn't have to worry about Qi. Not to mention, with the Myriad Breathing Technique, his Qi is refined and powerful. "Hah... Hah..."

The six of them were breathing heavily as exhaustion caught up to them both physically and mentally.

It was true for others who were also fighting. Only one person was still acting like the fight was just getting started.

"What's wrong? You've become quite slower compared to when we started," Bai Zihan called out.

He had been testing out his techniques and fighting quite well and realized just how powerful he had become.

Truly, his resilience and defense were as good as they could be. He definitely doesn't lack Qi as well.

The only problem was his attack power.

(As long as I comprehend Fate Severing Slash, that too would be satisfied.)

He was more than satisfied with his current power.

The six of them seemed to have made a decision in their hearts.

They wouldn't win this fight and needed to get out of here.

One of them gritted his teeth and turned toward the Second Prince, shouting above the chaos,

"Your Highness! This battle-cannot be won! We will retreat!"

The Second Prince's expression darkened instantly.

"What did you just say?!"

He took a step forward, his voice booming.

"Are you admitting defeat? Where is your pride as cultivators of the Void Refinement Realm?!"

The assassin who spoke clenched his jaw, veins bulging on his forehead. His patience snapped.

"Pride?"

He barked.

"You want us to continue fighting that?!"

He pointed at Bai Zihan, who stood wreathed in blood, but his face was full of a smile.

"How can we even win when the opponent has infinite Qi and regenerates like a monster?!"

He shouted, frustrated.

"We've done everything possible! His body doesn't break, his Qi doesn't run out, while ours does! What do you expect us to do-die for you?!"

The Second Prince's face turned pale with rage.

The assassin spat blood, his tone now cold and final.

"If you want him dead, then perhaps ask one of your Great Ascension experts to handle him. Because none of us can."

He wasn't wrong. Perhaps Great Ascension Experts can handle Bai Zihan.

However, The Great Ascension experts on their side were all locked in battle with Bai Clan elders- and losing ground.

Even with the enemy's numerical advantage, the Bai Clan elders held firm, some even fighting two opponents at once and still pushing them back.

One of the Void Refinement cultivators let out a bitter laugh.

"This Bai Clan... it's full of monsters."

Another nodded grimly. "If we stay, we'll die for nothing. We're leaving."

The Second Prince's eyes widened.

"You dare-!"

But it was too late.

The six assassins-no longer willing to throw their lives away-were getting ready to escape now.

Others who weren't directly under the Second Prince's command also began to waver and made their decision to escape.

They too couldn't beat the Bai Clan members and were even on the verge of getting killed many times, even while ganging up on them.

Since their hope of catching Bai Zihan was already ruined, why should they stay here? Just to get killed eventually?

Bai Zihan watched them as many began to make their run and others hesitated.

"You can come at me anytime," he called after their retreating forms, "but don't think you can escape whenever you want."

"Grand Elder! Kill them all!"

Bai Zihan said.

"What-? You fool! I told you-your Grand Elder is already taken care of-"

But he didn't even get to say what he wanted, as Bai Ren appeared before Bai Zihan.

The Grand Elder's presence swallowed the air: not loud, but absolute-an old storm contained in a human form.

"How did you find out?"

Bai Ren asked with a smile. "Do you think that I am an idiot like that Second Prince?"

He said. The Second Prince had no time to get angry at the insult since the appearance of Bai Ren greatly shocked him.

"Like those weaklings can even keep you occupied for a second."

Bai Ren just continued to smile. Indeed, those people sent by the Second Prince couldn't even keep him occupied for a second, and he had been there since before the fight even began.

He stood there and did nothing even when the Bai Clan was at a disadvantage, as he wanted to see just how much Bai Zihan had grown.

As expected, Bai Zihan didn't disappoint him.

No!

He had surpassed all of his expectations. Fighting and perhaps even winning against seven Void Refinement Realm cultivators at the age of 18-there was no one like him.

As long as Bai Zihan continued to grow, the Bai Clan would eventually become invincible. Anyway, now that he had watched the fight with expectation and the enemies had already lost hope, it was time for him to make a move.

"No one who tries to kill the Bai Clan's heir escapes," he said, his eyes full of Killing Intent.

"Not tonight. Not ever!"

Bai Ren's final words still echoed through the battlefield like a divine decree- low, cold, and absolute.

And then, in the next instant-he was gone.

A faint ripple of spiritual pressure was the only sign he had ever been there.

The air shivered.

A heartbeat later, blood bloomed across the sky. Those who had tried to flee froze mid-step, eyes widening in confusion.

Thin crimson lines appeared across their bodies before they could even react- then, like fragile clay dolls, they split apart from head to toe.

One breath.

Dozens fell.

The sharp scent of iron filled the air, heavy and suffocating. Even those far away trembled; they couldn't see the attacker, only the aftermath-a trail of corpses collapsing one after another like wheat before a scythe.

The massacre was silent, elegant, and merciless.

The assassins who moments ago had been running for their lives now littered the ground in two neat halves. The remaining few froze, terror rooting them in place.

Bai Zihan watched, eyes narrowing slightly. For all his composure, even he could feel the sheer weight of Bai Ren's killing intent pressing on the world.

Just as another scream began to rise in the distance, Bai Zihan realized something and shouted.

"Grand Elder, keep a few alive," Bai Zihan continued, calm yet commanding.

"I still have questions for them."

Bai Ren continued his massacre; as for whether he heard him or not, Bai Zihan would only find out later.

Around them, the chaos of the battlefield began to still.

The enemy's morale had collapsed entirely.

Even the Emperor couldn't quite hide the tightening of his grip. This time it wasn't out of anger but rather fear.

The Second Prince beside him, on the other hand, looked utterly pale, his lips trembling as his eyes darted between the fallen corpses and Bai Zihan standing so effortlessly in the blood-soaked ruins.

It was clear to everyone now: The Bai Clan has won.

Since Bai Ren was busy chasing after those who were escaping, at least the

Falling Star Empire's soldiers and commander were still alive. Though obviously, whether they continued to do so was in Bai Zihan's hand.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 339 The Shattering of Ambition[1,434 words]

Chapter 339 The Shattering of Ambition

Bai Zihan stood amidst the blood-soaked ground, his sword lowered but not sheathed.

The faint mist of battle still hung in the air, carrying the scent of burnt Qi and iron.

Around him, the corpses of those who had dared to challenge him lay in neat, lifeless halves-Bai Ren's doing.

The battlefield had gone quiet, except for the distant crackle of flames and the occasional dying groan.

The Bai Clan's cultivators stood proud and victorious, while their enemies- what few remained- stood frozen, too terrified to even move.

High above the carnage, the Emperor and the Second Prince watched from their vantage point, surrounded by the surviving commanders and guards of the Falling Star Empire.

None of them looked triumphant anymore.

The Emperor's expression was hard to read-caught between fury and disbelief -while the Second Prince's face had turned an ugly shade of pale.

He stared at Bai Zihan as if staring at a nightmare made of flesh.

He had thought he could achieve everything he planned for-to get rid of his rival, kill Bai Zihan as per his master's mission, and gain massive support from his Master and the hidden backer behind him.

Only to lose everything he had built up.

Bai Zihan's once pristine robes were torn and stained crimson. His elegant looks had been replaced by a more brutal and dangerous image.

He stepped forward. Each step echoed, making the surviving soldiers flinch.

When he finally stopped, he looked straight at the Second Prince and smiled- not kindly, but mockingly.

"So," Bai Zihan said, his voice calm and cutting through the silence like a blade, "was this what you were expecting?"

The Second Prince stiffened, unable to answer.

Bai Zihan tilted his head, the faint curve of amusement still playing on his blood-streaked lips.

"You came with your army, your so-called backers of the Void Refinement Realm and Great Ascension Realm... yet here we are. You-" he pointed lazily toward the prince, "-still breathing only because I haven't decided otherwise."

The Emperor's expression flickered.

He finally understood why Bai Zihan didn't care about him as Emperor-nor about the Falling Star Empire, for that matter.

Now that realization had sunk in, he couldn't help but tremble in powerlessness.

A single Clan!

A single Clan strong enough to destroy an Empire. What kind of logic was that?

Although the Empire itself wasn't yet destroyed-only the Royal Family implicated.

However, in the Falling Star Empire, where the Imperial Family held absolute power (unlike the Desolate Heaven Empire), defeating the Royal Family was as good as destroying the Empire itself.

The Second Prince, Fifth Prince, and even the Emperor now seemed like ordinary men in the presence of the one who was going to dictate their fate.

The Fifth Prince couldn't help but glare angrily at the Second Prince.

He wasn't stupid; he knew this entire disaster was born from the Second Prince's scheme-the same scheme that had led to his beating earlier.

Now, because of his brother's arrogance, they were all in deep trouble, facing an opponent they could never handle.

Only Princess Sun Yaoqing remained calm-eerily calm-watching everything in silence.

Bai Zihan chuckled softly.

"Now then! Shall we decide what your fate is going to be?"

He announced.

The Second Prince's throat went dry. His lips parted, but no words came out.

It was only when Bai Zihan's gaze shifted and his aura sharpened that the prince realized-he was next.

Bai Zihan's golden eyes narrowed slightly.

"Where," he asked, every syllable heavy with quiet threat, "is Elder Shuhai?"

The Emperor was confused. From the start, Bai Zihan seemed to be searching for that person, whom he had never heard about.

The Second Prince was also equally confused. He didn't know how Bai Zihan even knew about his backer.

That name-Elder Shuhai-was one he had never spoken aloud, nor revealed under any circumstance.

Even his Father, the Emperor-who received reports about nearly everything- was in the dark about Elder Shuhai.

Yet Bai Zihan seemed to know about it.

He tried to compose himself, forcing a weak chuckle.

"Elder Shu-who? I don't-"

Before he could finish, the air itself seemed to freeze.

Bai Zihan didn't move, yet the killing intent that erupted from him felt like a blade pressed against the Second Prince's throat.

The prince gasped, his knees almost giving way as his heart pounded violently against his ribs.

Every breath felt like standing at the edge of a cliff-one wrong word, one twitch too many, and he would plunge into a bottomless abyss from which

there was no return.

"Hah... Hah..."

Cold sweat drenched his back as he struggled to breathe, the invisible pressure crushing him like a mountain.

"Don't try my patience, Second Prince!"

Bai Zihan's tone was cold.

"Try that again, and your head will be flying off your body."

There was no need to explain further; anyone could tell from Bai Zihan's eyes that it wasn't an empty threat.

He has already shown more than enough to make everyone understand that if he doesn't get the answer he wants, they will be killed.

The Second Prince seemed to be also realizing the reality. If he tried to pull something similar to earlier, this time, he would be killed.

He had already revealed every trump card he possessed, even the secret power

he had cultivated behind his father's back.

What good would deception do now?

He gave up and decided to just tell everything honestly.

"I-I don't know where Master is!"

Bai Zihan's gaze sharpened dangerously.

"You don't know?"

The prince flinched.

"He gave me all the support he could."

Those supporters had either fled or been slain by the Bai Clan's Grand Elder chasing them down.

"He said there was no need for him to appear. Now that I think about it... he's likely fled."

Thinking back, his master had always been cautious-if the slightest part of a plan went wrong, he would never appear again.

He reckoned this time was the same. Unless someone confirmed the plan's success, Elder Shuhai would never return.

With his defeat and all his men dead, it was clear he had been abandoned along with other people who followed him.

He hesitated, eyes darting toward Bai Zihan. He didn't know whether Bai Zihan believed him or not, but it was the truth.

Bai Zihan obviously didn't trust him, yet could tell the prince was likely being

honest. However, whether the prince spoke truth or lies-if he was no longer useful, what use was there in keeping him alive?

Still, there was more information to extract.

Even if Elder Shuhai had escaped, perhaps the prince knew something about his true motives-or the organization behind him.

"How did you meet Elder Shuhai?" Bai Zihan asked. "And what do you know of

him?"

The Second Prince didn't answer right away. His head hung low, lips trembling faintly-not from fear this time, but from exhaustion.

His eyes were hollow, as if something inside him had broken.

When he finally spoke, his voice was quiet.

"... It doesn't matter anymore, does it?"

His words carried the weight of resignation.

The proud prince who once schemed to inherit the throne now looked like a man who had seen the heavens fall.

He took a long breath and began to speak, slowly and steadily.

"I don't know who he really is. Only that he called himself Elder Shuhai. He appeared to me three years ago-when I had nothing"

He looked up, his face pale but calm.

"At that time, I wasn't even considered a real candidate for succession. My talent was mediocre, my cultivation had stalled, and my bloodline was tainted. The court barely remembered my name."

His hand clenched into a fist, faint bitterness creeping into his voice.

"But then he appeared. Master Shuhai. He said he could make me strong... that I had the 'right temperament' for greatness."

A hollow chuckle escaped his lips.

"And I believed him. No! I want to believe him."

He said.

"He also made them true. Because after he appeared, everything changed. My cultivation soared. He gave me treasures, pills, and techniques that even the royal treasury couldn't dream of possessing. With that, I began to expand my faction-and became a real contender for the throne."

"Before I realized it, I had power. Real power. Supporters from great clans and

cultivators of high standing at my command. And most importantly, I had my master's support."

He let out a bitter laugh. After all, he knew deep inside that he never had real power, those were what his Master gave him.

One word from his Master was enough to destroy any illusion that he had. But he continues to believe that it was his, that's the only way he could move

forward. "Though he claimed to be at the Great Ascension Realm, I always felt he was hiding his true strength. Seeing how he could command and dispatch so many Great Ascension cultivators, he might have actually been at the Immortal

Realm."

The Emperor's expression darkened.

It was common for princes to use underhanded means in the battle for the

throne-but to be controlled by an outsider? That was no longer ambition. It was betrayal. Perhaps it was good that the scheme was exposed and ended before it succeeded.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 340 The Bastard Prince's Lament[1,489 words]

Chapter 340 The Bastard Prince's Lament

"What was his purpose?"

Bai Zihan asked.

To him, it didn't matter whether Elder Shuhai was at the Immortal Realm or higher-the Bai Clan, too, had many such people.

Though from what the Second Prince said, it seemed that Elder Shuhai had likely already fled.

The prince shook his head.

"I don't know. He never spoke of it directly. But... he helped me, so it was probably for the Throne of the Falling Star Empire!"

With how his Master was helping him unconditionally, he knew very well that he was being used.

However, rather than dying having achieved nothing, he was almost happy to be used. At the very least, he was still of some use.

Bai Zihan listened and tried to figure it out.

He didn't think that Elder Shuhai and the organization behind him truly wanted the Falling Star Empire-unless there was something here, or perhaps their target wasn't the Empire at all.

The prince looked up at him again. The fear was gone from his eyes, replaced by a strange calm acceptance.

Bai Zihan studied the Second Prince in silence, his sharp gaze like a blade dissecting every flicker of expression across the man's face.

There was something missing in his story-something that didn't sit right.

He finally spoke, his tone calm but edged with skepticism.

"...That's it?"

He asked softly.

"You expect me to believe a man like Shuhai went to such lengths just to make you Emperor of the Falling Star Empire?"

The Second Prince's expression stiffened for an instant before he sneered faintly, arrogance flickering back into his tired eyes.

"Believe whatever you want," he said. "Even if there was more to it, I wouldn't know."

His tone was biting, like a final act of defiance.

"There's no need to know what he wants. The only thing that mattered was

that, with Master's help, I could have become the Emperor!"

The words dropped into the silence like a spark into oil.

The Fifth Prince's head snapped toward him, fury igniting instantly.

"You-! A mistress's son really dares to dream so big!"

His voice trembled with barely contained rage.

He was a true noble-his father was the Emperor, and his mother the Queen- making him the legitimate heir to the throne.

He would never accept that a mistress's son could take the throne.

The Emperor was also furious at the Second Prince's bold declaration.

To say such words while he, the Emperor himself, was still standing there-
wasn't that the same as declaring him dead already?

After all, only when he was dead would someone else become Emperor.

"Become Emperor? You dare speak of destiny when your own greed invites ruin upon our Empire?"

But the Second Prince didn't back down. His eyes were bloodshot, his mind fractured between humiliation and madness.

"I only did what you never could, Emperor Longji!"

He spat bitterly.

"So what if I brought ruin to the Empire? It's not like this Empire ever treated me any differently!"

"You! You would never get the throne as long as I was alive!"

The Emperor said.

"Hmph! Like I didn't know."

The Second Prince scoffed. Underneath the words were heavy implications.

"If not for Bai Zihan, I would have definitely gotten the throne."

The Second Prince laughed hollowly, his voice echoing through the scorched
air.

"You are nothing without the foreigner's intervention."

The Fifth Prince said angrily.

"Nothing?" he said, his expression twisting. "Even if that's true, I was still closer to the throne than any of you. That's what matters."

As he spoke, his gaze drifted-subconsciously-toward Princess Sun Yaoqing.

Bai Zihan noticed it immediately.

His eyes narrowed slightly, a flicker of curiosity passing through them.

"Strange," he said quietly, cutting through the argument. "If you were truly that close to the throne, then why ignore her?"

"Her?"

"Princess Sun Yaoqing"

Bai Zihan's tone was casual, almost conversational, yet every word carried an undercurrent of danger.

"By talent alone, she surpasses both you and the Fifth Prince. Not to mention, I don't think she lacks connections or bloodline. Unlike you two, she has everything."

While Bai Zihan knew this was a world where men were favored for leadership, in a situation where an individual's talent and power vastly surpassed their competitors, it wouldn't have been strange for Princess Sun Yaoqing to become

Empress.

Yet, the Second Prince didn't seem to have targeted Princess Sun Yaoqing.

But by the way he glanced at her, he clearly considered her a stumbling block.

"Hehe... Looks like nothing can get past Young Master Bai Zihan!"

The Second Prince said.

"Indeed! I never took this ugly pig seriously. Princess Sun Yaoqing, however, was different. She was the one I wanted to eliminate the most if I wanted the throne for myself."

The Second Prince admitted honestly.

Princess Sun Yaoqing frowned. She was well aware that, because of her

position and talent, she was viewed warily by others-especially those aiming for the throne.

It wasn't once or twice that she had to deal with assassins.

Now, looking at the Second Prince's hidden forces and his declaration, she thought that it must have been him who sent those assassins.

"So, it was you who sent all those assassins after me?"

The Second Prince shook his head in denial.

"I can see why you'd think that, but no. I didn't send a single assassin."

Despite knowing it sounded contradictory to what he had just said, it was the truth.

"My Master said not to worry about you-that he would take care of you. Since he already said that, I had no need to worry."

The Second Prince answered.

"But what about the assassins?"

Princess Sun Yaoqing wasn't convinced.

"Heh! You should ask the Fifth Prince!"

Princess Sun Yaoqing's expression darkened as the Second Prince's words sank in.

She turned her gaze toward the Fifth Prince.

The Fifth Prince stiffened instantly.

"W-What are you looking at me for?"

He stammered, his voice cracking slightly as his eyes darted toward his father, then back to her.

"He's lying! He's trying to push the blame on me!"

But the Second Prince laughed-a cruel, mirthless laugh that carried through the smoky air.

"Push the blame? Did you really think everyone working for you was loyal?" He tilted his head mockingly.

"Do you remember, dear brother-three months ago, when the Princess went to the Moonlight Pavilion Auction? Didn't you spend quite a bit to eliminate her?"

The Fifth Prince's pupils shrank.

The Second Prince continued, his tone growing sharper with each word.

"Or how about when she left the palace to visit the Orchid Gardens last winter? Another ambush. Oh, and let's not forget the little incident when she was returning from the southern monastery. Care to explain that one too?"

Princess Sun Yaoqing's gaze never wavered, but the faint tremor in her fingers betrayed that she remembered every single one of those attacks.

Those assassins had been highly trained-each time, the strikes had been precise, meant to kill.

If not for the sacrifices of some of the guards, she would have very well been killed.

Those visits were kept highly confidential, known only to a select few-mostly her brothers and sisters.

So while she didn't want to believe it, she already knew the ones who wanted her dead were her siblings.

She just hadn't known whether it was one-or all of them.

"You thought you were being secretive," the Second Prince said, his grin widening.

"But I already knew everything. My Master's network runs deeper than you think."

The Fifth Prince went pale, all color draining from his face.

"I-You-That's not-"

He stuttered helplessly, words choking in his throat.

"Then why didn't you stop me if you knew!?"

He burst out finally, voice cracking in anger and desperation.

The Second Prince's smile vanished. His tone turned cold and disturbingly calm.

"Why should I?"

He said it simply, almost like it was the most natural answer in the world. "While I trusted my Master's judgment and did as he said. He never asked for me to protect Sun Yaoqing. So, why should I put in the extra effort?"

His eyes shifted toward the Princess, cold and indifferent.

"The result benefited me."

The words hung in the air like poison.

Princess Sun Yaoqing's lips pressed together tightly.

Her Qi stirred, faint ripples of fiery energy spreading through the air.

The Emperor slammed his hand down, his voice thundering with fury.

"Enough! You've brought shame to our bloodline!"

But the Second Prince only smirked, eyes burning with a madness that no longer feared punishment.

"Shame? Father, the shame was born long before me. You just refused to see it. Maybe if you'd controlled what was between your legs, there wouldn't be

bastards like me."

The Emperor's aura flared-Yet the Second Prince didn't flinch.

"The only regret I have..." he said, voice hoarse but steady, "...is that I couldn't kill you myself."

The words struck like thunder. Indeed, looks like Second Prince has never thought about keeping his Father alive.

The Second Prince raised his head, his eyes burning with a frenzied light that made him look almost serene.

"You, and every rotten noble festering under this so-called Empire," he continued, his tone now cold and cutting, "I would have slaughtered everyone of you."

He laughed a dry, broken sound that echoed eerily through the ruined hall.

His gaze swept across the Emperor, the Fifth Prince, and the Commanders.

Then, slowly, his attention shifted.

To Bai Zihan!

The madness faded a little, replaced by something else-an odd calm. Perhaps even relief.

"Young Master Bai," he said, "I've told you everything I know. Whether you kill me or not... I couldn't care less."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 341 After the Empire Fell Silent[988 words]

Chapter 341 After the Empire Fell Silent

Bai Zihan was already too preoccupied with his own thoughts to care about the Second Prince.

He didn't care about palace drama or any of the chaos unfolding around him.

However, he did realize that without his interference, the Second Prince might have indeed become the Emperor.

Still, Bai Zihan didn't think so-or rather, he believed that the Second Prince's reign would have been short-lived even if he was successful.

Why?

Because Chong Sheng, the Heaven-Chosen One, was in the Falling Star Empire.

Perhaps he might have taken advantage of the chaos from the Imperial conflict to seize the throne himself, or place someone of his choosing upon it.

In any case, the Second Prince was destined not to sit on the throne, even if Bai Zihan hadn't intervened.

Well, there was no use pondering what could have been.

There wasn't much that he had gained from coming to the Falling Star Empire- aside from meeting a Heaven-Chosen One.

Bai Zihan knew that Chong Sheng could become a terrifying opponent one day, and the only comforting thought was that Chong Sheng didn't seem to regard him as an enemy-yet.

Bai Zihan stretched slightly, brushing dust off his robes. His expression returned to that lazy indifference.

Then, he turned toward his Clan Member and spoke casually-almost bored.

"I've lost all interest," he said. "Let's go back!"

The words hit everyone like thunder.

The battlefield, littered with corpses and the stench of burnt Qi, fell silent.

It looked like the Imperial Family would now be under the control of Bai Zihan but he wants to leave now?

The Emperor, who had braced himself for another disaster, blinked in disbelief. After all this... he's just leaving?

He could have seized the entire Falling Star Empire if he wished. The military, the court, even the people-after such a display, none would dare oppose him. Yet Bai Zihan didn't seem to notice... or perhaps, he simply didn't care.

The Emperor exhaled slowly, relief washing over him. His hands, hidden within his sleeves, trembled slightly.

He had thought this calamity would end with his head rolling across the palace floor.

But despite all that had happened, it seemed that things were finally returning to normal.

"Anyway, Grand Elder is certainly taking his time. He must be growing old," Bai Zihan said, noticing that Bai Ren was still not back.

No one else would have dared say such a thing about someone like Bai Ren-an existence akin to a god, one of the strongest in the Desolate Heaven Empire.

"Bai Zihan, you've even started speaking behind my back now?"

Bai Ren's voice came from behind.

He was dragging two Great Ascension Realm cultivators with him. Judging by their condition, they had been the strongest among the enemy-and likely held the most information.

Bai Ren had kept them alive for questioning; otherwise, they would have long since joined the others in hell.

Bai Zihan wasn't the least bit worried that Bai Ren had heard his comment. Not like he told a lie anyways.

What surprised him was that the Grand Elder had managed to restrain himself -and had kept his earlier request to keep a few alive.

The captives looked like hollow shells, their souls crushed and wills broken.

Well, against Grand Elder, anyone would have their will crushed.

Bai Zihan walked closer, his boots crunching against shattered stone and dried blood.

He stopped a few steps away, expression calm, tone indifferent.

"Tell me," he said softly, "where is your headquarters?"

The two men froze.

One of them, the older, tried to speak-but only a hoarse wheeze came out.

The other quickly shook his head, trembling violently.

"We... don't know," the younger one stammered, voice breaking.

Bai Zihan's expression didn't change.

He had expected as much.

Still, he pressed on.

"Who ordered you?"

The older cultivator swallowed hard, throat moving as if forcing the words out.

"It was Elder Shuhai!"

"Elder Shuhai again," Bai Zihan murmured, more to himself than to them.

Looks like he wasn't on the level of other elders and definitely above them.

He continued questioning them-methodically.

"Is there anyone above Elder Shuhai?"

Silence!

"I... I don't know," one whispered. "Elder Shuhai is the highest rank person I know!"

Bai Zihan tilted his head slightly, expression thoughtful.

Bai Zihan continued asking various questions but the answer left him unsatisfied. Either they didn't know or it was information that Bai Zihan already

knew.

When the questioning ended, Bai Zihan looked at them both for a long, silent moment.

Finally, he sighed.

"I see... it seems you really don't know anything useful."

Moreover, he couldn't even tell whether they were lying or not.

(Should I ask Feilian to perform a Soul Search on them?)

That was an option, but doing so on Great Ascension Realm cultivators-who might not know anything-wasn't worth spending her Qi.

Sigh!

Bai Zihan scrapped the idea of using Feilian; it simply wasn't worth it.

Perhaps they would open their mouths after being tortured in the Bai Clan if they are hiding something. He could only hope so.

"Who is the person that has fallen for Xie Wanshou?"

This made him realize just how crucial Xie Wanshou was-and how important

the person who took an interest in her must be.

Otherwise, even Great Ascension Realm elders were denied entry to the headquarters or have their souls and memories tampered with.

A place so secretive yet Xie Wanshou was allowed in their headquarters though she seemed to be blindfolded and had her senses closed.

Looks like it was back to square one. For now, he could only rely on Xie Wanshou and wait for that mysterious person to contact her.

Still, after this ordeal, he understood one thing clearly-the organization behind all this was terrifyingly powerful, to the point that even the Bai Clan might not be able to face them directly.

He certainly couldn't take them on with his current strength.

So, while waiting for information... he needed to grow stronger. Otherwise, even if he did find their headquarters, he might not be able to exact his revenge.

Bai Zihan began to walk away, he was truly leaving the place after having destroyed the palace.

The Emperor could only suppress the rising complaint in his heart.

At least Bai Zihan was leaving. The palace could be rebuilt, but life could not be restored.

That alone was reason enough for gratitude.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 342 Empress Sun Yaoqing[965 words]

Chapter 342 Empress Sun Yaoqing

However-

"Wait!"

A sharp, urgent voice cut through the silence.

The Second Prince stepped forward, his robes still torn and singed from the earlier beating.

He forced a smile, though his face was pale.

"Lord Bai Zihan," he said, clasping his hands together and bowing deeply, "someone of your might deserves to command more than a single clan. I am willing to serve under you-no, to assist you in managing the Falling Star Empire in your stead!"

He spoke eagerly, his voice trembling with excitement rather than fear. The words struck the Emperor like a blade to the chest.

His face twisted in fury, his Qi trembling as he glared at his own son.

"You-bastard child!" he roared, spitting blood. "Even now, you still covet the throne?!"

The Second Prince ignored him, eyes shining with a greedy light that no longer hid behind courtesy.

Before the Emperor could lash out again, another voice rang out.

"Lord Bai Zihan!"

The Fifth Prince staggered forward, his face still swollen from the earlier beating, clothes tattered, yet his tone was resolute.

"I... I too am willing to serve you! If you wish to rule this Empire, I'll obey every command! Even if you wish to make me servant-I will not complain!"

His words were half-desperate, half-ambitious.

The two princes-once rivals locked in blood and ambition-now stood side by side, bowing before Bai Zihan as if he were the true Emperor of the land.

Their reasoning was simple.

Even if the throne became nothing more than a puppet seat, it was still the throne.

Under one man but above billions-how could they not crave that position? Bai Zihan stopped walking.

He turned slightly, his gaze sweeping over the two princes.

For a moment, neither of them could tell what he was thinking. Then-

He laughed softly.

A small, humorless sound that made the air grow heavier.

"Interesting," he said, his tone calm, yet every word seemed to slice through their hearts.

"You've both nearly lost your lives, and yet you still dream of sitting on that chair."

He was almost amused by how desperate the two of them were.

Bai Zihan didn't really care about the Falling Star Empire or who sat upon its throne.

After all, it was a weak empire, and the resources it possessed were nothing compared to what the Bai Clan had.

But of course, giving up on such an opportunity would also be a waste.

There was also the need to keep eyes on Chong Sheng-and on Elder Shuhai, if he ever returned.

Still, he had no intention of entrusting that to such incompetent people. When the time came, they would likely betray him and serve another.

His eyes slowly fell upon Princess Sun Yaoqing.

"Do you want to become the Empress, Princess?"

Princess Sun Yaoqing fell silent.

The words hung in the air like thunder that refused to fade.

For a brief moment, even the lingering winds seemed to hesitate.

She slowly raised her gaze to meet Bai Zihan's - the man who had shattered their armies, crippled their pride, and reduced the Imperial Palace to little more than rubble and ash.

And yet, she felt no hatred.

How could she?

If the Falling Star Empire hadn't provoked him first if the Second Prince, her father, and the court hadn't acted so arrogantly - none of this would have

happened.

Well, if she Bai Zihan, she would realize that it wouldn't have mattered whether they messed with him.

Even if they hadn't crossed paths, Bai Zihan would have eventually come. His

true target had always been the Second Prince.

Though if that had happened instead of what had happened, the palace might have still been standing by then.

Only the Second Prince might have been implicated.

Her hands trembled slightly at her sides, but her voice - when it finally came - was calm.

Behind her, her two attendants, Mingzhu and Meilin, exchanged glances. They understood what was happening, and both stepped forward, whispering urgently.

"Princess... you should consider it."

"Yes, Your Highness. You've always been the one most suited to lead. Think what would the Empire be if the Second or Fifth Prince were to take the throne."

Their words were sincere. They had always believed their princess was more than just a royal figurehead.

Princess Sun Yaoqing was known not only for her cultivation talent, but for her poise, intelligence, and compassion.

She managed people with grace, balanced strength with kindness.

Perhaps... She truly could be the bridge between this man and the crumbling Empire.

Sun Yaoqing took a deep breath. Her gaze softened, but determination flashed in her eyes.

She stepped forward-the hem of her robe brushing against the cracked marble floor-and bowed deeply.

"If Young Master Bai truly wishes for me to become the Empress," she said, her voice clear and steady, "then I will not refuse."

The Emperor's eyes widened, his lips parting - but before he could speak, she continued.

"However... I have a condition."

The court stirred. The Second Prince and Fifth Prince thought that their Sister was stupid for the condition when she could have become Empress.

Bai Zihan's expression didn't change, though a faint spark of amusement glimmered in his eyes.

"Oh?"

He asked lightly, as if this were all a game to him. "Let's hear them."

Princess Sun straightened her back, meeting his gaze head-on. "There should be no harm done to the citizens of the Falling Star Empire. I

would obey whatever orders you might have but if it concerns people's safety, I will refuse."

Bai Zihan's expression remained unreadable, the faintest curve tugging at the corner of his lips.

"A Condition, huh?"

He said softly, his voice carrying a lazy amusement that somehow felt more dangerous than any killing intent.

His crimson eyes narrowed slightly as he studied her-this princess who dared to bargain with him, not out of arrogance, but out of sincerity and resolve.

She was different from her brothers.

He tilted his head slightly, lips curling into a faint smirk.

"Interesting," he said again. "Very well, Princess. Let's see if you're worth the trouble."

He turned away, his cloak fluttering as he began to walk.

"From this day forth... the Falling Star Empire will be under Empress Sun

Yaoqing!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 343 Returning to Desolate Heaven Empire! [1,396 words]

Chapter 343 Returning to Desolate Heaven Empire!

A moment later, an enormous Flying Ship ascended through the clouds.

The very air trembled as the vessel came to hover above the ruined Imperial Palace, blotting out the light of the sun.

Bai Zihan didn't wait for a coronation or anything like that-he simply declared that Princess Sun Yaoqing would become the Empress.

As for whether she could continue to be one, well, that was in her hands.

His word should serve as a good deterrent to many, but there would obviously be others who would see this as an opportunity.

After all, he had clearly shown that he didn't care much about who ruled the Falling Star Empire-nor was he interested in their empire at all.

So, it wouldn't be strange if someone tried to seize the throne after he left. Still, Princess or rather, Empress Sun Yaoqing seemed capable enough; she might be able to stabilize the position that was suddenly given to her.

Perhaps the Falling Star Empire would undergo a drastic change in the coming days.

Bai Zihan had only two tasks for her: one was to keep an eye for Elder Shuhai, and the other was to monitor Chong Sheng.

Sun Yaoqing understood the first request. After all, his entire trip to the Falling Star Empire had been to find Elder Shuhai, who possessed information about their headquarters.

However, his second request confused her.

She remembered Chong Sheng, the slave who had used a Teleportation Formation to escape the Quan Clan.

A demonic cultivator, talented for his age.

But she hadn't thought that someone like Bai Zihan would pay attention to such a person, let alone ask her to keep watch for him.

While she didn't understand the reason, she had no reason to refuse either.

Since it was only two requests and nothing more, it was fine. Becoming Empress in exchange for such small favors seemed like a good trade.

She was also relieved to find out that Bai Zihan really had no interest in controlling the Falling Star Empire or treating her like a puppet Empress. That was the end of it-Bai Zihan left immediately after stating his demands. Now, it was time for him to return to his own empire.

At the border, the same thing happened as before, the Falling Star Empire's guards were nervous but also relieved to see the Bai Clan finally leave.

Judging by their expressions, they didn't seem to know what had happened in their capital or about the change in their ruler.

Though, in the coming days, they would definitely find out.

Not only them, everyone in the Falling Star Empire would learn that Princess Sun Yaoqing had ascended the throne and became their Empress.

Invitations would also be sent to the powerful clans and neighboring empires for her coronation.

In any case, Bai Zihan didn't think any of that had anything to do with him.

The journey back to the Desolate Heaven Empire was peaceful-too peaceful. The wind brushed past the Flying Ship, whispering across the deck. Below, mountains and rivers stretched endlessly, their beauty serene yet lifeless.

Bai Zihan leaned against the railing, his chin resting on his hand, red eyes half-lidded.

Only a few hours had passed since the bloodbath at the Falling Star Empire, and already, boredom gnawed at him like an itch he couldn't reach.

"Am I... becoming a Battle Maniac?"

He murmured lazily, a faint smirk tugging at his lips.

The thought almost amused him.

Previously, when his talent and cultivation were at rock bottom in the Bai Clan, he would avoid direct fights whenever possible.

But it was the opposite now. He likes to handle things with his fist whenever he can.

Moreover, fewer people dared to criticize him, meaning fewer people he needed to deal with.

"No, no... let's not let my guard down. Who knows what danger lies ahead."

He certainly couldn't afford to be satisfied with his current strength.

He hadn't forgotten his identity as a Villain.

Below, the clouds parted as the Flying Ship crossed into the Desolate Heaven Empire's airspace.

The border patrols, spotting the Bai Clan's insignia etched upon the ship's hull, stiffened in nervousness.

They bowed as the enormous vessel passed overhead, whispering prayers of gratitude that he did not stop.

Bai Zihan didn't even glance their way.

But just as the ship began to glide deeper into Desolate Heaven's territory, a faint plume of smoke caught his eye.

It rose from the horizon-dark, curling, and thick. The smell of burning reached even the upper skies, faint but distinct.

Bai Zihan's lips curved slightly.

"Smoke?"

He murmured.

"Now, that's interesting."

Without hesitation, he straightened and flicked his wrist.

"Turn the ship," he ordered lazily.

"Head toward the smoke."

There was no trace of urgency, no heroism in his voice.

He wasn't going there to help.

He was just bored.

The Flying Ship veered sharply toward the rising smoke.

As they approached, the scene below came into view-A town. Fairly large, though now half-engulfed in flames.

Screams and roars echoed through the streets as buildings collapsed under the rampage of Demonic Beasts.

They poured in from the surrounding forest like a dark tide-Grade-3 beasts in hordes, their claws and fangs glinting in the firelight.

Above them, several massive silhouettes loomed-Grade-4, even Grade-5

beasts, their auras suffocating the battlefield.

The defenders-cultivators, guards, and townsfolk, fought desperately, forming barriers and Qi walls, but their lines were breaking fast.

Bai Zihan stood silently, watching from above.

The scene was chaos-blood, fire, destruction.

And yet, in that chaos, something within him stirred.

It wasn't pity. It wasn't anger.

He tilted his head slightly, crimson eyes glinting faintly.

"Well," he murmured, "I suppose that's one way to kill time."

The town of Willowshade had always been a quiet place-small, humble, and

peaceful.

Nestled between the low mountains of the Desolate Heaven Empire's southern frontier, it was the kind of town travelers passed through without remembering

its name.

And yet, for those who lived there, it was home.

Farmers tended spirit herb fields in the misty valleys, merchants bartered in the town square beneath the old willow tree, and children ran barefoot through the

streets, laughing as their parents scolded them gently.

There weren't many cultivators in Willowshade-a few Foundation Establishment guards, a handful of Core Formation elders respected by the

younger generation.

But even so, life here was steady. Predictable. Safe.

At least, until that night.

From the roof of his burning apothecary, Gu Yiming could see everything.

The horizon-once a calm sea of stars-was now devoured by flames and black smoke.

The forests that bordered Willowshade howled with unending roars, and from them poured a nightmare-hundreds of Demonic Beasts, their eyes glowing crimson in the dark.

"Grade-3... so many of them!"

One of the town's guards shouted before a shadow pounced upon him, tearing him apart mid-sentence.

"When is reinforcement coming?"

"I-It would probably take an hour for them to reach here."

"Damn! There would be nothing left in an hour!"

Gu Yiming staggered backward, clutching his chest as his barrier talisman.

flickered weakly.

He wasn't a warrior-just a simple Qi Refining cultivator, a healer who brewed

pills and poultices for fevers, broken bones, and injuries. Never in his life had he seen a Beast Tide this size.

Grade-3 beasts were already as powerful as Core Formation cultivators. But

leading them towering above the others-was something far worse. From the heart of the burning forest emerged a hulking beast with scales black

as obsidian, its eyes molten red.

Flames licked its massive frame as it roared to the heavens.

"A... Grade-5 Flame-Scaled Rhino..."

Gu Yiming whispered in horror.

The earth trembled as the beast stomped forward, crushing homes beneath its

steps. They had no Golden Core cultivator who is Grade-5 Demonic Beast equivalent in Willowshade-the strongest among them, the town chief, was merely at late Core Formation.

He had already fallen, his body lying near the plaza, crushed beneath debris.

In mere minutes-no, seconds-the defensive formation shielding the town collapsed.

Once the barrier shattered, the beasts surged in like floodwater breaking a dam.

Women and children screamed as they were herded toward the underground shelters-the only place they thought could be safe.

Gu Yiming turned, breath ragged, sprinting toward the central well. Beneath a false stone slab was the passage leading to the shelters.

"Go! Hurry!"

He shouted, waving his hand as several spirit-light talismans flared to guide the fleeing townsfolk.

Then -

A terrible crash.

The ground shook violently. A pillar of flame burst through the cobblestone street, the air filling with the stench of burning flesh.

When the smoke cleared, Gu Yiming froze. The Demonic Beast had already found the shelter.

And the one before him was a Grade-4 Demonic Beast. It easily tore through the Metal entrance like paper.

No..."

Gu Yiming whispered, falling to his knees in despair. There was nothing that he or anyone here could do against such a powerful beast.

"No... this can't be..."

He could feel despair spreading through the shelter like poison.

There was no salvation. No escape. Only death!

Novel Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! Chapter 344 The Beast Tide Trembled

Chapter 344 The Beast Tide Trembled

Gu Yiming shut his eyes.

RRRWRRRR!

The roar of the Grade-4 beast thundered in his ears, the sound of tearing metal and screaming people blending into one suffocating blur.

The smell of smoke and blood filled his lungs.

He clutched his chest, feeling his heart beat so hard that it hurt.

He couldn't run anymore. Even if he could, there was nowhere to run.

So he simply waited-with his eyes closed.

The ground quaked beneath him. He heard a metallic shriek-the sound of the shelter's gate being ripped apart.

"W-We are dead!"

"God have mercy! Please protect us!"

Some screamed while others prayed. But deep down, everyone had accepted their fate.

Then-

Silence!

And in that silence came a strange scent-not smoke, not fire, but fresh, disgusting blood.

He waited for the pain that never came. Seconds passed. Then more.

Gu Yiming's brows knit together. His breathing hitched.

Slowly, he opened his eyes.

And froze.

The Grade-4 Demonic Beast that had been about to crush them was gone.

No-not gone.

It was there, but dead.

Its massive body lay in front of the shelter's gate, its head twisted at an unnatural angle, eyes still wide open.

The beast's horn had been driven straight into the earth, as though forced there by overwhelming strength.

Gu Yiming stared blankly, unable to process what he was seeing.

"What... what happened?"

He whispered, his voice cracking. He didn't dare be loud and attract another Demonic Beast.

He turned to the others huddled behind him-pale faces, trembling hands. Their faces were also full of confusion like they didn't know what had happened.

"Did anyone see what happened?"

No one answered for a long time. They only shook their heads.

Then a faint, hesitant voice spoke up from the back.

"I... I think... I saw someone."

Gu Yiming's gaze snapped toward the speaker-a young boy, bleeding from his knee, eyes dazed.

"A person?"

Gu Yiming asked. "You mean someone saved us?"

The boy swallowed hard.

"I thought I was seeing things... but before the beast died, I... I saw a shadow. Just for a heartbeat. Then the beast's head-it just... fell."

Gu Yiming's eyes widened.

(Could it be... reinforcements?)

A cultivator strong enough to kill a Grade-4 beast in a single instant-that was at least Nascent Soul Realm, maybe even higher!

If that was the case, it would make sense that a group of mortal and low-level cultivators couldn't see him.

Hope that fragile, flickering thing-began to burn again in his chest. "Reinforcements," he breathed. "The reinforcements must have arrived!"

He turned toward the others, his voice trembling but louder now. "We're saved!"

Some began to cry; others laughed weakly, unable to believe it.

"I'll go check," Gu Yiming said, gripping the wall for balance as he stood.

"I'll make sure. If it's really reinforcements, we can bring the wounded out." Several men followed him-hesitant, but desperate to confirm.

They pushed aside the shattered door and stepped out.

The night air was thick with ash. The town they once knew was nearly gone- only burning houses and the remains of Demonic Beasts remained.

"Damn! How powerful is the person who came to help us? He has already killed all the Demonic Beast in the vicinity."

Another spat weakly to the side, eyes darting around the ruined street.

"Killed all of them... just in a short period of time? I don't know any sect or clan that is capable of such a feat."

Obviously, the clan or sect that he was talking about was those in close proximity who they think are the ones who were sent to help them.

The others exchanged uneasy looks. The street was littered with corpses- massive bodies of Demonic Beasts, each one slain cleanly, many with their heads severed in a single strike.

Gu Yiming stepped carefully between them, boots splashing through pools of blood. The metallic tang filled the air.

A long trail of bodies stretched deeper into the street, like a crimson river leading into the heart of the burning town.

They knew that the reinforcement must be at the end of this line of corpse.

They moved cautiously, stepping over the carcasses of beasts that had once reduced their homes to rubble.

Each step they took, the destruction grew worse-walls shredded by claws, stone cracked as though something massive had slammed into it, and blood

splattered across the ruins like paint.

And yet... not a single beast still lived.

Every last one was dead.

Then they saw him.

A young man stood in the middle of the street.

Alone!

Blood dripped from his hands, pooling at his feet. His hair fluttered in the wind

as a wide smile curved his lips.

All around him were corpses of Demonic Beasts, piled high like mounds of flesh.

Gu Yiming's breath caught.

The man didn't seem to notice them. He stood still for a moment, head tilted slightly as if listening to something far away.

Then, from the other end of the street, another beast-a massive Grade-4 wolf-lunged at him.

The man turned his head slightly.

A faint smile curved his lips.

And in the next instant-

Shhhk!

The wolf's head separated cleanly from its body.

It didn't even have time to scream.

Blood sprayed into the firelight like a crimson arc.

The young man laughed softly, the sound carried by the wind-light, almost casual, yet chilling to the bone.

The remaining beasts, sensing something beyond their comprehension, trembled and began to back away.

The Demonic Beasts that had destroyed everything in Willowshade were now in terror.

Gu Yiming and the others couldn't help but feel a chill crawl down their spines when they saw such a scene.

(Who is he? Someone that young... with such terrifying power?)

Gu Yuming wondered.

"Up! Look in the sky! It's a Flying Ship! Looks like a powerful clan has come to

help us!"

One of the men pointed upward and shouted.

All of them looked up to find a Flying Ship descending. Judging by its size, anyone could tell it belonged to a powerful clan.

"That symbol... It's the Bai Clan! The Bai Clan has come to save us! We're safe!"

One of them recognized the symbol.

The Bai Clan-there was no one in the Desolate Heaven Empire who didn't know that name.

The strongest clan in the Empire. With their involvement, even a Beast Tide of this scale could be easily handled.

They sighed in relief.

If the reinforcements had been from a neighboring sect or small clan, they might have still been worried-but it was the Bai Clan.

There was no longer any need for fear.

In the sky, the Bai Clan members watched as Bai Zihan leapt down and annihilated the Demonic Beasts.

"Should we help the Young Master?"

One of them asked-not out of urgency, since the beasts below were clearly no threat to Bai Zihan, but out of duty.

After all, it was their heir they were talking about. Bai Zihan's safety was of utmost priority.

"Let him be," Bai Ren said calmly. "Looks like he was getting bored anyway."

He had already scanned the area for danger; the strongest Demonic Beast present was only Grade-5.

It would take only his breath to kill such a weakling.

"Just let Bai Zihan have his fun!"

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 345 Beast Tide Ends! [1,161 words]

Chapter 345 Beast Tide Ends!

It didn't take much time for Bai Zihan to annihilate almost all of the Demonic Beasts.

All Demonic Beasts on his path were killed mercilessly.

After some time, survivors came out and they too seemed to have noticed their Flying Ship.

"Land beside those people. Since we're here, we should help them."

It was always good to maintain a decent image. The Bai Clan didn't care much about fame, but even so-having a good reputation never hurt.

The massive flying ship descended through the smoke-filled sky like a divine omen.

The burning streets trembled beneath the gusts of wind that rippled from its hull.

Gu Yiming and his group shielded their faces as the gale swept through the ruins, scattering ash and embers.

When the light dimmed, the enormous vessel came to a halt just above the shattered plaza, casting a long shadow over the broken town.

From there, several figures descended-each dressed in robes bearing the emblem of the Bai Clan.

At their head stood Bai Ren, calm and composed, his presence sharp yet restrained.

The survivors, already on their knees, pressed their foreheads against the ground.

"Thank you! Thank you, great masters of the Bai Clan!"

"You have saved us! Willowshade owes the Bai Clan our lives!"

Their voices trembled not only with gratitude but with awe-and respect.

Bai Ren nodded. He wasn't going to be overly humble nor arrogant about their gratitude.

Bai Ren's gaze swept over the kneeling survivors.

"Tell me what happened here."

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Gu Yiming swallowed hard and stood, still trembling slightly from both exhaustion and reverence.

"Senior... it-it happened too suddenly. The beasts came out of nowhere. We thought it was just a small outbreak at first, but then... Grade-3 and even Grade-4 beasts appeared."

He looked around, his voice breaking as he took in the charred remnants of his home.

"What happened to the nearby Sect? They didn't send reinforcements?"

"The nearby sects-they're small. They couldn't handle a tide of this scale. Maybe they're still fighting elsewhere... or maybe..."

He hesitated, lowering his head.

"Maybe they decided it wasn't worth it. To them, losing one town is better than losing an entire force."

Bai Ren's expression didn't change.

That kind of thing wasn't uncommon. If one couldn't handle a Beast Tide, sending their disciples and elders was akin to throwing them to their deaths.

So, rather than sacrificing their forces and adding more corpses, many preferred to wait for reinforcements and make full preparations.

And if it was something out of their league, they will ask for help from a bigger sect and wait for them.

One of the Bai Clan cultivators behind him exhaled quietly.

"If we hadn't passed through this region, this place would have been erased."

Gu Yiming nodded shakily.

"We... truly are fortunate the Bai Clan came to help us."

A deep roar echoed in the distance-sharp, guttural, followed by a thunderous explosion.

Everyone turned toward the sound.

There, amidst the crimson haze, Bai Zihan was still fighting.

He stood alone in the ruins, his white robes now drenched in blood, his sword flashing through the air like a streak of silver lightning.

Each swing cleaved through multiple beasts, leaving trails of severed limbs and shattered bone.

To Gu Yiming and the survivors, it was almost surreal. That one man could turn the tide of an entire Beast Horde-it was something out of legend.

Gu Yiming couldn't help but whisper, eyes wide in disbelief,

"Shouldn't... shouldn't seniors assist him?"

One of the Bai Clan cultivators beside Bai Ren turned his head slightly, almost amused.

"Assist him?" he said, a faint smile tugging at his lips. "There's no need. Those beasts aren't even enough to harm him."

One Bai cultivator chuckled softly, pride glinting in his eyes.

"Indeed, there is no need for your worries. That's the Bai Clan's heir, Bai Zihan."

Gu Yiming froze.

There was no need for further introduction-there was no one who didn't know the infamous Bai Zihan.

(A big shot is here!)

Even among the Bai Clan, Bai Zihan was someone who stood out the most.

Gu Yiming had heard that Bai Zihan had already reached the Soul Formation Realm-perhaps even higher.

Rumors about him defeating his Spirit Severing Realm cousin had also reached his ears.

With such a person fighting, he wasn't worried about whether Grade-4 or Grade-5 Demonic Beasts could do anything.

As realization dawned, the sight before him became even more unbelievable.

In the distance, Bai Zihan stepped forward calmly, cutting down another Demonic Beast as if slicing through paper.

Each strike carried a refined precision-beautiful and terrifying at once.

The earth trembled.

A guttural roar-deep and thunderous-ripped through the smoke-choked air, shaking even the distant ruins.

Gu Yiming's breath caught in his throat as he looked toward the source.

From the shattered end of the street, a shadow loomed-massive, terrifying, and brimming with killing intent.

A Grade-5 Demonic Beast stepped forth.

It was the Flame-Scaled Rhino!

"That... that's the leader," Gu Yiming whispered in horror. His legs nearly gave out. "The Beast Tide's commander..."

Bai Ren's eyes narrowed slightly, but he made no move to assist.

The survivors could only watch as the gigantic beast locked its eyes on the lone figure standing amidst the corpses.

Bai Zihan turned his head slightly, expression almost bored. His white robes were drenched in blood, his sword glinting faintly beneath the flicker of firelight.

The beast roared again, the sound splitting the night like thunder.

The ground cracked beneath its claws as it lunged forward, its minions charging with it-a tide of claws and fangs rushing toward one man. For a heartbeat, it seemed as though the world itself trembled under their combined momentum.

Then-

Shhhk!

A silver light flashed.

The roar was cut short.

All at once, the massive Grade-5 beast halted mid-stride. Its pupils dilated- then its body split cleanly in two, blood spraying high into the burning sky.

The other beasts froze in confusion before their bodies followed suit, sliced apart by an invisible force.

In the space of a single breath, silence returned to Willowshade.

Only the crackle of fire remained.

Bai Zihan lowered his sword, eyes half-lidded, a faint curl on his lips.

"Who are you trying to pretend before?" he said lightly, his tone dripping with disdain. "Such weaklings."

His voice wasn't loud, but it carried effortlessly through the air-reaching even those far behind the ruined walls.

The remaining Demonic Beasts-those that hadn't yet realized their doom-trembled violently.

Fear!

Pure, primal fear rippled through the horde as their leader was killed instantly.

Their instincts screamed that the young man before them wasn't prey. He was the predator.

Then, as if on command, they turned tail and fled-howling, scrambling, trampling over each other to escape the town.

Bai Zihan watched them go, his expression unchanging.

"Hmph!"

He flicked his sword. Blood scattered, evaporating before it even touched the

ground. "Not worth chasing," he muttered. "Once beasts know fear, they'll never return." Far behind him, Gu Yiming and the others stared blankly at the battlefield. The corpses of Demonic Beasts littered the ruins-hundreds of them-while Bai Zihan stood alone among them, drenched in blood, his blade gleaming under

the flames.

Gu Yiming didn't respond. His throat was too dry.

He had seen many cultivators in his life-but never one like this.

The Bai Clan cultivators behind him nodded in quiet admiration, while down

below, Bai Zihan simply sheathed his sword and turned toward them.

The Beast Tide had ended.

And Willowshade-though broken and bleeding-had been saved.

All by one man.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 346 Fate[1,580 words]

Chapter 346 Fate

Gu Yiming stood frozen for several breaths before his body finally moved.

Then, as if awakening from a dream, he turned to the others.

"Quick! Let's go back to the shelter! Bring out the people, especially the injured ones!"

The others jolted to life. Even with trembling legs and bloodied faces, they ran. They pushed aside the broken metal gates of the shelter and announced that the Beast Tide had ended.

Within minutes, survivors began to emerge-some limping, some carried on makeshift stretchers, their faces pale but still breathing.

"Did someone really come to save us?"

"I can't believe that I'm not dead!"

"Oh! They must be the saviors! Let's thank them!"

People were relieved to see that the Demonic Beasts were nowhere to be seen.

Then realization hit-some cried for what they had lost, while others were simply grateful to still be alive.

Moreover, while the danger had been dealt with, there were hundreds of problems that needed to be addressed.

First and foremost was helping the injured, especially those in critical condition.

Bai Ren glanced at the group of survivors and knew what had to be done. With a flick of his hand-

"Go. Assist them!"

Several Bai Clan cultivators descended immediately, their movements steady and practiced.

The ones going were cultivators who specialized in healing.

These were no ordinary healers.

Each of them had been trained personally by the Bai Clan and were especially sent with Bai Zihan in case he was ever injured.

So, there was no need to worry about their lack of ability-they were probably the best of the best in the entire Desolate Heaven Empire when it comes to healing.

One knelt beside a woman with a crushed leg, sending Qi over the wound. The bone knit itself together within seconds.

Another fed a trembling boy a pill the size of a fingernail. His labored breathing eased instantly.

Even what seemed impossible to heal-cut arms-were restored within

seconds, as if they had never been broken before. No, they felt even better than before.

Compared to treating the wounds of cultivators in the Spirit Severing Realm, stabilizing mortals was almost effortless.

To this group of people who were in desperate need, the Bai Clan cultivators looked almost like gods.

Cries of pain slowly turned to gasps of astonishment.

"They... they healed me... I thought I could never walk again!"

"Thank you, great ones! Thank you, Bai Clan!"

Gratitude turned to reverence.

Soon, the once-silent street was filled with cheers and sobs.

"Long live the Bai Clan!"

"Long live the Bai Clan!"

Their voices trembled with emotion, echoing across the smoldering ruins.

Not only that, Bai Zihan also shared all the food that he had.

Well, cultivators didn't need to eat, but because he liked to-and because of

Luo Qing-he always kept quite a big haul.

He decided to give them away.

They were thankful, to say the least.

However, if they knew the worth of each item that was given, they might have thought about selling it instead of eating it.

But sometimes, water is more precious than gold.

When one is hungry, they wouldn't think about profit or logic-they would simply eat.

When the last of the wounded were stabilized and the cries of pain quieted, silence once again fell over Willowshade.

Bai Zihan stood at the edge of the ruined street, his gaze sweeping across the devastation.

Half-buried corpses of Demonic Beasts littered the ground, their monstrous forms already stiffening.

Among them were the remains of the townsfolk-burned, crushed, or torn apart.

It was not a pleasant sight, especially for the survivors who were related to those corpses.

He turned his head slightly, his expression calm but his eyes heavy with thought.

"Do you really want to stay here?"

He asked, almost quietly.

Gu Yiming, who had naturally taken on the role of leader among the survivors, looked at Bai Zihan.

Then he looked back at the group behind him-faces covered in soot, eyes red, bodies trembling but still standing.

Despite everything they had lost, there was something in their gaze-resolve.

Gu Yiming took a deep breath and bowed deeply.

"We are thankful, truly, for Young Master Bai's kindness," he said, voice hoarse but steady.

"But Willowshade has and always will be our home. Even if it's in ruins now... it's still our home."

The others nodded behind him, murmuring in agreement.

"We can rebuild."

"As long as we live, Willowshade still stands."

"I need to bury my friend's body and look after their tombstone. We can't abandon Willowshade after our loved ones made sacrifices to protect it."

Bai Zihan's expression didn't change.

"Is that so?" He looked at them for a while longer, then turned away.

He had already suggested they move elsewhere-another town or city-but they refused.

Perhaps they really couldn't leave their home.

Or perhaps they knew they might struggle in another place, where everything was unfamiliar.

Looking at the debris, it would take a great deal of time and effort to rebuild the town as it once was.

And who knew whether there would be another such invasion of Demonic Beasts?

They were lucky this time, but who could say it would be the same next time?

Still, Bai Zihan didn't argue. He had already warned them twice. It was more than enough.

Soon enough, Bai Zihan turned away from the broken street.

The survivors had begun gathering the corpses, laying their dead to rest amidst the rubble.

Cries of grief mixed with the soft chant of prayers, echoing faintly under the dim sky.

Without another word, Bai Zihan walked toward the Flying Ship.

The Bai Clan cultivators followed him. Once all had boarded, the massive ship began to rise-its radiant formations flaring to life.

As the Flying Ship ascended through the smoky air, the survivors below raised their hands, waving with trembling arms.

Some cried.

Some prayed.

Some simply stood there, watching until the shadow of the ship vanished beyond the clouds.

From above, Bai Zihan stood near the edge of the deck, his gaze following the figures shrinking below.

"Do you feel sympathy for them?"

The calm voice came from behind. Bai Ren approached, hands clasped behind his back, his expression as composed as ever.

Bai Zihan didn't turn around. His eyes remained fixed on the town below, on the smoldering horizon.

"Perhaps," Bai Zihan answered after a moment.

He doesn't know whether it was sympathy or not but indeed, he felt a bit sorry for those survivors and also felt a sense of responsibility towards them since he saved them.

Of course, he knew that he did everything to help them and it was more than enough.

Bai Ren's lips curved slightly.

For anyone else, hearing the Clan's heir speak that way might have been cause for concern.

A future patriarch of such a great clan shouldn't waste thought on the weak, nor let sentiment dull his edge.

But Bai Ren only smiled.

Rather than thinking about emotion clouding one's judgment, he thought the opposite-for Bai Zihan, who was always scheming and making cold decisions to get what he wanted.

Even if it were his brother or sister, he would show no mercy. There was no way Bai Ren was worried about Bai Zihan growing soft-hearted.

Rather, it was a relief-that Bai Zihan hadn't lost his human emotion, that there still existed something called sympathy within him.

Bai Ren stepped beside him, his gaze drifting down toward the town below- nothing but ruins and ash now, yet still filled with the faint flicker of human resilience.

"Fate is a strange thing," Bai Ren said quietly, his voice almost lost to the wind.

"They were doomed the moment that Beast Tide appeared. Even if another clan had come across them, few would have intervened. To survive this long, to meet you here-it was already their blessing."

Bai Zihan remained silent.

Bai Ren continued, his tone calm but firm, "There's no need to trouble yourself over them. You already did more than anyone else would have. You not only stopped the Beast Tide but also healed them, and even gave away your own resources."

He gave a small, knowing smile.

"And you didn't even take the beast corpses or their cores. With the number of Grade-3 and Grade-4 beasts, plus the Grade-5 leader you slew, the value of those materials alone could fund a minor sect for decades. They could surely live well after selling those."

Then looked at the group of survivors which was visibly for Bai Ren.

"And if they die even after that, that too shall be their fate."

"Fate, huh."

Bai Zihan muttered.

The word echoed in him, sinking deeper and deeper-beyond thought, beyond reason.

Fate!

A single word, but within it carried infinite meanings.

Was it truly the invisible thread that bound all beings from birth to death?

Was it the hand that guided the Chosen Ones toward glory... and cast the nameless into despair?

His mind flashed with countless memories-those who were born talented, those who struggled only to fall short, and those mortals who survived amidst impossible probability.

Was their fate to be destroyed? Or fate to be saved?

Bai Zihan closed his eyes. In that instant, the world around him seemed to fall silent.

"What is fate?"

He asked himself softly. "An unchangeable line drawn by heaven?"

He opened his eyes, and within them burned a light so deep it seemed to pierce through the sky.

"No," he said. "Fate is nothing but the name weaklings give to their chains."

A faint tremor rippled through the ship's formation, reacting to the pressure that suddenly emanated from him.

Bai Ren turned his head slightly, eyes narrowing. The surrounding air began to hum, as if reality itself trembled.

Bai Zihan's hair swayed in the rising wind. His robes fluttered, untouched by Qi but driven by the sheer will that surged from his body.

"If heaven has written my path," he said, voice calm but resounding, "then I will write over it."

"If fate decrees my rise, then that shall be my destiny."

"But if it decrees my fall-" His voice deepened, eyes blazing like twin stars."— then I will sever it myself."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 347 Fate Severing Slash! [1,431 words]

Chapter 347 Fate Severing Slash!

Bai Zihan has been meditating in Bai Clan's training Ground ever since his arrival a week ago.

He seemed to have compounded something about Fate which was the true essence for Fate Severing Slash!

The Saint-Grade Sword Technique which he couldn't fully comprehend despite training it for more than a year.

He had always fallen short. The technique demanded something beyond power, beyond comprehension-something intangible.

But now, he thought that he had finally grasped the final essence needed to use the Fate Severing Technique.

Bai Zihan slowly opened his eyes.

The air around him had grown unnaturally still, as though the world itself awaited his next move.

He raised his right hand, and with a flash of light, a sword appeared within his grasp.

The Eternal Spirit Sword!

He inhaled slowly, his chest rising.

Then-

He swung.

"Fate Severing Slash!"

The sword light that erupted from his blade wasn't dazzling—it was terrifyingly powerful.

It cut through the air like the judgment of the heavens themselves. No-it was as if it defied what Heaven stood for.

Boom-!

A deafening explosion shook the entire training ground.

The protective formations screamed as countless runes flared, trying desperately to hold back the overwhelming Qi.

For an instant, the entire chamber was engulfed in a blinding white light.

Then came the sound of shattering glass-the sound of the Grade-6 Protective Formation breaking apart.

"Th-the formation's collapsing!"

Guards stationed around the training group for the safety of Bai Zihan

immediately surged toward the disturbance.

Alarm talismans flared crimson as they activated emergency response protocols.

Within seconds, several powerful auras descended around the shattered chamber-each one belonging to a Bai Clan elite cultivator.

Their faces were grim, expecting some kind of assassination attempt on Bai Zihan like before.

"Young Master, are you alright?"

The massive chamber lay in ruins-cracks still flickering faintly in the air, Qi swirling like a tempest.

"Damn! Is it the Great Ascension Realm Assassin this time?"

"Call the Elders! We might not be able to handle such a powerful assassin!"

The Group of guards were instantly cautious as they felt very powerful attack on the broken Formation.

They slowly entered the Training Ground, expecting the Assassin who infiltrated their Bai Clan.

However, there was only one person in the training Ground, Bai Zihan, sword in hand, his clothes fluttering from the lingering shock.

He was unharmed. Completely untouched.

His expression was calm, almost indifferent.

Seeing the guards' alarmed expressions, he lowered his sword slightly and said in an even tone,

"There's no need to panic. It was my mistake."

He glanced at the shattered barrier and continued lightly, "I was the one who broke it."

The guards stared in stunned silence.

His words echoed in their minds-He broke it? Himself?

That barrier wasn't some simple defense.

It was a Grade-6 Protective Formation, personally designed by the Clan's chief formation masters to withstand even attacks from a Great Ascension Realm cultivator.

And Bai Zihan-merely in the Spirit Severing Realm-had destroyed it.

Just how strong was he now?

They couldn't even begin to imagine.

Some of them exchanged glances, their expressions wavering between awe and disbelief.

Anyways, since Bai Zihan was safe, there was no longer any need for them to worry.

After receiving his assurance, the guards finally relaxed. They exchanged uneasy glances, then began withdrawing from the chamber.

"Make sure to record everything and send a report to the formation department," one of them said, still looking at the shattered barrier with lingering disbelief.

"Yes. We'll request immediate repair."

When it came to matters involving Bai Zihan, there was never any hesitation. No matter how costly the damage, the clan would approve it without question. Of course, many of them couldn't help but feel a little envious.

The resources, formations, and treasures Bai Zihan had access to were beyond what most could even dream of.

But they also knew-he deserved it.

His talent was almost unmatched, not only in the Bai Clan but in the history of the Desolate Heaven Empire.

But what the guards didn't know was, it wasn't just because of Bai Zihan's talent that he has access to almost unlimited resources.

Bai Zihan's contributions to the clan had already surpassed those of countless elders and geniuses combined.

The Saint-Grade Artifact he had donated to the Bai Clan alone held immeasurable value. Even great sects might go to war for such a treasure. There was also Heaven-Grade Cultivation Technique which raised the talent and Cultivation of Bai Clan.

So what was a single Grade-6 Protective Formation, compared to those?

Besides, if a formation in the training ground was broken, it was never considered the trainee's fault-especially not when the trainee was Bai Zihan. After the guards had left, Bai Zihan exhaled softly, his eyes still faintly glowing

from the lingering energy of the Fate Severing Slash.

He could feel it-the faint trace of something new within his sword.

A fragment of the power he sought.

The corner of his lips lifted ever so slightly.

He sheathed his sword and murmured,

"System!"

[Host Info]

Host: Bai Zihan

Age: 18

Cultivation Realm: Spirit Severing (Early)

Constitution: Supreme Dao Bone Martial Arts:

Nine Shadows Flowing Light Sword (Greater Mastery)

Eternal Flowing Water Sword (Minor Mastery)

Fate Severing Slash (Beginner Mastery)

Fate Severing Slash was finally registered in his info, marking that he had truly grasped it.

Of course, there was still a long way to go before perfecting it, but it was already so powerful even without him fully understanding its essence-he could only imagine how terrifying it would become once mastered. However, the Qi consumption to use this technique was enormous, to the point that even he who possessed vast reserves of Qi-might be exhausted after using it twice.

If it were any average cultivator, they would likely need to reach the Great Ascension Realm before even daring to attempt to learn such a technique. Well, considering how powerful he already was, Bai Zihan thought this technique might only be needed when going against Great Ascension Realm experts or above.

As for Void Refinement Realm cultivators, he had tested himself enough to know that he could fare well against them even without needing to rely on Fate Severing Slash.

"Shall I head back to Heaven Sword Sect?"

It wasn't as if he needed to-nor was he attached to them like his sister, Bai Xueqing, since he hadn't learned a single thing from that sect.

The only reason he ever went there was because of the high possibility of encountering a Heaven Chosen, though he had only met one.

Well, two, if he included Bai Xinyue, but she had already left the Heaven Sword Sect.

Still, that was more than enough, considering just how rare it was to encounter a Heaven Chosen.

More than that, however, he wanted to return because of Kong Zhanhong and the information the latter might have gathered during his absence.

Many things seemed to have happened while he was comprehending the Fate Severing Slash technique.

For one, there had been a change of emperor in the Falling Star Empire which shocked nearby Empires.

Every nearby empire had received an invitation to the coronation of the new

Empress Sun Yaoqing.

The Bai Clan, too, received one-despite the invitation usually being limited to

royalty and not extended to clans outside the Falling Star Empire. Bai Tianheng had already received the report and understood why the invitation was sent to them.

He had one of the elders attend the coronation on behalf of the Bai Clan.

Sun Yaoqing also sent a personal message to Bai Zihan.

She stated that she couldn't locate either Elder Shuhai or Chong Sheng.

As for Chong Sheng, there were traces of his movements, but it seemed he was doing a good job of hiding-especially since his identity as a Demonic Cultivator had been exposed, and the Quan Clan had issued a wanted notice for him.

Elder Shuhai, on the other hand, had completely vanished. It was as if he had disappeared from the Falling Star Empire after that incident.

Another change was how some people had begun praising the Bai Clan for

saving the people of Willowshade.

Those survivors had been spreading songs of gratitude ever since they were rescued, and the story quickly spread throughout the region.

This was especially amplified by the fact that many nearby sects and clans had

failed to send reinforcements in time-and were now being harshly criticized

for it.

These days, sects and clans tend to prioritize their own interests and survival rather than helping others.

As a result, public dissatisfaction had been growing, especially as more and more people died needlessly due to delayed aid.

In that sense, the Bai Clan's reputation had improved slightly. However, there was also troubling news-an increase in Demonic Beast

invasions.

It seemed Willowshade was not the only town that had suffered a sudden attack from Demonic Beasts.

Several parts of the Desolate Heaven Empire had been assaulted by Demonic Beasts, and unlike Willowshade, many towns had been completely wiped out. Countless people were now fleeing their homes in fear, seeking safety in the Capital City, which was generally considered more secure.

The capital was now struggling to handle this sudden influx of refugees.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 348 Chu Ziyang defeated?[1,437 words]

Chapter 348 Chu Ziyang defeated?

Bai Zihan went to Heaven Sword Sect, and it caused a commotion like always.

But mixed amidst the admiration and envy, there were also some who seemed to be observing him.

Well, Bai Zihan wasn't too surprised; it wasn't anything new. Though, it did seem like the number of people observing him was certainly higher than usual.

(Something must have happened!)

Bai Zihan called for Kong Zhanghong through the Transmission Talisman, and Kong Zhanghong immediately appeared before Bai Zihan.

As always, Kong Zhanghong came prepared with all the information that was needed.

Bai Zihan read the information.

"Hmmm... Looks like the Anti-Sect Leader Faction is making a lot of moves."

Kong Zhanghong nodded gravely, his expression reflecting the weight of the situation.

The Anti-Sect Leader Faction had been growing bolder with each passing week. Their actions were no longer confined to quiet whispers or subtle alliances- they were openly consolidating influence among the outer sect elders and, more importantly, among the affiliated clans.

In recent months, they had succeeded in roping in the support of several influential clans under the guise of "restoring the sect's dignity."

Their propaganda painted Sect Leader Tian Yuheng as a coward who lacked decisiveness and vision-unworthy of leading the prestigious Heaven Sword Sect.

The incident with Shen Liang had become one of their favorite weapons. They claimed Tian Yuheng's failure to protect Shen Liang, one of the sect's most promising geniuses and Shen Clan's future, proved his incompetence. The fact that Shen Liang had ended up crippled after scheming against Bai Zihan was being spun into failure by the Sect Leader-an example of the Sect Leader's negligence and favoritism toward the Bai Clan.

Everyone knew the truth.

They had seen the evidence that Shen Liang was the one who used unscrupulous means to make it seem like Bai Zihan was doing something bad.

But facts rarely mattered when politics were involved.

Bai Zihan's reputation for causing chaos wherever he went only made it easier for the faction to twist the story.

The Anti-Sect Leader Faction exploited this image masterfully.

They spread rumors that it could easily have been their disciples-their children-who might fall prey to Bai Zihan's ruthless nature next.

This was especially effective since Heaven Sword Sect nurtured a lot of disciples with big backgrounds, with many hoping for the sect to protect them.

However, if even a person like Shen Liang wasn't protected, then how could they guarantee theirs?

The propaganda went even further.

They began insinuating that Sect Leader Tian Yuheng was nothing more than a puppet of the Bai Clan, controlled from the shadows by Bai Tianheng himself. After all, it was no secret that Bai Tianheng and Tian Yuheng were pretty good friends.

While Bai Clan had never interfered with Heaven Sword Sect, the Anti-Sect Leader Faction obviously didn't care about the truth and spun it to their liking. As Bai Zihan was reading through the information, a faint, amused smile curved his lips.

"How cute," he muttered softly.

The tactics were simple but effective.

With the Bai Clan being the strongest clan, as much as there were allies, there were also enemies.

The Anti-Sect Leader Faction was making use of that fact to get as many allies as they could by roping in those who have a bad relationship with the Bai Clan. And it was highly successful considering that Shen Clan was working with the Anti-Sect Leader Faction once again.

(They should have approached Li and Zhao Clan as well. Don't know whether they agreed to help the Anti-Sect Leader Faction.)

Bai Zihan thought.

Everyone knew about the enmity between Bai Clan and Li-Zhao Clan. There was no way that someone like the Anti-Sect Leader could miss this chance. Even though Li-Zhao Clan influence in Heaven Sword Sect is basically Zero, it could change if Li-Zhao Clan were to invest in them.

But there was no such information in the scroll given by Kong Zhanghong. Probably because the spy planted by Kong Zhanghong in the Anti-Sect Leader Faction was of lower position, or this was done in utmost secrecy.

Well, if those two got involved as well, then the allies of the Anti-Sect Leader Faction should far surpass that of the Sect Leader's faction.

And it seemed like disciples weren't spared either, since in the sect, those who sided with the Anti-Sect Leader Faction were given more attention and resources-clear favoritism.

Those disciples clearly showed vast improvement, which made other disciples also align with the Anti-Sect Leader Faction.

Inside and outside, both were advantageous to the Anti-Sect Leader Faction at the moment.

"What about Elder Han?"

Bai Zihan asked, seeing no information about the Anti-Sect Leader's leader.

"He has been in seclusion, and it looks like the task is being carried out by his followers," Kong Zhanghong answered.

"Mmmm..."

Bai Zihan didn't think Elder Han would be cultivating when his faction was making such huge moves.

Him being in seclusion was probably a bluff in order for him to do things in secret.

Like forming a secret alliance with the Li-Zhao Clan.

There was no way to be certain right now but it was something that he had to keep in his mind.

As Bai Zihan flipped through the remaining reports, his gaze suddenly hardened.

His tone dropped.

"What is this about Chu Ziyang being defeated by... Lu Xiangyuan?"

Kong Zhanghong visibly gulped.

Even without looking up, he could feel Bai Zihan's displeasure.

It was understandable since his fiancée-Chu Ziyang-had been defeated by someone.

"That... it's true," Kong Zhanghong said carefully.

"Lu Xiangyuan returned from five years of seclusion just last month. During that time, he advanced to the peak of the Spirit Severing Realm. His strength now surpasses many elders. He's also one of the most talented disciples who openly supports the Anti-Sect Leader Faction."

He hesitated before continuing.

"His father, Lu Teng, holds a senior elder position in the sect. It's likely that Lu Xiangyuan's challenge against Miss Chu wasn't random. The Chu Clan's alliance with the Bai Clan made her a political target."

Bai Zihan's expression didn't change, but the temperature in the room seemed to drop.

Kong Zhanghong pressed on.

"Defeating her publicly increases the Anti-Sect Leader Faction's influence within the sect especially among the disciples."

He swallowed.

"And... It appears Luo Xiangyuan's next target is Bai Xinyue."

Silence fell.

Heaven Sword Sect had long been influenced by Bai Xinyue's presence-her talent, her achievements, her overwhelming prestige.

If she fell too... then Lu Xiangyuan, and by extension, the Anti-Sect Leader Faction, would control nearly all influence among the sect's disciples.

"It seems," Bai Zihan said at last, his tone almost lazy but his eyes cold as winter steel, "they want him to secure dominance over the disciples before he ascends

to Elder rank."

Kong Zhanghong nodded uneasily.

Lu Xiangyuan being the Peak Spirit Severing Realm, likely to defeat Bai Xinyue as well.

After all, while Bai Xinyue might be able to defeat an average Cultvator above her Realm, it was a different case if it was also a genius like Lu Xiangyuan.

He not only has experience and more time to master Techniques, his biggest advantage was his higher Cultivation Realm.

Although obviously, Bai Xinyue or Chu Ziyan or for that matter, their master doesn't get involved in Sect Politics.

But anyone with eyes can see that their master, Elder Qinglan, though neutral,

is inclined to the Sect Leader who is her Senior Brother. When the time comes, obviously she could very well help the Sect leader.

And it was very important since she is a very influential person. Not to mention, her two students, Bai Xinyue and Chu Ziyan are role models for many disciples of Heaven Sword Sect, especially girls.

After the Dragon and Phoenix Competition, their influence only got bigger in the Heaven Sword Sect.

So, by having a fellow disciple, even though way older than them, the Anti-Sect Leader Faction seemed to want to curb their influence.

As Bai Zihan kept reading, the report mentioned several similar cases that had

occurred in the weeks before the duel between Chu Ziyan and Lu Xiangyuan. It looked like the Anti-Sect Leader Faction had been deliberately using its disciples to challenge and defeat those associated with the Sect Leader's side, especially the influential disciples.

Their intention was clear-prove their dominance within the younger generation, both in strength and influence.

Each victory they secured tightened their grip on the sect's internal atmosphere, slowly turning the balance of power in their favor.

And now, with Chu Ziyan's defeat, their next and biggest target was obvious-

Bai Xinyue.

Her defeat would not only shatter the image of Heaven Sword Sect's most admired disciple..

It was a calculated move.

They weren't just aiming to suppress his sister.

They were sending a message-to him, to Bai Clan, and to anyone who stood on the Sect Leader's side.

A quiet chuckle escaped his lips, cold and sharp.

"So that's their play... interesting."

His gaze darkened, a glint of killing intent flickering in his eyes.

"They want to use my sister as a stepping stone to rise?"

He placed the report down slowly, the smile fading. "Well, let's go and see what he got!"

Chapter 349 The Challenge That Shook the Heaven Sword Sect

Chapter 349 The Challenge That Shook the Heaven Sword Sect

A large crowd had gathered, filled to the brim with disciples-outer, inner, and even core disciples had come to see the commotion.

The disciple, who had just come to check what was happening, was understandably confused.

They asked nearby fellow disciples why everyone had gathered there.

Those who knew eagerly shared what they'd heard, and the listeners' expressions shifted from curiosity to disbelief.

They soon learned the cause behind the uproar.

It was none other than Bai Zihan.

Yes, that Bai Zihan-the name that carried an aura of awe, fear, and chaos wherever it appeared.

While Bai Zihan had seemed calmer recently, who could forget the incident where he toyed with Shen Liang and crippled him?

And then, of course, there was the matter of the Mei Clan-almost entirely destroyed by trying to defame Bai Zihan.

Everyone knew by now that one had to tread carefully around Bai Zihan.

And now, that same Bai Zihan had come here to challenge Senior Lu Xiangyuan. The reason?

Because Lu Xiangyuan-nearly twice Bai Zihan's age-had dared to fight Chu Ziyan, his fiancée.

Of course, Bai Zihan didn't stop there.

He had added plenty of insults to make the challenge sting even more.

He'd asked rhetorically, "If an old man beats up a child, could he even be proud of winning? Or is Lu Xiangyuan scared of facing someone of his own damn age?"

Using that analogy, Bai Zihan mocked Lu Xiangyuan for being shameless enough to fight Chu Ziyan who is basically a child compared to Lu Xiangyuan. He also invoked his position as Chu Ziyan's fiancé, declaring that since Lu Xiangyuan had dared to bully his wife, he would take revenge on her behalf.

That gave Bai Zihan both a solid justification for the challenge and a surprisingly favorable image among others-especially the female disciples, who couldn't help but fantasize about a man standing up for his beloved and delivering justice.

As for whether Lu Xiangyuan would respond to the challenge-that was yet to be seen.

Standing tall in front of the dueling platform, Bai Zihan's voice carried across the open courtyard, clear and confident.

"Since he likes to bully younger people then let's see whether he can do the same to me. I'll give Lu Xiangyuan one hour to appear and respond to my challenge."

He declared, his tone calm yet sharp enough to cut through the crowd's chatter.

"If he doesn't come, then he's nothing more than a cowardly chicken."

With that, Bai Zihan left the place.

He knew that Lu Xiangyuan and for that matter the Anti-Sect Leader Faction had no choice but to accept this challenge.

Otherwise, all their effort would be for naught, not to mention, it is also an opportunity for them as long as they win.

Within moments, the news began to spread throughout the sect like wildfire.

Transmission talismans lit up in the hands of disciples. Messages were sent from peak to peak.

"Bai Zihan has challenged Senior Lu Xiangyuan! He's waiting at the main dueling platform right now!"

"He said if Senior Lu doesn't show up in an hour, he'll call him a cowardly chicken!"

"Looks like Bai Zihan really cares for his fiancée. He is even willing to fight Senior Lu Xiangyuan!"

Disciples who had been in secluded cultivation came out of their caves, curiosity overpowering restraint.

Training sessions were paused, lectures interrupted-even elders began to

show up to witness what might be the most intense duel in years.

One was one of the oldest and strongest disciples in the sect, while the other- though among the youngest-was also counted among the strongest.

Their battle would be anything but ordinary.

Soon enough, the news also reached the secluded courtyard of Elder Qinglan's disciples.

Bai Xinyue, who had just returned from sword practice, was informed by a fellow disciple.

As she finished listening, her eyes widened slightly, a spark of surprise flashing across her calm, elegant face.

She turned swiftly, her long hair swaying behind her like a silken river.

"Ziyan'er!"

Bai Xinyue called out, stepping toward the adjoining courtyard where her best friend was meditating beneath the flowering spirit willow.

Chu Ziyan opened her eyes as her best friend approached-her gaze calm, though a faint weariness lingered within it.

Her body had yet to fully recover from her fight with Lu Xiangyuan, but her spirit, though shaken, remained unbroken.

"Hmm?"

She asked softly.

"Did you hear?"

Bai Xinyue's lips curved slightly, her voice carrying a hint of excitement she didn't bother to hide.

"Bai Zihan has challenged Lu Xiangyuan."

"...He what?"

Chu Ziyang blinked.

"He went straight to the dueling platform and announced it before everyone,"

Bai Xinyue said.

"He declared that since Lu Xiangyuan-who's nearly twice his age-had the audacity to fight you, he would personally teach him a lesson."

Bai Xinyue conveniently left out the part where Bai Zihan had called him a coward if he didn't show up.

Chu Ziyang felt a flicker of warmth upon hearing it, but she knew Bai Zihan's motives were never so simple.

She was well aware she wasn't important enough in his heart for him to throw everything away for revenge.

Rather, she suspected it had to do with the Anti-Sect Leader Faction, and perhaps even Bai Xinyue herself.

Everyone with a bit of sense could see that Lu Xiangyuan's next target would be Bai Xinyue-and Bai Xinyue had indeed been training hard for that inevitable clash.

So Chu Ziyang wondered if Bai Zihan's challenge was actually meant to thwart Lu Xiangyuan's plans before he could act.

Bai Xinyue's lips curled into a teasing smile as she watched a faint color rise on Chu Ziyang's otherwise serene face.

"Well, well... it seems the entire Heaven Sword Sect is talking about you two,"

She said lightly, though there was something subtle beneath her playfulness- something hard to define.

"Apparently, Bai Zihan is willing to challenge one of the sect's strongest seniors

just to avenge his fiancée's honor. How romantic!"

Chu Ziyang exhaled softly.

"You make it sound like he's doing it out of love."

"Isn't he?"

Bai Xinyue tilted her head slightly, eyes narrowing in amusement.

"That's what everyone thinks, at least. They're calling it a romance gesture-

how Bai Zihan couldn't stand anyone laying a hand on his beloved. Even the

senior sisters from Mystic Moon Peak are swooning"

Chu Ziyang sighed.

"They're overthinking it. You know he doesn't do anything without a good

reason."

Bai Xinyue chuckled quietly, though something twisted faintly in her chest. She couldn't deny the flicker of jealousy that rose when she heard the news.

Bai Zihan-cold, ruthless, and so often detached-had never once shown affection toward her, his sister.

Perhaps Bai Zihan wasn't acting out of love...

But for him to make such a public move meant that Chu Ziyang had indeed

played a larger role in his heart-and his plans.

After all, most of the time, he would rather play from behind than make such a

big move himself unless that was the only option.

If Bai Zihan was only targeting the Anti-Sect Leader Faction, there were various

other effective ways to get back at them.

But if that wasn't the only goal and perhaps warn others from targeting Chu

Ziyang, Bai Zihan was challenging Lu Xiangyuan.

At least, that is what it felt like to Bai Xinyue.

"Yeah, he doesn't act out without a good reason."

Inside the Heaven Sword Sect's Cloud Summit Pavilion, the air was thick with spiritual Qi and tension.

This was the meeting place of the Anti-Sect Leader Faction, and right now, the atmosphere was far from calm.

A group of elders and core disciples sat around a circular jade table, their expressions ranging from cold calculation to faint irritation.

The entire upper floor buzzed faintly with soundproofing arrays-no one outside would hear a word of what was said within.

At the head of the table sat Elder Wu Heng, a sharp-eyed man with streaks of white in his hair but a body that radiated vitality.

He was one of the most vocal opponents of Sect Leader Tian Yuheng. Since their Leader, Elder Han was not here, he took the charge.

His fingers tapped rhythmically on the armrest. "So... Bai Zihan has actually challenged Lu Xiangyuan?"

"Yes," replied a thin, scholarly cultivator with a faint sneer. "Before everyone, no less. He even gave him an hour's time limit. Hmph, arrogant as ever."

Elder Wu Heng's lips twitched upward.

"Arrogant, yes... but that arrogance can serve us well,"

He leaned back in his chair, eyes narrowing as faint amusement glimmered in them. "If Lu Xiangyuan wins, it'll humiliate the Bai Clan's precious genius. Although Bai Xinyue is a very good target, Bai Zihan being the heir is no less. Moreover, the Shen Clan would be very happy when they get the news."

A murmur of agreement rippled through the table. Another elder, a woman with long silver hair named Elder Qiu Lanyin, frowned

lightly. "But Elder Wu, Bai Zihan is not to be underestimated. If Lu Xiangyuan loses, it may instead strengthen the Bai Clan's influence." Wu Heng chuckled, low and dark.

"Although Bai Zihan is powerful, can he defeat Lu Xiangyuan? I also have a method to make sure that Lu Xiangyan victory is 100 percent certain." This silences any opposition. After all, Lu Xiangyuan was the strongest disciple

of Heaven Sword Sect and with Wu heng reassurance there was no need to worry.

He turned his gaze to one of the attendants standing silently by the corner.

"Go inform Lu Xiangyuan that the entire sect is watching him now. Tell him this is our chance to completely destroy any other influences and have every disciple support our Faction."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 350 The Absent Challenger?[1,531 words]

Chapter 350 The Absent Challenger?

Lu Xiangyuan versus Bai Zihan!

This wasn't just a duel between two disciples-it was almost an event. The entire Heaven Sword Sect had erupted into a frenzy.

Betting stalls appeared within minutes; disciples took out their savings, wagering on who would emerge victorious.

The odds heavily favored Lu Xiangyuan-after all, he was one of the sect's oldest and strongest disciples, standing at the very peak of the Spirit Severing Realm.

Bai Zihan, though brilliant and infamous, was still young, and for most of their lives, they had never even seen him fight.

All that most knew about Bai Zihan and his prowess came from rumors- rumors that certainly seemed exaggerated.

On the other hand, most of them had already seen Lu Xiangyuan's power and how he won against Chu Ziyang.

High above the dueling platform, the spectator pavilions shimmered with layered protective formations.

There, seated in neat rows, were the sect's Elders, Hall Masters, and Peak Masters-all had come to witness what was fast becoming one of the most anticipated duels in years.

Among them sat Elder Wu Heng and several other prominent figures of the Anti-Sect Leader Faction.

Their expressions brimmed with confidence and satisfaction; some even wore faint smiles, already envisioning Lu Xiangyuan's victory and the humiliation of the Bai Clan's heir.

Beside them, members of the Sect Leader's Faction were far less at ease.

They spoke in low tones, eyes shadowed with worry.

Though Bai Zihan was not one of them-never officially affiliated with any side -his defeat would hand the Anti-Sect Leader Faction a massive advantage.

It would cause their influence within the sect to skyrocket, make their claims of the Sect Leader's weakness seem justified, and render their dominance nearly certain.

Some even whispered bitterly,

"If Bai Zihan loses, we'll suffer for it. It's his fault for drawing so much attention."

"Why did he have to challenge Lu Xiangyuan at such a difficult time? He doesn't know how much we'll suffer if he loses!"

Many held similar thoughts, even though it wasn't Bai Zihan's fault that their faction had grown weaker than the Anti-Sect Leader Faction.

And then there was Peak Master Qinglan.

Her gaze was calm-neither anxious nor hopeful-but beneath that composed exterior lay a quiet expectation.

Bai Zihan was her disciple, at least in name.

Moreover, she had witnessed his brilliance when he fought Bai Xinyue-whose talent had been good enough for acceptance into the Flowing Moon Sect-and won.

So, she didn't think it was impossible for Bai Zihan to win, though she didn't think it would be easy either.

Around her, Elders and Peak Masters conversed quietly, their eyes fixed on the stage below.

Whoosh!

A faint tremor rippled through the air above the Main Dueling Platform as a streak of light shot across the sky-sharp, fast, and unyielding.

Whoosh!

It came to a stop above the platform, and from within that sword light stepped Lu Xiangyuan.

Clad in dark blue robes embroidered with silver sword motifs, his presence radiated calm, honed sharpness-the aura of someone who had stood at the peak of the Heaven Sword Sect's younger generation for years.

Behind him followed several disciples, all from his faction-loyal followers who admired both his strength and his firm stance against the current Sect Leader.

The instant he appeared, murmurs swept through the crowd like a wave. "Senior Lu Xiangyuan!"

"He's finally here!"

"As expected of him-look at that aura!"

"Bai Zihan must be quivering in fear."

Lu Xiangyuan landed lightly, the ground beneath his feet humming faintly from the residual qi of his descent.

His expression, however, was far from pleased.

His brows furrowed slightly as he gazed around the sea of faces before him- disciples whispering, elders watching from afar, and several female cultivators practically glowing with admiration.

"Tch!"

He exhaled sharply, eyes narrowing.

"If not for Elder Wu Heng," he muttered under his breath, "I wouldn't have bothered with such nonsense."

One of the disciples beside him, a young man with a flattering smile, quickly spoke up.

"Senior Lu, you're right. That Bai Zihan may be talented, but compared to you, he's still a child who doesn't know his place."

"Exactly! He's been making waves only because the Bai Clan backs him. But after today, when you defeat him, everyone will know who the true strongest disciple of the Heaven Sword Sect is!"

Lu Xiangyuan's eyes flickered faintly, though the disdain in them didn't fade.

He remembered hearing about Bai Zihan before entering seclusion-a troublesome child with endless scandals attached to his name.

Someone who relied on wit, arrogance, and family prestige more than true strength.

Yes, he had heard about Bai Zihan's rapid rise to the Soul Formation Realm, the incident with the Mei Clan, and even how he defeated Bai Xinyue, a Spirit

Severing cultivator.

But to Lu Xiangyuan, those things didn't erase the image of who Bai Zihan was- and he still looked down on him.

"Hmph!"

He gave a faint scoff.

"I was preparing to fight Bai Xinyue, the current Dragon and Phoenix Champion. Tsk! Who would have thought that Bai Zihan would be so eager to get beaten instead?"

The disciples surrounding Lu Xiangyuan nodded eagerly, their voices laced with flattery and confidence.

"Indeed, Senior Lu," one of them said, tone full of admiration.

"This might seem beneath you, but defeating Bai Zihan publicly will send a strong message. Our Faction will gain even more influence. Once Bai Zihan falls, who else would dare to oppose you?"

Another added with a smirk, "And there'll be no need to fight Bai Xueqing either. Defeating Bai Zihan is as good as defeating Bai Xueqing."

Lu Xiangyuan's lips curved faintly at that, though his expression still carried a trace of irritation.

He flicked his sleeve, brushing aside a loose strand of hair from his head, his voice calm but edged with disdain.

"You're right. It's not that this is difficult for me-just tedious."

His gaze drifted toward the dueling platform, where the crowd was thickest and the atmosphere electric with anticipation.

"But for the greater good, I'll do it."

The disciples laughed in agreement, their tones full of reverence.

"As expected of Senior Lu! No one is as selfless as you." "After today, no one will dare compare anyone to you ever again."

Lu Xiangyuan said nothing more, but his eyes sharpened slightly, a glint of pride flashing through them.

He had trained for years in seclusion, refining his sword skill and pushing his cultivation to the peak of Spirit Severing.

He had every reason to believe that a mere Bai Zihan-no matter how talented or cunning-would crumble in a single exchange.

As he stepped toward the dueling platform, his robes fluttered lightly in the wind.

The crowd instinctively drew back, parting for him. His every movement carried authority-the aura of someone long accustomed to standing above others.

Whispers rippled once again-

"Senior Lu's here. The fight's about to begin."

"Will Bai Zihan actually show up?"

"He challenged him, didn't he? If he doesn't come, he'll lose all face."

Lu Xiangyuan smirked faintly at those words.

Lu Xiangyuan stepped into the Main Dueling Arena with grace and composure.

The murmuring crowd grew louder, forming a tide of speculation and divided expectation.

"Senior Lu will win, obviously. He's already at the peak of the Spirit Severing Realm!"

"Of course! Bai Zihan might be talented, but he's far too young to match Senior Lu."

"True... but Bai Zihan isn't the type to act without certainty. If he challenged Lu Xiangyuan so openly, he must have something up his sleeve."

That comment earned a few skeptical looks, yet others nodded faintly.

After all, Bai Zihan's reputation wasn't built on empty bravado-every time he acted, chaos followed, but so did results.

Even if Lu Xiangyuan held the advantage, had there ever been a case of Bai Zihan losing?

No! So how could this time be any different?

Just because he lost his mind to avenge his fiancée?

Not everyone believed that excuse-especially those who had seen what Bai

Zihan was truly capable of.

Lu Xiangyuan's gaze was fixed straight ahead, calm and confident, as he

stepped into the center of the platform.

The entire dueling ground fell under his shadowed presence, spiritual qi swirling faintly around him like an invisible storm.

He raised his voice-calm, steady, and echoing across the courtyard.

"Bai Zihan! Come out and face me!"

The crowd collectively held its breath.

A few seconds passed. No movement.

No sound.

Only the faint rustle of robes and the whisper of wind.

Lu Xiangyuan's eyes narrowed slightly.

He waited a few moments longer, then called out again-this time, his tone edged with faint irritation.

"Bai Zihan! Are you afraid now that I've arrived?!"

Still, there was no response.

A ripple of uneasy laughter spread through the spectators.

"Where is he?"

"Did he run away?"

"What's going on? Bai Zihan challenged Lu Xiangyuan, but he ran away?"

Even the Elders watching from a distance began exchanging puzzled glances.

Lu Xiangyuan's jaw tightened.

To stand here before thousands of eyes, only for the challenger not to appear-it felt like mockery.

His patience, already thin, began to fray.

He exhaled sharply through his nose, his expression darkening.

"Hmph! So this is Bai Zihan? He dares to provoke and challenge me, but when the time comes to fight, he hides?"

A faint ripple of amusement spread among the Anti-Sect Leader disciples nearby, their voices dripping with mockery.

"Looks like Bai Zihan's courage only works from his mouth. All bark and no

action."

"Hahaha! Perhaps he realized he can't win after all. Well, I would also run away if my opponent was Senior Lu Xiangyuan!"

Lu Xiangyuan's aura flared subtly, his Qi rising slowly.

"If he doesn't show himself within ten breaths," he said coldly, his voice ringing

out across the platform,

"then I'll consider his silence an admission of defeat!"