

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 71: Dao Resonance Mirror[1,533 words]

Chapter 71: Dao Resonance Mirror

Bai Zihan had been watching it all.

As he thought, this event was just for Lin Xuan to show off his new profound strength.

Though he also got to see Lin Xuan's strength, which was honestly shocking.

No wonder he was Heaven Chosen!

If he got enough resources—especially Martial Techniques—there was no limit to his growth with his cheat-like learning ability.

Although Bai Zihan knew that he was stronger than Lin Xuan now, he wasn't sure for how long.

The rate at which Lin Xuan had been growing was truly shocking to Bai Zihan, and all he did was give him a somewhat good cultivation technique and some pills.

Compared to him, Bai Zihan had better Cultivation Techniques, better pills, and even a System—but still, his progress felt slower than Lin Xuan's.

"If a Three Star Fate grade Heaven Chosen is this strong, then what about Bai Xinyue?"

Does her growth rate exceed that of Lin Xuan?

If that was the case, wouldn't that mean no matter what he did, he couldn't escape his doomed fate?

Well, even if she did have that ability, Bai Zihan knew that she nearly didn't have enough resources to showcase all of it.

Lin Xuan was the same. If not for him, he wouldn't have progressed so much.

These protagonists had all the broken abilities—the only thing blocking their progress was resources.

Bai Zihan, on the other hand, with his villain status, had all the resources he needed, but his ability just wasn't good enough to progress as much as those protagonists.

"I need to think of a way to get those System Points! Otherwise, surpassing Bai Xinyue will only remain a dream!"

Bai Zihan thought he needed to tread cautiously, being new to the Heaven Sword Sect—but fate clearly had other plans.

If he stayed passive and played it safe, he feared he'd never escape his doomed fate.

So even if it meant taking a risk, Bai Zihan felt it in his bones—he had to act.

Meanwhile, Lin Xuan went back to the waiting area, calm as ever.

The other disciples gave him space, staring at him. But this time, instead of condescending looks, it was admiration.

Some even looked away—ashamed, or perhaps afraid after making those mean comments earlier.

One of them, a stocky genius who had jeered at him earlier, forced an awkward smile.

"H-Hey, uh... Brother Lin, right? That sword technique was... amazing! You sure showed that snake who's boss!"

He had also passed the second test—but not in a way like Lin Xuan.

There was a high chance that Lin Xuan could pass the third test, looking at his performance, and more than that, he'd likely be regarded highly by the elders.

So, he wanted to befriend him before all that happened.

Even if he wasn't regarded that highly by the Sect's elders, Lin Xuan still had Bai Zihan as his backing.

Lin Xuan glanced at him and said nothing.

He just kept walking.

Because he didn't need their fake praise.

The stocky genius looked awkward at being ignored, but he didn't get angry or anything.

After all, he understood his place and didn't want to get on Lin Xuan's bad side, who could possibly have the support of Bai Zihan.

Lin Xuan, just like in the first test, went to meditate and wait for the start of the third and final test.

This time, Lin Xuan attracted even more attention than in the first test.

Of course, no one dared to disturb him while he was meditating.

Meanwhile, the second test continued, with many attempting it—only to fail miserably.

The blazing noon sun bathed the arena in golden light as the second trial finally concluded.

Out of the thousands who entered, only a small fraction remained, perhaps around one hundred or two hundred.

The successful candidates now stood quietly before the Dao Resonance Mirror, a towering ancient monolith embedded with swirling runes and a mysterious, translucent glow.

Unlike the earlier stages which tested strength or endurance, this trial judged the most critical things for cultivators:

Fate! Talent! Potential!

The Mirror would assess it all and shine a single light—color-coded to represent the outcome.

White - No resonance. Complete failure. Trash tier.

Gray - Weak resonance. Not even worth training.

Blue - Low resonance. Barely acceptable and Minimum to get into the Heaven Sword Sect.

Green - Mid-tier resonance. Guarantee to get into the Heaven Sword Sect.

Yellow - High-tier resonance. Considered promising.

Red - Peak-tier resonance. True genius.

Gold - Heaven-grade resonance. Highest talent, guaranteed to reach the peak of cultivation.

Only those who reached Green or above were allowed to pass.

But Yellow and up? They were the kind of talents even Peak Master would scramble to take in.

The trial began.

One by one, the hundred or so qualified candidates stepped up to the Mirror.

A girl from the Bao Clan stepped forward. The Mirror flickered, then glowed blue.

"Mid-tier Dao Resonance!"

She let out a breath of relief and stepped down quickly, clearly knowing she barely scraped through.

Another followed. A boy with fiery eyes and twin sabers. The mirror shone green.

"High-tier. Good!"

The elder said.

"Someone mark him down."

Excitement built as a few more green and blue lights emerged, especially the elders.

Although the first two tests had disappointed them, the final test was promising, with many passing.

But then came the first gray.

There was no consideration for anyone with gray color and it was a direct failure for them.

"Wait, what?!"

The disciple panicked.

"I—I passed the other two trials!"

He was clearly not convinced. He had fought tooth and nail in the two earlier tests, but now he was denied just because some stupid artifact said he wasn't worth it?

How could someone who risked his life be convinced by that?

But of course, there was no way for him to enter the Heaven Sword Sect after the Dao Resonance Mirror had shown its result.

"You lack Dao Resonance," the elder said flatly.

"Your path in cultivation is too dim."

"No! Let me try again!"

"There are no retries," came the cold response.

"Do you think this Mirror runs on air? Every use costs thousands of spirit stones."

And so, the failures were dragged out one by one—begging, shouting, even crying.

But the elders didn't flinch.

They didn't have to.

You were either blessed by fate—or you weren't.

Moreover, there were no retries, even if one were to beg.

The Dao Resonance Mirror, after all, drained tens of thousands of mid-grade spirit stones just to operate.

This was the reason it came last, only after filtering out the weaker candidates.

If they could afford it, they would've done just this trial and called it a day.

No one was going to burn another fortune just so a few failures could try again.

Soon, the mirror's light began to dim slightly from overuse.

Only a handful of disciples remained.

And among them, the one drawing the most attention hadn't even moved.

Lin Xuan!

He stood silently at the very back, arms crossed, expression calm, waiting for his turn.

Ninety-eight. Ninety-nine, and so on.

A flash of light—green.

"Passed!"

Then all heads turned to the last one.

"Next," the elder said.

It was finally the last candidate—and that last person was Lin Xuan.

"It's finally Lin Xuan's turn! What color will he get?"

"He should be able to get at least yellow, looking at his talent. Red is also possible."

"Gold should be impossible. I heard that in a century, Heaven Sword Sect only had one person with that... and that person only joined recently. What was she called?"

"Bai Xinyue, right? I think one of the Grand Elders brought her in and she showed that her Dao Resonance was Gold."

"It would be a big blow if Lin Xuan got green or lower—though I hope he does."

...

Many watched, some speculating he would score high as he was the strongest among them, while others hoped he would fail.

Lin Xuan finally moved.

His steps were slow, unhurried, but he didn't hesitate.

He walked up to the Dao Resonance Mirror, stood tall, and placed a single palm on its surface.

The Mirror shuddered.

A moment of silence.

Then—

BOOM!

A blinding light burst out from its surface, shooting into the sky.

Not blue. Not green. Not even red.

It was gold.

Heaven-grade.

The entire platform trembled as golden rays exploded outward, casting everything in a radiant glow.

Even the clouds overhead stirred, the air vibrating with spiritual pressure.

A silence deeper than death blanketed the crowd.

And then—chaos.

"G-G-Gold! GOLD?!"

"No way! That's on par with Bai Xinyue!"

"Wait, wait, wasn't he just a handyman disciple a few months ago?!"

"How lucky! We got two Gold-graded talents in our sect at the same time. This must be heaven's sign of our rise!"

...

The elders on the high platform stood up at once—even the usually expressionless ones.

Only one person in recent decades had reached this level—Bai Xinyue, the genius they had recently recruited just a few months back.

Now Lin Xuan stood on the same level.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 72: Lin Xuan's Ascension[1,125 words]

Chapter 72: Lin Xuan's Ascension

"Inform the Sect Leader!"

One of the elders immediately ordered one of their disciples who immediately took off.

"Who would have thought that one of our handymen would be a Heaven-Blessed genius?"

Another said excitedly.

"Luck is truly on our Heaven Sword Sect's side! Haha... Other sects might as well have trash disciples compared to what we have."

"There's no way Lin Xuan will remain an Outer Disciple. The Peak Masters will definitely come once they hear the news."

"Yeah! Last time, Azure Cloud Peak got Bai Xinyue. This time, Elder Qinglan will surely want to have him."

"But ultimately, it'll depend on Lin Xuan—which peak he wants to join. No matter what, he's now a disciple of the Heaven Sword Sect."

"But... I've heard some unsettling rumors about Lin Xuan."

"What?"

"Apparently, Lin Xuan was recruited as a personal servant by Bai Zihan. Some say he's been mistreated by him."

"Really? If that's true, then Bai Zihan won't be able to avoid responsibility."

Normally, they wouldn't dare offend Bai Zihan—or more accurately, the Bai Clan. And for a mere handyman, they wouldn't have said much.

But now that the same handyman had shown Gold on the Dao Resonance Mirror, things were different.

To recruit someone like that, they'd be willing to offend even the Bai Clan.

After all, even keeping Bai Xinyue had risked offending the Bai Clan, who had exiled her.

Doing the same for another Heaven-Blessed genius wouldn't make much of a difference.

"Well, it might just be a rumor. But if Lin Xuan files a complaint, then we'll have to investigate. We can't let such a gifted disciple slip through our fingers and end up in another sect."

Others also nodded in agreement.

Meanwhile, the golden light slowly faded, but the shockwaves it left behind lingered in the hearts of everyone present.

The silence following Lin Xuan's test was almost reverent. No disciple spoke. None moved.

All eyes were on the young man who still stood with his hand resting on the now-dim Dao Resonance Mirror, as calm as a mountain.

Though a rare smile played on his face.

(I did it!)

Lin Xuan thought, both happy and stunned.

He would've been satisfied just getting Blue and passing. Who would've thought he'd actually get Gold?

The significance wasn't lost on him. He knew exactly what it meant.

On the main platform, the elder overseeing the event stepped forward, stroking his beard.

"Ahem. Lin Xuan... was it?"

He said, trying to keep his tone calm.

Lin Xuan finally moved, turning his gaze to the platform.

"Yes, Elder!"

"You've shown exceptional talent. Heaven-grade Dao Resonance... it seems the Heaven Sword Sect is truly blessed this year."

The elder's eyes gleamed.

"You understand what that means, right?"

Lin Xuan nodded.

Though it still felt unreal, he knew the significance of getting a Gold result on the Dao Resonance Mirror.

With that level of talent, he could instantly become an Inner Disciple of any peak he wanted.

After all, there wasn't a Peak Master alive who didn't want a Heaven-Blessed genius under their wing.

They'd even fight for the chance, offering generous benefits.

"Then you should be prepared," the elder said, confusing Lin Xuan.

(Prepared for what?)

He got the highest grade. What else was there to prepare for?

Before he could ask, the Sect Leader arrived—along with a line of elders, all of them Peak Masters.

The air trembled slightly as a majestic pressure descended upon the arena.

An imposing figure appeared at the edge of the platform, walking calmly but exuding authority with every step.

A dozen more figures followed behind, each one radiating the aura of someone who stood at the peak of the cultivation world.

The Sect Leader, Tian Yuheng, had arrived.

All the people present there instantly dropped to their knees.

"We greet the Sect Leader!"

The elders also bowed deeply.

Tian Yuheng waved his hand, and a soft ripple of spiritual power rolled out, gently lifting everyone to their feet.

"No need for ceremony. I came to see the Heaven-Blessed genius with my own eyes."

He said, his gaze turning to Lin Xuan.

Lin Xuan stiffened slightly under the Sect Leader's gaze.

It wasn't oppressive, but it was sharp—piercing, like a blade that could slice into one's soul and lay bare every secret.

A test!

And Lin Xuan... stood tall.

He met Tian Yuheng's gaze without flinching.

After a long moment, the Sect Leader smiled faintly.

"Good! A strong heart to match a Heaven-grade Dao."

He walked forward slowly, stopping before the now-lifeless Dao Resonance Mirror.

Then he turned to the elders.

"This disciple... is named Lin Xuan, yes?"

He asked, though it was clear he already knew.

"Yes, Sect Leader," the elder who oversaw the trial replied quickly.

"Originally a handyman disciple, but now—"

"He will not remain one," Tian Yuheng interrupted, voice calm but firm.

"From this moment on, he shall be promoted to Inner Disciple."

Just like with Bai Xinyue, although their talent was extraordinary, their cultivation was still lacking.

He would've preferred to promote them straight to Core Disciples, but the advanced teachings were tailored for those at the Nascent Soul Realm and above—their current level might hold them back.

But of course, while their status will remain as Inner Disciple, the resources that they get will be more than what other Inner Disciple would get.

Then he turned to Lin Xuan.

"You've shown the heavens your potential. From today on, the sect will show you its sincerity."

He gestured to the row of Peak Masters behind him.

Instantly, a storm of voices erupted.

"Lin Xuan! I am Elder Shi of Thundercloud Peak! Our peak specializes in lightning techniques and high-quality resources. Join us, and I'll guarantee you a personal courtyard and three Spirit Condensation Pills a month!"

"Don't listen to him! I'm Elder Wan from Verdant Fire Peak! We cultivate fire—join us and I'll give you a personal Flame Dragon Incantation manual and a Profound-Grade flame sword!"

"I am Elder Lianhua—"

"Elder Lianhua, please! You already have Bai Xinyue!"

...

A bidding war erupted, with each Peak Master trying to outdo the others to recruit Lin Xuan.

Even the Peak Master of Azure Cloud Peak, who already had Bai Xinyue, threw their hat into the ring.

After all, there was no rule saying a Peak Master couldn't have two Heaven-Blessed geniuses.

It was already extremely rare to have even one Heaven-Blessed genius, let alone two, so there was no rule saying a single peak couldn't have both.

Of course, the other Peak Masters did everything they could to stop Elder Lianhua from joining the recruitment.

That's when Lin Xuan finally understood what the elder had meant earlier—

"Be prepared!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 73: From Handyman to Hottest Commodity[1,193 words]

Chapter 73: From Handyman to Hottest Commodity

As the bidding war reached a fever pitch, it started to feel less like a sect promotion and more like an auction house.

"Three Spirit Condensation Pills per month!"

"Five! And an Earth-Grade Technique!"

"A Profound-grade sword AND a Grade-3 spiritual beast mount!"

...

Lin Xuan was starting to feel dizzy just from keeping track of the offers. He could practically see the desperation in the Peak Masters' eyes.

Some disciples in the crowd were practically foaming at the mouth.

"Shit, why wasn't I born with Heaven-grade Dao Resonance?!"

"This bastard was cleaning toilets yesterday!"

"Bro, we bullied him last month—do you think he remembers?"

...

Many of the Outer Disciples who had just come to watch the Assessment Test for fun found themselves stunned by what was happening.

For one, Lin Xuan—whom they had looked down upon, and some had even bullied out of jealousy for his looks—had risen beyond what they could imagine.

And those same Peak Masters they tried so hard to please in hopes of becoming Inner Disciples were now fighting over the handyman they used to mock.

Just as Lin Xuan was getting overwhelmed by the flood of offers from the various Peak Masters—each more extravagant than the last—a slow, deliberate clap echoed across the arena.

Clap! Clap! Clap!

The sound wasn't loud, but it carried.

The ruckus quieted slightly as a new figure stepped forward from the back of the group of elders.

He wore deep black robes with faint crimson embroidery—simple in design, but the authority it radiated made the air feel colder.

Elder Sheng.

Head of the Punishment Hall.

And one of the key figures of the anti-Sect Leader faction.

His eyes were half-lidded, his expression calm, but a faint smirk tugged at the corners of his lips as he slowly descended onto the platform.

"Impressive," Elder Sheng said, voice low but cutting like a knife through silk.

"Heaven-grade Dao Resonance. Truly, the sect has been blessed."

His gaze turned toward Tian Yuheng, the Sect Leader, just for a second.

Then back to Lin Xuan.

"Lin Xuan, I am Elder Sheng, head of the Punishment Hall," he said, bowing ever so slightly.

"I don't offer resources. I offer security... and power."

The other elders immediately frowned. His tone was off. A bit too... suggestive.

But Elder Sheng kept going.

"In the Punishment Hall, you will have freedom unlike any peak. No petty squabbles. No need to curry favor with fellow disciples or worry about sect politics."

He said that, obviously lying through his teeth.

Sure, the Punishment Hall was supposed to stay neutral and not get involved in sect politics—but Elder Sheng?

He was clearly siding with the anti-Sect Leader faction and neck-deep in political games.

Then he took a small step closer and added in a quieter voice only Lin Xuan could hear.

"I heard that Bai Zihan has wronged you! I can help you deal with him and even get your revenge. I oversee disciplinary matters in this sect. I have the authority to investigate, to punish. And you... would have my backing."

The offer hung heavy in the air, laced with implication.

Lin Xuan's eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

The idea of taking revenge against Bai Zihan?

Tempting!

It would've been—if the rumors were true.

But it was the exact opposite of what Elder Sheng thought.

Elder Sheng didn't know that the rumors saying Lin Xuan was mistreated by Bai Zihan were made up by his own nephew, Shen Liang in hopes of dragging Bai Zihan's reputation through the mud.

But Elder Sheng believed them to be true—and used them to try and lure Lin Xuan, thinking he wanted revenge.

"I appreciate Elder Sheng's offer,"

Lin Xuan said, trying to sound polite, though those with keen eyes could tell he was truly displeased.

"But it seems there's a misunderstanding."

The arena fell silent again.

They didn't know what Elder Sheng had said, but Lin Xuan's tone made it clear—he wasn't interested and even somewhat angry.

"I don't need those things, and I won't be joining the Punishment Hall."

Elder Sheng's expression didn't change much, but the subtle twitch at the corner of his mouth said enough—he wasn't giving up that easily.

Just as he opened his mouth to speak again, a stern voice cut in.

"That's enough, Elder Sheng. We've already given you more than enough face by letting you speak this much."

An elder with a long gray beard and sharp eyes stepped forward. It was Elder Wu from Ironheart Peak.

"You made your offer. Lin Xuan rejected it. You're not the only one here, so don't act like you are. Step back—it's our turn now."

Several elders nodded in agreement, clearly annoyed.

Some of them hadn't even gotten a chance to open their mouths before Elder Sheng tried pulling his usual shady strings.

Elder Sheng narrowed his eyes, clearly displeased, but didn't say anything.

He shot Lin Xuan one last look—hard to tell if it was pissed off or scheming—then turned on his heel and strode off, his robes trailing behind him.

The tension was thick, but before the other Peak Masters could start throwing their hats in the ring again, Lin Xuan took a breath and stepped forward.

"There's no need," he said calmly, voice steady but loud enough to be heard by all. "I already have a Peak in mind."

A heavy silence dropped over the arena again.

Even the Sect Leader looked intrigued. He raised an eyebrow, then nodded slightly.

"Very well. Since Lin Xuan has already decided, there's no need to waste time with more offers."

That caused a wave of discontent to ripple through the crowd of elders.

"What?! I haven't even spoken yet!"

"Just one chance! Let him hear what we have to—"

"Damn it, who got to him first?"

Even Elder Qinglan, who had remained silent the whole time, frowned slightly.

Her arms were crossed, her expression unreadable, but there was a faint trace of disappointment in her eyes.

Losing Bai Xinyue to Azure Cloud Peak was already bad enough—now she had to watch another Heaven-Blessed talent slip through her fingers?

But then—

"I want to join Mystic Moon Peak."

The words rang out loud and clear.

Elder Qinglan blinked.

"...Huh?"

She stared for half a second before realization hit her like a lightning bolt.

A rare burst of emotion broke across her usually cool face. She took a step forward, visibly excited.

"You've made the right choice!"

Her eyes gleamed with something fierce and proud.

"Mystic Moon Peak will welcome you with open arms, Lin Xuan. You've made the best choice you possibly could!"

The other elders could only grind their teeth in frustration.

Tch! Although Mystic Moon Peak didn't have a Heaven-grade genius, it was still full of talent.

They'd been relieved when Bai Xinyue didn't choose Mystic Moon Peak—otherwise, it would've made Mystic Moon Peak too powerful.

But now Lin Xuan, the second Heaven-grade genius, had to go there?

Absolutely unfair.

They could only curse in silence as Elder Qinglan practically beamed, already stepping up to personally escort Lin Xuan to her side.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 74: Lin Xuan Joins Mystic Moon Peak[1,542 words]

Chapter 74: Lin Xuan Joins Mystic Moon Peak

Elder Qinglan, who had maintained her usual aloof demeanor for the entire assessment, was now practically glowing.

She turned to Lin Xuan and gave a rare nod of approval, her long hair swaying slightly with the motion.

"From this moment on," she declared, "Lin Xuan is a disciple of Mystic Moon Peak. Anyone who dares trouble him, troubles me."

Her words were calm, but they hit with the weight of a mountain.

The crowd collectively swallowed.

The other elders could only stew in silence. No one dared challenge her now—not after such a clear, public claim.

Even Elder Sheng's eyes narrowed faintly, but he said nothing.

The smirk was gone. He for sure thought that Lin Xuan had a conflict with Bai Zihan and would want revenge but instead he was rejected on the spot without any consideration.

Moreover, Lin Xuan choosing to join Mystic Moon Peak set off alarm bells for the Anti-Sect Leader faction.

Elder Qinglan might be neutral on the surface, but they saw her—and her Peak—as the biggest threat thanks to her overwhelming strength.

The fact that she was the one who took Lin Xuan in?

Yeah, that was a bad sign for their side.

Tian Yuheng, the Sect Leader, chuckled softly under his breath.

"So that's how it is..."

He muttered, then raised his voice.

"Very well. The Assessment Trial concludes here! The results will be recorded, and the new disciples will be registered."

He looked around the arena, his gaze sweeping over all the crowd.

"And as for those who failed, don't forget that you can try again next year. I hope you all cultivate and work hard!"

With a gesture, the elders began to disperse, and the crowd slowly started breaking up. The trial was over.

But the whispers weren't.

"He really picked Mystic Moon Peak..."

"I thought he would avoid Bai Zihan, but he chose the peak where he is..."

"Looks like the rumor about Bai Zihan regarding Lin Xuan was false."

...

It seems like what Lin Xuan wants to achieve in the Assessment Test has been achieved.

Although there are still people who don't think those rumors about Bai Zihan are false, there are also those who began to doubt it.

Additionally, by joining Mystic Moon Peak and staying close to Bai Zihan, it wouldn't take long for others to realize the truth—Bai Zihan wasn't mistreating him. If anything, it was the complete opposite.

Meanwhile, Bai Zihan watched it all unfold, a smile on his face.

But now, as Lin Xuan stood beside Elder Qinglan, basking in the approval of the sect, Zihan's fingers slowly curled into a fist at his side.

That was how fast a protagonist could rise once they found their momentum.

Of course, he'd had a hand in helping him do so, but even without his help, Bai Zihan didn't think it would've mattered.

Maybe Lin Xuan had found some treasure or legacy out there—but either way, it was clear he was destined to rise.

Just that, he managed to at least make Lin Xuan owe him and in the future, he could make use of those favors.

As the crowd slowly began to disperse and the whispers of Lin Xuan's decision still echoed through the arena.

Most didn't think much of it—Mystic Moon Peak was the peak many wanted to join, after all.

Though many wondered why he deliberately chose to join the same Peak as Bai Zihan, the answer depended on what they believed—some thought it was for revenge, while others saw it as an act of gratitude.

Either way, with Elder Qinglan's favor, they thought that Lin Xuan status would be completely different than what it used to be.

Elder Qinglan turned her head slightly, casting a side glance at the young man now standing beside her.

She, of course, recognized Lin Xuan—after all, she was the one who'd saved him and brought him to the Heaven Sword Sect.

Of course, just because she saved him didn't mean she remembered him—if she did, she'd have to remember the thousands she'd helped over the years.

There were simply too many to keep track of.

Lin Xuan was just special because the one who'd attacked his village wasn't some no-name demonic cultivator—but a very powerful one.

To survive that... she'd always thought he was a lucky child, though she never expected him to possess Heaven-grade Dao Resonance.

She didn't speak at first. Just studied him.

Calm posture. Unshaken eyes. No trace of hesitation.

He'd turned from that helpless young boy who was scared of the world into a mature man in a short period of time.

Five to seven years. But for cultivators like her, those years were nothing more than grains of sand.

Finally, she broke the silence.

"You made your decision before I even spoke," she said—voice cool and even, but laced with a note of genuine curiosity.

"Not that I'm complaining—but I'd like to know why."

Was it to repay her for saving his life? Or because of her reputation?

Not that it mattered—but she was curious.

Lin Xuan turned to meet her gaze, respectful.

Elder Qinglan wasn't just a powerful figure in the sect—she was the one who had saved his life when he was at the dead door.

No matter how much he grew, how far he rose, that fact would never change.

"I don't know if Elder Qinglan remembers," Lin Xuan said quietly, "but... it was you who saved me back then."

He didn't try to dramatize it. Just stated the truth.

"I was barely hanging on. Everyone in the village was dead or worse. And then... you appeared. You didn't ask for anything. You just saved me."

"I owe you my life," Lin Xuan continued, voice steady.

"There's nothing I can offer that would be enough to repay that. But even so... I want to dedicate my life to helping you, to serving Mystic Moon Peak. If there's anything I can do, anything at all, I'll do it."

It wasn't a declaration made out of obligation. It wasn't guilt. It was a decision—his own.

Elder Qinglan regarded him for a long moment. She didn't smile, didn't offer flowery praise. That wasn't her way.

Instead, she gave him a single nod.

"And?"

She asked.

"Is that the only reason?"

Lin Xuan paused, then shook his head.

"There's another," he admitted.

"Because Young Master Bai Zihan is here."

Elder Qinglan's eyes narrowed slightly—not in suspicion, but in thought. She clearly hadn't expected that answer.

Her expression didn't shift much, but there was the faintest pause, as if something had clicked into place.

"Bai Zihan?"

She echoed, frowning.

"You're saying you wanted to be on the same peak as him?"

"Yes, Elder!"

Her brow furrowed, and for the first time in a while, she looked genuinely unsettled.

She remembered those whispers. The rumors.

About Bai Zihan mistreating Lin Xuan—verbally, physically, emotionally. That he was using his power and status to bully a helpless handyman.

But rumors were always flying around, and unless someone was caught in the act or there was solid evidence, she wasn't the type to act on mere hearsay.

After all, she had lived for many years and knew all too well how rumors could be used to deceive and manipulate—she'd even been a target of such schemes back when she was just a disciple herself.

But now, with Lin Xuan bringing up Bai Zihan's name...

She looked at Lin Xuan a little more closely.

(Was those rumors real? Does Lin Xuan want revenge against Bai Zihan?)

Elder Qinglan thought.

If it was for that reason, she'd be disappointed—even if the rumors were true.

She couldn't accept a disciple using her peak to take revenge on another... even if that other was Bai Zihan.

"...I see. Can I ask why?"

She asked.

"I'm not here to seek revenge or cause trouble."

Lin Xuan immediately said, already anticipating her train of thought.

"I owe him. He was the first person to offer me a hand when I had nothing. Not for pity, not for show—but because he saw something in me."

He looked down at his hands, clenched them once, then relaxed.

"If I hadn't met him, I might still be scrubbing floors and getting beaten for fun. He gave me cultivation methods, pills, a sword, even advice. I want to repay that."

Elder Qinglan stayed quiet for a moment, her eyes flicking briefly in Bai Zihan's direction across the arena—then back to Lin Xuan.

"So, you really want to join Mystic Moon Peak because of Bai Zihan."

"Yes," Lin Xuan said.

"It'll be easier to serve him and support him if I'm at the same peak. And... I want to keep learning from him."

The silence between them hung for a second longer—then Elder Qinglan nodded.

If it was for such a reason, there was no need for her to worry and it was indeed good for her disciples to get along with each other.

"Good," she said simply. "So long as your heart is clear, your decision is yours to make."

She turned, her robes flowing behind her like moonlight through still water.

"Come. I'll show you where you'll be staying."

Novel Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! Chapter 75: Villain doing villain things!

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan!

Chapter 75: Villain doing villain things!

Chapter 75: Villain doing villain things!

Bai Zihan turned away from the assessment test area, the crowd's murmurs fading into background noise.

Lin Xuan stood tall in the center of it all, basking in the start of his protagonist arc—admiring glances from outer disciples, jealous glares from failed applicants, even faint nods from a few elders.

He'd done it.

He had officially entered the sect with a splash, a gold-grade Dao Resonance, a personal claim from Elder Qinglan.

It was perfect!

Just like how many protagonists burst onto the scene during the Sect Assessment Test in those novels Bai Zihan used to read.

Bai Zihan decided to head back to his courtyard.

But something stopped him dead in his tracks.

"Wasn't that great?"

"Who would have thought that our sect would get another Heaven-grade Dao Resonance?"

Voices.

Familiar ones.

His hearing was sharp—not by talent, but necessity.

After all, he couldn't rely on his eyesight until recently, so his ears naturally became finely tuned.

He leaned slightly around the white stone archway and caught sight of two women walking side by side down the path.

Yun Qingmei and Fei Ling!

Senior sisters of Bai Xueqing—and now, technically, his senior sisters as well.

These were the two he'd thoroughly offended—harassed, even—back when he was still in the Bai Clan.

Bai Zihan's lips curled into a slow, wicked smirk.

Well, well!

Wasn't this a nostalgic little reunion?

He waited until they were about to pass by—then casually stepped out from behind the arch, hands behind his back, expression dripping with surprise.

"Ah, two beauties—what a pleasant surprise! We meet again!"

Yun Qingmei froze mid-step, posture stiffening like a deer hearing a hunter's bowstring draw.

Fei Ling reacted a second later, spinning around with narrowed eyes.

"...You!"

Her voice was like flint striking stone.

"What's wrong? So happy to see me again that you forgot how to form sentences?"

Bai Zihan said.

"I thought we'd moved past all that awkwardness."

Yun Qingmei didn't respond—just stared, eyes like frozen wells.

Fei Ling wasn't so reserved.

"You've got some nerve showing your face, after everything you pulled."

Fei angrily spat.

"Oh, come on!"

Zihan chuckled, strolling toward them with an easy, self-assured steps.

"I don't think I did anything to you two. In fact, I was being nice—trying to help, even."

He gave a wicked smile as he slowly approached them.

Although Yun Qingmei and Fei Ling had higher cultivation levels, they instinctively backed away, a flicker of fear in their eyes.

It wasn't about strength.

It was about him—the way Bai Zihan had humiliated Shen Liang, the man they respected, made him look like a common thug.

They knew the truth. Bai Zihan had outplayed Shen Liang, despite being weaker.

So naturally, a bit of fear had wormed its way into their disgust.

They still held a grudge, sure.

But not like Shen Liang, who'd taken the biggest hit.

As for them—they just wanted to avoid Bai Zihan altogether.

They would've been fine if he was just a pampered Bai Clan brat.

But now they know that he was scheming and cunning which makes for a dangerous combination.

They just didn't expect that the lazy, arrogant young master would be interest in something like Sect's Assessment Test.

Had they known, they wouldn't have come to check out their new juniors.

Yun Qingmei finally spoke, her voice low and guarded.

"Why are you here, Young Master Bai?"

He tilted his head slightly.

"Me? Just here out of boredom. Funny how fate brings old friends back together, huh? Maybe it's trying to tell us something."

Neither woman looked amused.

Fei Ling looked like she wanted to slap him. Yun Qingmei looked like she wanted to kill him.

But Bai Zihan just stood there, smiling like the devil dressed in white silk.

They thought about how unlucky they were. If only they had gone away few minutes ago, they wouldn't need to meet with this devil

Bai Zihan's smile deepened, eyes glinting as he glanced left and right with an exaggerated tilt of his head.

"Hm? Strange..."

He mused aloud, stroking his chin like a scholar pondering about some profound stuff.

"Where's that righteous Senior Brother Shen who falsely accused me? Not tagging along with you two today?"

Both Yun Qingmei and Fei Ling stiffened.

They exchanged a look, then turned back to him—deadpan, wary.

The audacity. The shamelessness.

Bai Zihan knew the turth. They knew it. He knew they knew it. And yet here he was, playing the innocent victim.

Truly a hypocrite in clothing.

Bai Zihan smirk curled wider.

"Ah," he said softly, "so no one to butt in this time."

He took another step forward. Slow. Casual. Unthreatening... and yet more suffocating than a blade to the throat.

Fei Ling's foot slid back instinctively.

Yun Qingmei didn't move, but her fingers twitched near her sleeve—reflexive, defensive.

"What do you want, Bai Zihan?"

Yun Qingmei asked coldly.

Bai Zihan spread his hands, mock-offended again.

"Want? Can't a man say hello to two old acquaintances without being treated like a walking plague?"

"Cut the crap," Fei Ling snapped.

"Don't act like you don't have some scheme in mind. So, what is it this time? Trying to humiliate us like you did with Shen Liang?"

Bai Zihan chuckled.

"Oh please," he said, voice smooth as silk. "You two? I could never humiliate you."

He paused.

"...You already did that to yourselves the moment you sided with someone like Shen Liang."

That hit like a slap.

Fei Ling's cheeks flushed with anger. Yun Qingmei's eyes darkened.

"Don't act like you're some noble victim," Yun Qingmei bit out.

"You were a bastard back in the clan, and you're still one now."

"Mmm... " Bai Zihan hummed. "True!"

That threw them off.

"I was a bastard," he said with a shrug.

"Spoiled, arrogant, lashing out at anyone who looked at me sideways. But you know what?"

He stepped forward again, voice dropping low.

"I've learned something since then."

The air thickened like a storm on the horizon.

Fei Ling swallowed.

"What?"

"That being a bastard doesn't mean I was wrong."

Bai Zihan's grin turned razor-sharp as he tapped his temple.

"Anyway. That bastard Shen Liang's been messing with me since I arrived at the Heaven Sword Sect."

Bai Zihan with somewhat irritated voice.

"Spreading lies, just like back at the Bai Estate. I thought maybe you two were helping him again."

Yun Qingmei and Fei Ling stiffened again, unconsciously drawing closer together.

They knew what he was talking about—and while they hadn't helped Shen Liang spread the rumors, they didn't think it was false either.

After all, this was Bai Zihan they were talking about, and those rumors perfectly fit the kind of thing he would do.

Well, Bai Zihan also knew that these two weren't actual involved with spreading those rumors about him.

With Fang Jinyan feeding him info, he already knew exactly who was involved.

But that didn't matter.

He didn't need facts. He never had. He just needed an excuse to screw with them.

"We don't know anything, Young Master Bai. If you have a problem with Senior Brother Shen, then take it up with him."

Fei Ling said quickly.

Her tone made it clear—she wanted nothing to do with this.

She might've supported Shen Liang, might've helped him if the opponent was anyone else.

But this was Bai Zihan.

And she'd already seen what happens when you get on his bad side.

Yun Qingmei looked just as wary as she nodded in agreement.

"Kekeke..."

Bai Zihan chuckled.

"I don't know about that. Maybe you're lying to me. Maybe not. Who knows?"

He took one more step forward, that mischievous glint returning to his eyes.

"How about we go to my courtyard and discuss it properly?"

Fei Ling's eyes narrowed. Her voice turned icy.

"Keep pushing, Bai Zihan, and we'll report this to the elders."

Yun Qingmei crossed her arms, her usual calm cracking just a bit.

"That's right. We're disciples of Mystic Moon Peak too. You think you can just harass us without consequences?"

Bai Zihan blinked.

"Hahaha... "

Then laughed.

"Report me?"

He repeated, tilting his head like they'd just said something in a foreign language.

"To the elders? What exactly are you gonna say, hmm? That I greeted you too enthusiastically?"

His smile widened again, lips curling into something wicked.

"That I asked two beautiful senior sisters to visit my courtyard? Where is your evidence?"

Fei Ling gritted her teeth.

"You're disgusting!"

Yun Qingmei took a breath, clearly done with this back and forth.

"If you keep this up, we'll tell Junior Sister Chu Ziyun."

That made Bai Zihan pause.

Just for a second.

Then—

He threw his head back and laughed.

"Oh no," he said, feigning exaggerated panic.

"Not my fiancée!"

He grinned at them.

"Please, don't tell her I was talking to other girls. She might cry."

Yun Qingmei's glare could've melted steel.

Fei Ling growled, "We're serious, Bai Zihan. Junior Sister Chu Ziyun would break off the engagement if you continue this behaviour."

That's when his expression shifted, though not in the way they thought.

"Really?"

He said excitedly.

They obviously misunderstood that Bai Zihan is the one who wants to marry Chu Ziyun as all other people thinks.

"Though I doubt that it could work. Chu Ziyun already told me I can take concubines if I want."

Silence!

Yun Qingmei's lips parted slightly.

Fei Ling blinked.

"What...?"

"Why? You interested? Trying to apply early?"

Fei Ling actually took a step back this time, eyes wide with disgust.

Yun Qingmei's face tightened, a storm brewing behind her eyes.

Before either of them could respond, Bai Zihan suddenly stopped.

His smile faded, and his voice dropped.

Low!

Calm!

Cold!

"Relax. I'm just messing around."

He turned his back to them, hands clasped behind him like none of this had ever happened.

"But if either of you helps Shen Liang—"

He glanced back over his shoulder, eyes dark with warning.

"Then maybe I won't just be messing around."

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Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 76: Rumors Shattered, Reputations Reborn[1,628 words]

Chapter 76: Rumors Shattered, Reputations Reborn

Bai Zihan stopped teasing Yun Qingmei and Fei Ling.

Not because he wanted to, but because he noticed Elder Qinglan and Lin Xuan making their way toward him.

The two girls didn't know what made him suddenly stop, but they weren't about to stick around and ask.

Just as they disappeared around the corner, Lin Xuan hurried over, eyes lighting up the moment he spotted Bai Zihan.

"Young Master, you're here?"

His voice was full of excitement and barely-contained admiration.

"Congratulations! I watched everything—I saw it all! I'm really happy you were able to show your worth to everyone."

His words were sincere, his tone free of pretense.

"It's all thanks to your help, Young Master," Lin Xuan said, bowing his head slightly.

"Without you... I never would've gotten this far."

Elder Qinglan watched the two interact.

From what she saw, it was clear the rumors she'd heard were completely fabricated.

"You two can catch up later. Let's go," Elder Qinglan said.

"Elder, can I make a request?"

Lin Xuan asked hesitantly.

He already owed her too much, and asking for more—even something small—made him feel a little guilty.

"Of course. What is it?"

Elder Qinglan didn't even hesitate.

She didn't think much of it; to get someone like Lin Xuan to join her peak, she'd fulfill any wish—unless it was something evil.

"Can I have my residence near the Young Master?"

Lin Xuan asked.

"It'd be easier to serve him if I was closer."

That surprised both Elder Qinglan and Bai Zihan.

Elder Qinglan had known Lin Xuan was grateful, but she didn't expect it to run this deep.

Even after being revealed as a Heaven-Blessed talent—someone the entire Heaven Sword Sect treasured—Lin Xuan still wanted to serve Bai Zihan?

He could've repaid the favor by asking the Sect for help like giving back 10 times the resource Bai Zihan gave him.

There was no need to keep acting like a servant.

The Sect certainly wouldn't want their future Sect Leader—or at the very least a high-ranking elder—to lower himself for someone like Bai Zihan, whose reputation could only be described as rock bottom.

No one else in the entire Heaven Sword Sect—maybe even the whole Desolate Heaven Empire—had a worse name than him.

If it were another elder, they'd probably step in and tell Lin Xuan not to throw himself away like this.

But Elder Qinglan wasn't like most elders. She didn't care about appearances or fake face—she cared about values.

If Lin Xuan wanted to repay kindness by staying close and continuing to serve Bai Zihan, then she didn't feel the need to interfere.

"Certainly! There are quite a few residences near Bai Zihan's. You can pick the one that suits you best."

Lin Xuan shook his head.

"The closest one will do."

He'd been staying in some rundown handyman's shack, so he didn't care about luxury. He just wanted to be near Bai Zihan.

While Elder Qinglan and Lin Xuan were talking, Bai Zihan listened with a smile.

It seemed that even after Lin Xuan's flashy moment, he was still loyal. That was good news.

At least Lin Xuan was someone who repaid kindness with kindness—no matter the situation.

Unlike certain protagonists who throw a few resources at someone and act like they've paid back a life debt, then go off to rise to the heavens, completely forgetting the people who helped them.

Until hundreds of Chapters later, when they find out that person died to some low-tier villain while they were busy being the main character.

The news of the assessment test spread through the Heaven Sword Sect like wildfire.

At first, it was just whispers—someone claiming Lin Xuan, that quiet little handyman who used to sweep the stairs and scrub toilets, had actually awakened a Heaven-grade talent.

People laughed. Thought it was a joke. A blatant lie!

But as more details came in—confirmation from Elders, word from various disciples who'd witnessed it firsthand—those whispers turned into a full-blown storm.

The handyman had shattered expectations.

But even more shocking than Lin Xuan's Heaven-grade result was the revelation that he hadn't climbed the mountain alone.

According to some disciples who'd been present, Lin Xuan had wielded a Profound-grade sword technique during the combat trial—one exclusive to the Bai Clan.

That alone was already enough to turn heads.

But when people started connecting the dots—the expensive pills, the sudden boost in strength, the calm demeanor, and how he always seemed to be hovering near Bai Zihan like a loyal guard dog—things began to click.

And what came next sent shockwaves through the Sect.

"Wait... you're telling me Bai Zihan gave him an Earth-grade cultivation technique? Are you kidding me?!"

"I heard that he promised Lin Xuan if he became his personal servant, he'd be given one. Looking at Lin Xuan's progress, it seems to be true!"

"But why would Bai Zihan give something like that to an outsider?"

"Exactly! That's the thing—he shouldn't have! It's a massive breach of clan secrecy. If the Bai Clan finds out, he's not just getting scolded. He's getting executed. Or at the very least, thrown out of the clan with nothing but his name left!"

"What the hell is going on with that guy..."

The Heaven Sword Sect was in a frenzy.

They thought of Bai Zihan as a lazy and arrogant young master without any talent or morals.

There were various rumors about him—one crazier than the next. He was truly the embodiment of a privileged child.

Then they found out that he was crazier than the rumors.

To be able to teach his Clan's exclusive technique to an outsider, it seemed like Bai Zihan didn't even fear his own clan's rules.

Even teaching a Profound-Grade technique to an outsider just to make them a servant would be unthinkable—not to mention an Earth-Grade one.

If there was such a person, even a Nascent Soul cultivator might be willing to become a servant.

"Wait, so those rumors about Bai Zihan mistreating Lin Xuan are false?"

"Exactly! Lin Xuan's a Heaven-grade talent now. The Sect would be willing to do everything to have Lin Xuan stay, even expelling Bai Zihan, if Lin Xuan asked for it."

"But instead, he asked Elder Qinglan personally to have his residence moved closer to Bai Zihan's."

The group of disciples fell into stunned silence.

"So all those rumors about Bai Zihan torturing him, beating him up, and feeding him poison pills were just... bullshit? I thought for real that Bai Zihan would do those things."

"Looks that way! Wouldn't be the first time people made shit up to ruin someone's reputation."

Soon, the Heaven Sword Sect began to think Bai Zihan was the victim of someone else's scheme—and his reputation was starting to look a whole lot better.

Of course, those things weren't as important as the Sect gaining another Heaven-grade talent.

Though for one person, this was a huge problem.

Inside a secluded courtyard on one of the Inner Peaks, Shen Liang sat alone beneath a pavilion, his tea untouched, his brows furrowed so deep they might as well have been carved into stone.

"Damn it!"

CRACK!

The cup in his hand shattered with a sharp crack, ceramic shards scattering across the table.

Everything had been going so perfectly—or so he thought.

Lin Xuan—some nobody handyman—was supposed to be just one of his pawns to ruin Bai Zihan's reputation.

He didn't care whether the rumors were true. Even if they were proven false, it wouldn't affect much. There were still plenty of other bad ones to latch onto.

But now?

Because of Lin Xuan's sudden rise and the news about his Heaven-Grade Dao Resonance spreading everywhere, people were only focused on the rumors about Bai Zihan mistreating him.

And now, those were collapsing.

The little bastard had chosen to join Mystic Moon Peak—publicly, in front of everyone—and even called Bai Zihan his benefactor?

Many now thought the other rumors were false too—guilt by association working in reverse.

"Tch!"

Shen Liang scowled, his teeth clenched.

Worse still, the whispers were changing.

In the last hour alone, Shen Liang had overheard things he never thought he'd hear.

"I didn't think Bai Zihan was the complete opposite of what I'd heard."

"Yeah, look at how he treated Lin Xuan, who was just a handyman. Giving him so many precious resources and even Earth-Grade cultivation techniques!"

"People are even volunteering to serve Bai Zihan now. I heard some Inner Disciples saying they'd do everything he commands if he made them his servants."

(Generous? Kind? Cultivating loyalty?)

"Bullshit!"

Shen Liang growled.

After suffering through Bai Zihan's scheme, it felt like getting slapped every time someone praised him.

Would he have suffered falsely if Bai Zihan was so generous? Is he kind just because he knows how to make others fear or obey?

Sure, he made up some of the rumors. But that didn't make them wrong.

He just fabricated the wrong incident.

He was protecting people—people who might fall for the same trick he did.

Of course those were the justification he made to himself while committing all those horrendous things.

But now, all that hard work was going to waste.

And Shen Liang wasn't going to let that continue.

He reached into his sleeve and pulled out a communication talisman.

"Fang Jinyan," he said coldly.

Moments later, a familiar voice answered through the talisman, smooth and composed:

"Senior Brother Shen. Awaiting your command."

Shen Liang's eyes darkened.

"It's time. We're done playing nice."

There was a pause. Then Fang Jinyan's voice came through, this time with a hint of interest.

"So we're moving forward with the plan?"

"Yes!"

Shen Liang snapped.

"I'll completely destroy Bai Zihan's reputation this time!"

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 77: Shen Liang's Little Play[1,050 words]

Chapter 77: Shen Liang's Little Play

Bai Zihan stayed in his room and didn't cultivate that day, which was unusual as he would normally spend all his time cultivating.

He looked at Mystic Moon Peak, serene and beautiful, as peaceful as ever.

But the peace didn't last long.

Before Bai Zihan could even enjoy a cup of tea in his courtyard, the sound of footsteps—organized and heavy—echoed from the entrance.

A group of disciples in black-and-silver robes arrived, led by a stern-faced elder whose beard looked like it had been chiseled from disappointment itself.

Behind him, two outer court guards and four inner disciples flanked him like they were ready to drag Bai Zihan off to a public execution.

"Bai Zihan!" the elder called out in a loud, commanding tone. "Come out!"

Bai Zihan raised a brow and casually stepped out from under the shade of his house.

"Who?"

He asked, without even a flicker of fear in his eyes, despite being surrounded by people who clearly weren't there for anything good.

"What's this about? If you're here for tea, I've only got the expensive stuff. Don't think you can appreciate that, though."

Elder Shan didn't laugh. Of course he didn't. The man looked like he'd forgotten how smiles worked fifty years ago.

But this was the first time a disciple hadn't taken him seriously—and even seemed to be mocking him.

"Bai Zihan, do you know your crime?"

Elder Shan asked with a deep frown.

"My crime?"

Bai Zihan repeated, face painted with confusion.

"Whatever do you mean? I don't think I did anything."

Of course, there was no way Elder Shan believed him. Or rather, no way he intended to let him off with just words.

"You know what you did! Feigning ignorance won't help you!"

Elder Shan declared.

"The charge is clear."

Elder Shan snapped, his voice ringing through the courtyard like a judge's gavel.

"Multiple witnesses claim you were seen wandering around the women's bathing grounds—and one inner disciple testified that she personally saw you steal her undergarments!"

The courtyard fell silent.

Bai Zihan blinked.

Then squinted.

"...What?"

A long pause.

"Are you serious right now?"

Elder Shan's face darkened.

"Do not test my patience."

"Oh, I'm not testing anything," Bai Zihan said, raising both hands.

"I'm just trying to figure out what kind of brain damage one needs to accuse me of stealing panties."

He turned his head, looking around at the guards and disciples like he was searching for that brain damaged person among them.

"Even if I did, shouldn't that be the girl's privilege? And would I really need to sneak around for girls with my status? Aren't you being a bit too stupid?"

"Bai Zihan!" Elder Shan barked. "Enough! You will admit your guilt and submit yourself to the Punishment Hall!"

"Oh, so it's 'guilty until proven burned at the stake'. Got it!"

Bai Zihan muttered, shaking his head.

He turned back to Elder Shan, eyes sharp now.

"Listen, old man. I don't know what sad little gremlin whispered that nonsense into your ear, but I haven't even left my courtyard in two days. Ask the birds."

"Still refusing to admit it?"

Elder Shan's tone dropped several degrees.

"Even now?"

"There's nothing to admit, old man."

Bai Zihan said coldly.

"Unless you want me to confess to a crime I didn't commit just to make your job easier. Not happening!"

Elder Shan frowned as he was getting angrier. Bai Zihan even refused to address him as an elder and was clearly not taking this seriously.

"Then you will come to the Punishment Hall. Your crime and punishment will be decided there."

With a flick of his sleeve, the guards moved in.

Bai Zihan didn't resist. Didn't fight.

He simply adjusted his collar, made sure his hair looked decent, and stepped forward.

"I hope you can prove your accusation. Otherwise, don't say I'm being petty if I take revenge."

And with that, he walked calmly between the guards, like he was on his way to attend a boring meeting—except this one was about him supposedly being a pervert.

As they escorted him out, word spread fast.

Suspiciously fast.

Almost like someone had prepared the gossip in advance.

By the time Bai Zihan reached the central path leading to the Punishment Hall, a crowd had already gathered—dozens of disciples, outer and inner, whispering among themselves with barely concealed excitement.

"Is that him? The pervert who was seen in the female bathing grounds—and even stole underwear."

"Yeah, that's Bai Zihan!"

"Disgusting... and he's the younger brother of Bai Xueqing."

"I thought those rumors were false. Turns out he's an even bigger creep than they said."

"Our sect should expel people like him."

...

The disciples all looked at him with disgust.

It was strange—too strange—how quickly the news had spread when he himself had only learned about it minutes ago.

Bai Zihan didn't need to think twice about who was behind this.

Shen Liang!

And wouldn't you know it—there he was.

At the front steps of the Punishment Hall, standing in full view like a noble young master who just happened to be passing by.

Smug. Composed!

Face filled with the perfect amount of outrage, as if he too was shocked by such depravity.

(Nice acting!)

Bai Zihan's lips curled ever so slightly.

Just a smirk. Faint and fleeting.

But it said everything.

"Oh? So this is the game we're playing now."

Shen Liang's eye twitched—just for a second.

He must have noticed the look. The total lack of panic.

The glimmer of amusement in Bai Zihan's eyes—as if he was being played right in Bai Zihan's hand.

But he shook off the doubt, thinking Bai Zihan was just bluffing.

The moment the heavy doors of the Punishment Hall opened, the atmosphere shifted.

The elders sat on high. Disciples of the Hall filled the benches. Curious eyes stared down, eager to watch the "pervert" be humiliated.

And overseeing it all was Elder Shen—Shen Liang's uncle.

This should have been the kind of pressure to make any disciple tremble, even if they were innocent.

But Bai Zihan?

He walked in like a prince stepping onto his throne.

Posture relaxed. Chin slightly raised.

Eyes sweeping over the hall like he was there to judge them instead of him.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 78: Dare to Accuse Me?[1,190 words]

Chapter 78: Dare to Accuse Me?

"What kind of trouble did you get into this time?"

Bai Xueqing asked.

Not only was she present—Chu Ziyang was there as well, standing inside the Punishment Hall.

(Looks like Shen Liang wants to humiliate me in front of my sister—just like I did to him. And Chu Ziyang? He clearly wants to sabotage my engagement.)

Bai Zihan shook his head, almost pitying Shen Liang.

Once again, it seems Shen Liang's ready to be humiliated in front of his crush—my sister. And on top of that, he brought a whole crowd to watch.

"Trouble? Dear sister, can't you see I've been falsely accused again? And I'm certain the culprit is the same."

Bai Zihan said, glaring at Shen Liang.

"B-Bai Zihan, don't talk nonsense! What did I do to deserve such an accusation?"

Shen Liang shot back.

"Tsk! You know what you did. Not that you'd ever admit it."

Bai Zihan smirked.

"You! Hmph! I won't waste my breath on someone so shameless."

With that, Shen Liang turned and stormed off.

(Idiot! If you're not smart enough to scheme, you probably shouldn't try. Too bad no one told you that you are an idiot.)

"You're here too?"

Bai Zihan said, his words clearly aimed at Chu Ziyan.

"Well, I heard my fiancé has been stealing other girls' underwear. So naturally, I had to be here, right?"

Chu Ziyan said, more amused than angry.

Not that Bai Zihan expected anything else.

After all, she was the one who said he could have other women—their engagement was just a matter of convenience.

So it'd be strange for her to suddenly care just because someone said he stole another girl's underwear.

"So you're just here for the show?"

Bai Zihan asked.

"How could you say that? I'm here to support my dear fiancé and prove his innocence!"

Chu Ziyang dramatically clutched her chest like a devoted wife ready to die for her husband.

"Then do it!"

Bai Zihan said.

"Ahem! Well, we have to follow sect rules. Let's see what evidence they've brought."

Chu Ziyang replied with a shrug.

Bai Zihan couldn't tell if Chu Ziyang actually believed he was innocent—or if she was just like his sister, thinking he was causing trouble again.

Not that it mattered. Still, he was curious... though he figured it was probably the latter.

Elder Shen, seated at the highest position in the Punishment Hall, finally raised his hand.

"Silence!"

His voice wasn't loud, but it carried unmistakable authority.

The murmurs ceased. Disciples held their breath.

Elder Shen's eyes—calm, cold, and calculating—swept over the hall before settling on Bai Zihan.

"We are not here to bicker like unruly children," he said, his tone sharp as tempered steel.

"This is the Punishment Hall. The rules of the Heaven Sword Sect are absolute, and all must answer to them—regardless of status."

He let those words linger in the silence before turning toward the stern elder who had brought Bai Zihan in.

"Elder Shan," Elder Shen called, voice clipped. "State the charges."

Elder Shan stepped forward.

"Honored Hall Master!"

He bowed respectfully, then turned to address the gathered hall.

"The disciple Bai Zihan is accused of breaching Sect Rule Twenty-Seven—'Trespassing upon sacred or private areas designated to a specific gender'—and Rule Thirty-Four—'Conduct unbecoming of a Heaven Sword Sect disciple, including but not limited to theft of personal property.'"

He continued, voice unwavering.

"There are multiple eyewitness accounts placing Bai Zihan near the women's bathing grounds. Furthermore, Inner Disciple Mei Rulan has testified that her personal garments were stolen—and she claims she saw Bai Zihan fleeing the scene."

Chu Ziyang raised an eyebrow. Bai Xueqing's expression soured. Shen Liang lowered his gaze, hiding a satisfied smirk.

Gasps and whispers erupted once again, but Elder Shen raised his hand, and they quieted immediately.

"And this accuser..." Elder Shen narrowed his eyes. "Is she present?"

"She is," Elder Shan replied. "I request permission to call her forward."

Elder Shen gave a curt nod.

"Bring in Mei Rulan."

The side doors creaked open.

In stepped a young woman in inner disciple robes, delicate features twisted in a mixture of shame and outrage.

Her eyes were red from crying, her hands trembling as she bowed before the elders.

She looked like the perfect victim—pitiful, vulnerable, wronged.

"I... I didn't want to come forward at first," Mei Rulan said, her voice quivering.

"But it was too shameful... I saw Bai Zihan near the hot springs. He was looking around suspiciously. And when I went back, my—my clothes were gone. I'm sure it was him! I saw his face clearly!"

Another wave of murmuring rippled through the crowd.

Some disciples shook their heads in disgust. Others looked skeptical. But the damage was done—she said she was sure.

Bai Zihan didn't speak immediately.

He just stared at Mei Rulan, lips slightly parted in disbelief—as if he couldn't believe the performance she was putting on.

"Hahaha..."

He laughed.

Loudly and unhinged.

The soft laughter soured the air, drawing scowls from most of those present.

Some sneered, thinking Bai Zihan was simply being his arrogant self—too deluded to recognize his own downfall.

But others... others felt a chill creep down their spines.

There was no fear in that laugh. Not even in the face of the Punishment Hall or serious accusations.

"What's funny?"

Elder Shen asked, frowning.

Ignoring the elder, Bai Zihan stepped forward.

One hand rested casually at his side; the other lifted to point directly at Mei Rulan.

"You're sure it was me?"

Mei Rulan flinched, but nodded quickly.

"Don't try to deny it! I'd recognize your face anywhere! Y-you were wearing white—like the robe you're wearing now. And—and I saw your ring too!"

Bai Zihan's expression darkened. The amusement drained from his face like ink washing off parchment.

"Mei Rulan, was it?"

He asked, voice low, cold, and quiet.

"Are you really sure you want to accuse me of this?"

"I—yes! I—"

"Good!"

His voice dropped even lower—venom in every syllable.

"Because I want you to remember this moment. I want you to remember that I gave you a chance. One. Single. Chance."

The hall fell utterly silent.

"You want to falsely accuse me?"

Bai Zihan's gaze turned icy. His smile disappeared.

"Fine. Then lie. But you better do it all the way. You better pray the sect executes me today—because if they don't..."

His eyes burned with terrifying intent.

"...I will come for you. And I won't just ruin your life. I'll erase your name. I'll burn your house to the ground. I'll make your clan beg for mercy they'll never receive."

Mei Rulan stumbled back, eyes wide in horror.

"Y-you're threatening me?! In front of the Punishment Hall?!"

Bai Zihan didn't blink.

"Threatening you? No. I'm making a promise."

The entire Punishment Hall was deathly silent.

Everyone was stunned—Bai Zihan was openly threatening someone, right in front of the entire sect and inside the Punishment Hall no less. Bold didn't even begin to cover it.

Bai Xueqing and Chu Ziyan both looked stunned.

Bai Zihan still acted like he was in the Bai Clan—arrogant, reckless, threatening whomever he pleased.

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 79: Lies Beneath the Bed[1,547 words]

Chapter 79: Lies Beneath the Bed

"Bai Zihan, do you think you can get away with threatening someone in the Punishment Hall?"

Elder Shen asked angrily.

"Yes!"

Bai Zihan simply answered.

"Y-You!"

Even Elder Shen couldn't keep his cool in front of Bai Zihan, who was giving him no face.

"You're just adding to your list of crimes. I'm holding you for threatening a fellow disciple—inside the Punishment Hall, no less."

Elder Shen said coldly.

"Do whatever you want."

Bai Zihan replied, not caring in the slightest.

"Hmph! Let's continue with the trial. Bai Zihan, you've heard the accusations. Do you wish to confess?"

Elder Shen demanded.

Bai Zihan stared at him like he was looking at an idiot.

"Confess?"

He gave a short laugh—dry, mocking.

"To what? Being blamed by someone clearly scheming against me?"

He turned to face the audience now—eyes calm, voice steady.

"I haven't left my courtyard for two days. Ask the trees. Ask the birds. Hell, ask the teapot if you want."

His gaze swung back to Elder Shen.

"This is clearly a setup."

"Oh?"

Elder Shen raised an eyebrow slightly.

"And do you have any proof to support that?"

Bai Zihan shrugged, completely unfazed.

"Do you?"

There was a pause—brief, taut.

The room held its breath again.

Time and again, Bai Zihan was blatantly provoking Elder Shen. But for those who knew Bai Zihan, like Bai Xueqing, this was just his usual attitude.

Unless presented with undeniable evidence, there was no way anyone could do anything to him.

Even Clan Elders had suffered at Bai Zihan's hands because of that.

That's why Bai Xueqing saw Bai Zihan as someone completely shameless—someone who could lie without blinking, staring you dead in the eye like you were the crazy one.

Even when he knew he was lying, he'd act like you were wrong, gaslighting the victims.

He was someone who knew the rules well and how to use them.

"Elder Shan, apart from the victim's testimony, do you have any other proof that Bai Zihan is truly the culprit here?"

Elder Shen asked, as if following the script that had already been planned.

Elder Shan nodded and replied.

"I had left behind some disciples to search Bai Zihan's courtyard."

He straightened his back confidently.

"All of it is recorded using the Memory Crystal Mirror."

As soon as he said that, one of the inner disciples stepped forward, holding a smooth, translucent orb glowing faintly with spiritual light.

The Memory Crystal Mirror—a rare artifact used by the sect to record events in real-time and project them in holographic form.

It was often used for important trials like this, where evidence needed to be indisputable.

With a simple incantation, the disciple activated it.

A shimmering light appeared above the hall, like a mirage solidifying.

The recording began.

Everyone watched intently.

It showed the moment after Bai Zihan's arrest—disciples respectfully entering his courtyard.

It started from there because they hadn't tampered with the evidence by planting it themselves.

Their movements were cautious but methodical, sweeping the grounds, searching the rooms.

They even lifted the beds, overturned the wardrobes—without touching or disturbing anything unnecessary.

Then—

The image zoomed under Bai Zihan's bed.

There, nestled in a dark corner, was a small ornate box.

One of the disciples in the recording pulled it out, opened it—

And the hall erupted.

Inside the box was a mess of delicate, colorful undergarments—some even embroidered with the names of their owners.

And sitting right on top, unmistakable even to the untrained eye, was a lacy violet piece that practically screamed Mei Ruolan's name.

Some disciples gasped. Others grimace in disgust.

Bai Xueqing's face turned black as the bottom of a pot, while Chu Ziyang didn't show much change in her expression.

She just watched Bai Zihan, who was strangely calm for someone caught with "indisputable" evidence.

Shen Liang lowered his head, smirking to himself in secret triumph.

Elder Shen's lips curled into a sneer as he leaned forward slightly.

"Well, Bai Zihan," he said, voice dripping with righteous fury, "what do you have to say now?"

All eyes turned to Bai Zihan.

Some were gloating.

Some were disgusted.

Some—very few—were confused, not sure if things were as they seemed.

Bai Zihan, however, didn't look rattled in the slightest.

He glanced up at the swirling hologram of the box.

Then he smiled.

A slow, lazy, devil-like smile.

"What do I have to say?"

He repeated, voice casual—as if he weren't the one being questioned.

Bai Zihan took a step forward, completely ignoring the guards subtly trying to block him.

"Hmph! Since you have nothing to say, we will proceed with your punishment according to your crimes!"

Elder Shen's voice echoed across the Punishment Hall, self-righteous and cold.

"First, for stealing the personal belongings of fellow female disciples, you shall have your right hand severed to atone."

Murmurs broke out in the crowd.

Severing a cultivator's hand was as good as crippling half their life.

It seemed excessive—but those who didn't like Bai Zihan agreed with it.

Well, others thought that while it was excessive, an arrogant and shameless person like Bai Zihan deserved it.

"Second," Elder Shen continued, raising his hand for silence, "for threatening Mei Ruolan within the walls of the Punishment Hall, you are sentenced to one year of solitary reflection in the Sect's Reflection Cave."

His voice was heavy, final.

Not only crippling Bai Zihan but also imprisoning him?

That was really a bit too much.

"And third... if after this punishment you continue to show disrespect or misconduct, you will be expelled from the Heaven Sword Sect without mercy."

The hall buzzed, shock and disbelief rippling through the disciples like a stone thrown into still water.

Yet in the middle of it all, Bai Zihan stood there.

Still. No trace of fear or panic—even smirking at Elder Shen.

Looking at Bai Zihan, one wouldn't know whether he was just that confident in his Clan's influence—or just plain arrogant.

That nonchalance made some furious, others nervous.

But Bai Xueqing—

Her face turned ugly.

Not because she cared about Bai Zihan personally.

If he was guilty, then sure, punish him.

The Bai Clan wouldn't cover for trash.

But this...?

This punishment was way too excessive.

Severing Bai Zihan's hand?

The Bai Clan's heir?

A direct descendant?

Was Elder Shen out of his mind?

Even if Bai Zihan was guilty, treating the Bai Clan's heir like this was a slap across the Clan's face.

They wouldn't be able to avoid war with the Bai Clan if they go through Elder Shen's punishment.

"Elder Shen, isn't this going too far?"

Bai Xueqing finally spoke up. She couldn't help it—Bai Zihan was still her younger brother, and his future was at stake.

"Disciple Bai Xueqing, although you are respected and highly regarded by the sect, that doesn't mean you can protect your brother from his crimes."

Elder Shen said stiffly.

"Still, this is too much. Expelling him from the sect should be enough."

Bai Xueqing angrily said.

She thought that if Bai Zihan had truly committed the crime, it would be better for him to go back to the clan where he could still live as the arrogant young master rather than being crippled.

"My words are final. Those who commit these crimes will face the same punishment—even if they come from a prestigious clan."

Elder Shen declared, as if righteous and unbiased.

This earned him favor from those with weaker backgrounds, who thought Elder Shen would protect them even against the powerful.

Bai Xueqing frowned.

It seemed like Elder Shen didn't want to compromise at all—and it was getting on her nerves.

At that moment, Shen Liang thought it was the perfect time to step forward.

"Junior Sister,"

Shen Liang whispered to Bai Xueqing in a low voice,

"Perhaps I can help plead for mercy from my uncle."

Bai Xueqing raised her eyebrow.

Indeed, although Elder Shen didn't listen to her, he might listen to his nephew.

"However," Shen Liang said, eyes flashing,

"I want Bai Zihan to apologize for what he did back at the Bai Clan."

He was planning to gain favor with Bai Xueqing—and get revenge for what he suffered.

Bai Xueqing thought for a second and nodded.

She thought that Bai Zihan apologizing was better than losing his future.

Moreover, she also knew that Bai Zihan had surely messed with Shen Liang, even if the servants said otherwise.

Meanwhile, Bai Zihan simply stood there.

Finally, he opened his mouth—Voice lazy, mocking, full of disdain.

"Sever my hand?"

He chuckled—low and hoarse—as if he couldn't believe the stupidity he was hearing.

"Is this really the punishment for my so-called crimes?"

Bai Zihan asked.

Elder Shen—and many others—thought that finally, Bai Zihan was coming to his senses, frightened by the punishment he was about to face.

"Yes!"

Elder Shen declared.

"Is that so?"

Bai Zihan paused for a moment before continuing.

"Then what if someone orchestrated the whole thing, and I was framed? Would the punishment be the same for them?"

Bai Zihan asked, voice steady and sharp.

"Yes! There's no mercy for those who commit such crimes — and those who frame others should face the same punishment!"

Elder Shen said sternly.

"Good. I hope you remember those words."

Turns Out, I'm In A Villain Clan! - Chapter 80: Arrival of Power[1,071 words]

Chapter 80: Arrival of Power

BANG!

The heavy doors of the Punishment Hall creaked open.

Everyone turned in unison.

Elder Qinglan walked in, her azure robes flowing like water—cold and graceful, every step light yet firm.

And behind her—Lin Xuan.

The same Lin Xuan who should've been locked away in cultivation, riding the high of his Heaven-grade Dao Resonance result.

Yet here he was, face serious, eyes sharp, striding just a half step behind Elder Qinglan like he'd personally dragged her over.

The crowd instantly buzzed again, whispering like cicadas.

Even Elder Shen's face stiffened.

Bai Zihan, meanwhile, simply smirked a little, raising his chin a fraction.

(Not bad, Lin Xuan!)

Bai Zihan thought casually.

He hadn't asked for help nor shared anything with him.

But Lin Xuan had obviously heard about his arrest somehow and immediately gone to Elder Qinglan—who, as Bai Zihan's Peak Master, couldn't ignore it.

It wasn't a huge favor... but Bai Zihan appreciated it.

This would further help him later and make things easier for him.

Elder Qinglan's jade-like eyes swept over the hall once, cold and sharp, freezing the whispers dead in their tracks.

She didn't even spare Elder Shen a greeting.

Instead, she went straight to the heart of the matter:

"Severing a disciple's hand over such an accusation? Reflection Cave imprisonment for a year? Expulsion on top of it? I don't think you can solely decide that on your own."

Her voice was calm—but layered with an undercurrent of authority.

After all, deciding the fate of a disciple of her Peak without even informing her was akin to directly provoking her—which Elder Shen had done.

Moreover, everyone knew Elder Qinglan was overprotective of her disciples, and without her permission, was akin to asking for trouble with her.

Elder Shen's expression turned ugly.

He had wanted to finish things up quietly, without Elder Qinglan finding out. After all, things always got messy when she was involved.

But of course, even with her here, he had no intention of backing down—especially not in front of so many disciples watching.

"Peak Master Qinglan," he said, voice strained, "the Punishment Hall is under my jurisdiction. I hope you won't interfere without understanding the full details."

The words were polite enough on the surface.

But the meaning was clear: Stay out of my damn business.

Elder Qinglan's lips curved slightly—though not into anything remotely resembling a smile.

"If your 'full details' result in crippling a Core Condensation disciple—one from the Bai Clan no less—over a pile of undergarments," she said codly, "then perhaps it's your judgment that needs reflecting."

Any sane person could see that while there should be fitting punishment for a crime, they should also consider the consequences.

Maybe the Heaven Sword Sect could get away with it if it were any other disciple—but Bai Zihan? The heir to the strongest clan in the Heaven Sword Sect?

That would plunge the Sect into chaos, with war against the Bai Clan practically guaranteed.

Perhaps even the Chu Clan and other clans allied with the Bai Clan—like Bai Zihan's mother's clan, which was also among the strongest—would get involved.

Murmurs broke out again—louder this time.

Who could have expected that in the Punishment Hall where they came to look for fun, two Elders would be on the verge of clashing?

Elder Shen gritted his teeth.

He couldn't blow up at Elder Qinglan.

She wasn't someone he could beat in a fight, at least, but he thought he could defeat her with logic.

Before Elder Shen could snap back, another voice rang out:

"Enough!"

The entire hall stiffened.

From the side door, two figures entered at once.

The first was a man in simple white robes, carrying a calm yet oppressive presence—the Sect Leader of Heaven Sword Sect himself.

And next to him, matching step for step—

An old man in silver-gray robes, his sharp eyes sweeping across the hall like an unsheathed sword.

Grand Elder Bai Ren!

The only Grand Elder of the Bai Clan still active.

The other Grand Elders were in seclusion, cultivating—an act that normally lasted for years.

But one Grand Elder would always remain outside to oversee matters, and right now, it was Bai Ren.

He was the one who had overseen the matter when certain Bai Clan elders wanted to strip Bai Zihan of his heir position.

The two of them stood side by side.

Bai Ren had clearly been informed.

He had come personally.

For Bai Zihan.

Well, Bai Zihan had indeed asked the clan for support, citing that he was being schemed against by certain elders of the sect and needed backup.

The evidence—and how he knew the date of the so-called 'trial'—could all be attributed to Fang Jinyan, who had informed him in detail.

Maybe he was trying to kiss ass, just like Kong Zhanhong had after being rewarded by Bai Zihan.

In any case, Bai Zihan hadn't expected his father to send a Grand Elder... but this was even better.

Grand Elder Bai Ren was, after all, stronger than the Sect Leader of the Heaven Sword Sect—and the only ones capable of stopping him would be the Ancestors themselves.

With such powerful backing, Bai Zihan had no reason to fear anyone.

Not that he ever did.

Elder Shen's pupils shrank slightly.

Elder Qinglan... and now even the Sect Leader?

Although he wasn't exactly sure who Bai Ren was or how strong he was, it was obvious the man wasn't someone simple if he could stand side-by-side with the Sect Leader.

Tian Yuheng's steady gaze swept across the hall. Even Elder Qinglan and Elder Shen lowered their heads slightly in greeting.

"Two Elders of our sect," the Sect Leader said, voice steady but carrying a faint edge, "arguing like street vendors in front of disciples. How unbecoming."

Neither Elder answered.

Tian Yuheng gave a small sigh, then turned his gaze to Bai Zihan—pausing just briefly, his brows furrowing, as if contemplating the situation.

At the same time, Bai Ren took half a step forward, his voice cold and cutting:

"If anyone believes they can cripple a direct heir of my Bai Clan over flimsy accusations and gossip, then they may step forward now and explain themselves."

A beat of heavy silence.

"And if they cannot—"

Bai Ren's voice sharpened like a blade.

"Then today, I will make sure the Punishment Hall learns the true cost of provoking the Bai Clan."