

U. Warlord 711

Chapter 711: A Magnificent Wedding

Within the palace, in a lavish room, two makeup artists were slaving away at the young woman who sat between them.

One of the makeup artists was male, and the other was female. The female artist was putting makeup on the young woman's exquisite face, while the male artist stood behind the young woman, thinking deeply as he felt her lustrous silver hair.

"My dear, this is hardly acceptable! How do you expect me to style your hair if you refuse to put it in a bun! What long, beautiful hair you have—but how can a bride leave her hair down?"

The young woman shook her head once more. "I refuse to put my hair up in a bun. Can't I leave it as is?"

The male artist pouted. "But then I won't be able to answer to my superiors... Why are you so reluctant to put your hair up today? It's the day of your wedding!"

The female artist sniffed. "What's there to be surprised about? Miss Qianqian is the most beautiful woman I've ever set eyes on, whether or not she dresses herself up."

The male artist scowled. "That may be, but her hairdo and makeup will only accentuate her natural beauty. Alright, alright—I'll rack my brains and come up with something."

The young woman's smile reminded one of flowers blooming. "Thank you."

Half an hour later, the female artist carefully slid a circlet over the young woman's long hair, before leaning back and clapping with excitement, "It's done! My dear, you're the most beautiful bride I've ever seen. Stand up and have a good look!."

The young woman slowly stood up. Her long, straight hair had been plaited into two braids which twined down her back, gems and jewels of all colors studded into her hair.

Her wedding gown, pure white, gleamed resplendent. Each gem on the gown was custom-made with a flawless starstone, and the entire gown took a thousand and one such stones. The largest stone was inlaid over her chest, cut into the shape of a heart, and surrounded by a border of small red jewels.

The young woman was a paragon of beauty, somehow simultaneously curvaceous and slim. Her veil hid her sparkling eyes and exquisite features, the natural extension of her beauty. Her wedding gown had no bustle, revealing the curves of her perfect body to the world. The circlet on her head was made of white gold and inlaid with starstones in silver and white, all cut into the shape of flowers.

As she glanced at her reflection in the mirror, Li Qianlin's pale blue eyes grew misty, and a faint sense of worry seemed to echo between her brows. Lightly pursing her lips, she asked, "Am I truly beautiful?"

Lush trees were carefully cultivated on the palatial grounds, blossoming with fragrant white-and-pink flowers. Around the trees were all sorts of strange and precious flowers, herbs, and shrubs—some priceless for their spiritual or medicinal properties, but all merely decoration for the land here.

Underneath the fragrant blooms and tall, lush trees, guests strode by talking to each other as they sipped on wine and champagne.

No one would dare to speak too loudly on such an occasion, for fear of ruining their carefully cultivated image of elegance.

Just then, two huge beasts flew through the air.

One seemed to take up the entirety of the skies, its body massive and covered in radiant scales. Antlers shining in all the colors of the rainbow adorned its head like a crown. Its imposing aura pressed on the guests despite how far away it still was.

The lifeforms on the ground, superior- and peak-grade alike, all lowered their bodies, as though paying respects to the lifeform from above.

The other lifeform was equally large, and its scales glittered with such radiance that even the sun seemed to pale in comparison. Its presence alone shook the ground.

A halo of light shone above its head, and nine pairs of wings kept it aloft, forming strong winds that buffeted the guests below. Their hearts pumped; the lifeform seemed to be staring at them with an air of disdainful arrogance.

"The star of the show's here," one of the guests whispered.

The two beasts carried a lavish palace between them, resplendent in its wealth. Just a jewel studded on its outer walls was comparable to the total wealth that the average guest possessed.

The floorboards themselves were made of a crystalline, jewel-like material, so precious an ordinary family could live on a small piece for a lifetime.

What stood out the most, however, was the radiant jewel that hung at the very top of the palace and gave off light. As the palace appeared more closely within sight, however, the guests realized that it wasn't a jewel at all, but rather the core of a disaster-grade lifeform. It gave off a shining glare, one so bright that it hurt one's eyes even looking at it from afar.

The worlds of east and west had been connected and in contact for quite some time, and they had met each other both in diplomacy and in war. This marriage, political as it was, would be a milestone in the history of both worlds.

Li Zongming was waiting on the lawn as the flying palace landed, followed by a dozen or so attendants. They stopped about thirty meters or so from where the giant beasts had landed. With a faint smile on his face, ever the polite host, Li Zongming welcomed the western delegation.

As the palace's doors sprung open, golden radiance melded into long stairs of light.

A long sheepskin carpet rolled down the steps, and a rain of flower petals floated down from the top of the palace.

A guest reached out and caught a petal in his hand, only to find it dissolving away like snow—it was made of energy.

The first people to step down from the palace were two armored knights, each on one side of the stairs, followed by an alien who looked like a lion walking upright.

The lion-man was over two meters tall, his body tawny red, with hands like an eagle's claws. His whiskers and mane were turning white, though he had combed them tidily behind his head. His appearance was beyond reproach.

Although he was smiling, his imposing aura made some of the guests take a step back.

These aliens of the world of the west were known as the Suanni.

Following behind the elder was a young Suanni, likewise garbed formally in a suit with black shoes and a black tie. His golden mane was brushed neatly, and he looked much like the elder who had stepped down before him.

His eyes shone brightly as he took in the sights.

Only when the two Suanni had descended did Li Zongming walk up to welcome them. The old man likewise stepped forward, and the two of them gave each other a warm hug. This old man, the king of the western realm, was Li Zongming's counterpart across the land.

"Duan Zisuan, you're as much of a hulk as ever," Li Zongming commented.

"From now on, we'll be relatives by marriage." Duan Zisuan guffawed and beckoned the young man behind him forward. "Duan Gen, greet your father-in-law!"

The golden-maned man stepped forward and bowed formally. "Duan Gen greets his father-in-law."

Li Zongming smiled. "There's no need for all the courtesy. You must have had a long journey, so let me lead you to your rooms for now. The ceremony is ready, and we can begin once you're prepared."

Duan Zisuan nodded. "It's about time. Thanks for your hard work."

A few dozen attendants stepped out of the palace, all of whom seemed stern and tight-lipped. They surrounded the father and son as they proceeded to their quarters.

As Li Zongming led them there, the wedding guests all greeted him. He returned each greeting one by one.

Duan Gen smiled warmly, with passion in his eyes that he couldn't hide. He couldn't help but think of the silver-haired, blue-eyed maiden's figure. His heart itched, as though thousands of ants were crawling over his skin. Her prideful gaze and disdainful expression, the aura of ice that surrounded her—he had wanted to ravage her in bed for quite some time, and today, he was finally going to get what he wanted.

Once the two Suanni had emerged unscathed from the throngs of guests and were in their personal chambers, Duan Zisuan asked, "Duan Gen, do you know how much sacrifice this wedding cost me?"

Duan Gen bowed. "Thank you for your assistance, Father."

Duan Zisuan shook his head. "No need for such words between father and son. Li Zongming has only one child, whom you'll be marrying. I need you to conquer her. The world of the east has been growing stronger and stronger these last few years, and Li Zongming has been a particularly effective ruler. I hope this marriage will prove to be a blessing for us."

Duan Gen requested, "Father, may I go see the bride?"

Duan Zisuan laughed. "You'll be able to see her shortly. Are you in such a hurry?"

Duan Gen's eyes shone. "I want to see what she looks like in her wedding gown."

Duan Zisuan sighed and waved at him. "Well, go on!"

Duan Gen licked his lips, his eyes turning as lustful as a beast's.

His life had been ruined five years ago, when he met Li Qianlin for the first time. She was fifteen, her beauty already having flowered. She looked at the world with pride in every fold of her body and disdain in her eyes, like a white lotus blooming in the solitude of a tall mountain. He dreamt of her at least weekly.

The first time he met her, he had been twenty-one. He vowed that he would obtain that ice-cold young woman, then make her into nothing more than his plaything. He wanted to see Li Qianlin beg for him, to lose that pride in her eyes and sink into despair, instead, to make her lick his toes like a lowly servant.

As these thoughts ran through his head, Duan Gen found himself getting an erection...

Chapter 712: An Uninvited Guest

"You're unbelievably pretty, Miss Qianqian!"

"You shine like the night sky."

"I'm sure his highness will be thrilled!"

After countless hours of makeup and then dress-up, her makeup artists and attendants were all very satisfied with their handiwork. They pronounced her the most beautiful young woman they had ever laid eyes on.

Although it was the day of her wedding, Li Qianlin couldn't summon up any joy. As though she were a girl walking to her execution, Li Qianlin had lost all hope in the future.

She had seen Duan Gen quite a few times before. The lecherous look he had thrown her way during their first encounter left an indelible impression on her mind, and she felt disgust whenever she saw his appearance.

He was strong, of that there was no doubt. There was no one who could best him among his generation in either the east or the west, and he was widely lauded to be the strongest person aside from the kings of the realms themselves.

However, strength was often negatively correlated with niceness, and Duan Gen was no exception. That only made him more dangerous and more detestable.

Upon coming to the realm of the east, he had played cruel tricks on almost all the talented youth of his generation, showing off his strength and proving his dominance.

Even so, this odious man would become her husband. That was her fate, a fate that couldn't be changed.

She was hailed as the goddess of the east, but despite her fame, she too knew how it felt to be a young girl. She had dreamt that, in her time of need, a prince would show himself and save her from

the cruel grasps of tyranny—or that she would be attracted to another person and, overcoming whatever trials came their way, end up together with him. It was an impossible daydream, but she still couldn't let it go.

Li Qianlin was intelligent, and she had accepted her place in life since she was a young girl.

Even if she were to marry a repulsive husband, she would play the role of virtuous wife to the best of her ability.

Suddenly, there was a commotion from outside the doors to her chamber. They swung open violently, and a man forced his way inside despite the protests of Li Qianlin's guards.

"Oh? I suppose this get-up... is acceptable." The man looked her up and down as though she were an object, then gave her a rather lackadaisical evaluation.

"Prince Duan Gen, I must express my heartfelt admiration at how brazenly you force your way into an unmarried maiden's chambers," Li Qianlin retorted.

"Ah? I'm your husband, aren't I? What nonsense are you spouting?"

"Just my fiance, if you please," Li Qianlin corrected him.

Duan Gen hadn't changed from before. He'd act like a gentleman in front of his betters, but rough, coarse, and brutish to anyone else, as though he were an undisciplined hound. He looked Li Qianlin up and down again as though he wanted to lick her all over, causing her to shudder.

"All of you, get out," Duan Gen commanded, smiling lecherously as he commanded her attendants and guards.

None of them knew how to react. Only when Duan Gen repeated himself did the attendants rush out. The guards, of course, were unwilling to let the princess go unsupervised.

Duan Gen's eyes narrowed dangerously.

Worried that Duan Gen would target them in the future, Li Qianlin commanded them to leave the room.

Duan Gen scowled and called out toward their backs, "You're all untrained dogs—looks like I'll have to break you in in the future myself!"

"They're not dogs," Li Qianlin protested, "but my loyal subordinates."

"You're still bickering with me? I remember how you looked at me the first time we met—and I knew then that I wanted you to become my plaything."

Duan Gen sneered as he glanced at Li Qianlin's stubborn face, then suddenly grabbed her hand.

"Ouch!"

Duan Gen's hand, like a steel pincer, made Li Qianlin yelp in pain. He grew excited at seeing her pained expression. "I must say, your disgust is ravishing. How about we consummate our marriage in advance?"

"You dare?!"

"Dare? What don't I dare to do? Cry out as loudly as you want—the louder you are, the more excited I'll be. I've tested the soundproofing in this room, you know. I had my fun with one of your attendants in here, and no one could hear anything from the outside."

"You! You were the one who killed Tao?!"

Li Qianlin's eyes widened in disbelief. Her closest attendant, the girl she had grown up with since childhood, was more like a sworn sister to her than a servant. Half a month ago, she had died of mysterious causes. Her body was found thrown into a well, and she had clearly been brutalized before her death.

Because Li Qianlin's marriage was nigh, the king of the realm had sealed off all information regarding the affair, and Tao was given a quiet burial. Duan Gen had visited the palace the night before Tao's corpse was found.

"For a servant to stare at me so brazenly—well, I couldn't let that slide. I have to say, I did enjoy myself. I dug out her eyeballs, and she was moaning piteously as blood dripped out of her sockets."

Li Qianlin had expected that she would be able to grow out of her dislike of him, that Duan Gen would ultimately turn a new leaf with her careful guidance, but it looked as though that had only been a childish fantasy.

Some people would never change.

Li Qianlin's eyes grew resolute. She couldn't let herself be married to such a nightmare.

"Let go!" With a scream, the young woman kicked at Duan Gen's groin as she began to resist.

The unexpected kick caused Duan Gen to loosen his grip, freeing Li Qianlin from his grasp. As the only heir of the king, she could hardly just be a pretty face. Genetic energy filled her body in an instant.

"You wretch, you kicked me!" Unfortunately, her opponent was far too strong. The king of the west had heaped his son with all sorts of treasures. With a roar, darkness consumed the entire room, trapping Li Qianlin in an airless cage.

Li Qianlin bit her lips. Only now did she realize just how strong her new husband would be—as strong as a king of the realm, far stronger than the rumors had claimed.

Duan Gen drew closer and closer, but even as Li Qianlin's face grew pale, her eyes remained resolute.

"Your eyes are very pretty, and I do like how you continue to resist me. I want to dye them in the colors of pain and despair—to play with my prey, to force them to submit to me." Duan Gen cackled as he drew even closer. "Li Qianlin, the first time I met you, when you stared at me just like that, I swore to myself I'd drown you in the depths of despair."

The last sliver of light winked out as Duan Gen continued fanning Li Qianlin's fears. He reached out to her with a hand, thinking to grip her lower jaw tightly and force her to look at him.

Li Qianlin despaired.

"Li Qianlin, how do you think it'll feel to have lost your virginity before the wedding banquet? Bearing with the pain of your loins while you greet the wedding guests—just what sort of expression would you make, I wonder?"

"You damned bastard! I, Li Qianlin, will never submit to you, even in death!" Genetic energy roiled around her body, and she suddenly spat out a mouthful of blood.

Before she could do anything more, however, the space in the room suddenly seemed to freeze up.

"Haha! You don't think I'd let you commit suicide, do you?" Duan Gen's lecherous hand finally made its way to Li Qianlin's lower jaw, but it suddenly vanished the moment it did so.

Li Qianlin had never expected that someone would stand up for her in her time of need, saving her from her misery and vanquishing the bastard in front of her.

As darkness overwhelmed her, she had prayed for salvation—but that lasted only an instant before cold logic and rationality took over. They were in the world of the east, in her father's palace!

Except for her father, no one would be able to stop this man, and no one would have expected him to be right here in her rooms. Her father would be very busy preparing for the wedding, and there was almost no chance she would be found.

Even so, when Duan Gen's hand disappeared, her eyes lit up in hope.

A man appeared behind Duan Gen.

The next moment, as Duan Gen's techniques shattered, she found herself able to move again.

She tilted her head and stared at her savior. Among the men she had seen, the man's face was hardly better than ordinary, but his warm gaze made her feel safer than anyone else to date.

His deep, profound eyes seemed to have a story to tell; she felt suddenly as though she knew him, even though she was certain she had never met him before.

He reminded her of the king of the east.

How had this man made his way in here?

They were in her personal chambers, on the eve of her wedding! All those who were rich and influential enough had secured an invitation to her wedding, and the security presence from these combined personages, along with the heightened security from both kings of the realms themselves, made this palace all but a fortress.

Even so, this mysterious man had somehow made it into her chambers. Furthermore, he had even managed to creep up behind Duan Gen, a man as strong as a king of the realm, while evading his notice entirely. None of the guards from outside seemed to have noticed his presence, either.

In other words, he had to be far stronger than even Duan Gen himself—he had to be on another dimension of strength entirely.

His face was rather youthful, but Li Qianlin was sure she knew everyone of note around her age in the worlds of east and west.

Duan Gen trembled subtly. "As a guard that the king of the east assigned to Qianqian, you're not bad—"

Zhang Lie clarified Duan Gen's misunderstanding with a simple action. He kneed Duan Gen's groin from the back, crushing Duan Gen's testicles like persimmons.

Before he could react, Duan Gen found his head crashing into the ceiling. He slammed back down to the floor, a patch of blood forming by his pants. He clutched his groin and yelled out in pain, curling up into a ball.

Zhang Lie kicked him and slammed down hard with one boot over his stomach, remarking leisurely, "Indeed, the soundproofing in these chambers is excellent."

Chapter 713: Treatment Against Perversion

"Your cries aren't too bad yourself!" Zhang Lie listened to Duan Gen's pained howls with a grin on his face. His genetic energy filled the rooms, and he controlled all the space within.

Duan Gen clutched his groin and yelled out in so high-pitched a voice it seemed as though he had just been castrated. "I'm the prince of the west and prince by marriage of the east! No matter who you are, the fact that you've hurt me will be your end. My father will kill you!"

Zhang Lie smiled. He walked forward and stepped on Duan Gen's head. "Which of your hands touched her?"

Duan Gen shrieked, "You bastard! How dare you step on your master's head—you're really asking to die, aren't you? When my men come, they'll tear your corpse to pieces!"

"Your men? You want them to see you begging me for mercy, is that it?"

Zhang Lie stared at the pitiful man in disdain as he slowly crushed his right arm. He infused pitch-black corrosive energy into his palm, causing Duan Gen to screech in pain as his skin and bones melted away.

He howled in rage and madness, "I'll kill you, I'll kill you for sure! You'll suffer my pain thousandfold! I'll dig out your eyes and have a hundred men penetrate your body, I'll pour oil up your ass and burn you alive!"

Perhaps an ordinary person might be scared by Duan Gen's threats, but Zhang Lie was wholly unfazed.

As for Li Qianlin, she could barely believe her eyes. Duan Gen, first among his generation, who had defeated countless legends, was nothing more than a baby in front of this man, without any ability to defend himself whatsoever.

Li Qianlin scrutinized the man before him more closely. From his appearance, it was evident that he didn't belong to this world. Either he came from other worlds in the third realm, or he was a lifeform from the Milky Way.

However, she didn't understand how he had suddenly appeared in her rooms, nor why he had bothered. Most people would steer clear of trouble. As Duan Gen stated, he was the prince of the west, and he would soon be prince of the east by marriage as well. Laying a hand on him meant simultaneously offending two kings of the realm.

Li Qianlin was Duan Gen's fiancée, and those who weren't in the know could very well write off Duan Gen's interactions with her as foreplay between husband and wife.

Perhaps because she had felt so hopeless, the fact that someone was beating Duan Gen up made a feeling of exuberance well up from her heart. It spread throughout her entire body and filled her with relief, excitement, and bliss.

But the show wasn't over yet.

After crushing Duan Gen's arm, Zhang Lie parroted Duan Gen's words back to him.

"You said you enjoyed playing with those who resist you, that you wanted to watch them submit, didn't you? I'm much the same way—but what I like most is seeing perverted bastards like you die the same way you've hurt others in the past. Your gaze looks just perfect—you really are mentally ill, aren't you? Don't worry, I can cure you no matter how severe your illness!"

Zhang Lie poked out Duan Gen's eyeballs with his fingers, causing them to explode leaving nothing more than sockets behind.

Duan Gen clutched his face in pain, blood seeping out between his fingers. His opponent was clearly able to remove them swiftly and cleanly, but he had chosen a far crueler method instead.

Zhang Lie continued, "I love seeing perverted bastards like you struggle to no avail. In the end, you'll have to kneel down in front of me and beg for mercy—nothing could make me happier."

Zhang Lie repeated the words that Duan Gen had said to Li Qianlin, making her realize that he seemed to be taking revenge on Duan Gen for her.

Li Qianlin racked her brain trying to think of where she might have encountered Zhang Lie before, but she had no recollection of any interaction with him. But why else would he stand up for her?

"After losing your dick, your eyeballs, and one arm, I wonder what sort of expression you'll make at the wedding banquet? Will you stand before them with your pain, shame, and weakness obvious to one and all? I really am quite curious."

Zhang Lie lifted Duan Gen up by his mane, then smashed a fist into his stomach, cracking his bones and sending Duan Gen convulsing as he vomited out blood.

Zhang Lie reached out and grabbed one of Duan Gen's legs, then pulled on it until it tore off his body.

Only then did Duan Gen finally lose hope.

"Hey, you'd better not die just yet—I'm only halfway done with you!"

Duan Gen understood that his opponent was a crazed man, that his threats against Zhang Lie were meaningless. He began to beg for mercy. "Please, let me go! I understand my wrongdoing now, I really do!"

Zhang Lie peered at him with interest. "Oh? I don't think so. Didn't you say you wanted a hundred men to penetrate you, to pour oil up your ass and light you aflame? You can't die until then, you know— I won't let you."

Duan Gen shivered involuntarily. He pleaded as he smashed his forehead against the ground, "Please, let me go! I won't do it again, never again!"

Li Qianlin was very surprised that Duan Gen, whom everyone called a demon king behind his back, was actually willing to beg for mercy.

Duan Gen was a perverted bastard, but that didn't make him a fool. Instead, he had to be far more intelligent than an average person to hide his perversion.

At the moment, he was planning to give up his pride and beg for mercy until his father was able to save him. Then, he would pay Zhang Lie back a hundred times, a thousand times what he had suffered at his hands.

Neither would he let Li Qianlin go. She was surely affiliated with that bastard in some way!

"Good, good! You're still a kid, aren't you? I'll take it easy on you and give you one opportunity to prove yourself."

Zhang Lie glanced around the room and finally set his eyes on a crystal high heel, which he picked up.

"Come, shove this up your ass!" [1]

"What?!" Duan Gen's eyes widened in disbelief.

Zhang Lie continued, "You want to turn over a new leaf, don't you? Prove it. Shove this up your ass and crawl out from this room. I'll believe you then."

Duan Gen shouted, "I'll be ruined! My reputation—"

"You're unwilling to do it, then?" Zhang Lie's face turned dark.

Chapter 714: The Scene of the Wedding

Duan Gen could feel the killing intent gathering by Zhang Lie's body. If he didn't do as Zhang Lie demanded, Zhang Lie really might kill him!

Just as he was about to plead for mercy again, Zhang Lie, who was losing his patience, stuffed one heel into his mouth. Then, he looked threateningly at him, then at the other heel.

Duan Gen wanted to shriek, but the heel was a surprisingly effective gag. Finally, unable to take Zhang Lie's glare any longer, he penetrated himself with the heel. Blood fountained out of his ass, and his whole body began to tremble.

Even so, Zhang Lie wasn't done with him just yet. With a quick prod of his fingers, Zhang Lie crippled Duan Gen's cultivation.

By then, Li Qianlin had curled up into a small ball by the edge of the room as though she were a wounded rabbit. "Just who are you?"

Zhang Lie was stronger than Duan Gen. His attention hadn't been directed at her yet, but who was to say he wouldn't suddenly turn on her?

Zhang Lie glanced at her and couldn't help stifling a smile. "Who am I? A prince come to save you in times of need, of course."

Li Qianlin raised an eyebrow. "You liar—you don't look like a prince at all! More like a demon king who wants to steal a princess away."

Zhang Lie's lips quirked. "Will you leave with the demon king, then, princess?"

She felt almost as though she were drowning, and Zhang Lie her only lifeline.

Even so, she resisted. "Father told me not to trust strangers."

"Well, it's not up to you." Zhang Lie lifted Li Qianlin up by force as she began to pound his chest with her fists, but she could do him no harm. All she did was sense the scorching heat radiating from his body, as well as his firm chest.

After all, Li Qianlin's genetic energy had been temporarily sealed.

"What are you doing? Are you really going to abduct me?"

Zhang Lie kicked Duan Gen, who lay in a heap on the ground. "You won't leave? Do you really want to marry this bastard?"

Li Qianlin shook her head violently.

"In that case, leave with me!"

Zhang Lie kicked the door to her rooms open. Her guards and attendants were sprawled on the floor, and Li Qianlin couldn't help but be nervous when she saw their bodies.

Zhang Lie explained, "Don't worry, I didn't kill any of them. They're all just asleep."

Li Qianlin asked, "Where are you bringing me?"

"Anywhere's better than staying behind and marrying that ass, surely?"

A look of revulsion crossed Li Qianlin's face. "I don't mind a cripple, but I won't marry a bastard like him."

Zhang Lie smiled with satisfaction—this sounded like the Li Qianlin he knew.

She nodded firmly. "You're right. Anywhere would be better than this."

In his last life, Li Qianlin had broken free from Duan Gen's grasp, kicked him in the groin until his testicles burst, and fled from her wedding. In her race to freedom, she leapt through two different worlds and encountered Zhang Lie for the first time. "Don't worry. I won't hurt you, and I won't let anyone else hurt you!"

She had died for him in her past life; in this life, he would make sure her previous sacrifice wasn't for naught. He had the ability to protect her, after all, even against the likes of Duan Zisuan.

Zhang Lie's eyes grew firm, causing Li Qianlin to become even more confused. She had never met this person; why would he do so much for her?

She asked, "I still don't know your name."

"I'm Zhang Lie."

"Zhang Lie..." Li Qianlin murmured.

Zhang Lie glanced at the palace, still adorned in shades of pink and white. "A festive occasion, isn't it? No wonder you're dressed like this."

Li Qianlin blushed. "My clothes are ruined."

"Here, for you."

Zhang Lie tossed her the disaster-grade gown of starry night he had recently obtained.

Li Qianlin was familiar with these curious soulshards that the aliens of the Milky Way were able to procure, and she had some of her own, but nothing of this quality.

Zhang Lie smirked. "For such a wedding to be without a bride and groom is truly a pity..."

"What are you planning?"

"What do you think?"

When Zhang Lie revealed his plan, Li Qianlin glanced at him as though he had grown a second head.

"Are you crazy?!" Were all kidnappers so bold these days?

In the main pavilion, classical music played in the background and the fragrant scent of beautiful, elegant flowers wafted in the air.

The rows of white seats had long since been filled as the guests gathered to witness this historic wedding that would unite the two worlds of east and west.

A priestly middle-aged man stood at the very front of the gathering, a smile on his face as he waited for the bride and groom to arrive.

"Tonight, under the auspices of the moon and the night sky, we shall witness the pairing of two stars." The woman who would moderate and act as hostess for the wedding ceremony stepped out from behind the stage, her voice clear and crisp.

"My goodness—it's Dong Mingxing! She's the hostess for tonight's ceremony!"

Even the guests, famous and influential as they were, were shocked by the choice of hostess.

She was dressed in an elegant but understated close-fitting red dress, cut in such a way that one of her silver-white thighs could barely be seen. A mink shawl was draped over her shoulders. She looked the very picture of mature beauty.

"To think the king of the east would manage to secure the top performer of the world for this wedding—well, I suppose I can hardly expect any less!"

"Apparently, even the famous and wealthy have a hard time scheduling even a simple meal with her."

"I'd die for a night alone with her!"

Many of the guests were immediately enraptured.

"Only someone like the king of the east would be able to command her time..."

"No, that's not right. She's here only because of the bride—I heard that the king of the east's daughter was like a niece to her."

"I'm curious as to this mysterious bride—she's hardly made a public appearance before, has she?"

The murmurs of the shocked guests didn't faze Dong Mingxing's speech.

"Tonight, in this sacred chamber, the bride and groom shall be tethered forevermore in holy matrimony. On this auspicious occasion, the most fortunate and gifted couple of the east shall be united as one." Her voice was mellifluous and effortlessly charming.

One of the guests whispered to his neighbor, "Won't Dong Mingxing's presence upstage the bride?"

"Right—if she's even prettier than the bride, then..."

"The king of the east is no fool, and he wouldn't allow her to host the ceremony if that were the case. Who knows? The bride might eclipse even Dong Mingxing in beauty!"

The guests' anticipation rose to a climax.

Chapter 715: A Shocking Appearance

Dong Mingxing's mellifluous voice caught the hearts and ears of the present guests. "On this joyous, festive occasion, we stand together in the palace atop Mt. Yun in witness of the marriage between Mr. Duan Gen and Ms. Li Qianlin. I am honored to be the hostess for the wedding tonight."

The guests chattered away. "Could there really be a more beautiful woman than Dong Mingxing?"

Many of the guests staunchly refused to consider this possibility.

"First, please allow me to offer my heartfelt thanks and welcome to all the guests that are gathered here. Let the wedding ceremony begin!" Dong Mingxing raised her arms high up into the air.

On that signal, countless golden superior-grade lifeforms took to the skies, forming a gigantic golden flock. Golden powder scattered through the air reflected the evening sun, shading the entire sky in streaks of red and gold.

The guests witnessing the ceremony from below gasped in awe. Only someone like the king of the realm would be able to marshall a flock of superior-grade lifeforms—and for nothing more than to set the ambience for his daughter's wedding, too.

The king of the east smiled. The preparations for this wedding had taken an inordinate amount of work, but it was also an ideal stage for him to show off his strength.

Two pairs of ten peak-grade dragons appeared from either side of the pavilion, each pulling a gigantic, ornate carriage. Those within the carriages flung golden confetti and flower petals out their windows, and behind each carriage trailed a long banner of light.

The dragons on the left were yoked to a carriage with a silver banner, and those on the right, a gold banner. The two sets of dragons circled and revolved around each other before pulling apart, their motions so organized that it was apparent how much effort had been put into training them.

The dragons made their final revolution in the air, their trajectories criss-crossing and forming two hearts with the banners behind the carriages. Just then, a multicolored beam of light struck the center of the two hearts like an arrow, dyeing the entire sky in rainbow light.

"Now, as the band plays an original wedding march, let us welcome the bride and groom with thunderous applause!"

The guests all began to clap vigorously as the band started to play—but even as the spotlights gathered on stage, after a pregnant silence descended long after the last guest had stopped clapping, the stage remained empty.

No shadow of either the bride or groom could be seen.

Dong Mingxing coughed politely to break the tension. "It appears that the stars of today's show are a little nervous!"

Li Zongming and Duan Zisuan's smiles froze on their faces.

"Please, let's give our stars a bit more time!"

...

When no one made an appearance even after her pronouncement, even Dong Mingxing seemed to start fretting. The guests began to grow visibly displeased despite her best attempt to keep the ceremony proceeding forward absent the two stars of the show.

Li Zongming beckoned an attendant over. "Have someone check on just what's happening with the bride and groom."

"...today, we witness a match made in heaven, a fusion of east and west, a distillation of beauty and talent!"

Just as Dong Mingxing was about to run out of platitudes to throw at the crowd, two figures finally made an appearance from backstage. She sighed in relief as one of the staffers gave her an "OK" gesture, and she turned to the crowd. "Let us, once again, welcome the bride and groom with thunderous applause!"

Arrayed along the stage were thirty-six children, forming a choir as they sang a lilting melody.

As planned, the brightest and most extravagant fireworks were released at that very moment, dyeing the skies in phantasmagorical color.

"Now, we witness the conjoining of two hearts made for each other! Now, we witness the moment of holy matrimony! Now, we tether man and woman, husband and wife! Together, united in mind and body, they shall bear the ordeals of life, whatever wind and rain may come their way!"

Dong Mingxing's pleasing voice sparked the excitement of the crowd.

The lights on stage dimmed as a group of young and middle-aged people took to the stage, carrying bouquets of flowers and candles with them. They sang in low, pitched voices, their candles, though weak individually, brightening up the entire stage as they gathered in a circle.

These singers were the closest relatives, companions and confidantes of the bride and groom, and they came bearing well wishes.

Meanwhile, Dong Mingxing strode down the stage and began singing alongside the children, her sonorous voice intoxicating the crowd.

A group of ten page boys and flower girls then appeared on stage, the two youngest at the very front, scattering flower petals from a basket, whereas the older ones at the back held candles up high. The procession was arranged in height and age, as though representing the passing of time.

Finally, the two stars of the wedding made their appearance.

Even before they took to the stage, the guests felt as though they could sense the impression of a starry night sky, one whose natural beauty stunned and overwhelmed all.

The bride stepped forward in a gossamer gown, ethereal and otherworldly in her appearance. The luminous fabric glowed in the candlelight, making her look as though she had descended from the heavens.

If there really were angels in this world, she would be the most beautiful among them.

Her flawless gown molded an equally flawless body. The curves and arcs of her body were elegant, lithe, and graceful, and the guests felt themselves charmed by her presence.

Her wedding gown might well have been holy garb.

Her face was hidden behind a veil, and all that the guests could see of her shining sapphire eyes were flashes of blue light. That and the contours of her face alone were enough to capture the imagination of many.

The bride was always the focus of the wedding; this wedding was no exception. No, she was more than just the focus!

The instant Li Qianlin walked out on stage, the entire world seemed to lose its color, as though everything was shrouded in a layer of dream and shadow.

The guests' attention were completely gathered on the bride standing on stage, the most beautiful bride anyone present had ever seen. Heaven and earth seemed to fade to black and white, leaving the bride as the only source of color in the world.

Her appearance, as beautiful as a delicate flower, as the finest jade, brooked no criticism. Her graceful, dignified bearing had no equal in the realm.

Even the most grandiose praise would fail to capture all her beauty.

The moment she appeared, she was as splendid as the sun. As she stepped forward, she eclipsed even the moon in purity.

She effortlessly claimed the hearts and minds of all present.

Even the two kings of the realm, who were the most worldly among them all, were stunned by Li Qianlin's beauty. A goddess might well pale in comparison to her.

Chapter 716: A Wedding for the Ages

While the guests were stupefied by Li Qianlin's charm, one of them murmured, "No wonder the king of the east was willing to have Dong Mingxing host the wedding. She really is absurdly beautiful..."

Li Qianlin's beauty would be besmirched even by the highest of praises. The men were shocked; the women were jealous. The diaphanous gown seemed to illuminate itself without any source of light

whatsoever. It made Li Qianlin's body look as though it were studded with jewels—this wasn't a wedding gown, it was the raiment of the gods!

Dong Mingxing herself was captivated.

Many of the female guests murmured to each other as they tried to identify the designer of the gown.

Even Li Zongming was openmouthed. He didn't seem capable of reconciling the woman on stage with his daughter.

When had she become so beautiful?

Li Qianlin's beauty was stunning to begin with, but what really allowed her to capture the attention and imagination of the crowd was the disaster-grade gown of starry night.

Duan Zisuan was very pleased with his new daughter-in-law.

Li Zongming came to his senses after sneaking a few more peeks at his daughter. My daughter is really pretty, isn't she? That lad got a bargain.

Li Zongming glanced at the groom, who stared at the crowd with a resolute gaze and deep, intelligent eyes. He was dressed neatly in a suit. He was not particularly handsome, and could hardly compare to Li Qianlin in that regard, but he stood as her equal largely due to his aura, which flared as though it would devour everything in sight. The two of them, standing together, looked like a matched pair.

Strangely enough, Duan Gen's body was wrapped up in colored fog, and only the outline of his body could be seen from afar.

The colored fog was so impenetrable that even Li Zongming and Duan Zisuan were unable to overcome it.

Li Zongming thought that it was something the westerners had planned, worried that Li Qianlin's beauty would make her seem far too superior a match to Duan Gen. On the other hand, Duan Zisuan thought that it was something the easterners had planned, worried that Duan Gen would eclipse Li Qianlin instead.

The two kings' complementary misunderstanding made Zhang Lie's ridiculous plan go as planned.

Everyone's focus was on the bride, and the weak illumination on stage meant that no one realized that the groom's identity had changed.

The bride and groom, holding hands, walked toward the front of the stage. Their other hands, they held up in the air, four fingers extended. One finger was for loyalty, another for fidelity, the third for abiding love, and the last for mutual partnership.

Li Qianlin felt as though she were in a dream.

"Under the auspices of heaven and earth, I so swear that, be it in illness or in strife, in pain or poverty, my love for my partner shall not waver."

"Under the auspices of heaven and earth, I so swear that, be it in illness or in strife, in pain or poverty, my love for my partner shall not waver."

The bride and groom made matching bows to each other.

The customs of the worlds of east and west were different from those on Earth. The will of the world itself would recognize and approve of their marriage, and they would receive corresponding marks as a result.

"So sworn: Li Qianlin."

Li Zongming watched on with benevolence. He had raised his daughter for two whole decades, and it was finally time to let her go.

"So sworn: Zhang Lie!"

Duan Zisuan's eyes suddenly widened in shock. Zhang Lie?! What? Who was this?!

Before either king could react, the skies lit up in gold. A thousand stars shone brightly, heaping well wishes on the newlywed couple. Two beams of rainbow light tangled in the air and landed on the two newlyweds' foreheads, a proof of marriage.

When newlyweds swore vows to each other under the will of the world, they would be bound together for life. If they ever were to betray each other, they would be punished by the will of the world.

The beam from the will of the world caused the rainbow fog surrounding Zhang Lie to dissipate, and the bride and groom were revealed in their entirety.

The guests grew silent, and Li Zongming jumped up in his seat.

The groom holding hands with the bride wasn't Duan Gen—he was a stranger no one knew! Who was this 'Zhang Lie'? Why was he marrying his daughter? Whose idea was this? Where was Duan Gen?

Duan Zisuan was equally flummoxed to find an unknown groom standing on the stage. What had happened to his son? What was this farce?

"Who's that?" Duan Zisuan was so angry that his face was turning green. This was his son's wedding, but where was his son? This was a public insult to the world of the west! In rage, he thundered, "Li Zongming, do you take me for a fool?"

"Calm down, Duan Zisuan! I don't know what's going on either." Li Zongming suddenly twisted his head and commanded, "Stop the music!"

Only then did the guests finally start to react.

They glanced at the king of the west, thundering in rage, and were utterly baffled. Wasn't the wedding going perfectly? The bride was a beauty for the ages! What was there to be upset about?

Only belatedly did they realize that the groom wasn't a Suanni—he was from an alien race.

"Hold on, isn't something wrong?"

The bride was far more beautiful than expected, and that beauty gave an otherworldly shine to the wedding. The groom, however... wasn't the groom supposed to be a Suanni?

What did he call himself, Zhang Lie? Who was this Zhang Lie?

The bride was the original bride, the wedding was the original wedding, the kings of the realm were the original kings of the realm, but the groom... was someone different?

Even Dong Mingxing seemed baffled. "Just what is that girl thinking?"

This was Dong Mingxing's first time being a host for a wedding, and it was an honor for her to even agree to it—was Li Qianlin trying to make a clown of her?

Dong Mingxing knew that Li Qianlin was a serious girl, but upon looking at the ersatz groom on stage, she couldn't help but feel as though she was at the receiving end of a prank. And if she, who actually knew Li Qianlin, felt this way, what would the guests think?

For this historical marriage to suddenly become so farcical...

The indigenous people of the worlds of east and west were unable to accept what had happened, but the aliens of the Milky Way were behaving in another manner entirely. After all, they quickly recognized the identity of the man on stage—he was a human!

The starbeasts were particularly close allies of the human race, and they recognized Zhang Lie immediately.

"Isn't that... the champion of mankind, Zhang Lie?!"

"Really?!"

"Really?!"

"It really is!"

Many of the aliens from the Milky Way were gobsmacked.

Zhang Lie had truly made a splash and an indelible impression in front of this gathered crowd.

For him to be replacing the groom on such a momentous occasion—no one could believe it; it was the stuff of whimsy and daydreams.

"No matter who he is, he's a true man, I say!"

"Hear, hear!"

Some praised Zhang Lie for his courage, but others disparaged his idiocy.

"A true man, perhaps—but one who doesn't have long to live..."

"If not for all the guests present, the two kings of the realm would have ripped him to pieces already!"

Li Zongming leapt up onto the stage. "Who are you?!" To his daughter, he asked, "Just what's going on?"

Zhang Lie stood with a grin on his face, ignoring the kings growing more and more agitated. His eyes were for his bride and his bride alone. Even Zhang Lie hadn't expected to end up marrying Li Qianlin in such fashion.

As for Li Qianlin herself, she was even more confused. She didn't know how to begin the story of her convoluted and unimaginable evening...

Chapter 717: I Was Forced

She could hardly say that her fiance was about to rape her, and a mysterious man crippled him as a result. She didn't know this man at all, and no one would believe her words—at the very least, she couldn't even believe what had happened, and she had witnessed everything!

Why would a stranger save her, join her on stage, and even marry her? And why did she swear this binding oath that would intertwine their lives for now and ever after?

While Li Qianlin was lost in her thoughts, Zhang Lie gripped her hand tightly and shielded her with his body. "Don't worry. I'm here."

He turned to the crowd and announced, "You've all heard, haven't you? My name is Zhang Lie!"

Duan Zisuan stood up in anger, and his two guards shot toward Zhang Lie like bolts of lightning.

As the shocked crowd watched on, their bodies rapidly grew, tearing their clothes and revealing their frightening true forms.

The guard on the left morphed into a four-meter tall baboon-like creature, whereas the guard on the right transformed into a five-meter tall giant seemingly clad in a tiger's pelt. Muscles bulged all over his body.

The two beastmen crashed into the bouquets arrayed all over the stage, sending a storm of petals into the air.

"Protect the guests!" Li Zongming shouted. The eastern guards rushed out from the perimeter and escorted the guests away.

The baboon-like guard howled and pounced toward Zhang Lie with such a fierce expression that even the guests watching from a distance gasped audibly.

"Scram!" Zhang Lie commanded. No one saw what he had done, but the next moment, the fierce baboon's entire body turned charred black as he flew out into the distance like a bullet.

The tigerman, who had also pounced forward in an attempt to rescue Li Qianlin from Zhang Lie's grasp, stilled and scrabbled to stop his forward momentum.

Suddenly, punch after punch rained down from the heavens, causing so much destruction it seemed as though the stage of the wedding had been the birthplace of a disaster.

Amidst the sudden bursts of genetic energy, the guests instinctively shielded themselves as Zhang Lie brought Li Qianlin soaring into the air. In the middle of his leap, he morphed into a bolt of golden lightning, carrying Li Qianlin with him as he flew off into the distance.

He was so quick that no one was able to catch up to him, not that many dared to do so after his display of strength.

The carriages and steeds were struck the most badly by the punches that suddenly rained down from the heavens. The superior- and peak-grade lifeforms were sent flying, and the carriages themselves had all been overturned.

The lifeforms trembled as they cowered on the ground, even more frightened than if they had encountered a disaster-grade lifeform.

The wedding was a wreck; what should have been a glorious ceremony that would be remembered for a generation had, in just a matter of minutes, been reduced to nothing but rubble.

The bolt of golden lightning, carrying Li Qianlin, fled thousands of meters away in an instant. Just as they left the territory of Mt. Yun, however, a golden barrier suddenly flashed into existence before Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie was forced to halt in front of that barrier, still carrying Li Qianlin by her waist.

On the other side of the barrier was the hostess of the ceremony, Dong Mingxing.

Many knew of Dong Mingxing's beauty and talents, but few were aware of her true strength in cultivation. In fact, though few knew it, she was even stronger than Duan Gen.

Dong Mingxing blocked Zhang Lie's path. By then, she had changed into a suit of golden armor for combat.

"Qianqian, just what are you doing?" Dong Mingxing called out, exasperated.

Li Qianlin chuckled. "Would you believe me if I said I were kidnapped?"

Dong Mingxing gaped at her. She had sworn her vows with perfect sincerity—or the will of the world wouldn't have marked the bride and groom! She didn't know just what had happened to cause Li Qianlin to ruin her own wedding, but her priority had to be to save her at any cost.

"Leave Qianqian behind, or die!" Dong Mingxing shouted coldly.

"Move aside!" At least toward Li Qianlin's friend, Zhang Lie would be a little more courteous.

"I'll let you go as long as you leave Qianqian behind. This is your only chance to live: none among my generation is my equal." Dong Mingxing was confident in her strength and ability.

Zhang Lie had no intention of repeating himself. He shook his head forcefully, then flung a punch straight at Dong Mingxing.

Dong Mingxing sniffed as she deflected the punch with her spear. "Don't you understand?"

"Hah! Even a king of the realm wouldn't be able to stop me, Zhang Lie, from leaving. But you're Qianqian's friend, and I don't want to hurt you." Zhang Lie shrugged.

"Hm?" Dong Mingxing suddenly sensed something from the periphery of her vision—a huge shadow had appeared out of thin air, a red glow emanating from its back. With a crisp snap, her spear was broken in two. A huge force flung her far into the distance.

Where Dong Mingxing had stood was now a red genetic lifeform, about twenty or thirty meters tall, whose carapace shone a lustrous rose red, as though it were made of precious gems. The protrusions emanating from its carapace were red at their base and turned to a purple-golden hue by their tips. Blood-red lightning crackled in the skies, causing the lifeform's carapace to glow even more brightly.

As though it had survived countless battlefields, the lifeform's eyes were filled with killing intent. Its arms were like a reaper's scythes, and wings fluttered so quickly they were almost invisible on its back. The lightning grew more and more intense.

"That, that's—"

Dong Mingxing had stabilized herself in the air, but her eyes were filled with shock. The lifeform that had suddenly appeared in front of her was none other than Red Comet.

"A fifth-level beast...!"

A legendary fifth-level beast was rare even in the worlds of east and west, and only a king of the realm of a large world would be able to command them.

Even a king of the realm of a medium-sized world had no such capability.

Dong Mingxing suddenly thought she understood what was happening. Indeed, only a king of the realm would be so daring, so strong, as to snatch away a bride on the eve of this momentous wedding! Who else would dare to destroy a historical marriage between two worlds? Who else would be able to control a fifth-level beast?

It was apparent that this king was, for some reason or another, unwilling to see the worlds of east and west forge an alliance.

By then, Zhang Lie, whose departure had been deterred by Dong Mingxing, saw the disaster-grade steed that the king of the west commanded rise into the air.

It shot straight toward Red Comet, who flashed away like a bolt of lightning, but it was still unable to extricate itself from the other lifeform's hot pursuit...

Chapter 718: The King Gives Chase

Duan Zisuan's eyes were bloodshot. "You wretched couple—you crippled my son?! I'll tear you both to pieces!"

The gigantic disaster-grade lifeform pounced toward them again, but Red Comet forced it back with its speed.

The king of the east mobilized all the guards in the vicinity. They rose into the sky like stars, surrounding Zhang Lie and Li Qianlin.

Li Zongming bowed politely. "Thank you for stalling for us, Miss Dong. Leave the rest to us!"

As Li Zongming walked to the front of the guards, he commented with some surprise, "A fifth-level beast! I don't know where you're from or why you've come, but everything is meaningless. You're surrounded now—give up."

Zhang Lie glanced at the guards and clutched Li Qianlin even more tightly. "If I want to bring her away, none of you can stop me."

Sensing the strength of Zhang Lie's genetic energy, Li Zongming continued, "Qianqian, don't make such a fuss. Come over here."

However, the usually obedient Li Qianlin shook her head immediately.

Zhang Lie smirked. "King Li, don't you care about the safety of your guests?"

Li Zongming frowned. "What are you implying?"

"Nothing. Well, consider this a gift from me to you, dear father-in-law." Zhang Lie snapped his fingers, and thousands upon thousands of beasts responded to his command.

They appeared from all corners of the land, then rushed toward the tallest mountain in sight: Mt. Yun.

Earth shook and trembled underneath their feet. At the base of the mountain, a stampede of beasts was quickly forming, one made of superior- and peak-grade lifeforms in such large numbers that the Jinghun would have overthrown the king in an instant if they had such a force behind them as they stormed the capital.

The citizens of east and west were shocked by the presence of so many beasts, as was the king of the east, Li Zongming. Where had so many beasts come from? Why were they gathered around Mt. Yun?

Rationally, Li Zongming understood that they hadn't gathered around Mt. Yun, but rather that there were so many of them that they gave off the visual illusion of having congregated there, but Li Zongming simply didn't understand how, despite being the king of the realm and having the ability to sense it in its entirety, that he hadn't noticed such a large group of lifeforms.

Zhang Lie could see through his thoughts. "A king of the realm's sensory abilities aren't foolproof. As long as there's a source of greater mental energy around, the king will be blinded by his sight."

Li Zongming wanted to laugh. "You claim that your mental energy is stronger than mine? I'm backed by the entire world!"

As the sea of beasts rushed up Mt. Yun, Zhang Lie lowered his head. "What a pity. The guests gathered here to witness a wedding—their lives will all be forfeit!"

"Lots of powerful people have gathered there, haven't they? I'd estimate that about thirty percent of those in charge of the realm are present. How large a blow do you think it would be if they were all to perish here?"

Atop the mountain, the aliens of the Milky Way were now all but certain that the man who had snatched away the bride was none other than Zhang Lie.

Despite the beast stampede, these aliens panicked less than the indigenous races.

The starbeast representative noted that the lifeforms' foreheads were each studded with a purple crystal, a sure sign that the Jinghun were responsible. The representative headed to his Jinghun counterpart, who was leisurely drinking wine.

The Jinghun had also been invited to the wedding, and it was thanks to that invitation that Zhang Lie had managed to sneak inside. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been able to do so as silently as he did.

The starbeast sat down by the table and asked, "This is your doing, isn't it?"

The Jinghun representative was none other than Ren Kunjing. He smiled and asked, "What are you referring to, Warlord Xing Ying?"

Xing Ying was 30th on the warlord leaderboard, stronger than even Ren Kunjing himself—but even more shockingly, what the other races of the Milky Way considered a superlative ranking, Xing Ying and the four prime races themselves considered low.

Xing Ying rolled his eyes. "What else? Who else besides the Jinghun could control such large numbers of genetic lifeforms?"

Ren Kunjing smiled as he drank more wine. "Who knows?"

Others might not, but he knew very well who else could—Zhang Lie! And not only could he control genetic lifeforms, he could even control humans.

Xing Ying frowned. "Only the Jinghun would cause a shard of purple crystal to appear on the lifeforms' foreheads. You can't deny that, surely."

Ren Kunjing sighed. "As you say, Warlord."

Xing Ying nudged him and whispered, "How did you Jinghun end up working with Zhang Lie, and just what are you up to? Why did he suddenly snatch this bride? She's a beautiful woman, there's no doubt about that, but she's nothing more than a member of an indigenous race in the third realm..."

"I only met the champion of mankind, Zhang Lie, by coincidence. As for why he's doing this, well, it's not a topic I feel comfortable getting into myself. You'd better ask him if you want the full details. Right, when the beasts rush up toward the mountain, please don't target them. They won't attack any of you, either. Once this is over, we can split the lifeforms among us all."

Xing Ying laughed. "Of course! We'll do anything to support the champion of mankind. You know that the four prime races have always been allied with him, and we'll hardly desert him in a time of need. We all know Zhang Lie's name in the Milky Way by now, at any rate."

The world federation had declared that they were now in an age of limit fragments, an age of Zhang Lie's making.

Xing Ying patted his chest. "On behalf of the champion of mankind, and with the reputation of the four prime races, no alien here will attack the lifeforms. We'll all sit back and watch the show—in fact, I'll let the other three prime races know now."

Xing Ying got up from the table and moved through the crowd.

Li Qianlin asked, "This is your goal?"

Zhang Lie smiled. "Whether or not it's my goal depends on your father's actions."

Li Zongming's face darkened. He commanded the guards, "Go protect the guests and deter the beasts' advance. I and the king of the west can resolve matters here by ourselves."

As the guards departed, the only people remaining in the sky were the king of the west's gigantic disaster-grade lifeform, Red Comet, the king of the west's guards, and the king of the east himself.

Li Zongming cried out confidently, "Even if you've lured my guards away, nothing will change. I've taken care of countless presumptuous aliens like you before—and in this world, I'm the only undefeatable existence."

How many members of an alien race, how many warlords, had tried to stir up trouble in the world of the east? To Li Zongming, Zhang Lie didn't seem particularly strong—just absurdly bold.

Chapter 719: Father-in-Law

"Undefeatable? I think not!" Ripples of air formed around Zhang Lie's arm, growing more and more intense as Zhang Lie combined spatial force with his water-attuned genetic energy.

Zhang Lie's aura rose rapidly. The water-attuned genetic energy swirling around him condensed around his arm, kneading space as though it were nothing more than paper, summoning what seemed to be a massive whirlwind.

The king of the west's guards were the first to leap forward. As they did so, a flood of genetic energy overwhelmed them, propelling them into the distance as Mt. Yun shook violently.

A frightening wave of energy erupted from the collision, annihilating the king of the west's guards. Even the ones that were further away fell from the skies and landed among hordes of superior- and peak-grade lifeforms, and they were unlikely to make it out alive.

The rest of Zhang Lie's attack struck at the top of Mt. Yun, sending flower petals and gold foil scattering through the air. Buildings of wood and stone collapsed, and the stage, a gigantic red heart, tore in two.

Li Qianlin's gown glowed with radiance, shielding her from the attack—anything less would be an insult to a disaster-grade defensive-type soulshard, after all.

"Do you know what you're doing?!" Li Zongming shouted, diverting the flood with one arm. As his palm formed a fist, he continued, "You're making the entire world your enemy."

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Quake]! The entire world, you say? Hah! For her, it'd be a shame not to do that much!"

Zhang Lie's eyes sparkled with his pronouncement. Waves of water erupted from him, shaking heaven and earth. His punch met Li Zongming's head-on, shattering space around them.

"[Rune: Control]!" Zhang Lie raised an arm into the air and sent the gravity and anti-gravity tablets crashing down by the king of the east's side. Black ripples emanated from the two gravity-altering tablets, forming a localized region of distorted gravity.

Li Zongming, sensing the shift in gravity, corrected it with the wave of an arm, but just as he defended against Zhang Lie's move, Zhang Lie struck once more.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!" Zhang Lie's technique possessed such strength it made the very air warp. Ripples of energy spread out all around him, forming a sea of chaos.

Li Zongming slashed forward with his palm like a blade, tearing apart Zhang Lie's technique.

"[Rune: Resonate]!" Zhang Lie raised an arm into the air and sent the two sealing tablets crashing down. The tablets began to resonate at the same time. Golden script appeared on their surfaces, sending ripples out around them that restricted the flow of energies both physical and mental.

Li Zongming's control over the world suddenly weakened, and the sea of chaos Zhang Lie marshaled came roaring back at full force.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" Zhang Lie summoned a serpent, thousands of meters long, with a massive infusion of genetic energy, one whose body was so long its head was up in the clouds.

Li Zongming leapt up with a fist, punching the serpent's lower jaw. The serpent retaliated with a sweep of its long tail as Li Zongming vanished from where he stood and appeared behind Zhang Lie in the very next moment.

As though he had predicted it, Zhang Lie was waiting for him with Guicang unsheathed. "The spatial fluctuations in the air betrayed your presence."

Li Zongming clearly hadn't expected that Zhang Lie would be able to see through his teleportation ability, and he allowed Zhang Lie to get a clean hit in through the armor on his shoulder.

As the king of the east and a superlative fighter, this was a clear blow to his reputation.

"Father!" Li Qianlin shouted in worry.

Ignoring the blow, Li Zongming punched Zhang Lie with a thump that resounded through the skies, but Zhang Lie took not a single step back. Just like Li Zongming, he allowed the hit to land as he slashed forward with his blade.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!" The sword strike was dull and plain, but Li Zongming felt an overwhelming sense of danger. He immediately retreated, but it was too late.

Overwhelming energy, as vast as the sea, swallowed him up, crushing space around him. Li Zongming was unable to make a move before he was overwhelmed.

Time stilled for a moment. Then, a golden ball of energy formed where the king of the realm stood, a golden sun that shone so brightly it tore apart the sea of power surrounding Zhang Lie. The entire sea turned golden and was cut apart by the beams of light.

The skies were all dyed golden.

As a king of the realm—and of a large world at that—Li Zongming could hardly fall so easily to a simple attack from Zhang Lie. Mere moments before the blow landed, he protected himself by drawing on the power of the world.

Even so, he was unable to negate the force of the attack completely. His carefully styled hair for his daughter's wedding had become a mess, and blood seeped out of a corner of his mouth.

Li Qianlin was extremely surprised to see her father injured. In her memories, her father was invincible. Even against the king of the west, Duan Zisuan, he rarely sported an injury—and he had never been injured on his own territory, the world of the east.

Li Zongming reined in his disdain for the aliens of the Milky Way. His face turned serious. "I respect your strength, and you are indeed stronger than the aliens I've had to put down to date, but even so, I'm the king of the realm!"

The golden sun brightened to a painstaking degree. As though a god were descending from the heavens, the air turned scorching hot, and the rays of sunlight broke through the cloud cover like blades.

"Hah! If you weren't my father-in-law, I would have put even more force into the attack." Zhang Lie didn't fear anything the king of the realm could throw at him. An underworld river materialized in the sky, one so vast the entire world could see it.

As though the gates to hell had been opened and all sorts of vile ghouls and spirits were rushing out, the atmosphere darkened and a chilly wind swept past them all.

The rays of sunlight attempted to penetrate the river, but the river absorbed all that sunlight and only grew larger instead.

Li Zongming howled. A hundred thousand rays of sunlight materialized into a saber of light that struck the river directly. Half the sky was shining; the other half was pitch-black.

Neither side seemed about to back down.

The guests gathered atop Mt. Yun were shocked by the scale of the battle. How could this mysterious stranger who had stolen the bride of the wedding be able to fight the king of the realm on equal footing on his homeworld?

"You seem to be able to control the natural law of this world to some extent, but those are all puny tricks in comparison to what I can do as the king of the realm!"

While Li Zongming and Zhang Lie were facing off, Li Zongming activated his authority as the king of the realm, warping gravity and space around Zhang Lie...

Chapter 720: The Final Blow

Zhang Lie had used his dragonturtle tablets to great effect against his foes, never suspecting that he would fall prey to similar effects himself. The sensation was vertigo-inducing, and he could feel his genetic energy roiling in his soul space.

It took Zhang Lie only a moment's contemplation to summon the two gravity-controlling tablets and re-orienting himself, but even so, he had left an opening for the king of the realm to exploit.

Between experts, such openings could often be lethal, and golden radiance had just torn apart Zhang Lie's underworld river. The light would penetrate him within moments, but Zhang Lie didn't seem to panic at all.

The golden light flashed by. The skies were dyed fully golden once more. The inhabitants of the entire world could see the light—not just atop Mt. Yun, but over the entire world.

Li Zongming, king of the east, firmly believed that nobody would be able to withstand his blow. The guests, witnessing what had happened, believed that Li Zongming had taken care of the arrogant upstart who had dared to claim his daughter as his own.

"He's truly a brash young lad, isn't he? Daring to snatch the bride away from such an important wedding—he had to know he wouldn't make it out alive!"

"Indeed. I wonder who gave him the idea that he could succeed if he's incapable of dealing with the king of the realm's wrath?"

"He did seem strong, didn't he? It's just that his opponent was even stronger."

The guests who had chosen to remain on Mt. Yun were all esteemed personages in their own right, and they had seen their own share of trouble. This was nothing in comparison—or so they'd like to think, but in fact, they were trapped on the mountaintop by the horde of lifeforms that were slowly gaining ground despite the defenders' best efforts.

Those who could fight were already doing so, while the remaining guests huddled at the top of the mountain. As time passed, however, they calmed down. After all, there was nothing they could do, so they might as well watch the king of the realm's fight and the guards' defense.

Suddenly, one of the guests asked, "Just what happened to the groom?"

Indeed, what had happened to the king of the west's son?

"I heard the guards mention that he was found in the bride's room, crippled in more ways than one..."

The guests' eyes widened.

"Ignoring the fact that he was found in his fiancée's room, what do you mean, crippled in more ways than one?!"

"As a man, as a warrior, and as a person..."

Xing Ying's lips twitched. "The champion of mankind is truly quite something." Did he bear the groom some deep enmity, so deep he would cripple him personally?

Li Zongming was just about to turn and leave when he suddenly sensed something from where Zhang Lie was standing.

A strange half-dragon half-wolf blood-colored demihuman floated in mid-air. His appearance was far removed from anything the king of the realm had ever witnessed, but his aura was familiar enough that Li Zongming could place him immediately: this was Zhang Lie!

"This is your true form?"

By then, Zhang Lie had activated his dragonwolf and blood ant soulshards, absorbing the blow from Li Zongming's golden light on the basis of physical strength and fortitude alone.

Li Zongming frowned. "No, that's not right. You aliens from the Milky Way use these treasures known as soulshards, don't you? To think there were such powerful transformation-type soulshards!"

"You're not bad yourself. This is the most anyone has pushed me in the third realm, I should think."

The next moment, Zhang Lie morphed into a bolt of blood-colored lightning and shot forward at Li Zongming, who had to make use of his authority as the king of the realm to suppress the attack.

Even so, these constraints were meaningless to Zhang Lie. After his dragonwolf transformation, Zhang Lie received such a huge boost to his abilities that he could transcend natural law—no gravity or spatial barriers would deter his movement, because his strength was enough to eclipse those effects.

Li Zongming's eyes widened as Zhang Lie charged forward, the sword in his hand forming a veritable net of sword strokes as he waved it around.

Li Zongming, caught unprepared by the sudden increase in Zhang Lie's strength, was forced back.

He howled. His skin began to give off golden light, and he shone so radiantly he was like a miniature sun. Zhang Lie's sword slashes were annihilated by his radiance. As the light struck the gathered lifeforms, they burst into golden flame, swallowing them up whole.

The golden light landed not just where the lifeforms were concentrated, but also atop Mt. Yun, where the guests were gathered. It took Li Zongming's full concentration to control his power; he had no energy to spare for shielding others.

Fortunately, many of the guests were strong fighters. They would lose out in a direct confrontation against Li Zongming, but blocking the aftermath of his attack was straightforward enough.

The warlords of the Milky Way were able to counter the beams of light with nothing more than a wave of their arms. After the knowledge of disaster-grade lifeforms and limit fragments was disseminated to the public, the aliens of the Milky Way had grown stronger and stronger.

Zhang Lie darted between the rays of light so rapidly and skillfully that he was able to avoid the bombardment of light and appear before Li Zongming in no time at all. As he swung his sword, it broke the protection of the golden light, leaving a thin line of blood on Li Zongming's neck.

"If you weren't Qianqian's father, I'd have killed you with that blow!"

Li Zongming stepped back and thundered in rage, "Insolence! You're not the only one with a soulshard!"

As a bird's cry echoed amidst the heavens, Li Zongming began to transform. In the blink of an eye, he had become a gigantic bird with three black feet.

He had exchanged a large number of peak-grade lifeforms to purchase such a soulshard from aliens from the Milky Way.

As he flapped his wings, the golden energy condensed into a molten core, a gigantic sun whose diameter was thousands of meters long.

The sun turned night into day, illuminating the entire world. All the indigenous inhabitants of the world were wondering just what was going on. Too much unusual stuff had happened that day—the sky flashing golden and black, and now, the appearance of another sun?

The gigantic sun, which Li Zongming raised above his head at great cost, was so large that it dwarfed even the tallest mountain of the east.

Zhang Lie whistled, "King of the east, you truly don't care for your subjects, do you? Whether or not it kills me, we'll see, but it'll surely kill at least all those guests at Mt. Yun."

"Let fate decide life and death. This is my strongest blow. If you can defend against it, I won't stop you from leaving." Li Zongming's tone was no longer that of chasing down a criminal. To be frank, he had conflicting feelings of his own...