

War God 351

Chapter 351 Contemplating the "Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record"!

Inside the formation.

Lin Mu's expression was somewhat dazed.

The great array he had set up not only shielded him from external prying but also absorbed the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. He planned to gather spiritual energy to cultivate, comprehending the Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record to achieve a breakthrough.

But now, the Mountain and River Cauldron was siphoning away all the spiritual energy. How was he supposed to cultivate?

However, after observing for a while, Lin Mu noticed something different. As the Mountain and River Cauldron absorbed spiritual energy, the concentration within it grew stronger and stronger, reaching a level that astonished him.

If I were to cultivate inside the Mountain and River Cauldron, wouldn't it be twice as effective for half the effort?

Lin Mu's eyes lit up, tempted by the idea.

BUZZ! BUZZ!

Just as this thought arose, the Mountain and River Cauldron seemed to sense it and began to shake violently. It suddenly floated into the air, hovering amidst the clouds. The sea of clouds churned, and the spiritual energy hidden in the air poured into the Mountain and River Cauldron even more frantically.

So stingy.

Lin Mu pouted and dismissed the thought. After all, the Mountain and River Cauldron was a holy artifact of the Human race, an ancient divine object. Although its spiritual energy had greatly diminished in the long river of time and it was no longer as powerful as it once was, its spiritual nature remained.

Currently, the Mountain and River Cauldron was using the spiritual energy of heaven and earth, presumably recovering its own power. This was a good thing, and Lin Mu was glad to see it happen.

Seemingly sensing Lin Mu's thoughts, the Mountain and River Cauldron buzzed as it began to rotate, stirring up a wild wind.

RUSTLE! RUSTLE!

The countless plants and trees in the mountains began to sway, their leaves fluttering and dancing in the air. This place was deep within Thunder Mountain, where ordinary people could hardly enter. Furthermore, it was a forbidden area of the Li Clan, and even clan members were prohibited from setting foot inside. Thus, the vegetation was lush, with no shortage of towering trees. There were not only century-old trees but also a thousand-year-old ancient tree, which the Li Clan had worshipped for generations as a divine tree.

Now, as the wind gusted, the divine tree standing deep in the mountains began to tremble. A single fruit suddenly fell from its branches, was swept up by the wind, and landed inside the Mountain and River Cauldron.

DANG!

A clear sound rang out as the lid of the Mountain and River Cauldron slammed shut and the cauldron sank back into the sea of clouds. But Lin Mu noticed that it did not disappear. Instead, it hovered off the cliff, continuously absorbing the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. Compared to before, however, the scale of the absorption had diminished significantly.

It seems to have reached a critical point.

Lin Mu's eyes flickered as he settled down to cultivate. His cultivation level had already reached the Qi Cultivation Tenth Level. To break through the final two levels, he still needed some time. With the

abundant spiritual energy here, there was a high chance he could break through to the peak of Qi Cultivation.

Wasting no more time, Lin Mu sat cross-legged on the ground, his hands forming a seal. The Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record began to circulate on its own.

At this moment, Lin Mu was not in a hurry to absorb spiritual energy to advance his realm. Instead, he prepared to comprehend the Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record to its highest level. When his Divine Soul had previously roamed the cosmos, Lin Mu had already comprehended most of the Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record. This was an excellent opportunity to deepen his understanding of the cultivation technique.

Besides, the Mountain and River Cauldron was still absorbing the spiritual energy, leaving little for him. It wouldn't be too late for him to cultivate once the cauldron reached its saturation point. After all, with his powerful Divine Soul and sufficient spiritual energy, the shackles on his cultivation were non-existent.

With his mind submerged in tranquility, Lin Mu began to comprehend the Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record. As he did, beams of light started to emanate from his body. They were weak at first, but as time passed, they grew stronger and stronger, making Lin Mu glow like a miniature sun.

BUZZ!

The Mountain and River Cauldron hovering off the cliff stirred slightly and rose a bit, as if observing Lin Mu. Then, the lid cracked open, and a suction force burst forth, pulling the light radiating from Lin Mu into the cauldron. These were the Seeds of the Dao that flowed from his body, something an ordinary cultivator could only dream of obtaining a wisp of. Yet now, the Mountain and River Cauldron was absorbing them frenziedly.

「...」

While Lin Mu was in closed-door cultivation, the outside world was quietly undergoing changes.

First, Li Lingqing forbade her clan members from stepping foot into the rear mountain and personally stood guard outside. All matters within the clan were entrusted to the Great Elder, Li Xuan.

Following the Miao King's instructions, countless medicinal herbs were sent to River City and were taken over by Boheng Pharma, which began processing them into elixirs and various medicines. With powerful figures like Cheng Bugui stationed in River City, no one dared to have designs on Boheng Pharma.

Moreover, to the shock of many, Boheng Pharma and Qin Corporation entered into a business partnership, signing several large deals with each other. Surprisingly, the general manager of Boheng Pharma and the CEO of Qin Corporation had apparently never met face-to-face. All matters were delegated to their subordinates.

While the two companies collaborated, they were also secretly competing, each attempting to expand beyond River City and into other regions. Boheng Pharma set its sights on Jiangbei, while Qin Corporation chose Jiangling.

「Jiangling」

At a bidding conference held in Jiangling.

"In this auction, Qin Corporation has successfully won the Haiyuan Tiancheng project with a high bid of two hundred million!" the auctioneer announced, banging his gavel.

Amid the murmuring crowd, a discussion broke out. "Qin Corporation? That name sounds familiar."

"Not sure. I haven't heard of this company in Jiangling."

"Wait, it's the Qin Corporation from River City!"

"It's really them?!"

Amid the shock, many began to jeer quietly. The Haiyuan Tiancheng project was infamous in Jiangling. It was already mostly built, but several companies had been involved before. The CEOs of those companies either died in car accidents or committed suicide by jumping from a building. None of them met a good end. The last one to take over the project was apparently a disciple from a branch of the Fang Family. However, due to a single poor decision, that disciple caused the Fang Family to suffer heavy losses. As a result, they were expelled from the family and driven to River City. This person was apparently a relative of Fang Cheng's father.

This led some astute individuals to speculate whether Fang Cheng's death in River City was related to this matter. But most people were simply mocking Qin Corporation. Rumor had it that they had spent three hundred million to acquire the cursed project, which meant the company was not far from bankruptcy. No one had ever succeeded in taking on the Haiyuan Tiancheng project.

"Heh. Qin Corporation certainly has guts. Aren't they afraid of getting burned?"

"Exactly! That Haiyuan Tiancheng place is notoriously haunted. No one who's taken it over has met a good end!"

"Spending three hundred million to buy a place like that... the chairman of Qin Corporation must be an idiot."

"Haha, it's understandable. Qin Corporation is all the way over in River City, so they don't know the situation here. They must have thought this was a golden opportunity to enter the Jiangling market and got a little too eager."

"Hmph. That just proves the chairman is an absolute moron."

「Fang Family」

"Family Head, Qin Corporation has successfully acquired the Haiyuan Tiancheng project."

Fang Tang gave a noncommittal hum and sneered, "They killed a member of our Fang Family, built up their company, and now they think they can just waltz into Jiangling? How ridiculous!"

Fang Tang said coolly, "Tell our people in River City to prepare to make a move."

"Yes!"

After the butler left, Fang Tang let out a cold laugh. "Lin Mu, you're still far too green to challenge the Fang Family!"

Chapter 352: Cleansing the Marrow, Refining Gods and Demons Horizontally!

River City.

The Qin Family Old Residence.

Today, Qin Luoli visited the Old Residence for her routine greeting to the Old Madam and took the opportunity to announce her decision to move to Jiangling.

Naturally, no one in the Qin Family opposed this. After all, the Qin Corporation was continuously expanding into numerous fields. Within River City, it was practically unrivaled. If Luo Li didn't set her sights elsewhere, the Qin Corporation would be confined to River City, its growth stifled.

"As long as you've decided, that's fine. I trust you with the company," the Old Madam said. She was in a good mood today, even eating half an extra bowl of rice.

Suddenly, the Old Madam asked, "By the way, I haven't seen that boy Lin Mu for a long time. What has he been up to lately?"

Without lifting her head, Luo Li replied, "He's busy with some matters and won't be back for a while."

But a small seed of resentment had taken root in her heart. That guy has been gone for over half a year and hasn't made a single phone call. I could kill him!

The Old Madam sighed. "Luo Li, you shouldn't always focus on work. You need to make time for Lin Mu. After all, you're a woman, and you'll have to have children eventually."

"Great-Grandmother, what are you talking about?" When the topic turned to having children, Qin Luoli blushed a deep crimson. "I'm still young. It wouldn't be too late to have them in a few years."

"In a few years?" the Old Madam said, displeased. "In a few years, I might not be around to see them."

"Great-Grandmother, don't jinx it!" Qin Luoli chided playfully.

While they were talking, a servant rushed in. "Old Madam, there's trouble! Someone has broken into the Qin Family Old Residence!"

"What?" Luo Li was startled. "Do you know who it is?"

"I don't know. That person is awfully strong. He's already injured several bodyguards," the servant said, his face still pale with fear from the scene outside.

"Jin Fu, go and check," the Old Madam ordered, as calm as ever after having seen plenty of storms in her life. "If it's someone causing trouble, just send them away."

"Yes!"

Luo Li stood up. "I'll go have a look too."

...

Shi Potian was starting to feel scared.

He had woken up the day before to find himself in an incredibly luxurious room. Panicked, he opened the door and ran out, only to find four men guarding it. They stopped him the moment he appeared.

Still feeling groggy, Shi Potian subconsciously gave them a push when they blocked his path. Unexpectedly, the four burly men, each much larger than him, went flying from the light shove and landed on the ground screaming in pain.

Shi Potian was startled. I barely used any strength at all.

Fortunately, Third Master Xu Shanhu arrived at that moment and explained everything. Only then did Shi Potian realize he had been asleep for more than half a year.

No wonder my stomach was rumbling when I woke up.

He also noticed the strange way Third Master looked at him—a mixture of shock, envy, and even a hint of respect. He wasn't stupid; he knew all of this was thanks to the young man from the bar.

Shi Potian was not one to forget a kindness. So, after eating his fill, he went to the Qin Family Old Residence alone. He wanted to thank the man personally and ask what had happened to him. How could I sleep for so long and not only be fine but also feel like I have endless strength?

However, as soon as he arrived at the Qin Family Old Residence, Shi Potian was stopped and forbidden from entering. No matter how he explained, the security guards refused to let him pass. Since he didn't know the man's name and had no other choice, Shi Potian decided to force his way in.

Shi Potian felt a mix of secret pride and nervousness as he looked at the guards he had knocked to the ground with a single punch.

"Sirs, are you alright?"

Shi Potian was only seventeen. An orphan, he had dropped out of high school to make his way in the world. Life on the outside was not as easy as he had imagined. He was often bullied, which made him long for the day he would be strong enough to stop it. Seeing the guards groaning on the ground, Shi Potian couldn't help but feel a pang of pity.

"An older brother really did tell me to come here. I'm not lying!" he said, his face etched with anxiety.

"Hmph. Kid, I don't care who you are. You beat us because our skills are inferior, so we won't hold it against you. But the Qin Family Old Residence is not a place just anyone can enter." The security captain clutched his arm, a lingering fear in his eyes. Though the boy was young, he possessed Innate Divine Strength; a single punch from him was more than he could withstand. If not for his own considerable skills and the boy pulling his punch at the last second, he might have been killed.

"I really mean no harm. If that older brother hadn't sent someone to tell me I would get the answers I want here, I wouldn't have come at all." Shi Potian was kind-hearted, but not particularly brave; the sight of such an opulent residence had his heart pounding.

The security captain stood firm, his duty clear. "No matter what you say, you can't enter!"

"If you won't let me in, then I must go in!" Shi Potian said stubbornly. Third Master said I would find all the answers here. Maybe that older brother is inside.

"Stop him!" the security captain yelled, alarmed, as he tried to block Shi Potian again.

Shi Potian didn't even throw a punch this time; he simply charged forward. The four or five guards blocking his path were sent flying with loud cries.

"What divine strength!"

Suddenly, a voice of admiration rang out. A figure rushed from the old residence, his hands stretching out to catch several of the guards before they could hit the ground.

It was Jin Fu!

Jin Fu stared at Shi Potian, a flash of shock in his cloudy eyes. This youth seems ordinary, and I sense no leakage of True Qi, so how can he possess such terrifying strength? Even our Qin Family guards are no match for him! Could there really be people in this world born with Innate Divine Strength?

"Old Sir, can you let me in? I'm looking for an older brother," Shi Potian said to Jin Fu, a little shyly.

Jin Fu was startled for a moment before shaking his head. "Little boy, you should leave. The person you're looking for isn't here."

"But that older brother said I'd understand everything if I came here!" Shi Potian pleaded urgently.

Jin Fu shook his head again. "He really isn't here."

"You're lying! I'm going in to see for myself!" Shi Potian declared, starting to walk past him. I'm not leaving until I see Lin Mu!

"Don't push your luck, boy!" Jin Fu roared, lunging for Shi Potian's collar. I won't hurt him. I just need to restrain him and toss him out.

Seeing Jin Fu make his move, the security guards breathed a collective sigh of relief. Although Jin Fu rarely took action, everyone in the Qin Family knew he was a master of the Martial Way. Of course, their master-in-law was another.

"You started it, Old Sir!" Shi Potian huffed. He then raised his fist and brought it crashing down.

Jin Fu was momentarily startled, then shook his head with a wry smile. I may be old, but after decades on the Martial Way, my cultivation level is unfathomable. It's not something this little brat can possibly imagine.

Without changing his technique, Jin Fu continued his grab.

But just as Jin Fu was about to touch Shi Potian, he was struck by an intense sense of unease. He looked up, his pupils shrinking slightly.

THUD!

A small fist came crashing down. In his haste, Jin Fu could only cross his arms to block.

The moment the fist connected, Jin Fu's face flushed crimson. He coughed up a mouthful of blood as his entire body was sent flying backward.

Everyone was stunned. Jin Fu was sent flying by the boy's punch? And severely injured?

"Stop!"

Just then, Qin Luoli rushed out. She stopped dead, her mouth agape in astonishment at the scene before her.

Chapter 353: Sister Qin, I'll Protect You from Now On!

"Grandpa Jinfu, are you alright?" Qin Luoli ran over and helped Jin Fu to his feet, her face unable to conceal her shock.

Grandpa Jinfu actually lost? And he was sent flying by a single punch!

"COUGH, COUGH. I'm fine." Jin Fu coughed twice, wiping the blood from the corner of his mouth. He stared at Shi Potian with a solemn expression. "Kid, who in the world are you?"

At that moment, Jin Fu was utterly shaken. Although he was old now, in his youth, back in that place teeming with countless experts, he had been considered a prodigy, with no one able to stand against him. Yet now, in a small place like River City, he had been felled with a single punch. It would have been one thing if his opponent were a great master who had practiced martial arts for many years, but this was merely a boy, not even twenty years old.

This filled Jin Fu not only with shock but also with a faint, growing dread.

Could this person have come to cause trouble? The Qin Corporation is getting bigger and bigger, so ordinary people wouldn't dare to stir things up. My only fear is that he's from *that* place.

His expression hardened and his tone sharpened. He even moved to shield Qin Luoli behind him.

If this youth is truly from that place, then the Young Miss must not fall into his hands, no matter the cost.

"Old grandpa, I already told you, I'm here looking for a big brother," Shi Potian said earnestly, his shy smile making him seem harmless.

"Then tell me his name. And how do you know him?" Jin Fu, of course, did not believe a word of it.

"I..." Shi Potian paused, realizing he seemed to have forgotten the man's name. However, he did remember something. Didn't Third Master and the others call him Venerable Master?

Shi Potian scratched his head. "I don't know his name. I only know that everyone respectfully calls him Venerable Master. He looks very young, and he's a very kind person."

Everyone was stunned by his words.

Venerable Master? Does the Qin Family have someone like that?

"My apologies, there is no such person in the Qin Family. You've come to the wrong place," Jin Fu said seriously, feeling a wave of relief mixed with a hint of disappointment.

However, Qin Luoli, who was standing beside him, seemed to recall something. "Do you know Lin Mu?" she asked suddenly.

"Lin Mu?" Shi Potian's face lit up. "Yes, I think that's his name!"

He had been asleep for more than half a year and had forgotten most of what had happened at the bar. During his deep slumber, he only remembered an indistinct silhouette speaking to him. But he had been sleeping too soundly to make out the words. No matter how he tried to listen, the voice seemed to be whispering right next to his ear, yet at the same time, it felt as distant as the horizon.

"Young Miss, are you saying he's looking for the son-in-law?" Jin Fu was also taken aback. This kid knows the son-in-law?

Qin Luoli shook her head. "I'm not sure, but before Lin Mu left, he told me someone would come to the Qin Family looking for him. He said that when they arrived, I was to give them something."

"What is it?" Jin Fu asked, his curiosity piqued.

Qin Luoli's expression was odd. She didn't answer Jin Fu but instead looked at Shi Potian. "Your name is Shi Potian?"

Shi Potian was instantly overjoyed. "Pretty sister, you know my name? Did the big brother tell you?"

Hearing Shi Potian's form of address, Qin Luoli felt a flicker of fondness for the boy. She nodded. "That's right."

"Oh, I remember now! You're the big brother's wife, right?" Shi Potian chuckled.

Qin Luoli smiled and nodded back. "Yes. But Lin Mu isn't home right now, so you won't be able to see him."

"Ah?" Shi Potian was crestfallen. He had come specifically to thank his big brother in person. It was a shame he wasn't home. Does this mean I won't get the answers I'm looking for?

"Pretty sister, do you know where the big brother went?" he asked with a hopeful look.

"I'm not sure," Qin Luoli said. "However, before he left, he asked me to give you something."

With that, Qin Luoli rummaged through her pockets and produced a letter.

Good thing it wasn't lost.

She handed the letter to Shi Potian. "This is what Lin Mu left for you. Go on, take a look."

"A letter from the big brother?"

Curiously, Shi Potian took it and opened the envelope. An overwhelming surge of Evil Qi instantly billowed out from the paper.

"Protect the Young Miss!" Jin Fu's face drained of color. He grabbed Qin Luoli and frantically pulled her back, his heart pounding in his chest. This aura... it's terrifying!

The other Qin Family security guards couldn't withstand the pressure. They were thrown back, spitting mouthfuls of blood as they flew through the air.

In the eye of the storm, Shi Potian stood stunned, the letter clutched in his hand.

Within the letter were just eight large characters, written with powerful, sharp strokes: Supreme Dao Body, Forged to Slay Gods and Demons!

The moment he saw these words, a roar thundered through Shi Potian's mind. They were the exact same eight words the figure in his memory had repeated to him over and over. And now, he could finally see the figure's face clearly.

He was as tall and mighty as a god, his head touching the heavens and his feet planted on the earth, radiating an undying will to battle across the Ten Thousand Realms. The heavens wept blood over a land strewn with corpses. His body was covered in ghastly, shocking wounds. That fierce battle intent, unyielding even in the face of a thousand deaths, shook Shi Potian to his very core.

"I am the foremost war general under Emperor Zun... Shi! Po! Tian!"

「The Qin Family's Old Residence.」

Shi Potian stared at his now-empty hands, feeling a hollow ache inside, as if he had lost something precious beyond measure. His eyes reddened, and tears began to stream down his face.

"Sigh." Qin Luoli slowly approached him, gently patting his head. "If it hurts, just let it all out."

Looking up at the beautiful big sister before him, Shi Potian could no longer hold back and burst into heartbreaking sobs.

"WAAAH! Sister, my heart hurts so much..."

Jin Fu and the others watched, dumbfounded and utterly speechless. What... what is happening?

However, none of them said a word or asked a single question. They knew that within the Qin Family now, anything related to the son-in-law was not to be questioned, not to be discussed, and certainly not to be interfered with.

Watching the two of them sitting on the doorstep, Jin Fu turned to his guards and warned them. "Not a single word of what happened today gets out!" His expression was grave, and his eyes grew incredibly sharp as he spoke in a low, stern voice, "If any of you dare to breathe a single word of this, don't blame this old man for forgetting our past ties!"

The guards didn't need Butler Jin Fu's reminder. Knowing the matter involved the son-in-law, they wouldn't have dared to speak anyway and hurriedly nodded in agreement.

Shi Potian sat on the threshold, his chin propped in his hands as he looked at Qin Luoli. "Sister, you're so beautiful."

Qin Luoli smiled, pursing her lips. "You sure know what to say."

"Pretty sister, can I keep calling you that?"

"Of course, you can."

"When will the big brother be back?" Shi Potian asked sullenly.

Qin Luoli gazed toward the horizon. "Hmm... He should be back soon, I think."

Shi Potian's eyes lit up. "Heh, that's great! Until the big brother returns, I'll protect you!"

"Really? Then I'll have to trouble you."

Shi Potian puffed out his chest. "No trouble, no trouble at all! I'm really strong!"

"Haha, of course. I know you're very strong."

And later, when the Qin Corporation faced a great crisis, and countless experts gathered in River City to destroy the family, it was this very youth who stood before her. With his bare fists, he fought a bloody battle to protect her, never taking a single step back.

Chapter 354: Can Be Pinched to Death with Just One Finger!

Southern Sky.

Thunder Mountain.

The forbidden land of the Jiuli Tribe!

Spiritual energy howled, converging in the skies above to form a massive Qi Storm. The spiritual energy here had settled for many years, making it an exceptionally rare place for cultivation.

At the center of that energy, a figure hovered three feet above the ground. The surrounding spiritual energy gathered around him, trying to penetrate his body. However, strange lights intermittently burst forth from him, seemingly containing countless insights into the great Dao. Complex and obscure sounds emanated from his mouth, causing the surrounding vegetation to sway and emit an even richer primal force.

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

An odd humming sound arose as the Mountain and River Cauldron floated up from beyond the cliff, its lid opening on its own. A speck of emerald light twinkled within, as if something was about to break through the soil.

BUZZ!

The entire Mountain and River Cauldron trembled as a small, thumb-sized tree grew from within it. Though merely half a meter tall, it was a lush, vibrant green, resembling pure jade. More peculiar still, an emerald vine was coiled around this small tree.

The sapling and the vine voraciously absorbed the spiritual energy between heaven and earth to aid their own growth. Their growth rate was astonishingly fast, surpassing one meter in the blink of an eye.

BOOM! BOOM!

The moment the sapling grew past one meter, dark clouds suddenly amassed above the forbidden land, rolling in like a besieging army, accompanied by thunderous rumbles. All the members of the Bai Miao Village knelt on the ground in terror, crying out for the Miao King.

Li Lingqing's beautiful eyes snapped open as she gazed toward the forbidden land.

Is Master about to emerge from his seclusion?

While everyone trembled in fear, Lin Mu, within the forbidden land, suddenly opened his eyes, a flash of divine light streaking through his pupils.

Divine radiance emerged; the myriad laws had taken their initial form!

At this moment, Lin Mu had already mastered the "Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record" to the point of great achievement. His expression was placid, showing neither sorrow nor joy as he tilted his head slightly to look at the sky.

"Thunder, come!"

With a tremendous roar, the formation was fully activated. From his palm, a Thunder Dragon suddenly soared into the sky, burrowing into the clouds and frantically devouring countless bolts of lightning.

Amidst the violent storm, the entire Southern Sky region witnessed an incredible scene. The dark clouds in the firmament above rapidly diminished. Patches of colorful clouds began to spread across the sky over Southern Sky, converging toward a single direction.

That direction was precisely Thunder Mountain!

"What's going on?"

"Such a phenomenon... even a Martial Arts Grandmaster couldn't achieve this, right?!"

"To cause such a change in the heavens and earth of an entire region, either a great treasure has been born, or some mighty expert is in the middle of cultivating!"

"..."

While the people were abuzz with speculation, Lin Mu's lips parted slightly. The colorful clouds and mist were drawn toward him, entering his mouth.

Purple Qi Coming from the East, Body Tempering!

As his body was continuously refined, Lin Mu's aura grew steadily more powerful. The Mountain and River Cauldron, of course, would not miss such a golden opportunity. It unleashed an even greater suction force to draw the purple qi into its depths, helping the small tree to grow.

In a short time, the tree had reached three meters in height, its trunk now as thick as a baby's wrist. The vine coiled around it grew in tandem, its color becoming even more pure and vibrant.

Seeing this, Lin Mu's Dao heart was calm, and a faint smile touched his lips. He had only just achieved great mastery of the "Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record"; his cultivation level itself had not yet broken through. But the Lin Mu of now was already more than twice as strong as before. If he were to face someone like Ouyang Ming again, he could kill them with a single move. Even Han Xiaochuan would not dare claim he could take one of his punches.

With the myriad laws perfected, Lin Mu's command over the natural forces of the world had reached a certain zenith. Next, it was time to start absorbing spiritual energy to raise his cultivation level.

Southern Sky.

Hongfeng Lake.

Xing Yong watched the colorful clouds dissipate on the horizon, an inexplicable unease stirring in his heart.

In all of Southern Sky, could there be someone who broke through to the Grandmaster realm even before Chong'er?

He immediately dismissed the thought. Impossible. Even for a breakthrough to Grandmaster, this phenomenon is far too astonishing. The direction of Thunder Mountain... the Jiuli Tribe?! Could the rumors be true? The Jiuli Tribe possesses a great treasure!

As Xing Yong reeled in shock, a bewitching young man with long hair walked over and stood beside him, also looking up at the sky. "A heavenly anomaly, the Purple Qi Coming from the East... truly a once-in-a-century sight."

Xing Yong spoke with a solemn expression, "Chong'er, do you think this has something to do with the Jiuli Tribe's treasure?"

Xing Chong sneered, "Whether the treasure is real or not remains to be seen, but this certainly proves that something significant has happened within the Jiuli Tribe."

Xing Yong said, "Then, about the marriage proposal..."

Xing Chong turned to leave, his voice drifting back, "In one month, you will lead our people to the Bai Miao Village to propose." He paused his step, a faint smile playing on his lips. "The Saintess of the Jiuli Tribe—I'm going to marry her!"

In the seventh month after Lin Mu left River City, Qin Luoli became exceptionally busy, with her workload growing ever more substantial. Many people also noticed that a quiet young man had appeared by her side. This person was taciturn, rarely spoke, and often squinted his eyes, looking as if he were dozing off even while walking. Everyone was puzzled and somewhat dismayed that the distinguished CEO of Qin Corporation had hired such an assistant. It was impossible to know what she was thinking.

While people speculated, inside the CEO's office at Qin Corporation.

"Sister Qin, please tell me another story about Brother Mu," Shi Potian pleaded, tugging on Qin Luoli's arm.

Qin Luoli, who was eating from a boxed lunch while reviewing documents, replied with a hint of resignation, "What stories are there to tell? That guy is just an ordinary person."

"I still want to hear it!" Shi Potian insisted, crossing his arms. "Sister Qin, I heard from Grandpa Jinfu that half the big shots in River City knelt at our doorstep to apologize to Brother Mu. Is that true?"

"That's just an exaggerated rumor!"

Just as Qin Luoli was about to say more, a cold, disdainful snort came from outside the office.

"Luo Jinping!" Seeing the man, Qin Luoli was momentarily taken aback before her expression darkened. "What are you doing here?"

Luo Jinping looked much more composed than before, but the mere mention of Lin Mu soured his mood. He gave an uncharacteristic sneer. "What? Can't I come by for a visit?"

"What do you think this place is? A teahouse or a tavern?" Qin Luoli said coldly. "Get out!"

She had not an ounce of goodwill for Luo Jinping.

"Heh."

Luo Jinping sat down on the sofa, unconcerned. His gaze roamed boldly over Qin Luoli, and the corner of his mouth curled up. "Qin Luoli, don't think your Qin Corporation runs everything in River City. To tell you the truth, bringing your company down would be a matter of minutes!"

Qin Luoli scoffed, "It seems you've forgotten how you knelt before Lin Mu, kowtowing and begging for mercy."

At the mention of this, a muscle in Luo Jinping's cheek twitched.

That was the humiliation of a lifetime!

But he only sneered coldly. "Lin Mu? Hmph, if he ever dares to show his face again, I could crush him with a single finger!"

Chapter 355: Slap in the Face!

"What did you say?" Shi Potian was instantly displeased. He stood up and walked directly in front of Luo Jinping.

"When adults are talking, why is a child butting in? Get lost!" Luo Jinping waved his hand, giving Shi Potian a disdainful glance.

Is this the assistant Qin Luoli has supposedly been keeping by her side? He looks simple and naive, clearly someone unsophisticated and without a trace of cunning.

"Luo Jinping, what exactly do you want?" Worried that Shi Potian might resort to violence, Qin Luoli hurried over, her expression grim as she stared at Luo Jinping.

"What do I want?" Luo Jinping pulled out an invitation. "My Luo Family and the Chen Family are planning to co-host a networking reception. Since the Qin Corporation is currently the largest enterprise in River City, you naturally qualify to participate."

Qin Luoli scoffed, "Sorry, I'm not interested!"

Although the Luo and Chen Families combined were not weak, they still fell far short of the current Qin Corporation. Qin Luoli naturally had no interest. Moreover, the Chen Family had been in decline since Chen Ruoping's death, with many of their resources carved up by others. Out of respect for Qin Hongbo, Qin Luoli had not moved against the Chen Family, but other corporations in River City had no such scruples. They took what they could without hesitation.

"Don't be so quick to refuse," Luo Jinping said with a confident smile. "I assure you, you will agree."

"And what if I don't?" Qin Luoli said coldly. "Surely you aren't thinking of forcing me to go?"

Her current status was worlds apart from what it had been. Never mind Luo Jinping, she wouldn't be intimidated even if the current Steward of the Luo Family were here.

"Heh, ever heard of the Jiangling Fang Family?" Luo Jinping said with a faint smile. "This reception was initiated by them."

The Jiangling Fang Family?

Qin Luoli was slightly startled. She had recently been planning to expand her business into Jiangling and had even secured the Haiyuan Tiancheng project. Naturally, she had researched the major corporate groups there. The Jiangling Fang Family was one of the most prominent enterprises and major families in Jiangling. They were a long-established company that had been around for decades, so a reception they initiated would carry significant weight.

Are they planning to establish a presence in River City? Why would the Fang Family be interested in a small place like River City? Could they have some other objective?

"So, are you interested now?" Luo Jinping grinned. "I don't mind telling you, my Luo Family and the Chen Family have already reached a series of business agreements with the Jiangling Fang Family. I've even heard that Huasheng Technology, the Fan Family, and several other companies are considering the same."

A mocking smile touched Luo Jinping's lips. "I hear you hold shares in those companies. Didn't they tell you?"

Qin Luoli's heart skipped a beat.

Those guys... they dared to go behind her back and join hands with the Jiangling Fang Family?

Qin Luoli now knew that Lin Mu and the Jiangling Fang Family were not on good terms. The fall of the Wanta Group and the destruction of the River City branch of the Fang Family were supposedly because of him. If the Jiangling Fang Family came to River City, their sole purpose had to be Lin Mu. Targeting the Qin Corporation was merely the first step!

Qin Luoli's thoughts raced.

"Fine, I will be there on time," Qin Luoli said, taking the invitation with a solemn expression.

Now that Lin Mu had been missing for over half a year and wasn't in River City, she needed to find out what the Jiangling Fang Family was truly planning.

"Very well." Luo Jinping snapped his fingers in satisfaction. "Then I shall await the honor of President Qin's presence."

After Luo Jinping left, Shi Potian said resentfully, "Sister Qin, why didn't you let me teach that guy a lesson? He's so arrogant, daring to speak of Brother Mu that way."

He was, of course, referring to how Luo Jinping had mocked Lin Mu, even claiming he could crush him with a single finger if he showed up. It was infuriating!

"We can't act rashly out of anger." Seeing Shi Potian's disgruntled expression, Qin Luoli consoled him, "Just this once. If there's a next time, I won't stop you."

"Okay!" Shi Potian exclaimed in pleasant surprise. "Sister Qin, you said it yourself."

"Of course. Sister Qin always keeps her word."

Her own heart was anything but at ease. She was itching to beat Luo Jinping senseless for daring to speak of her man like that.

But for Luo Jinping to dare to come knocking, he must have some backing. The Jiangling Fang Family? That hardly seems sufficient. He must know something more.

With that thought, Qin Luoli immediately took out her phone and dialed a number.

The call went through, only to be immediately disconnected.

This made Qin Luoli's expression turn sour. She then found another number. Similarly, it was hung up the moment it connected.

SMACK!

Qin Luoli slammed the phone on the table and said in an icy voice, "These treacherous ingrates! Aren't they afraid Lin Mu will settle the score with them when he returns?"

She had been calling Huasheng Technology and the Fan Family. Normally, they would never dare hang up on her. It seemed Luo Jinping had been telling the truth.

Taking a deep breath to compose herself, Qin Luoli said, "Xiao Tian, get ready. You're accompanying me to a gala tonight!"

「At seven o'clock in the evening.」

There was still half an hour before the networking reception began.

Qin Luoli entered the Four Seas Hotel with Shi Potian. It was here that she and Lin Mu had once been blocked from attending a gala. It was also on that day that Lin Mu's identity as the Divine Doctor was revealed, and he humiliated Patriarch Chen, Chen Ruoping, to the point of vomiting blood. Afterward, Elder Luo, accompanied by Luo Jinping, had gone to the Qin Family to apologize.

She never expected to return to this place so soon. And this time, it seemed the Luo Family had found a powerful backer.

The Jiangling Fang Family?

A sharp glint flashed in Qin Luoli's eyes as she exuded a cold, imposing aura and slowly entered the hotel. The reception was being held on the top floor.

As soon as she walked into the main hall, Qin Luoli sensed something was different. Normally, whenever she appeared, everyone would rush to greet her. But today was strange. The looks in people's eyes held a peculiar mix of emotions. Fear, pity, regret... and cold mockery.

Qin Luoli's expression remained unchanged as she proceeded into the hall.

"Well, well, if it isn't President Qin. I was starting to think you wouldn't come."

Just then, a voice dripping with sarcasm reached her ears. Following the distinct click-clack of high heels, several figures approached.

It was Chen Xinlan from the Chen Family! Qin Luoli's aunt by marriage.

"Greetings, Auntie," Qin Luoli said politely.

"Oh, don't. I couldn't possibly bear such an honor," Chen Xinlan sneered, her eyes overflowing with venom and hatred. "I'm no longer a daughter-in-law of the Qin Family, so I'm certainly not your aunt. You can call me President Chen."

The smile on Qin Luoli's face didn't falter. "Greetings, President Chen."

"I am not well!" Chen Xinlan's face darkened. She took two steps forward, leaned close to Qin Luoli, and whispered, "Qin Luoli, today I'm going to make your death an ugly one. I'll make you regret ever being born!"

Stepping back, Chen Xinlan put on a false smile. She glanced at Shi Potian behind Qin Luoli and said in a mocking tone, "Oh, I was wondering why Lin Mu wasn't here. It seems you've found a replacement. Who would have thought the great President of the Qin Corporation had a taste for pretty boys?"

Chen Xinlan's words instantly silenced the hall.

So... it's starting?

The gazes on Qin Luoli turned peculiar.

Qin Luoli's eyes narrowed slightly. With the dignity of an empress, she glanced at Chen Xinlan and said coolly, "Xiao Tian, slap her."

"Yes!"

Shi Potian strode forward. Under the shocked gazes of the crowd, he raised his hand and sharply slapped Chen Xinlan across the face.

Chapter 356: I Hit You, What Are You Going to Do About It!

SMACK!

A palm strike sent Chen Xinlan screaming as she flew backward, toppling several tables and spilling drinks all over the floor. The onlookers were dumbfounded by the scene, momentarily unable to process what had just happened. Good grief, he really dared to hit her!

"Aaah!" Chen Xinlan shrieked, clutching her face. She pointed at Qin Luoli and bellowed, "You little bitch, I'll..."

However, before she could finish her tirade, Shi Potian grabbed her by the collar and slapped her again.

SMACK!

"Ah, I'm going to kill you!"

SMACK! SMACK!

"I..."

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

"Stop hitting me, I..."

SMACK! SMACK! SMACK! SMACK!

"Please, stop hitting me!"

Every time Chen Xinlan uttered a word, Shi Potian slapped her. After just a few strikes, her face was completely deformed, swollen like a pig's head, with blood flowing from her mouth and nose. Eventually, terror filled her eyes, and she began to beg for mercy.

"Apologize!" Shi Potian commanded, holding her fast as he stared at her coldly.

"Apologize?" Chen Xinlan shrieked as if provoked. "No way! I'll never apologize to that little..."

SMACK!

PTHOO!

Shi Potian swung his hand and fiercely slapped her again, this time knocking one of her teeth out.

"If you spout any more filth and disrespect Sister Qin, believe it or not, I'll knock out all your teeth and make you eat them!" An icy, chilling aura emanated from Shi Potian. His eyes, like those of a Demon King, radiated an undisguised killing intent.

"No, please!" Chen Xinlan cried out, startled. She was certain that if she kept talking nonsense, this man would actually kill her.

"Apologize!" Shi Potian kicked Chen Xinlan behind the knee, forcing her to the ground to kneel before Qin Luoli.

"I'm... sorry." Chen Xinlan clenched her teeth, her face a mask of humiliation and her eyes burning with deep resentment.

"Be more sincere!" Shi Potian raised his hand as if to strike again. Chen Xinlan trembled, quickly suppressing her hatred for Qin Luoli and pleading shakily, "Luo Li, I'm sorry. I was wrong. Please, don't let him hit me anymore."

"Sigh... Xiao Tian, let her go," Qin Luoli said, shaking her head.

"Sister Qin, you're going to let her go after she insulted you?" Shi Potian asked, looking indignant. It was one thing for Chen Xinlan to insult him, but for her to dare humiliate Sister Qin with such vile slurs... Shi Potian wished he could twist her neck off right then and there.

"Forget it. She is an elder, after all," Qin Luoli said, looking at Chen Xinlan expressionlessly. "Aunt, I hope you'll conduct yourself properly in the future."

"Mhm, mhm, I understand. I won't dare to do it again," Chen Xinlan mumbled. Although she harbored intense hatred for Qin Luoli, she had been beaten so brutally by Shi Potian that her heart was filled with terror. She had no choice but to submit.

"Alright, let her go."

Only then did Shi Potian release his grip. He stared coldly at Chen Xinlan and said, "This time, I'll let you off for Sister Qin's sake. But if I ever hear you disrespecting her again, I will personally smash your teeth, tear out your tongue, and gouge out your eyes. I'll make you regret ever being born!"

He believed in giving people a taste of their own medicine; it was a principle he lived by.

"I won't, I won't! I'll never dare to again!"

Chen Xinlan scrambled to her feet and crawled away, keeping her distance. The look she gave Shi Potian was full of fear and venom. You little bastard, just you wait! I'll kill you with my own hands! I'll put you in a state where you'll wish for death, but I won't grant it!

With that thought, Chen Xinlan quickly fled the hall, presumably to tend to her injuries.

Only then did the crowd begin to stir from their shock. After all, ever since Chen Ruoping's death, Chen Xinlan held a manager position at Chen's Enterprise. Yet, she had been beaten so viciously on Qin Luoli's behalf. This woman was truly domineering!

Seeing Chen Xinlan's pitiful state, many who had previously mocked Qin Luoli shivered inwardly. The young man at her side was especially terrifying. He had attacked without any hesitation, and his blows were utterly ruthless. If Qin Luoli hadn't spoken up, he might have actually beaten Chen Xinlan to death. At that thought, the crowd's feelings toward Qin Luoli shifted to a mix of fear and respect. No one dared to show the same mocking expressions from before.

Most gazes, however, landed on Shi Potian. Previously, they had only known him as Qin Luoli's little follower and paid him no mind. But after what had just happened, everyone understood that he was the most dangerous one there. He clearly didn't care about status or background. If Qin Luoli gave the word, he would attack without a second thought. What frightened them most was the utter indifference on his face as he dealt out the beating. It sent a chill down their spines. They felt they had seen something familiar in his demeanor, but they couldn't quite place it.

...

"Sister Qin, this is delicious!" Shi Potian said, holding a plate of cake, his mouth smeared with cream.

"If you like it, eat more," Qin Luoli said, dotingly wiping his mouth. "Eat slowly, no one's going to steal it from you."

"Mm-hmm," Shi Potian mumbled, his mouth full. "Sister Qin, you should have some too."

Qin Luoli smiled, her eyes narrowing. "I don't really like these things."

Qin Luoli was genuinely fond of Shi Potian and cared for him like her own younger brother. And Shi Potian was obedient, never causing trouble. Most importantly, Xiao Tian was very protective of her.

Shi Potian felt the same way. To him, Sister Qin was the kindest and most beautiful woman in the world. She treated him wonderfully, like a real big sister. Shi Potian had grown up an orphan and had been hustling from a young age, enduring much hardship. Later, while working as a bouncer at a bar, his

youth and honest nature led to him being bullied by customers and colleagues alike. But Shi Potian never spoke of it, simply enduring it in silence.

But Sister Qin was different. She cared for him and worried about him like family. With Brother Mu gone, he was even more determined to protect Sister Qin and ensure no one could bully her.

"Sister Qin, someone's coming," Shi Potian said, putting down his plate. "It's that annoying guy from yesterday."

Qin Luoli turned and saw Luo Jinping approaching.

"Were you the ones beating someone up just now?" Luo Jinping strode over, staring at Shi Potian with a hostile expression. Behind him, several security guards followed, their faces equally cold.

Shi Potian stepped forward, shielding Qin Luoli behind him, and stared back at Luo Jinping with matching coldness.

"I'm the one who hit her. What about it?"

Chapter 357: Dare to touch her, you will regret it!

"I'm the one who hit her. What are you going to do about it?"

Shi Potian's words left Luo Jinping slightly stunned. He thought Shi Potian would deny it and had prepared many countermeasures to drive the boy away. He never expected the other party to actually admit it.

"You little punk, don't you see where you are? How dare you lay a hand on someone!" Luo Jinping's face darkened as he looked at Qin Luoli. "Qin Luoli, this kid hit someone. What do you have to say?"

With a look of indignation, Shi Potian shielded Qin Luoli behind him. "She started it by insulting Sister Qin."

Luo Jinping said coldly, "I don't care what the reason is. You were wrong to hit someone first. Now, go and apologize to President Chen immediately!"

"Apologize?" Shi Potian scoffed, took a step forward, and glared at Luo Jinping. "Say that again. I dare you!"

"You... What are you trying to do?" Luo Jinping instinctively took a step back. "Kid, I'm warning you, this is the Luo Family's territory!"

"So what?" Shi Potian cracked his knuckles. "That woman insulted Sister Qin first, so I taught her a lesson. You got a problem with that?"

"You..."

Luo Jinping hadn't expected Shi Potian to be so domineering and downright unreasonable. And now he was asking if I have a problem with it? Of course I do! Making Qin Luoli apologize to Chen Xinlan was just an excuse to humiliate her. But this kid... he acts completely without thinking.

"If you've got nothing better to do, then scram. Don't bother me while I'm eating," Shi Potian said, glancing disdainfully at the security guards behind Luo Jinping. They might look imposing, but I could knock them all down with one punch.

"Qin Luoli, is this your opinion as well?" Luo Jinping looked at her, his tone threatening. "You know, the person you hit was President Chen of the Chen Family. You owe me an explanation for this!"

"She deserved it."

To that, Qin Luoli just gave a simple, cool reply.

Luo Jinping nearly jumped up in frustration. How could Qin Luoli be so reckless now? She deserved it? So she just hit her? Isn't she afraid the Chen Family will come after her?

"If there's nothing else, I'm going to greet a friend." Qin Luoli glanced at Luo Jinping and slowly walked away with Shi Potian.

Watching Qin Luoli's retreating figure, Luo Jinping's face was grim. He waved a hand and said to a security guard, "Later, find a way to lure that kid out and teach him a proper lesson!"

"Yes, Young Master!"

...

"Sister Qin, I need to go to the bathroom." Shi Potian clutched his stomach, looking uncomfortable.

Qin Luoli was conversing with a friend and couldn't help but respond with a mix of laughter and exasperation, "I told you to eat less, but you wouldn't listen. Go on, hurry up. The networking event is about to start, so don't wander off."

"Okay."

Once Shi Potian had left, Qin Luoli's friend pulled her aside. "Luo Li, who's that little guy? He looks so adorably clueless."

She and Qin Luoli were about the same age and had been good friends for years, so they were very close.

Qin Luoli joked, "What, are you interested? Xiao Tian has never even dated before. Want me to introduce you?"

The girl flicked her hair. "Forget it. I'm not interested in a naïve little virgin like him. I'd better not lead the poor thing astray."

"Oh, right," the girl said, as if suddenly remembering something. "You've been married for a while now, but I still haven't met your husband. It couldn't be..." Her mouth fell open as she stared at Qin Luoli in disbelief.

"What are you thinking?" Qin Luoli couldn't help but give her a light smack. "My husband has been busy recently; he's not in River City. The boy from before is more like a little brother to me."

"Oh, I see." The girl sighed in relief. "When you get a chance, bring your man out so we sisters can finally have a look."

"Sure."

At the mention of Lin Mu, Qin Luoli couldn't hide the smile that blossomed on her face. Her friend watched, amazed to see the usually aloof and authoritative 'Emperor' of River City reveal such a girlish side. She couldn't help but wonder what kind of man had made Qin Luoli feel this way.

...

"Is everything arranged?" a man's deep voice echoed from a restroom stall.

"Relax, it's all taken care of. The moment the exchange meeting starts, our people will move against the Qin Corporation!"

That voice sounds familiar.

"Good. I've been planning this for a long time, and I don't want any mistakes. Otherwise, your Luo Family knows the consequences!"

"Don't worry, there absolutely won't be any!"

"And as for Qin Luoli, we must get her under our control. Since she's Lin Mu's woman, I doubt he'd want to see her die." The man's voice was cold, laced with a hint of murderous intent.

"Mr. Fang, rest assured. I will not disappoint you!"

"Good."

After the two men left, a stall door opened, and Shi Potian stepped out, his face flushed with anger.
"Bastards! How dare they try to harm Sister Qin!"

He had heard every single word of their conversation, and one of the speakers was none other than Luo Jinping, the man he despised most.

"No, I have to tell Sister Qin about this right away."

Shi Potian pushed open the restroom door, ready to rush out. However, his steps faltered. Several security guards were standing at the entrance, holding iron rods and other weapons. The one leading them was Luo Jinping.

"Kid, it seems you heard everything!" Luo Jinping looked at Shi Potian, his eyes filled with both murderous intent and lingering fear. Luckily, my men saw Shi Potian heading to the restroom, so I immediately led them here to block the entrance. I caught him red-handed.

"You're targeting Sister Qin's company and trying to harm Brother Mu! I won't let you succeed!" Shi Potian glared at Luo Jinping with hatred.

Luo Jinping laughed coldly. "Kid, you can barely protect yourself, and you're worried about others?" He commanded, "Break his limbs and hand him over to the Chen Family!"

Handing Shi Potian over to the Chen Family will make them owe me a huge favor. It's killing two birds with one stone. After today, the Qin Corporation is finished, and the Qin Family is done for. The future of River City belongs to my Luo Family!

"Yes!"

Receiving the order, the security guards stepped toward Shi Potian, their faces twisted with cruelty.

Shi Potian grinned fiercely, rubbing his wrists. "Just you guys?" he mumbled to himself. "It's been a while since I've fought, and my hands were getting itchy. Perfect timing for you to serve yourselves up on a platter!"

"Kid, you don't even know you're about to die!" Luo Jinping commanded coldly, "Get him!"

The security guards advanced with grim smiles, swinging their iron rods directly at Shi Potian.

CRACK!

But Shi Potian just sneered and threw a punch. The iron rod flew from the guard's grasp, and Shi Potian's fist smashed straight into the man's stomach.

"ARGH!"

With a cry of agony, the guard collapsed, retching violently on the ground. The punch had nearly pulverized his intestines.

Shi Potian retracted his fist, a cruel smile on his face. "Small fries like you? I can handle all of you with one hand!"

Luo Jinping's pupils shrank. Before he could speak, a shadow rushed forward. With a few quick punches and kicks, Shi Potian knocked down all the security guards, leaving them wailing on the ground.

Shi Potian stepped toward Luo Jinping, his face impassive. "Trying to harm Sister Qin and Brother Mu? Then I'll cripple you first!"

Luo Jinping's face turned pale as he stammered, "What are you going to do? Y-You wouldn't dare kill me, would you?"

"What am I going to do?" Shi Potian sneered. "I'm going to beat you, of course!"

Luo Jinping recoiled and turned to run.

"Trying to run?"

Shi Potian laughed coldly and threw a punch that landed in the blink of an eye.

CRUNCH!

It struck Luo Jinping squarely on the shoulder. He screamed in pain, falling to the ground and clutching his arm as he cried out in agony. His arm had been crushed by Shi Potian's blow.

Shi Potian grabbed Luo Jinping by the neck, lifting him up as if he were a baby chick. "Don't worry, I won't kill you," he said coldly. "I'll personally hand you over to Brother Mu. Daring to bully Sister Qin... Brother Mu will make you regret ever being born!"

Chapter 358: Breakthrough in Realm, the Twelve-Fold Towers!

"On what grounds?"

In the hall, Qin Luoli's expression was grim as she looked at the man on the stage.

East China Technology, Xinglong Real Estate, Fan's Enterprises... so many companies were actually preparing to terminate their cooperation with Qin Corporation? And they even wanted her to hand over all her previous shares?

Don't these people fear Lin Mu coming back to cause them trouble?

"On what grounds?"

Standing atop the platform, Chen Wen spoke coldly, "Because your Qin Corporation forcibly took all of these assets. Asking you to hand them over is merely returning them to their rightful owners!"

Chen Wen was Chen Xinlan's older brother and the current head of the Chen Family. This conference was just one part of a series of plans against the Qin Corporation.

"And what if I refuse?" Qin Luoli clenched her fists, glaring coldly at Chen Wen. "Are you really going to try and force my hand?"

Chen Wen sneered, "Of course not. Someone else will simply be here to uphold justice."

The doors to the hall were suddenly flung open, and a figure slowly walked in. He was young, only in his early thirties, but he carried an imperious air about him.

"Let me introduce him. This is Fang Shaoning from the Jiangling Fang Family. Young Master Ning!" With a fawning smile, Chen Wen said, "Young Master Ning has come to River City regarding the matter of Fang Cheng and his family."

At these words, Qin Luoli's expression subtly changed.

The Jiangling Fang Family! They actually came.

The expressions of everyone else in the hall changed as well. Rumor had it that the River City Fang Family was annihilated by Lin Mu, and Lin Mu was Qin Luoli's husband. The purpose of Fang Shaoning's visit to River City was self-evident.

As expected, Fang Shaoning slowly ascended the platform. He looked down imperiously at Qin Luoli and said, "Qin Luoli? I'll give you one chance. Hand over Lin Mu, or prepare for the Qin Corporation to be destroyed!"

"Choose one." His tone was domineering, carrying an authority that brooked no argument.

"The Qin Corporation has stood tall until today, and we have never feared anyone!" Qin Luoli declared, meeting Fang Shaoning's gaze without a trace of fear. "If you dare harm a single hair on the Qin Corporation, I, Qin Luoli, will never let you go, even if you are from the Jiangling Fang Family!"

The audience held its breath. Qin Luoli truly lived up to her reputation as the Empress of River City, showing no fear even when facing the Jiangling Fang Family. But the Jiangling Fang Family was not something the small Qin Family of River City could possibly resist.

"Hmph." Fang Shaoning nodded. "I'm not here for your opinion. You have three days. Either hand over Lin Mu or prepare for the Qin Corporation to be annihilated!"

Having said this, Fang Shaoning turned and strode away. As he reached the door, he paused and added coldly, "This is the consequence for daring to harm my Fang Family!"

Only after Fang Shaoning had left did everyone awaken from their shock. This seemed to be the prelude to war. Many gazes filled with pity and sighs turned toward Qin Luoli. No matter how powerful the Qin Corporation was, it was merely a slightly larger ant before the Jiangling Fang Family.

What would she choose? While the crowd sighed, some also took delight in her misfortune.

If there's anyone to blame, it's Qin Luoli for her poor judgment in choosing a man like Lin Mu. See? Hasn't he brought disaster upon the Qin Corporation?

From the shadows, Chen Xinlan watched Qin Luoli's pale face, her eyes filled with satisfaction.

Qin Luoli, I told you I'd make your downfall a miserable one!

"Qin Luoli, let me give you some advice. Don't fight the Jiangling Fang Family. You can't win," Chen Wen said, feigning kindness. "Lin Mu destroyed the Fang Family, so they will certainly not let him off. I hope you make a wise choice."

"Hmph, he brought this on himself!" Chen Xinlan couldn't help but interject. "Just because he knows a little kung fu, he goes around killing whomever he pleases. Now that a catastrophe is upon him, he's run off to save his own skin. Lin Mu is no man at all!"

BANG!

As soon as Chen Xinlan finished speaking, a loud sound echoed as a dark shadow flew through the air and crashed into her.

"Ah!"

Two screams rang out. Everyone saw Chen Xinlan lying on the ground, pinned beneath another person. The man on top of her was a bloody mess, looking as if he were dead.

Luo Jinping! It was none other than the Young Master of the Luo Family, Luo Jinping! But now, one of his hands was mangled, and one of his legs was bent at an unnatural angle, as if it had been twisted off.

"I warned you not to bully Sister Qin!" A figure slowly walked into the hall, standing protectively in front of Qin Luoli. It was Shi Potian.

"Kid, you're courting death!" Chen Wen stared at Shi Potian, his eyes filled with an icy chill. This boy had already struck his sister before, and now he dared to do it again. Did he think the Chen Family were pushovers?

"Men! Cripple him for me!" Chen Wen roared, and several bodyguards instantly charged toward Shi Potian.

"Sister Qin, stay close! I'll get you out of here!" Shi Potian grabbed Qin Luoli's arm. "These people want to harm you. I heard everything!"

"Don't let them go! Stop them!" Chen Wen's expression changed as he ordered the bodyguards to intercept the pair.

"Chen Wen, if you lay a hand on me, Lin Mu will not let you off when he returns!" Qin Luoli said coldly.

A flash of killing intent appeared in Chen Wen's eyes. "You should worry about yourself first! If Lin Mu dares to come back, he is as good as dead!"

Qin Luoli's face paled slightly. She turned to Shi Potian and said, "Xiao Tian, hurry, let's go!"

"Alright!"

Shi Potian grabbed Qin Luoli, sent a bodyguard flying with a single punch, and charged toward the exit. But countless more bodyguards swarmed forward, encircling them. Seeing this, the guests hastily scrambled out of the way. The Chen Family had gone completely mad, daring to attack Qin Luoli in public!

Watching the surrounded Qin Luoli, Chen Wen's eyes were filled with murderous intent. "Qin Luoli, if you must blame someone, blame Lin Mu!"

...

「Southern Sky.」

「Thunder Mountain.」

Lin Mu's eyes snapped open, a cold glint shooting three feet from his gaze. While in seclusion, he had felt an inexplicable sense of unease.

Could Luo Li be in trouble?

He trusted his instincts. Once a cultivator's strength reached a certain level, they developed a Heavenly Sense. He would be able to feel it if someone close to him was in danger.

The Magic Artifact I gave Luo Li can block several deadly attacks, and Shi Potian has awakened and gone to the Qin Family.

When Lin Mu had slapped Shi Potian, it was to help awaken his spirit and pass the Indestructible God-Devil Body technique to him. He believed that Shi Potian could handle even the greatest of dangers. Still, a strong sense of unease lingered in his heart.

I can't wait any longer. I must leave my seclusion and return to River City!

At that thought, Lin Mu took a great breath. The spiritual energy in the heavens and earth suddenly surged toward him in a frantic torrent, which he swallowed into his body.

BOOM!

A muffled sound erupted from within Lin Mu.

Qi Refining Eleventh Layer!

BOOM! BOOM!

Immediately after, two more sounds rang out in unison, and Lin Mu's aura skyrocketed.

Twelfth Level of Qi Refining!

As Lin Mu's cultivation level shot straight to the Twelfth Level of Qi Refining, all the spiritual energy within a hundred-mile radius of Thunder Mountain swarmed toward him, triggering a strange phenomenon in the heavens and the earth.

Lightning flashed and torrential rain poured down, as if it were the end of the world. For a time, everyone in the realm of Southern Sky felt a sense of impending doom

Chapter 359: Innate Spirit Wood, Xing Family Proposes Marriage!

In his Dantian, a phantasmal image of a small tower slowly appeared.

The tower had twelve floors, signifying Lin Mu had reached the peak of Qi Refinement.

The Twelve-Fold Towers!

Feeling the surging Spiritual Energy within his body, Lin Mu's expression grew serious.

Although I haven't achieved Foundation Establishment, whether or not I can construct the Twelve-Fold Towers will determine the height of my future cultivation.

At present, the tower within his Dantian had not yet solidified; it remained a mere phantom.

Only by solidifying these Twelve-Fold Towers could a sturdy Dao foundation be laid for Foundation Establishment.

The Twelve-Fold Towers are the Dao foundation!

Lin Mu sat cross-legged, floating three feet above the ground, absorbing all the surrounding Spiritual Energy. In the blink of an eye, any Spiritual Energy that entered his body was devoured by the Twelve-Fold Towers.

The first floor of the tower flared with a brilliant light, solidifying from illusion into reality. It was followed by the second, the third... all the way to the fifth floor.

Unfortunately, the ambient Spiritual Energy had grown scarce, and it was far from enough for Lin Mu to construct the final seven floors.

If the Twelve-Fold Towers could not be constructed in a single attempt, this period of seclusion would end in utter failure.

However, Lin Mu had already absorbed all the Spiritual Energy within a hundred-mile radius. With each additional level, the amount of Spiritual Energy required by the Twelve-Fold Towers grew to a terrifying degree.

Just then, Lin Mu suddenly sensed a fluctuation of extremely pure Spiritual Energy. He snapped his eyes open and saw a massive, ancient tree as thick as a water bucket standing at the edge of the cliff.

The tree was lush and verdant, its leaves swaying gently. Streams of exceptionally pure Spiritual Energy emanated from it. On its trunk, a vine as thick as a wrist was also thriving, its vibrant green a pleasing sight.

Is this...

Lin Mu's pupils constricted, and his heart began to beat a little faster.

A Dao Tree?

He shook his head. No, this isn't a Dao Tree. It's a seed of Innate Spirit Wood that was cultivated by the Mountain and River Cauldron.

A smile touched Lin Mu's lips. "A most timely rescue!" he murmured.

With a grasp of his hand, the giant tree began to shake, and the Mountain and River Cauldron emitted a buzzing sound, as if condemning Lin Mu for his thievery.

"Help me forge my Dao foundation today, and I promise I'll help you recover your full power in the future!" Lin Mu said, appearing to negotiate with the Mountain and River Cauldron.

BUZZ! BUZZ! BUZZ!

The Mountain and River Cauldron emitted a muffled hum, as if in hesitation.

"The Spiritual Energy in this realm is too thin to help you recover your peak strength," Lin Mu said earnestly. "To you, this Spirit Wood is only useful for preserving your spirituality. It's not a great help. But if you give it to me, I guarantee that I will find you places overflowing with Spiritual Energy in the future."

BUZZ! BUZZ!

The Mountain and River Cauldron seemed to have made a decision, as its resisting force weakened considerably.

BOOM!

As Lin Mu's palm exerted a powerful suction, the Spirit Wood inside the Mountain and River Cauldron exploded. A streak of green light shot out from within, attempting to flee.

"Haha, trying to run?"

Lin Mu's large hand snatched at the air, and the light was instantly frozen. It was a palm-sized block of wood, carved with countless mysterious inscriptions.

This block of wood was the Spirit Core of the Spirit Wood, which could also be called Innate Spirit Wood. It contained the entire essence of the spirit tree.

A so-called Innate Spirit Wood comes from a divine tree with a lifespan of over 10,000 years. After Transcending Tribulation, it can shed its mortal body and live on as a primordial spirit. It can fly through the heavens, roam the sky, transform into a human, and possess all manner of inconceivable Divine Skills.

However, this Innate Spirit Wood had clearly not yet undergone its tribulation, so it was naturally unable to fly or take human form.

Even with the Mountain and River Cauldron's heaven-defying abilities, it was impossible to grow a seed into a true Innate Spirit Wood in such a short amount of time.

Still, this block of wood contained an extremely dense Spiritual Energy, which could help Lin Mu with the Construction of the Twelve Floors.

If this Innate Spirit Wood were to fall into the hands of someone practicing a wood-attribute cultivation technique, it would be an absolute treasure!

Unfortunately for the wood, Lin Mu only needed its Spiritual Energy.

Having mastered the Heavenly Dao Myriad Laws Record, he had integrated all the myriad Daos into one. With every concept clear in his heart, a single move from him was a law, a technique, a Divine Skill, capable of manifesting any art in the world.

As long as his Divine Soul remained powerful enough and his physical body was indestructible, he would be the most invincible being in the world!

His Divine Soul was already among the strongest in existence, but his physical body, after all, was not some powerful Dao Physique. It required polishing and Body Tempering; it needed to become stronger!

The Twelve-Fold Towers could help him lay his Dao Foundation and temper his physical body!

At this thought, Lin Mu floated three feet off the ground, sitting cross-legged with his hands held before him as if cradling a Tai Chi symbol from which Yin and Yang spontaneously emerged.

The Innate Spirit Wood hovered between his palms, its Spiritual Energy being drawn from the Spirit Core with every breath Lin Mu took.

Streams of supremely pure Spiritual Energy emerged from it, forming an ethereal mist. This mist appeared to be composed of countless green droplets, each one containing surging vital energy and dense Spiritual Energy.

If an ordinary person were to absorb just one such droplet, their body would undoubtedly be overwhelmed and burst from the potent Spiritual Energy, transforming them into an ancient tree.

But if a Cultivator refined and absorbed it, not only would their lifespan be extended, but their cultivation level would also rise dramatically.

Lin Mu was now using these green droplets to complete the Construction of the Twelve Floors and lay his Dao Foundation.

BOOM!

As Lin Mu began refining the green droplets, one of them burst open. A terrifying wood-attribute energy and a surging Life Force instantly blanketed the entire forbidden area of the back mountain.

Fortunately, a Formation was in place to contain it. Otherwise, this energy would have spread out in all directions and dissipated back into the world.

Even so, the countless flowers and grasses in the back mountain seemed to come alive, growing rapidly, becoming lush and verdant, and brimming with vitality. Even long-withered trees and plants sprouted new shoots, bursting with renewed life.

In the blink of an eye, the vast forbidden area was filled with thousands of swaying trees and hundreds of blooming flowers. Countless peach trees released a thick, sweet fragrance.

It was like April in the mortal world, when the peach blossoms at the mountain temple begin to bloom.

BUZZ! BUZZ!

The Mountain and River Cauldron "watched" with envy, continuously absorbing the spiritual energy that filled the air.

Lin Mu paid it no mind. The Spirit Core contained thousands of these green droplets, which was more than enough for him to lay his Dao Foundation.

As Lin Mu continued the refinement, his pace quickened, as did the Construction of the Twelve Floors.

The sixth floor, the seventh, the eighth... all the way to the tenth! Only the final two floors remained!

Moreover, Lin Mu's physical body grew stronger and stronger, faintly emitting a dazzling halo.

He had only used a little more than half of the Spirit Core's essence. It was more than enough to construct the final two floors!

While Lin Mu was occupied with the Construction of the Twelve Floors, a group of uninvited guests arrived at Bai Miao Village.

"The Xing Clan of Southern Sky has come to propose marriage to the Li ethnic group Saintess today!"

As the leading elder's voice fell, the people of Bai Miao Village erupted in fury.

"How audacious!"

"Our ancestral teachings state that the Saintess must serve the Miao King for her entire life and cannot marry an outsider!"

"Xing Family, you are bold indeed! Do you wish to forsake the ancestral teachings and challenge the authority of our King of the Miao of the Li Clan?"

Facing the anger of the People of the Li Clan, the elder chuckled faintly. "The Xing Family and the Jiuli Tribe are branches of the same tree. A union between the Li ethnic group Saintess and our own genius, Xing Chong, is a match made in heaven. How could that be considered forsaking your ancestral teachings?"

The elder sneered proudly. "Besides, this so-called 'Miao King' is merely a title the Li Clan bestowed upon itself. The Xing Family does not recognize it!"

"The Xing Family violated the ancestral teachings and is no longer part of the Li Clan! Our Miao King has no need for your recognition!"

"Well said! Members of the Xing Family, get out of here! Or don't blame us for being discourteous!"

As the angry shouts from Bai Miao Village carried out, the smile on the elder's face slowly vanished. "The Xing Family came today with the genuine intention of arranging a marriage with the Saintess, not to use force," he said coldly. "But if you insist on being stubborn, then don't blame this old man for forgetting our past ties!"

With a wave of his hand, the elder sent a human head flying into Bai Miao Village.

"Xiao Qian of the Xiao Family!"

Chapter 360: Three Days Later, the Saintess Enters the Xing Family!

"Xing Yi, what is the meaning of this?!" Li Xuan appeared on the rampart, her eyes coldly fixed on the elder below. "Xiao Qian was a member of our Li Clan Xiao Branch. You killed him. Are you not afraid of our Li Clan's retaliation?!"

Li Xuan was enraged. These arrogant and dictatorial Xing Family members truly deserved to die!

"What do you mean?" Xing Yi snorted coldly. "Half a year ago, Xiao Qian killed someone from my Xing Family. That was a warning, and a betrothal gift!"

Back then, Xing Yong had ordered the Xing Family members not to touch the Xiao Family, precisely for this day.

"You're talking about the Tan Family?" Li Xuan was well aware of the incident. She said icily, "The Tan Family dared to offend the Miao King, a crime punishable by death. Slaughtering only three generations of them was letting them off easy! But you dare kill someone from our Li Clan and still have the audacity to propose marriage?"

With his hands behind his back, Xing Yi declared, "Although the Tan Family was at fault, they were my Xing Family's dogs. Even when you beat a dog, you must answer to its master. Your so-called Miao King killed someone from my Xing Family without our permission—he deserved to die!"

"How dare you!" Furious, Li Xuan leaped from the rampart, striking at Xing Yi with her palm.

"Haha, I've long heard that you, Li Xuan, have acknowledged a master. After all these years, I wonder if your cultivation level has improved!" Xing Yi laughed heartily, responding with a palm strike of his own.

SLAP!

The two palms clashed, and a violent surge of energy spread out, pulverizing some of the stones on the ground. Li Xuan, however, gave a muffled grunt and was sent flying back to the rampart.

"Humph!" Li Xuan grunted as her body swayed slightly.

"Great Elder!" A few Li Clan disciples rushed to support her, their faces filled with worry.

"I'm fine." As soon as Li Xuan spoke, she spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Great Elder!" Li Zhou's expression changed, and he glared coldly at Xing Yi below. "Old fool, you injured our Li Clan's Great Elder! You must be tired of living!"

No sooner had he spoken than he instantly leaped from the rampart, his fist smashing toward Xing Yi.

"Xing Ling!" Xing Yi, however, revealed a mocking smile and took a step back. "You dare to lay a hand on a Xing Family Elder?"

From within the Xing Family contingent, a young man burst forth, throwing a punch. It was Xing Ling, the prodigy of the Xing Family!

SPURT!

The fists had barely collided when Li Zhou screamed in agony, flying backward and crashing into the wall as he spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Pathetic." Xing Ling withdrew his fist, looking at the rampart with disdain. "Anyone who isn't convinced can come down and try me!"

"Damn it, I'll kill you!" Suddenly, another figure leaped from the rampart, rushing toward Xing Ling. It was Li Tong.

Xing Ling didn't even bother to look, lashing out with a kick that struck Li Tong squarely in the chest.

SPURT!

Just like before, Li Tong was grievously injured by the kick.

"What? Is the younger generation of your Li Clan all such trash? Is there not a single one who can put up a fight!" Xing Ling's expression was arrogant, his tone filled with disdain for the Li Clan.

"Sigh, the Li Clan truly gets weaker with each generation," Xing Yi sighed, shaking his head.

Mockingly, Xing Ling added, "It seems your so-called Miao King is nothing special..."

WHOOSH!

Before Xing Ling could finish speaking, a blur of motion streaked toward him with a howl.

"Hmm?" Xing Ling raised an eyebrow, a sneer forming on his lips as he threw a punch in response.

THUMP!

A dull thud sounded, and Xing Ling was sent flying, skidding seven or eight meters across the ground.

SPURT!

Just as he steadied himself, a mouthful of blood gushed from his mouth.

Xing Ling, the prodigy of the Xing Family's younger generation, was sent flying by a single blow? This sight instantly made Xing Yi's face turn grim.

"Who dares to launch a sneak attack!" he roared, his eyes filled with murderous intent.

"To insult our clan's Miao King is a crime punishable by death!" A cold voice rang out, as clear as a lark's song, yet it contained a bone-chilling killing intent.

"The Saintess!" The Li Clan members were overjoyed, their faces flushed with excitement.

TING-A-LING!

A series of crisp chimes echoed as a figure appeared in everyone's line of sight. Dressed in light blue robes with bare feet, she wore a string of silver bells on her ankles that jingled with her every step.

The newcomer was none other than the Saintess of the Jiuli Tribe, Li Lingqing. She walked slowly to the rampart and stood upon it. With a simple gesture of her hand, a gleam of light landed on her fingertips. It was a snow-white insect.

"The Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm!" Seeing this, Xing Yi's expression changed drastically, and a hint of crazed fervor flickered in his eyes.

To think that the Jiuli Tribe had actually managed to cultivate the legendary Gu King!

"Good, good, good!" Xing Yi rejoiced. "It seems the Saintess and our clan's Xing Chong are truly a perfect match. Now I can rest assured!"

The Xing Family Members also wore looks of satisfaction, as if the matter of marrying the Saintess of the Jiuli Tribe was already settled.

"Marry me?" Li Lingqing's aura was much more powerful and frigid than before. She said indifferently, "Your Xing Family is not worthy!"

"Hmph, whether we're worthy or not isn't up to you! Nor is it up to your Jiuli Tribe's Miao King!" Xing Yi said proudly. "Only my Xing Family has the final say!"

"I said, those who insult the Miao King shall be killed!" A murderous light flashed in Li Lingqing's eyes. With a wave of her elegant hand, the Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm whistled through the air toward Xing Yi.

"Such arrogance!" Xing Yi laughed loudly. "If that's the case, then allow me to test the strength of you, the Li Clan's Saintess, on behalf of our Xing Family's Dragon!"

He swung his large hand, attempting to catch the Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm.

BUZZ!

The Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm dissolved into countless afterimages, revolving and dancing around Xing Yi.

"Petty tricks!" Xing Yi snorted coldly, his body radiating a wild aura as he swiped vigorously with both hands.

HISS!

The afterimages vanished, and the Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm disappeared along with them.

"AHHH!" Suddenly, a scream rang out.

Xing Yi whirled his head around, his face twisting in horror. The insect had burrowed into Xing Ling's eye.

Xing Ling screamed shrilly, but his body soon went still. In the blink of an eye, the living man was reduced to a pile of white bones. The Nine-Star Bloodshadow Worm flapped its wings and landed back on Li Lingqing's fingertip.

The atmosphere instantly froze.

Li Lingqing... actually killed Xing Ling?

Xing Yi was momentarily stunned, then he erupted in rage. "Li Xuan, your tribe's Saintess killed a member of our Xing Family! This is a capital offense!"

"He insulted our Miao King. He deserved to die," Li Lingqing said coldly. "If you are not satisfied, you are welcome to seek revenge."

"Good!" Xing Yi laughed through his anger, looking at Li Xuan and the others. "I will give your Jiuli Tribe three days to deliver the Saintess to my Xing Family. Otherwise, don't blame us for flattening your Bai Miao Village!"

"Don't even think about it!" Li Xuan roared. Li Lingqing was the Saintess of the Miao Tribe, and the Miao King was currently in secluded cultivation in the back mountains. If she, the Great Elder, were to send the Miao King's disciple to the Xing Family, her tenure would surely be at an end.

Xing Yi sneered. "Li Xuan, think carefully. Our Xing Family has a Grandmaster in our ranks. Even if your so-called Miao King's power reaches the heavens, can he truly compare to our Xing Family Patriarch?!"

At these words, Li Xuan's face turned pale. The other Li Clan members also looked terrified.

"Li Xuan, you have three days." Xing Yi turned and left. "In three days' time, my Xing Family expects the Saintess to be delivered!"

After the Xing Family Members left, a Bai Miao Village elder said worriedly, "What do we do? What are we going to do?"

The Xing Family had a Grandmaster; this was common knowledge throughout the Southern Sky. That person's ranking on the Sky List was even higher than the Miao King's.

Tenth on the Sky List, Xing Zirong