

The moon spilled its cool light across the lands while a cold wind sent dirt and dust flying in the air.

Under the pale moonlight stood a solitary young woman of unearthly beauty.

Before her were four supreme grandmasters of China, their eyes shining brightly in the night.

The blades remained sheathed. The tension in the air was palpable.

Tang Yun, Ye Qing-Tian, Sword Saint...

Any one of them could take down an army of martial artists.

They were now gathered here.

One could almost taste the tension in the air.

Sword Saint's furious words lingered in the air. Yet, the young woman appeared oblivious to the questions of both Sword Saint and the King of Fighters. There was no hint of emotion on her face. She

appeared as dispassionate and cold as a statue.

“Sect Leader Tang Yun, please explain yourself. You owe us an explanation for what you did on our land,” Ye Qing-Tian, who had not said a word all this while, finally broke the silence.

Ye Qing-Tian should have kept his mouth shut because his words earned a glare from Tang Hao as soon as he said them. He jabbed Ye Qing-Tian hard in the back and whispered furiously at the man. “We know what happened. There’s no need for an explanation. We’re talking about a hundred thousand lives here. No explanation she can concoct will absolve her of her crime! Qing-Tian, you should remember your place and your duty. Don’t let yourself be bewitched by her!”

Others might not know anything about Ye Qing-Tian’s past dalliances but Tang Hao and the other supreme grandmasters were well aware of his history.

They simply couldn’t believe that this old man still hadn’t given up after all these

years.

Ye Qing-Tian's face darkened when he heard Tang Hao's words.

His lips twitched violently. He was ready to kill Tang Hao.

What had he done?

He had simply wanted to give Tang Yun a chance to explain herself.

Shouldn't they at least get to the bottom of things before meting out punishment?

Maybe Tang Yun hadn't killed these men and women.

"Alright, I know what I have to do." Ye Qing-Tian couldn't be bothered to get into an argument while they were in the presence of a beautiful young woman.

After replying Tang Hao with a casual remark, he continued questioning Tang Yun. "Sect Leader Tang Yun, we're not unreasonable men. We won't put you in the spot if you're not the one responsible for

the catastrophe that just happened. However, I concur with Sword Saint. If you were the one who killed those hundred thousand people, we won't let you go scot free either! War God Castle isn't going to fear you because you're the sect leader of Chu Sect and the most powerful fighter on the Sky Ranking. China isn't a nation you can push around!"

The leaders of the nation must guard its borders and lands with their lives!

The Chinese people had always been a proud people.

No matter how powerful their enemies were, they remained fearless and uncompromising. They showed no fear to their foes who would abuse and torment their fellow people.

Ye Qing-Tian and the other five supreme grandmasters had united the Chinese martial arts circle and founded War God Castle so that they could rebuild the Chinese martial arts circle!

Even at the height of its power, Chu Sect

had failed to conquer the Chinese martial arts circle.

Ye Qing-Tian and the others naturally wouldn't waver even if they were going to face Tang Yun, the most powerful martial artist on the Sky Ranking.

But they wouldn't fight Tang Yun unless they were sure that she had been responsible for the disaster that had struck the town.

"I have only one question for you, Sect Leader Tang Yun. Are you responsible for the deaths of the hundred thousand men and women in Yanyang?"

The winds began to howl and tension grew heavy in the air as Ye Qing-Tian uttered those words.

The eyes of Mo Gu-Cheng, Tang Hao and Sword Saint fell on Tang Yun.

"Sect Leader Tang is the most powerful martial artist on the Sky Ranking and the leader of the most powerful sect in the world. You're known as the empress in the

martial arts circle. Such a powerful and great woman would take responsibility for her actions, wouldn't she?" Mo Gu-Cheng's icy voice rang out before Tang Yun could say a word.

The silence of the night stretched outward and filled the starlit heavens.

The four supreme grandmasters waited patiently for Tang Yun's reply.

Seconds passed...

...followed by minutes. Yet, Tang Yun did not speak.

All Ye Qing-Tian and the others got from her was a cold, dispassionate look and an air of untouchable dignity.

"Sect Leader Tang Yun, please let us have your answer!" Sword Saint spoke slowly and clearly, every word seemingly a dagger. The force of his words sent the young woman's hair stirring in the air.

Sword Saint and his fellow supreme grandmasters had reached the limits of

their patience.

If Tang Yun still refused to answer, then she would simply have to face their onslaught of attacks.

It was then that Tang Yun finally lifted her lovely face. A sword had appeared in her hand. Her cherry red lips moved slightly. Her prolonged silence was broken by her emotionless voice. "It is as you have thought. I was the one who destroyed Yanyang and the one who killed those hundred thousand men and women. Make your move."

The sins of a son should be borne by his father. But her child had no father, so let her be the one to bear his sins.

Tang Yun had known the moment that Ye Qing-Tian and the other supreme grandmasters had appeared, a fight was inevitable even though she was the sect leader of Chu Sect and the leader of the most powerful martial arts organization in the world.

Under normal circumstances, War God

Castle might hesitate to get into a fight with her.

But these weren't normal circumstances. Tang Yun knew that she had crossed the line.

It didn't matter who she was. War God Castle wasn't going to let her off.

"I knew it!" Sword Saint's joints creaked furiously as he tightened his fists. His eyes gradually reddened with rage. "Sect Leader Tang Yun, you must think yourself god. A hundred thousand men and women. Some of them were mothers and fathers, some daughters and sons. Some were lovers who had loved ones. You killed them all thoughtlessly. Do you realize how many families you've ruined, how much happiness you've destroyed, how much suffering and pain you've brought into this world because of your thoughtless killing spree? Do you feel no guilt or shame for what you've done?"

The Sword Saint's words of rage exploded like a thunder amongst their midst, sending waves of fury and power surging



outwards.

“Why are we still wasting time talking? Let’s fight and kill her now! I don’t care if Chu Sect declares war on China tomorrow. Tang Yun dies today! I’m going to appease the hundred thousand spirits of our people with her head!” The King of Fighters thundered and sent his fist smashing downwards.

His punch hit the ground with the crushing weight of a mountain and sent the very air around him quaking with the force of his blow.

An intense fight broke out instantly.

The skies shook violently while the very earth split apart.

The ruined town was going to be completely leveled by the end of this battle.

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Meanwhile, thousands of miles away, at Chu Sect.

Chu Sect had been keeping its head down since their trip to the Amazon rainforest.

Yet, beneath the sect's veneer of calm lurked tumultuous waves.

A deafening thud erupted in the halls of Chu Sect as an old man seated on the platform slammed his fist on the table. His face was filled with fury.

"A bunch of good-for-nothings! Why haven't you managed to find the sect leader after so long? You call yourselves the Eagle-Eyed Hounds? You're a pack of good-for-nothing dogs!"

The chief elder was infuriated.

It had been nearly a year since the sect leader had gone missing.

They had sent their best men to search for her and they had found nothing. The chief elder was naturally livid.

The men before him simply kept their eyes down and their mouths shut in sheepish silence as he ranted and railed at them.

“Chief Elder, you shouldn’t blame them for this. At her level of martial arts, if the sect leader really doesn’t want anybody to find her, we wouldn’t be able to find her even if we deployed the tens of thousands of men in the sect,” someone seated next to the chief elder said.

“Tang Yun’s uncontrollable! As a sect leader, how could she go missing without a word? Does she feel any sense of responsibility for her office at all? Why did the old master Chu choose that young wench as his successor? She’s holding the sect back!” The chief elder was filled with both frustration and anger.



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Even though Tang Yun had been the sect leader of Chu Sect for numerous years, her age and lack of experience meant that debate over her suitability to the office had never abated since she had assumed it.

After that, Tang Yun had gotten placed first in the Sky Ranking but there had remained many who had continued to question her legitimacy and suitability as the sect leader.

After all, the sect leader of Chu Sect had to be both a powerful martial artist as well as a responsible leader.

Tang Yun might be an incredible martial artist, but when it came to other areas, she was still a long way from becoming a competent sect leader.

That was why the elders of greater seniority in the sect had not looked upon Tang Yun favorably all these years.

They had kept their disapproval to themselves in the past but Tang Yun's increasingly brazen behavior had finally pushed them beyond their limits. The

grudges and complaints that they had buried inside them finally made their way out into the open.

“You’re right. This isn’t appropriate behavior of a sect leader at all. She went missing for months previously as well. But she’s gone too far this time. She hasn’t been back to the sect for nearly a year! Does she still care for the sect at all? Does she still remember that she’s the sect leader of Chu Sect? We should have stopped the former sect leader from electing Tang Yun as his successor. We wouldn’t be stuck with this mess if we had done that. The ambitions of the sect remain unfulfilled while our sect leader plays hide-and-seek with us. If we keep this up, it’s going to take us more than a century to regain our former glory,” another elder sighed as his snowy-white hair stirred in the breeze.

These men seated in the grand hall and in the thick of a discussion were elders of great seniority in Chu Sect.

The chief elder himself had survived three generations of sect leaders.

He was well respected and wielded incredible influence in the sect.

During Tang Yun's prolonged absences, he had been the chief reason why Chu Sect had continued to run smoothly and without a hitch.

Tang Yun was simply a junior in the eyes of these old men.

"Why do we keep such a sect leader around?" Another elder slammed his fist on the table angrily. The look on his face was stormy as he thundered. "We should have a meeting with the entire sect and the heads of the three families. Come to a unanimous decision to denounce Tang Yun as our sect leader! No matter how powerful Tang Yun is, she is still a woman. She lacks the guts and the forcefulness a sect leader should have. Chu Sect needs a strong leader if we wish to regain our former glory! Our current sect leader is clearly unsuited for the job!"

Tang Yun had clearly crossed the line with her willful actions. These elders had finally decided to get rid of her.

They weren't in the wrong. Despite being sect leader, Tang Yun would go missing from time to time without any rhyme or reason.

No one would have minded her disappearing acts during the sect's periods of inactivity. But according to the hundred-year plan that Chu Sect had set down, they were due for something important and massive soon and their sect leader had chosen to do her disappearing act during such a critical moment. These elders were naturally frantic and in a panic.

This concerned the sect's hundred-year plan to regain their former glory. With the sect leader missing, they had no one else with the power to make the necessary decisions.

The chief elder sighed. "We'll discuss the replacement of the sect leader another time. Our top priority is to locate the sect leader's whereabouts as soon as possible. Otherwise, our plans will be seriously affected and delayed."

He folded his hands behind his back and

walked up to the window.

From the window that stretched from the floor to the ceiling, one could see the lands stretch out infinitely beyond the mountain that Chu Sect stood on.

The chief elder still remembered the days when the Chu Sect had been at the height of its strength. They nearly had the entire world and its martial arts circles at their feet.

Korea. Indian. Western Europe.

The martial arts circle of countless countries had hailed Chu Sect as their lord and master.

Chu Sect had possessed the power to unite the international martial arts circle.

Yet, just as their martial artists had been on the verge of vanquishing the stubborn and resistant martial artists of China, an upheaval had taken place within their sect.

Masses of martial artists had been recalled. Their sect leader had been



severely injured and had to retreat into seclusion.

Chu Sect had been so close to achieving its ambition then. It had been the closest it had gotten to realizing its dream.

They had been one step away from conquering the whole world!

That had been the greatest regret Chu Sect had suffered.

They had been so close to realizing the dream of countless of generations of Chu Sect followers.

But their dream had been shattered right before they had fulfilled it.

The martial artists from the other countries had seized the opportunity and mounted a counterattack after Chu Sect had recalled their army of martial artists.

In the end, the sect's martial artists who had been scattered all across the globe had been forced to retreat to Chu Sect.

That war had been a catastrophe for both the international martial arts circle and Chu Sect and had been named the Chu Sect Upheaval in history books.

Many years had passed since the upheaval.

Chu Sect had gradually recuperated from the losses that it had suffered then and after gathering its strength for many years, was now eager to make its move again.

They had kept their heads down for too long.

It was time for the world to quake at their feet once again and tremble at their might.

They had everything prepared. Unfortunately, their leader, Tang Yun, had gone missing.

Stuck in a precarious situation, no one in the sect dared to act rashly.

“Pass my orders down. Deploy every branch and every affiliated party under the sect across the globe to search the world

for the sect leader. We must find her within ten days!" The chief elder's eyes shone brightly as his words reverberated through the halls.

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As Chu Sect was about to launch a massive effort to locate Tang Yun, they remained unaware that their sect leader was presently in Jiangdong, engaged in fierce battle with four supreme grandmasters of China.

The humming of a sword rang loudly in the air like the cry of a dragon.

Sword Saint sent his sword slashing across the heavens above the ruins of a decimated town in Jingzhou.

The silver glint of his blade filled the air and was followed swiftly by the furious rumbling of thunder. The streaks of light left by his blade slicing through the sky looked like hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts rippling across the vast heavens like serpents in the sea. The power brimming in the air was akin to that

of a lightning storm.

Tang Hao and the others marveled at the sight, the look in their eyes betraying their incredulity.

“Sword Saint’s managed to gain such mastery over the Heaven’s Lightning Blade without our notice. He can probably rival the God of War now.”

Tang Hao’s feelings appeared mixed. He was happy and yet somehow dispirited. Sword Saint was one of the pillars of the nation. Any strength he gained was strength gained by the Chinese martial arts circle and the latter naturally brought Tang Hao great comfort. But the growing difference in strength separating him and Sword Saint also made him despondent.

“It seems that I have to buck up too or they’re going to have me eating their dust soon,” Tang Hao thought privately to himself. Unwilling to be outdone by his fellow supreme grandmasters, he leaped into the air and sent the huge hammer in his hands swinging as he thundered. “Heaven’s Hammer! First Strike: Flowing

Flames! Second Strike: Soaring Spring!”

The black hammer in Tang Hao’s hands seemed to gain strength from the storm. He wielded the thousand-pound as effortlessly as if it were an extension of his arms, summoning winds with every sweeping blow from the hammer.

Tang Hao and Sword Saint unleashed a flurry of relentless attacks on the pale-looking young woman and alongside their attacks was the King of Fighters’ merciless punches.

The three supreme grandmasters launched their attacks on Tang Yun simultaneously, with the fury of a storm.

The God of War was the only one who simply stood there silently amidst howling wind and flying sand and dust, his robes fluttering fiercely in the wind while his face was a complete blank.

He gazed upon the beautiful young woman silently.

Ye Qing-Tian did not attack. He didn’t wish

to.

She was outnumbered and the God of War disliked unfair fights.

Winning such fights brought him no satisfaction.

Besides, with Tang Yun in her current condition, there was no need for him join the battle at all.

Tang Yun was already in for a tough fight with the other three supreme grandmasters.



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