

Domination 651

Chapter 651: Man-eating Ominous Star Flower

Qing Yu became more and more unreasonable, to the disapproval of Madam Zi Yan. Li Qiye was an honored guest of the country, yet Qing Yu was humiliating him like this. This was a deliberate act challenging her. If it wasn't for Li Qiye stopping her just a moment ago, she would have personally taken action.

Li Qiye gently sighed and put on a helpless appearance, but the shots had been fired so he let it go and said: "If you really want to bet, then I can't do anything about it. Let's do it and let it be up to fate."

Qing Yu couldn't help but sneer after seeing Li Qiye's appearance. At this time, he felt his victory was assured, and Li Qiye was pretty much a dead man in his eyes.

"Don't worry, fueling a Fire Source isn't a painful death, you will be burnt into ashes in a split second." Qing Yu coldly said with a clear gloating look.

Li Qiye said: "If this is how it has to be, then start. Just make a screaming sound."

Qing Yu sneered while looking at Li Qiye to say: "Since you are anxiously waiting to reincarnate, I'll send you off."

With that, he let out a long scream with a considerable sharpness. The moment the scream came out, there was no change in the dormant Ominous Star Flower. Qing Yu then let out a loud laugh and pointed at Li Qiye to say: "Li, now it is your turn to fuel the Fire Source..."

"Ohh..." But at this second, before Qing Yu could finish, the flower suddenly rushed forward. The pistil of the flower opened its mouth like a bowl of blood and swallowed half of Qing Yu's body in an instant.

"Noo..." Qing Yu's wail came from inside the flower, but it was too late. The flower was like a hungry beast with a growing stomach and swallowed him entirely. In the blink of an eye, Qing Yu was nowhere to be found. The only thing that was left was the sound of chewing as the flower gorged on its hearty meal.

After it finished chewing, the flower let out a popping sound like a belch. It didn't do anything afterward and acted just like before as if nothing had happened.

This sudden development left all the alchemists present aghast since it happened too quickly. They were sure of Qing Yu's victory and how nothing would happen, so who would have thought that Qing Yu would be swallowed whole by the flower where not even his corpse would be left behind?

Such a scary and unexpected scene would, of course, leave all the alchemists in fear.

"Oh god..." Eventually, all the alchemists calmed down and retreated with horrified and blanched expressions as if they had just seen a ghost. Suddenly, all of them stayed far away from the Ominous Star Flower. Even Qing Yu was swallowed in one gulp by this flower, so if they were close, perhaps they would be next and get devoured by the flower without leaving behind a body.

Even Huangfu Hao was shocked by this development. Although he supported Qing Yu, he essentially didn't care for Qing Yu's outcome. Huangfu Hao only wanted to use him to test Li Qiye.

He didn't expect for Li Qiye to be right — for the flower to swallow Qing Yu whole. Of course, he couldn't care less about Qing Yu, he only wanted to learn more about Li Qiye's abilities.

As for a Demon King like Madam Zi Yan, she stood there unperturbed. With her power, she was definitely able to save Qing Yu. However, he was courting death, so why would she do so and offend Li Qiye, causing him to be unhappy?

Li Qiye couldn't help but laugh a bit. How could anyone in this world be more knowledgeable about spirit medicines and grasses than him? The flower was extremely sensitive to shrieks; the moment someone screamed, it would immediately attack the creature that emitted the sound! There were alchemical reasonings behind this that someone of Qing Yu's level couldn't understand.

"Aizz, you got the worst out of it since you didn't listen to the wise. Like I said, it was better not to bet, but you didn't trust me. Look what happened now, you've even thrown your life away, a sad death with no burial." Li Qiye smiled and calmly said while waving his hand dismissively.

It would be strange if Li Qiye would forgive Qing Yu after his malicious actions. Only death awaited him the moment he wanted to kill Li Qiye.

At this point, the alchemists present couldn't help but take in deep breaths while looking at the Ominous Star Flower before them, overwhelmed by a creepy sensation. At this time, flashing starlight still came from the flower in a beautiful fashion as if nothing had happened.

But now, none of the alchemists dared to approach it. They understood that its vicious nature had not changed and would still hunt its prey.

Just like Li Qiye had said, this was only an act, and the flower only wanted to absorb the sacred water for its nutritious properties.

The other alchemists were not only anxious, they were also dumbfounded. Earlier, they thought that Qing Yu had won for sure and that his logic was sound since it was based on common knowledge privy to all alchemists. They didn't expect that the truth was far from it.

At this moment, the common sense that they were used to had been shattered by Li Qiye, leaving them in disbelief.

The entire scene inside the alchemy garden was now silent besides the howl of the gentle breeze. Many alchemists here couldn't help but glance at Li Qiye.

Even if these alchemists were annoyed with Li Qiye earlier, at this moment, they were aware that Li Qiye was someone who was actually capable. Otherwise, the Giant Bamboo Country wouldn't have chosen him so easily. Those who sneered at him earlier shuddered and felt fortunate to not have been the one who tested the waters. Otherwise, they would have taken Qing Yu's place and end up being devoured by the flower.

The only person who was calm, perhaps, was Madam Zi Yan since she saw Li Qiye's peerless alchemy skill with her own eyes. Qing Yu couldn't compare to Li Qiye, so his end was within expectations.

“One can only say that with such low alchemy standards, being eaten by the Ominous Star Flower is no surprise.” Li Qiye smiled and looked at the seemingly calm flower while leisurely saying: “It seems that the flower won’t need to eat for some time now.”

“You tricked him!” At this time, a cold voice came from Huangfu Hao: “You already knew this would be the result, so you urged him to his death!”

Li Qiye turned around to look at him with one eye and nonchalantly said: “So what? I only killed one person, what is there to be alarmed about? Those who provoke me should come to understand that they are being suicidal.”

Li Qiye’s domineering reply caused many alchemists to shudder, especially those who sneered at him earlier. They subconsciously took several steps back to create some distance between themselves and Li Qiye. They didn’t want to die a miserable death like Qing Yu.

“You are too cruel...” Huangfu Hao’s expression sank as he coldly said: “Someone who kills their peers like this will not be tolerated by the world!”

Huangfu Hao’s rhetoric carried an air of righteousness. He simply wanted to use this chance to propel his own agenda.

At this time, Li Qiye was too lazy to look at him again. He looked around the garden and slowly spoke: “Don’t pretend to be a defender of justice in front of me. While my mood is still good, instantly scam back to your Huangfu Clan with your tail tucked between your legs before I paint this paradise with blood. If you truly provoke me, then you won’t be the only one dead, your entire Huangfu Clan will disappear from this world!”

Everyone gasped after hearing this declaration. It was truly too bold and caused the alchemists here to glance at each other. They didn’t expect for Li Qiye to dare say such a thing to Huangfu Hao.

Huangfu Hao wasn’t only the fifth alchemy prodigy, he was also a brilliant cultivator. He had reached Heavenly King, allowing him to look down upon the younger generation.

Moreover, he was also the First Young Noble of the Huangfu Clan, thus his prestige rang far across the Alchemy Realm.

But right now, Li Qiye didn’t care for Huangfu Hao and opened his mouth to declare his murderous intent. Moreover, he even announced his intention of eradicating the Huangfu Clan to the roots — such a claim was far too arrogant.

A few alchemists here felt that Li Qiye didn’t know the immensity of the heaven and earth and could even be described as ignorant. Of course, some alchemists also gloated with cold smiles. Li Qiye provoking Huangfu Hao in such a suicidal manner was a good thing for them.

Even Madam Zi Yan, standing by his side, had to smile helplessly. She herself thought that Li Qiye’s words were too outrageous.

Killing Huangfu Hao was not difficult, but wanting to destroy the entire Huangfu Clan was far more challenging. Even their Giant Bamboo Country couldn’t do so.

Huangfu Hao's expression quickly turned extremely ugly upon hearing this. He was the heaven's proud son of the Alchemy Realm, a prodigy respected by everyone no matter where he went! Their Huangfu Clan was a top ranked great power that had an alliance with the Alchemy Kingdom. Not too many existences dared to touch their clan in the Alchemy Realm!

"Well..." Huangfu Hao was enraged and replied with a cold smile: "Naive fool, I want to see what you can do! Today, I will personally skin you and pull out your tendons!"

Having said that, he took a step forward. Earlier, he wanted to find an excuse to teach Li Qiye a lesson, but he didn't expect Li Qiye to be so bold and choose to meet the blade's edge head on. This was actually perfect for Huangfu Hao.

With a sneer, he raised his foot and instantly stepped over towards Li Qiye's direction. As a Heavenly King, his stomp carried an untouchable momentum like a gigantic mountain crashing down. He wielded an attitude as if Li Qiye was an insignificant ant in his eyes that couldn't reach the apex. One foot alone was enough to crush Li Qiye to death.

However, Li Qiye didn't even bat an eye. He slightly stomped on the ground with his foot and shouted: "Scram!"

The moment his words came out, a series of rumbles appeared. It was as if there was a dragon underground. One could hear a crash, and suddenly, the muddy soil seemed to turn into a dragon that soared into the sky. In an instant, a shadow snapped forward like a long whip.

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Chapter 652: Green Bamboo

"Pah!" Huangfu Hao, who seemed to be a gigantic mountain stomping down, was suddenly smashed into a bloody pulp. "Ah!" Before he could react, his entire body was slapped away by this whip-like shadow. He was blown out of the capital and sent all the way towards the horizon before eventually disappearing in the farthest reaches of the sky.

His shrill scream filled the sky after being whipped and blown away. Even if he didn't die, he would still be at death's door!

After blowing Huangfu Hao away with one blow, both the dragon-shaped soil and the item that resembled a whip disappeared underground without a trace.

"That was..." After seeing this whip-like item, Madam Zi Yan was astounded. Amidst its action, she noticed that the whip was actually a bamboo root. To be more exact, it was a branch connected to the root. Madam Zi Yan herself used to be a violet bamboo tree, so after seeing the bamboo root, she immediately thought about many things.

The other alchemists didn't know what was going on since they were scared silly. They actually thought that there was a dragon hiding underground. They couldn't calm down as they shuddered at the thought of Huangfu Hao, a heaven's proud son at the Heavenly King realm, being swatted away like a fly by the shadow underground. How could they not be shocked by this development? Was there really a dragon underground?

Of course, there was no dragon beneath the soil. This earth was personally sealed by Li Qiye and strengthened by many wise sages, including Godkings. An extremely formidable law suppressed the area below.

After stepping into the garden, Li Qiye seemed to be enjoying the spirit grasses, but the truth was that he was measuring this land and calculating the changes to once again take complete control of the gigantic seal underground!

At this location, Huangfu Hao causing trouble was akin to courting death. Li Qiye didn't even have to do anything and could still easily kill him.

"Could that have been..." Madam Zi Yan regained her composure, but she still carried a shocked expression. She lifted her head up to look at the giant bamboo that pierced the firmament.

"You guessed correctly." At this time, while looking at the madam, Li Qiye slightly raised his brows to say: "That was a branch of the bamboo's root, just a tiny one."

This answer left the madam frozen. Although the giant bamboo tree was their Divine Guardian, for millions of years, no one had seen it take action. From the time she became a disciple of the country, she had never witnessed any movement from the tree.

The giant bamboo tree had always been the same, staying high above the clouds without any changes as if it would forever be this way for many more millions of years to come.

However, today, an outsider like Li Qiye came and spurred the giant bamboo deity to take action. Under Li Qiye's control, a small root actually came and swatted Huangfu Hao away to the ends of the earth. This was simply unthinkable!

While she was still in a daze, Li Qiye moved forward and instantly crossed the alchemy garden. At this moment, he was standing at the end of the garden, and in front of him was the path towards the Bamboo Garden.

Even though the two gardens were connected, the Bamboo Garden was currently full of rippling radiance. The giant bamboo in the sky poured down little specks of light that came together to form an extremely realistic ward and sealed off the entire Bamboo Garden. No one could cross this barrier to enter the garden.

Li Qiye looked at this barrier ahead and then the giant bamboo in the sky. He couldn't help but laugh as old scenes started to play out in his mind.

At this time, the endless sea of memories in his forehead shot out a golden law. "Bang!" This law struck the barrier and dissolved it before swiftly turning these flashing runic lines into a door.

The door opened as Li Qiye stepped inside the barrier and into the Bamboo Garden. After he entered, the door disappeared while the barrier remained without any changes, prohibiting entry for anyone else.

"Impossible..." After seeing this scene, Madam Zi Yan was horrified and had to take several steps back from the shock.

How could she not be shocked? This Bamboo Garden had always been a forbidden ground in her country. For millions of years, besides the progenitor, she had never heard of anyone else being able to enter the garden.

However, an outsider like Li Qiye could easily walk inside without using force. It was as if the Bamboo Garden specifically allowed him entry. It became even clearer to the madam after seeing the door formed on the barrier. This meant that the garden accepted Li Qiye, and more importantly, the deity of her country accepted Li Qiye.

For tens of millions of years, the Giant Bamboo Country had produced many brilliant geniuses along with wise rulers. However, outside of their progenitor, none of these people had been accepted by the garden and the deity. Despite all of this and to the dismay of the madam, an outsider like Li Qiye was accepted. She even saw it with her own eyes!

As for the other alchemists in the alchemy garden, they didn't know what was going on. They actually thought that Li Qiye was a disciple of the Giant Bamboo Country.

"Fellow guests, today was truly a grand event where everyone took the time to join us here." The madam composed herself and immediately told all the alchemists in the garden: "However, some unexpected events happened and there was a misunderstanding, resulting in spilled blood, so we can't do anything except end the party before the appointed time."

At this moment, she formally ended the party. After all, this sudden development caught even a Royal Lord like her unprepared.

The alchemists here didn't dare to say anything else. Qing Yu was dead and Huangfu Hao's fate was unknown. They knew a storm was brewing after such a big event occurred, so at this time, many of them quickly left the party.

After all the alchemists were sent out, Madam Zi Yan immediately went to the end of the alchemy garden and stood in front of the entrance, the barrier to the Bamboo Garden.

She took a very deep breath and reached out towards the barrier. She wanted to see if she could enter the Bamboo Garden or not. Unfortunately, with a bang, she was immediately repelled by an extremely powerful force from the barrier.

After she regained her balance, she took another deep breath and sent out a command: "Summon all eighteen Demon Monarchs here without delay!"

Meanwhile, Li Qiye had entered the Bamboo Garden and only saw an indistinct scene. The entire garden was immersed in a worldly energy so thick that it had nearly condensed into fog.

Such thick worldly energy was frightening. This level of density couldn't be found even in the ancestral grounds of the great powers. Anyone would feel relaxed in this place; all of their pores would open as if they were about to flutter away into the sky like an immortal.

By standing in this location, even those with the most ordinary of talents would be able to feel the laws of this ground. Those who were more talented could resonate and become close with the grand dao, and the dao would answer back.

This place could only be described as a treasure ground, one great enough to be coveted by all great powers!

"So tens of millions of years of saturation could turn a regular location into a sacred ground..." Li Qiye stood amidst this fog and felt the beat of the earth as well as the Elegant Azure Grand Vein beneath the ground. It was as if this earth was hiding a dragon, and it caused him to become sentimental.

Long ago, this land was only an ordinary location, but after a certain era, Li Qiye planted a green bamboo here. At that time, the kings heeded his call; Virtuous Paragons and Godkings all gathered here just to strengthen this ground. Many invincible existences created a supreme seal at this place.

In that year, Li Qiye used an extremely heaven-defying method to alter this land. He gathered the worldly energy from the Elegant Azure Grand Vein and moved it here so that the entire vein would cultivate the green bamboo planted by him.

As he walked around the garden, it appeared to be a forest with splashing rivers. Many flickering shadows were cast from the tree. Flowers and grasses were silently blooming with new green sprouts growing everywhere.

This place was full of life and vitality. Here was a scene of tranquility like a paradise amidst this vast world, an escape from the rowdy and mundane world.

Walking in this place allowed one to be immersed in the worldly energy, giving birth to the illusion that this was a land of immortals.

Li Qiye took a leisurely stroll through the garden and eventually found himself standing before a bamboo tree. This tree was beyond gigantic, and after millions of years, he had finally seen it once again.

It had a lush green color like jade. At a glance, it had a green and glossy glow just like a supreme immortal piece of jade.

As the flow of time raged on, this bamboo was still as shiny and moving as before. There was no sign of aging as if it could live for millions of more years without any problem.

When one stood before this unreasonably large tree, they would feel that there was a gigantic wall before them. One couldn't calculate how many people it would take to surround such a huge tree.

Li Qiye couldn't help but reach out with his hand to gently stroke the jade-like bamboo tree's trunk. He sighed before murmuring: "How many years have passed... When I brought you out from that Ominous Ground, you were only a seedling, but now you have become a deity."

The bamboo tree's shadow swayed while rustling its leaves high in the sky. Its branches fluttered back and forth gently as if answering Li Qiye.

Since Li Qiye used a law from his sea of memories to open the barrier, the bamboo tree that had turned into a deity naturally knew what had happened and who was coming.

Chapter 653: Your Disappearing Fragrance

Li Qiye gently caressed the giant bamboo and couldn't help but gently sigh in his mind. He suddenly became sad for no reason and murmured: "Not everything in this world can be perfect. Although you can't turn your dao into sentience, why is it not a good thing for you? Tens of millions of years would only be a blink of an eye. You can watch the seas turn into mulberry fields, and all the grievances and feuds in the mundane world are just ephemeral clouds and puffs of smoke."

The green lights coming from the tree slightly shifted as if it was listening and responding to Li Qiye.

He gently leaned against the tree and closed his eyes. At this moment, he felt relaxed and carefree; at this second, his mind gained a rare moment of serenity. Many things had happened in the past millions of years. Although he could cause a storm in the Nine Worlds with a simple sway of his hand, although a simple gesture from him could massacre myriad realms, although his anger had caused the world to tremble, although the state of his eyes could change day and night... For the past millions of years, he had too many things to do: kill, battle, scheme, venture, train talents...

For millions of years, besides his deep slumbers, it was as if he had never slept before. His time seemed to pass by slowly as if each moment was an eternity.

At this time, he was sitting comfortably with peace of mind. Here, he didn't need to think too much; he didn't need to be vigilant against anything. Although he had countless secrets, he was able to relax at this time.

The giant bamboo seemed to be very quiet as well. Its green light became gentle as if it was quietly protecting Li Qiye.

After a long period of time, Li Qiye opened his eyes and reorganized his thoughts. He couldn't help but smile while slowly walking around the bamboo tree.

The moment he made it halfway around, he saw a pond before him, emitting a gentle light. Before one even got close, they would feel the approaching water vapor permeate deep into their body.

The water in the pond was a collection of dew that dripped down from an old root of the tree. It took a very long time for this old root's dew to slowly accumulate into an entire pond.

“People in this world always talk about the Immortal Nectar, but how many of them have actually seen it? How many of them know that ‘Immortal Nectar’ is merely a name?” Li Qiye chuckled after seeing the pond.

This was the Giant Bamboo Country’s Immortal Nectar. For many generations, many people of the country had tried to find the legendary Immortal Nectar, but all had failed. Every single location in the country had been searched, but no one was able to find it.

The Immortal Nectar was merely a name. Only those who were unaware would call this water Immortal Nectar. In fact, there were many types of Immortal Nectars, and the difference in rankings was quite great.

Li Qiye didn’t linger by the pond. He continued to tread forward around the pond of nectar and finally stood before a small cabin.

This cabin was not big and was also very simple. However, after millions of years, it was as if it hadn’t changed at all; it was still as clean and bright as before.

Countless images appeared in his mind while gazing at the little cabin ahead. The graceful and lively young girl that was as gentle as water and oh-so considerate... As he found himself lost in this scene, it felt as if all of it happened just yesterday, even though millions of years had passed.

“Squeak.” He opened the door and, amidst his daze, he could still hear the two words “young master” being tenderly cried out just like that year. The two words “young master” made his heart so happy!

This room was still clean, and the table and chairs inside were still the same. The bookshelf by the wall was still stocked neatly with old scrolls and trunks of books.

“Yan’er... you were not able to let go back then.” Li Qiye couldn’t help but let out a light smile. In the end, he could only sigh softly with a sad and helpless sensation while saying: “Those years lasted for ages... I once ruled myriad worlds, and some people even said that there was nothing I couldn’t do. However, the truth is, since time immemorial, frustration arose countless times. Countless people left my side, and I couldn’t keep them even if I wanted to.”

In the quiet little cabin, Li Qiye’s eyes were like a flowing river running across each corner of the room. This place was once filled with his presence.

Before he knew it, he was standing next to the bookshelf that housed many old scrolls. He couldn’t help but open some of them.

He easily read the words they contained as old scenes appeared right before his eyes. It was as if the past had struck him, as if it were yesterday, as if he was reliving past events.

If Madam Zi Yan saw these old scrolls, her soul would be scared away from her body because all of these things were secrets of the Giant Bamboo Country that were never passed down. Some of them were merit laws and techniques that even her country didn’t have.

Li Qiye only casually flipped through these secrets; they were not much to him. The merit laws and techniques that belonged to the Giant Bamboo Country mostly came from him. Only a small portion was created by its progenitor.

Back in that time, its progenitor was only an ordinary girl. Li Qiye let her stay by his side and led her down the path of the grand dao while teaching her supreme arts.

Due to various restraints, Li Qiye didn't train her as a potential Immortal Emperor. Nevertheless, she stayed by his side as his maid and took care of his daily needs. Li Qiye, at the same time, gave his all and taught her the best techniques.

Although she couldn't become an Immortal Emperor, her life and skill were extremely frightening and completely heaven-defying.

Li Qiye gently went through all of the scrolls on the shelf once before putting them back.

By the window, a guqin could be found. The sight of it caused Li Qiye to gently sigh. He sat before it and took a deep breath to calm his emotions before lifting his hands to play a melodious song that carried a free and relaxed temperament. [1. A guqin is a seven-string Chinese musical instrument that belongs to the zither family. This type of instrument has traditionally been favored by scholars and literati as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement.]

The melody was enchanting, and the tune seemed to be taking Li Qiye back to the past. Back then, Yan'er's musical skill was also taught by him. Whenever he had something on his mind, Yan'er would play a tune for him. Now, when he played that old song again, he couldn't help but think about the unforgettable past more and more.

Some time passed and the song finally ended. At this time, Li Qiye paused and was lost in his nostalgia. The scenery remained the same, but the people were gone...

Outside the Bamboo Garden, Madam Zi Yan summoned all eighteen Demon Monarchs. The moment they received the urgent order, they immediately came running.

At the same time, she ordered that besides her and the monarchs, no one else could enter the alchemy garden. It could be said that at this time, the entire garden was barricaded completely.

"That... that can't be real!" After hearing the madam's words, the Eagle Demon Monarch couldn't help but take a deep breath and display a shocked expression.

In fact, all the other monarchs were aghast as well. To them, this was an impossible matter.

"How can this be? For millions of years, the legends stated that besides the progenitor, no one else has been able to enter the Bamboo Garden." Ancient Pine emotionally stated.

Although they knew that Madam Zi Yan was absolutely not lying, they still found such a matter hard to believe and couldn't accept it in a short period of time.

For many generations, even invincible Virtuous Paragons from the Giant Bamboo Country had tried to enter the Bamboo Garden, but they couldn't successfully do so. And yet, an outsider like Li Qiye, a nameless junior, was able to enter as easily as flipping one's palm.

If such words didn't come from Madam Zi Yan, then the monarchs would have never believed it.

“He didn’t forcefully enter and instead went through a portal — this means that our deity has accepted him.” Madam Zi Yan said in a solemn tone.

The monarchs glanced at each other in astonishment. One of them said: “This is incredible... Our country has produced many wise rulers and geniuses, but none were accepted by our bamboo deity. Yet now, an outsider was able to enter. I just can’t believe it!”

“Your Majesty, what should we do now?” Another monarch had to ask.

At this point, all the monarchs looked at Madam Zi Yan and awaited her orders. They felt a bit helpless when an outsider had been recognized by their bamboo deity.

Madam Zi Yan looked at the monarchs in a serious manner and said: “Do fellow monarchs have any opinions? Go ahead voice them.”

Ancient Pine pondered for a bit before speaking: “Your Majesty, in my opinion, this is a good thing and is killing two birds with one stone. Young Noble Li’s dao of alchemy is peerless, so it is extremely hard for us to keep him. But now, with the acceptance of the deity, maybe we can keep him here.”

“Your Majesty, I feel Brother Ancient Pine’s opinion is right.” The alchemist monarch added: “Since no one from our country was able to obtain the deity’s acceptance for so long while Young Noble Li was able to, this means that he has fateful ties with our Giant Bamboo Country. Perhaps this is the will of the heavens, perhaps our progenitor in the heavens is answering our call so that we can have a chance to stand proudly on top of all the races...

“... Imagine Young Noble Li’s alchemy skill on top of being recognized by our deity! Maybe this means that our country will be led by Young Noble Li to a new glorious peak. Your Majesty, in my opinion, this is an extremely good omen and a reason for our country to rejoice.”

Chapter 654: Which Path To Take?

Regarding this affair, the alchemy monarch and Ancient Pine held an optimistic attitude.

Another Demon Monarch also agreed: “Your Majesty, this is indeed an auspicious omen. Just think about it. If our country could have an Alchemy Emperor, then even the Alchemy Kingdom would respect us. Moreover, millions of years have gone by without anyone gaining the acceptance of our deity, so maybe Young Noble Li is the bringer of prosperity and the ruler of our Giant Bamboo.”

“I’m afraid we need to be more careful about this matter.” The Eagle Demon Monarch pondered for a moment and said: “If Young Noble Li agrees to stay in our country, then I will wholeheartedly agree to this. However, for him to act freely as the bringer of prosperity... This requires further consideration. We don’t even know of his background.”

When the title “bringer of prosperity” came up again, the monarch who spoke earlier had to cough with a slightly embarrassed expression. He misspoke earlier because Madam Zi Yan was the current Royal Lord of the country. If Li Qiye becomes the new ruler of prosperity, then where would Madam Zi Yan go?

“Brother Eagle is right, maybe Young Noble Li only came for our Bamboo Garden.” A different monarch agreed with Eagle’s view and said: “It is not that we don’t trust Young Noble Li, but we really know nothing about his origin. What if he came with a hidden agenda?”

“Although the phrase ‘bringer of prosperity’ is somewhat inappropriate...” The Ancient Pine Demon Monarch quickly tried to defuse the situation: “However, I think it is very unlikely for Young Noble to come with an agenda. Not to mention that his dao of alchemy is beyond the reach of all the sects, we can take a step back and pretend that Young Noble came here for our Bamboo Garden. However, is this at all plausible? Let’s forget about outsiders, even we don’t know what is inside the garden outside of our deity. We’ll take another step back and assume that Young Noble Li really came for our garden, but this in itself is impossible since everyone knows that outside of our progenitor, no one else had been able to enter before...

“... Even our strongest Virtuous Paragon couldn’t enter. Think about it, could Young Noble Li force his way in? We can all see that his entrance was permitted by our deity. Even though our deity hadn’t taken any action for millions of years, as disciples of Giant Bamboo, each and every one of us know that it has always been protecting us. It can see through all things and understand them more clearly than all of us. It definitely has its reasons for accepting Young Noble Li.”

In this situation, Ancient Pine was still supporting Li Qiye. Intuition told him that Li Qiye would definitely bring about a miracle and become a great figure.

At this time, the eighteen monarchs were stuck in a dilemma as they couldn’t make a decision. Putting aside Li Qiye’s mysterious background, it was difficult to make Li Qiye stay. Ordinary conditions would not be able to tempt Li Qiye, and perhaps only by handing over the reins of the country would he be willing to stay.

However, this situation had its own problems. There would always be unease in the monarchs’ minds by letting someone with an unknown origin become their ruler.

There was another problem. If Li Qiye were to become the ruler of prosperity for their country, then what would Madam Zi Yan do? She was a wise ruler with many notable contributions. As long as she was still on the throne, they couldn’t make her abdicate since it would be quite unfair.

“That’s fine.” Madam Zi Yan revealed a calm and gentle smile. She was aware of the current deadlock, so she slightly nodded and said: “If Young Noble Li truly wants to stay and take the reins, then I will happily abdicate for a better ruler. Until now, our Giant Bamboo Country had always let the most capable become our ruler — this is our tradition.”

“But, Your Majesty...” After her words came out, the eighteen monarchs couldn’t help but become shocked. She was a wise and open-minded ruler who was always kind to her subjects. Up till this point, she had been adored and supported by the entire country, so if she had to resign under such a condition, then many loyal subjects as well as the eighteen monarchs would feel ashamed for having done her wrong.

This conversation might have seemed like a forced abdication, but the monarchs had no intent of doing so. However, if the only way to keep Li Qiye was for her to abdicate... How would the monarchs choose?

“For our Giant Bamboo’s grand plan, my abdication is acceptable.” Madam Zi Yan calmly spoke. She was indeed extraordinary and had a will that couldn’t be found in others.

“What if Young Noble Li does not wish to stay?” At this time, another monarch presented a different view.

This question caused the monarchs to glance at each other while contemplating. Even the madam pondered for a moment. It seemed that everything was just one-sided and wishfully thinking on their part so far; they still didn't know if Li Qiye wanted to stay or not.

Time passed very quickly. In the blink of an eye, five days had come and gone. Inside the Bamboo Garden beneath the giant bamboo, Li Qiye withdrew his true fate treasure, the rock from the Divine Dragon Mountain back in the Metal Realm of the Prime Ominous Grave. At this time, the stone itself had turned into Li Qiye's fate treasure.

After undergoing continuous transformations, it had now turned into a grand seal. Li Qiye named his fate treasure "World Seal"! After some research, he had understood the mysticisms of his World Seal. [1. I believe it is a print stamp; this has more significance in Chinese since the most important object for a dynasty is often the emperor's seal.]

At this time, Li Qiye spent another four days to finally imprint another seal on the giant bamboo. He gently touched the bamboo, causing the green lights from it to flutter. It poured down a gentle light as if it was answering Li Qiye.

Li Qiye gently sighed. Although the bamboo didn't have intelligence and couldn't talk, to him, this type of exchange was more than enough. This green bamboo was taken from an Ominous Ground and was personally planted here by him. He gathered the Elegant Azure Grand Vein to this place where the bamboo took root.

Who could understand it better than him? They didn't need words since this was more than enough.

After putting the World Seal away, Li Qiye finally turned around to look back at the little cabin in the far distance. That place carried too many peaceful memories. Eventually, he sighed once more and left the Bamboo Garden.

The moment he appeared outside, he immediately saw Madam Zi Yan and the eighteen monarchs. The truth was that they had been protecting this place for the last five days.

The group immediately stood up and all eyes fell upon Li Qiye. Suddenly, the atmosphere became unprecedentedly heavy.

At this moment, it was unclear to them whether Li Qiye was friend or foe. Perhaps under such a tense atmosphere, one wrong move would result in a fight.

"What is it? Do you wish to fight?" Li Qiye stared at the madam along with the monarchs. He was still at ease since he didn't mind if they wanted to take action.

The monarchs couldn't help but look at each other before shifting their gazes towards Madam Zi Yan. At the moment, they still wanted to listen to the madam's orders.

She took a deep breath and eventually calmed her mind. A pair of eyes as smooth as flowing water fell upon Li Qiye as she slowly spoke: "Young Noble Li, we do not wish to do so, we only hope that Young Noble Li can stay and lead our Giant Bamboo Country. Young Noble has obtained the recognition of our bamboo deity — this has immense significance to our country."

Li Qiye only chuckled after hearing Madam Zi Yan. He responded by casually throwing a bottle to her while lightly saying: "Take it."

"This is..." Madam Zi Yan caught the bottle and was taken aback. She couldn't help but look at Li Qiye since she didn't know what was inside.

Li Qiye didn't say anything and only stood there, smiling. Madam Zi Yan composed herself and quickly opened the bottle. The moment it was opened, a powerful aura rushed out. After recognizing what was inside, she began to shudder uncontrollably. She lifted her head and looked at Li Qiye then emotionally asked: "Could this be... Is this the legendary Immortal Nectar of our country?"

"Immortal Nectar!" The eighteen monarchs were astonished as well. They all had to take deep breaths. Even their country had never seen this nectar before, but now it appeared in Li Qiye's hands.

"This treasure is extremely hard to come by. It's a gift from the giant bamboo tree to the country! Be frugal since this bottle can last for several generations." Li Qiye said in a nonchalant manner.

In this instance, the group couldn't help but look at each other in confusion. They became a bit silly since they didn't expect Li Qiye to give them something so precious.

Although they had never seen it before, they knew that this was something even an Alchemy Emperor from the Alchemy Kingdom had tried to find. One could imagine just how precious and priceless it must be, and yet, Li Qiye had just casually thrown it to them as if it was not enough to reach the apex.

While the rest of the group was in a daze, Li Qiye stretched his fatigued back and slowly said: "I'm tired, help me prepare a place to rest."

The others calmed down and didn't dare to delay his request. Under Madam Zi Yan's command, the most quiet and comfortable courtyard inside the imperial palace was prepared for Li Qiye.

For the next few days, Li Qiye stayed in this courtyard. Outside of cultivation, he began to control the World Seal.

To a cultivator who wanted to reach the peak, their fate treasure was absolutely indispensable because this treasure could unleash their true capabilities as well as their strongest battle power.

Many cultivators preferred to have stronger weapons. For example, nothing could be better than an Immortal Emperor True Treasure to them. However, for the ones with extraordinary ambition, this was not the case. Even if they had extremely powerful weapons such as Immortal Emperor True Treasures, at the end of the day, those still belonged to other people. This only created a sense of dependency and was not the correct path.

For tens of millions of years, those who eventually became Immortal Emperors ultimately relied on their own weapons to sweep through the Nine Worlds and obtain invincibility! It could be said that a qualified cultivator was one who could refine their own weapons so that they were capable of exerting their strongest fighting potential.

The type of cultivator who depended on someone else's weapon would never be able to reach the apex.

[spoiler title='654 Teaser']Regarding this affair, the alchemy monarch and Ancient Pine held an optimistic attitude.

Another Demon Monarch also agreed: “Your Majesty, this is indeed an auspicious omen. Just think about it. If our country could have an Alchemy Emperor, then even the Alchemy Kingdom would respect us. Moreover, millions of years have gone by without anyone gaining the acceptance of our deity, so maybe Young Noble Li is the bringer of prosperity and the ruler of our Giant Bamboo.”

“I’m afraid we need to be more careful about this matter.” The Eagle Demon Monarch pondered for a moment and said: “If Young Noble Li agrees to stay in our country, then I will wholeheartedly agree to this. However, for him to act freely as the bringer of prosperity... This requires further consideration. We don’t even know of his background.”

When the title “bringer of prosperity” came up again, the monarch who spoke earlier had to cough with a slightly embarrassed expression. He misspoke earlier because Madam Zi Yan was the current Royal Lord of the country. If Li Qiye becomes the new ruler of prosperity, then where would Madam Zi Yan go?

“Brother Eagle is right, maybe Young Noble Li only came for our Bamboo Garden.” A different monarch agreed with Eagle’s view and said: “It is not that we don’t trust Young Noble Li, but we really know nothing about his origin. What if he came with a hidden agenda?”

“Although the phrase ‘bringer of prosperity’ is somewhat inappropriate...” The Ancient Pine Demon Monarch quickly tried to defuse the situation: “However, ...”

Chapter 655: Madam Zi Yan’s Abdication

In the past few days, the eighteen monarchs didn’t dare to come bother Li Qiye. Meanwhile, Madam Zi Yan came to see him every day. More often than not, she even personally took care of his daily accommodations.

It didn’t stop there. Whenever Li Qiye was free, she would explain the current situation of the world and the Giant Bamboo Country to Li Qiye in great detail.

Today, she came to see him like always. Noticing that he was deep in meditation, she slowly sat down by his side.

A while later, Li Qiye opened his eyes and said with a smile: “Is there something else you want to tell me?”

“In the last two days, the Qing Clan has caused quite a stir. They demand justice from the Giant Bamboo Country for Qing Yu’s death. They even swore that they would never let this go.” Madam Zi Yan explained to Li Qiye.

“The truth is, you don’t need to tell me these things.” Li Qiye gently shook his head and said: “As the Royal Lord, I’m sure that you can deal with these matters in a satisfactory manner.”

“Hmm...” Madam Zi Yan wanted to say something, but she paused for a bit before continuing: “You have only been here for a short amount of time and aren’t familiar with many issues. This is a transitional period for you, so after you become used to it...”

Li Qiye interrupted her. He chuckled while looking at the madam before speaking: “Madam, don’t tell me you want me to become Giant Bamboo’s ruler?”

Li Qiye's sudden interruption left her stunned for a bit. In fact, she had mentally prepared herself and was ready to hand over the Giant Bamboo Country to Li Qiye.

"I feel that you are right for it. For millions of years, outside of our progenitor, no one had ever been recognized by our Divine Guardian. Despite its inactivity, we all know that it has been shielding our country from war. There must be a reason why it chose you at this time. Besides, your dao of alchemy is peerless. And it's not just me, all of the monarchs also feel that you can lead Giant Bamboo to the top of all the races." Madam Zi Yan spoke in a serious manner. Her words were very sincere and came from her heart. She had plans to abdicate and was more than happy to do so as long as Li Qiye could lead the country down a more glorious path.

After hearing this, Li Qiye couldn't help but smile. Then, he gently shook his head while saying: "Do you really think that I would become the Royal Lord of the country? Do you actually think that I came here just to take the reigns?"

This answer made the madam ponder for a moment before she was able to calm down and reply: "That is not what I meant. Although Young Noble Li might not have come for the Giant Bamboo Country's throne, the Divine Guardian chose you. I trust that no one else is more suitable than you to become our ruler. I also believe that with you taking the reigns in the future, the country will naturally become even more prosperous."

Li Qiye smiled and said: "Your words are correct, but also incorrect."

Madam Zi Yan always had a good temper, so she gently said: "Which parts are incorrect? Young Noble Li, please point me in the right direction."

Li Qiye looked at this charming and beautiful woman ahead, a woman with an elegant and noble aura that didn't take away from her gentleness. He couldn't help but smile and say: "First, you are correct with regards to the country prospering in my hands. Under my control, the Giant Bamboo Country would certainly stand at the top of the Nine Worlds one day and look down with disdain upon all the other races."

Anyone else would think Li Qiye was being too arrogant and didn't understand the immensity of the heaven and earth. Across this world, not too many heaven's proud sons would dare to proclaim this.

However, Madam Zi Yan still attentively listened in a quiet and gentle manner. This aura of hers, an aura as soft as water, was quite pleasing and would make others feel relaxed.

Li Qiye paused here for a bit before continuing: "Second, I will not take the Royal Lord position of your Giant Bamboo Country since I have no interest in it. And even if I were to take this position, I wouldn't be able to take your country to the glorious peak."

Li Qiye's words puzzled the madam quite a bit. His firm rejection caught her by surprise. His dao of alchemy was peerless, and such a talent would be sought after by countless great powers. If anyone else were to face the choice of ruling the entire Giant Bamboo Country, then even if they didn't start salivating from temptation, they would at least hesitate a bit before declining.

However, Li Qiye didn't have the slightest bit of yearning. It was as if controlling an entire great power was only a trivial matter to him.

The madam calmed down and looked at Li Qiye to say: "I can understand Young Noble not wanting to become our Royal Lord to rule the country... However, like you said, if you are in control, you will be able to take us to the glorious peak with your abilities, yet your second statement contradicted the first. May you explain this?" She carefully considered his words. Others might think that Li Qiye was spouting arrogant nonsense, but not the madam.

Li Qiye looked at the elegant and noble woman before him; she did indeed resemble Yan'er in the past. He shifted his gaze and looked outside the window before slowly speaking: "The Giant Bamboo Country... This is a tranquil place, a land of peace. I do not wish to involve it in a bloody conquest. In the future, my path will be paved with blood and corpses... No matter how high the heavens might be, no matter how far myriad worlds are, I will kill my way to the very end. Because of this, let's leave this serene place how it is right now, I do not want to tie it to my war chariot!" [1. The last sentence means "I do not want to involve it with my conquest", but I kept it more like the raw.]

At this point, he couldn't help but sigh with some sadness in his heart.

At this moment, Madam Zi Yan couldn't help but feel a bit lost. It was as if she saw an illusion; on the solitary path of the dao, Li Qiye walked forward alone. Behind him was an endless sea of blood that contained the floating corpses of his enemies, and the gods from the capital of the immortals were wailing in anguish.

Eventually, her mind returned. She couldn't help but shudder as her heart skipped a beat. That illusion she just experienced was truly chillingly terrifying and caused her to feel that such an event would happen in the future.

"Another thing you are mistaken about, in my eyes, is that whether the Giant Bamboo Country is powerful or not doesn't matter. This place is a peaceful land that I love. If possible, I hope that one day, I will be able to stop and stay in this place." Li Qiye said while looking at the madam.

She couldn't help but reply: "If that is the case, then why not stay now? I'm certain that the entire country would welcome you. You can think of the country as your home, and you can come and go as you please."

"Home..." Li Qiye revealed a faint smile and gazed into the distance. After a while, he slightly shook his head and said: "It is impossible for me."

At this point, Li Qiye paused for a bit before looking at the madam and smiled: "If you are willing to come with me, I will be more than happy to take you. Follow me and, in the future, you will definitely see many sceneries from the top of the peak."

Madam Zi Yan was stunned by these words. Any other girl who heard such a thing would think that Li Qiye was teasing or flirting with them.

However, Madam Zi Yan didn't think so; she didn't sense any intention to flirt or tease from the tone of his words. In fact, this was not his first time proposing this idea. Back at Ancient Pine's palace, he had said something similar.

“Boom!” Right when Madam Zi Yan was still in a daze, a majestic aura suddenly appeared in the sky. It was so powerful that it was as if its billowing waves reached the heavens itself. This mighty force instantly flooded the earth and drowned the entire capital.

“What’s happening?” The unrivaled aura that appeared without any warning and loomed over the capital caused all the citizens and cultivators within to be frightened. Even Royal Nobles and Ancient Saints were quivering in fear.

“A Virtuous Paragon!” Madam Zi Yan suddenly stood up with a shocked expression at the appearance of this aura and exclaimed: “This is an ancestor from a great power!”

The Giant Bamboo’s capital was a large city. In the contemporary times, ancestors from great powers would not easily show their face, but through the years, there would still be ancestors coming and going in this capital. However, no matter which great power they might be from, these ancestors wouldn’t act in such a wanton manner. They wouldn’t use their invincible aura to seemingly aim to suppress the entire capital.

This meant that the opponent wasn’t merely arrogant and instead came with malicious intentions against the country.

“Virtuous Paragon?” Li Qiye only narrowed his eyes after sensing this aura; his expression was essentially unchanged. Even a Virtuous Paragon was not a big deal to him!

“Your Majesty, not good, not good.” At this time, the Ancient Pine Demon Monarch came rushing in and saw Madam Zi Yan together with Li Qiye. He quickly said: “Your Majesty, something bad has happened.”

“Demon Monarch, what happened? Why are you so nervous?” Madam Zi Yan asked in a serious tone.

In fact, even if the demon monarch was not in a panic, she would still know that something big had happened. An aura suddenly erupting from a Virtuous Paragon was a sign of suppression. This newcomer obviously bore malicious intent towards the Giant Bamboo Country.

“People from the Huangfu Clan came.” Ancient Pine’s expression was quite unbearable to look at as he quickly said: “There are quite a few too. One ancestor is personally leading the group that consists of three high elders and five elders!”

[spoiler title=’655 Teaser’]In the past few days, the eighteen monarchs didn’t dare to come bother Li Qiye. Meanwhile, Madam Zi Yan came to see him every day. More often than not, she even personally took care of his daily accommodations.

It didn’t stop there. Whenever Li Qiye was free, she would explain the current situation of the world and the Giant Bamboo Country to Li Qiye in great detail.

Today, she came to see him like always. Noticing that he was deep in meditation, she slowly sat down by his side.

A while later, Li Qiye opened his eyes and said with a smile: “Is there something else you want to tell me?”

Chapter 656: The Huangfu Clan’s Vengeance

“So they are finally here?” Madam Zi Yan’s glare became serious as she tried to confirm the situation.

Ancient Pine quickly responded: “They still haven’t entered the capital and are staying on the outskirts. Their ancestor sent a message to Brother Eagle’s group and wants our Giant Bamboo Country to give an explanation regarding Huangfu Hao or face the consequences.”

It turned out that after being blown away from the capital, the Huangfu Clan expended a lot of effort before finding him. Huangfu Hao was found on the verge of death. Although he managed to survive, his wounds were quite grave, so he would be bed-stricken for some time.

The Huangfu Ancestor quickly brought Huangfu Hao back for treatment. After his wounds stabilized, the people from the Huangfu Clan regained their calm and refocused their attention. How could the people from the Huangfu Clan swallow this anger? Because of this, the ancestor brought a group of experts from the clan, demanding an explanation.

Madam Zi Yan’s visage became cold as she stated: “So if we say no, they will massacre our capital.”

Ancient Pine had cold sweat running down his face as he said: “Most likely. It seems that the Huangfu Clan won’t give up unless we give them an explanation. If they actually attack, I’m afraid the Eagle Demon Monarch’s group won’t be able to withstand it.”

Madam Zi Yan scowled while showing a cold glare. She knew very clearly that there were many great powers in the Alchemy Realm who had been eyeing their country. However, all of them had been living together peacefully. Nevertheless, with such a good excuse at the moment, how could the Huangfu Clan let this great opportunity go?

In addition to all of this, Huangfu Hao desired a marriage alliance with her, so their clan could use this as leverage as well after this event. It was killing two birds with one stone!

“Your Majesty, what should we do?” Ancient Pine hastily asked.

With a serious gaze, Madam Zi Yan austere declared: “If the Huangfu Clan wants to play hard, then we shall entertain them. Our Giant Bamboo Country is not so easily bullied.”

“I’m only worried that behind the Huangfu Clan is the Alchemy Kingdom. They had been in-laws for several generations.” Ancient Pine couldn’t help but worry.

Madam Zi Yan coldly replied: “When the soldiers come, let the generals deal with them; when the flood arrives, let the earth halt it.” [1. Worry about it when the time comes is the meaning behind this phrase.]

“We absolutely will not falter in the face of the Huangfu Clan coming to our gate. Go beseech our ancestor to come into being. I will take full responsibility.” Although Madam Zi Yan was a woman, she was not soft at all. In fact, she was even more decisive compared to the rougher sex.

“It’s only a Huangfu Clan, there is no need to make any extraneous effort.” At this time, a lazy voice came about. Li Qiye slowly said: “There is no need to ask for your ancestor to come out, leave this matter to me. This matter started because of me, so let me finish it.”

Having heard this, Ancient Pine couldn't help but stare at Li Qiye. Madam Zi Yan also became serious and said: "The Huangfu Ancestor is an unfathomable Virtuous Paragon who has been renowned since thirty thousand years ago."

She only said this out of concern for Li Qiye. Even a Heavenly King like her was very wary against an existence of the ancestor level. Her strength alone was not enough to fight the Huangfu Ancestor; this was why she wanted to ask a Giant Bamboo Ancestor to come out of his seclusion.

Although the madam thought very highly of Li Qiye, this didn't mean that the current Li Qiye could confront a character of the ancestor level.

In fact, ever since he got here, he had never personally taken action so she didn't know of his exact cultivation. However, in her opinion, he was not stronger than the Heavenly King realm.

And if he wasn't stronger than a Heavenly King, then he was not qualified to contend against an ancestor. A Heavenly King was insufficient when the opponent is an ancestor.

"It's only a Virtuous Paragon, not an Immortal Emperor — no big deal." Li Qiye said in an indifferent manner: "If they want to come, then let them. We can just use this chance to wipe them off the earth. Don't let even one of them think about escaping."

These casual words silenced both Ancient Pine and the madam.

Only a Virtuous Paragon — this might be the most arrogant phrase they had ever heard! Even an ordinary power would have only one Virtuous Paragon. This was a terrifying existence, someone capable of plucking the stars and seizing the moon in the sky, someone who could reverse the heaven and earth! It could even be said that a Heavenly King was not worth mentioning before a Virtuous Paragon.

But now, in the mouth of Li Qiye, he was "only" a Virtuous Paragon. How carefree and easygoing was he to utter such words? It was as if an ancestor of a great power, to him, was essentially insignificant.

Ancient Pine hesitated for a moment before having to voice his mind: "But... but... This is a Virtuous Paragon! A Virtuous Paragon capable of killing tens of thousands with one hand!"

While he recognized Li Qiye's peerless alchemy skill and knew that he could definitely become the Alchemy Emperor in the future, Ancient Pine had no confidence regarding Li Qiye's cultivation.

And this was the truth. In the Stone Medicine World, many genius alchemists had very average talents for cultivation. Even an Alchemy Emperor, regarding cultivation, couldn't compare to a God-Monarch or Godking.

In addition, Li Qiye hadn't shown his cultivation to Ancient Pine. Li Qiye was extremely young, so despite Li Qiye's supreme dao of alchemy, Ancient Pine believed that he was but an insect before a Virtuous Paragon.

Li Qiye lazily smiled and said: "So what if it is a Virtuous Paragon? Even a Godking would only come to seek his death. Leave this trivial matter to me."

Ancient Pine was completely speechless at this time. These words were even more preposterous and audacious! Godkings were existences at the top of the nine heavens, individuals who were capable of

sweeping through the world! But now, Li Qiye dared to make such a reckless statement. How could Ancient Pine reply to this?

If it was someone else, Ancient Pine would already have berated him for this ignorance. Although he didn't dare to yell at Li Qiye right now, he still felt that Li Qiye was a bit too unreasonable.

And so, he turned to the madam for an answer. She pondered for a moment then stared at Li Qiye before slowly speaking: "Do you really think we don't need to invite an ancestor?"

"Since when have I told a lie?" Li Qiye couldn't help but laugh and say: "Don't worry, with me here, Virtuous Paragons are merely clouds in the sky. If the Huangfu Clan is too dumb to scam, then even if they have the Alchemy Kingdom as their backing, I will still exterminate their clan to their very roots!" Having said that, his eyes narrowed.

The Giant Bamboo Country had a special position in his heart, so if the Huangfu Clan dared to touch this country, he didn't mind massacring their whole clan!

Those who dared to offend the Giant Bamboo Country would be killed without mercy! This was one of his uncrossable bottom lines.

Madam Zi Yan slightly nodded and formally said: "Since you have such confidence... Very well then, we'll leave this for you to deal with."

Although she did feel that his words were somewhat arrogant, her intuition told her that Li Qiye was not the type to bluster. In fact, all of his actions seemed to be premeditated, so she had faith in him.

"Your Majesty..." Ancient Pine was startled by Madam Zi Yan's decision. To say that the country was being encroached by an army right in front of their gates was not an exaggeration. Right now, the Huangfu Ancestor was right outside, but their lord was leaving this catastrophe to Li Qiye and didn't even invite an ancestor, so how could he not be scared out of his skin?

Over the years, Madam Zi Yan had been a great ruler. All of her decisions had been admirable, but now, Ancient Pine, who was counting on her to resolve this dispute, didn't expect for her to throw this matter over to Li Qiye.

"Demon Monarch, summon all the other monarchs. This time, all the problems will be personally dealt with by Young Noble Li. All monarchs and disciples must follow his orders." Madam Zi Yan slowly declared. Although she was not very loud, her voice carried a powerful resonance that left no room for questions.

Ancient Pine paused for a moment but didn't say anything in the end. He left and carried out the order. To him, although this decision was a bit crazy and could even be said to be insane, he still chose to follow Madam Zi Yan's command.

After Ancient Pine left, Li Qiye asked with a smile while looking at the madam: "It seems that you have a lot of confidence in me, ah?"

The madam couldn't help but meet his gaze and softly say: "Are you confident in this?" These words were very gentle and pleasant like soft water that could drown listeners in pleasure.

Li Qiye looked at the madam and smilingly stated: "I like women like you."

This response caught her off guard. Once she composed herself, she smiled back at him. Of course, she was not misunderstanding Li Qiye's intent. She didn't feel that he was teasing her or taking advantage of her.

At this moment, she believed that Li Qiye had no need to take advantage of her. With his attitude, it seemed as if even the goddess of all nine heavens would not be much to him. Even the fairies from myriad domains would wish for his loving embrace.

He was the most confident and indifferent person she had ever met.

The moment the monarchs received her order, they all stood there while looking silly. One monarch couldn't help but say: "This, this is a bit too crazy."

"Perhaps... this is Her Majesty giving Young Noble Li a chance to gain more experience." Another monarch replied.

This speculation made the monarchs look at each other. This made a bit of sense since if Li Qiye were to rule the country in the future, he must experience storms such as this to hone his skill.

Despite their skepticism, they eventually carried out her order and gathered around, awaiting Li Qiye's command.

Seeing the eighteen monarchs sitting there while waiting for his orders, Li Qiye couldn't help but smile wryly. He shook his head to say: "It's only a little matter, there is no need to make such a big deal out of it."

Madam Zi Yan didn't reveal her stance on this situation while the monarchs remained silent. Their extremely dangerous predicament was not exaggerated at all since they were under siege by a Virtuous Paragon ancestor. But now, Li Qiye was saying that it was only a minor matter... This was the most indifferent person they had ever met!

Chapter 657: Critical Juncture

Right when they felt that Madam Zi Yan's decision was crazy, the Huangfu Ancestor outside of the capital spoke: "Royal Lord Zi Yan, our Huangfu Clan's descendant suffered a sneak attack and was gravely wounded inside your imperial palace. He was your guest, yet not only did you fail to protect him, you are also shielding his assailant. Does your country wish to oppose my Huangfu Clan? I hope that you will be able to give us an explanation. Otherwise, I will have to personally take a trip to your palace!"

At this time, the huge figure of the Huangfu Ancestor appeared. Although he had yet to step inside the capital, his mountainous shadow — along with the grand, majestic Virtuous Paragon's aura — was about to suppress the entire capital.

A Virtuous Paragon's voice was able to reverberate throughout the capital so that every single inhabitant would be able to hear his words.

The presence of a Virtuous Paragon was boundless. The moment his voice hovered around the capital, each of his words were like hammers nailing the hearts of everyone in the city. Countless people felt the pressure and couldn't help but stagger backward.

“A Huangfu Clan ancestor...” A Heavenly Sovereign from the previous generation exclaimed while aghast after seeing the mighty figure outside of the capital.

After knowing that the Huangfu Ancestor was personally sieging the city, countless cultivators went pale from fear. There were even those who fled the capital overnight. It was understandable that they felt fear. After all, the one who appeared all of a sudden was a Virtuous Paragon. This was too much for weaker cultivators to bear.

The sudden siege by the Huangfu Clan left many citizens thinking that a disaster was approaching.

“What is going on? Don’t we have a good relationship with the Huangfu Clan? Why are they sieging us now?” Many cultivators trembled before the anger of the Huangfu Ancestor.

One cultivator who knew a thing or two said: “I heard that something happened to their First Young Noble, Huangfu Hao, several days ago at the feast in the palace. I don’t know what happened, but he was blown away from the capital. Although he is still alive, he was seriously wounded, so he can only stay in bed. He is currently unable to stand for even half a second.”

“It wasn’t just that Huangfu Hao was seriously wounded, Qing Yu from the Qing Clan was killed inside the Imperial Alchemy Garden without even leaving behind a corpse.” A cultivator who knew even more added.

“What exactly went wrong? The party resulted in one dead and one wounded? Moreover, they are both famous young geniuses.” After hearing this information, many cultivators became aghast and felt that a storm was approaching.

Sure enough, while the Huangfu Ancestor was causing trouble outside of the capital, the Qing Clan also sent their own words of intimidation.

“Your Majesty, my son attended the royal feast and died a terrible death inside the alchemy garden, yet Your Majesty didn’t even send notice. His killer is still free and is still considered a guest by the court! For millions of years, even if my Qing Clan had no notable contributions, the blood-spent effort was still there, but now, my son is dead! Your Majesty, however, continues to harbor the killer — this will sadden everyone’s hearts and deter all the talents in this world. Your Majesty must give our Qing Clan justice!” The Qing Clan revealed its stance.

At this time, not only did they express their attitude to the court, they did so in an open manner as if they were going to inform the entire country. This indeed happened after the Qing Clan’s message came out. The entire country was sent into turmoil with rumors spreading everywhere. A wave was stirred in just a moment.

Many messages were spread across all the counties. Moreover, most of them criticized the current Royal Lord of the country, Madam Zi Yan.

“Her Majesty is famous for her righteousness and love for talents. People praised her as a wise ruler, but now, it turns out that she is harboring a killer? Wouldn’t this negatively affect her reputation?” All of a sudden, in all the streets and corners, all the inns and tea shops, everywhere was full of people discussing this issue.

This news spread way too fast, and all kinds of rumors from all over the place eventually returned to the capital.

“I heard that Her Majesty and the killer has a special relationship. Because of her protection, the killer dared to act so wantonly without a care for laws!”

“Don’t people say that Her Majesty is impartial and wise, a true virtuous ruler? How could Her Majesty protect the killer?”

“Hah, because you don’t know. These praises only act as a pretense for outsiders to see. From this matter, one can immediately conclude that it was all political posturing.”

The rumors became increasingly harsh. There were hidden helpers with unknown agendas pushing for chaos in the nation.

One messenger sneered: “Madam Zi Yan’s love for talents, humility, and impartialness are only an act so that she could climb to the throne. Hah, in my opinion, she has already viewed the country as her own property, so right now, since her rule has been consolidated, she is beginning to reveal her true colors. At this moment, she basically sees human life as trash and will do whatever she wants with no consideration for Giant Bamboo’s prosperity.”

All sorts of messages were sent. Another one stated: “Think about it, only the wise and virtuous rule the country — this was the order created by our progenitor and has been upheld for millions of years. Although the Qing Clan is not considered her direct subject, the clan is absolutely loyal to the country and has commendable contributions...

“Every time the country was in danger, the Qing Clan would rush to the front to protect it. Think about it, a family of heroes like this had to suffer the injustice of the death of their descendant. This is blatantly wanting the clan to end, so how could people not cry in pain from this grievance?”

“Since our Giant Bamboo Country has a tradition of wise and virtuous rulers, if our Royal Lord is not wise and uses her power for personal gains and also treats lives like trash, then the throne should change hands to a new wise ruler.”

At this time, the rumors were no longer simple, and their intentions were clear.

It could be said that overnight, not only was it just the street of the capital, all the provinces of the country were full of these rumors. It was clear that the storm was quickly approaching and will bring great turbulence in tow.

At this time, the informed cultivators realized that this matter was not so simple. It was the Huangfu Clan who first laid siege, then the Qing Clan cried out for justice. Now, rumors were circulating everywhere, stirring the hearts of people and causing them to become restless and uncertain.

The smart cultivators realized that if this situation was dealt with inadequately, then the entire country would fall into turmoil. Even a long lasting war was not out of the question.

Sure enough, on the second day after the Qing Clan’s cry for justice, the Qing Clan’s leader brought many people to the capital. Before entering, he cried out: “My son had died a terrible death. Your

Majesty, please hand over the culprit and punish anyone who was involved in this matter. Give our Qing Clan justice!”

“The Qing Clan does need an answer.” When the Qing Clan’s people made it to the capital, a few lineages in the country also voiced their opinions. Some even sent their disciples to the capital to declare: “The Qing Clan deserves fair treatment.”

“Boom!” The moment the Qing Clan’s people made it to the capital, a cauldron’s flame pierced all the way to the sky, illuminating an entire zone as if a Fire God was emerging.

“What just happened?” Even the distant border regions of the Giant Bamboo Country could sense this huge commotion, especially when this endless flame shot through the sky like a violet aura from the east heading towards the capital. Such momentum caused all the cultivators inside the capital to feel its presence.

“I heard that the Qing Clan’s Pill King is about to come into being. Since the Qing descendant died a horrific death and the Qing Clan suffered unfair treatment, the Pill King was enraged and didn’t mind breaking his Blood Era Stone to come into being.” In a short period of time, this frightening news reached the capital as if this scenario had been prepared beforehand.

“The Pill King is about to appear? Another Virtuous Paragon is about to come to the capital?” After hearing this ancient title, a few cultivators from the previous generations were startled.

In the legends, the Pill King was a Qing Ancestor, a brilliant alchemist. Word of mouth stated that the Pill King’s cultivation stopped at the Heavenly King realm, but he was extremely well-versed at pill refinement, so after gathering countless ingredients, he was able to refine one batch after another. After eating fate pills like meals, he finally broke through the Heavenly King realm and became a Virtuous Paragon.

The arrival of the Huangfu Ancestor and the coming of the Pill King along with some clans showing their support all happened within one short day. This caused many great characters inside the country to shudder.

“Is there going to be a revolt?” One person murmured: “Is the throne of the Giant Bamboo Country about to change owners?!”

Giant Bamboo had been standing strong for millions of years. The royal succession established by the progenitor maintained a firm grasp on the country. No one had ever been able to shake its foundation.

But now, the capital was under siege, causing people to have crazy thoughts. The Qing Clan’s sudden attitude was not simply a demand for justice for the death of their descendant. To bluntly put it, it was a forceful call for abdication.

“I wonder if Madam Zi Yan is going to be able to handle it?” At this time, a lot of gazes fell upon the imperial palace. Although the Qing Clan had an aggressive momentum at this moment, the madam in the country still had a great reputation. Moreover, she was loved and supported by her subjects.

However, it was precisely due to their love for her that many of them were left very worried at this moment: “Even the Pill King is coming out!”

After this news reached the palace, many monarchs were both angry and shocked. In just a few days, too many ups and downs occurred. It was clear that there was an underlying scheme, and it resulted in a lot of stress for the eighteen monarchs.

At this point, they were counting on Li Qiye to take some sort of action because the madam had left everything to him.

However, he did not do a single thing. It was as if he had not heard any news at all. Let it be known that anything that happened in the country had been reported to Li Qiye by the monarchs. Despite all of this, he was still relaxed; it was as if he paid no mind to this whole matter.

Such a situation made the monarchs very nervous. One even hoped for Madam Zi Yan to take over, but the madam only smiled and said: "We need to have confidence in Young Noble Li."

Chapter 658: Forcing An Abdication

After hearing about the eventual appearance of the Pill King, even the Eagle Demon Monarch who was friends with the Qing Clan was enraged. Normally, he would say a nice word or two for them or try to win them some advantages, but in the end, he still came from the court and was one of its disciple as well as a loyal subject! Thus, during this critical juncture, he was on the side of the court.

"What is the Qing Clan trying to do? Are they intending to force the king to abdicate?!" One monarch angrily exclaimed: "I hope they didn't forget that it is not up to their clan to do as it pleases with the country."

The Eagle Demon Monarch was quite worried as well as he spoke: "If the Pill King comes to the capital, I'm afraid we will be in danger. We will have no choice other than to invite the ancestor to come out in the face of two Virtuous Paragons!"

At this time, a disciple rushed over and reported: "Young Noble, the Qing Clan wants to have an audience with Her Majesty!"

The monarchs couldn't help but turn to look at Li Qiye who was leisurely sitting on the throne that originally belonged to Madam Zi Yan. However, at this moment, he was half-sitting there in a completely relaxed fashion as if nothing was happening.

As for the madam, she was sitting on the other side. With a calm demeanor, she didn't say anything; at best, she would only reveal a smile.

Eventually, Li Qiye came back to reality and lazily said: "Since they are already here, how could we not see them? Go tell the Qing Clan and the Huangfu Clan... In fact, tell this to all the people in the capital, all the lineages, that have something to say or are demanding an answer."

Li Qiye didn't make a single move in the last two days; he was still nonchalant towards all the new developments. Now, he finally took action, allowing the monarchs to heave a sigh of relief.

At this moment, for the monarchs, it didn't matter whether Li Qiye's actions were right or wrong, it was still better than his attitude of indifference. At least he was doing something.

This disciple immediately acknowledged Li Qiye's command and quickly carried it out.

“Young Noble, we should have a discussion with the Qing Clan and the Huangfu Clan about this matter tomorrow. This is only a misunderstanding, so as long as Young Noble shows sincerity and relies on the reputation the Giant Bamboo Country that has already been established, erasing this animosity shouldn’t be a problem.” The Ancient Pine Demon Monarch busily said.

He thought very highly of Li Qiye, so he didn’t hope for Li Qiye to ascend to the throne in a state of war before consolidating his power.

The Eagle Demon Monarch also pondered for a moment before speaking to Li Qiye: “Young Noble, I volunteer to talk to the Qing Clan. We have some time and with my mediation, resolving this conflict shouldn’t be a problem.” The Eagle Demon Monarch also didn’t want to see the country fall into disarray, so he was willing to solve this side of the issue.

“Mediation and erasing this animosity with me showing sincerity?” Li Qiye couldn’t help but chuckle after hearing these two and slowly replied: “Who said I wanted to mediate? Who said I wanted to resolve this conflict?”

This answer took the monarchs by surprise. Ancient Pine had to interject: “Young Noble, before we lose all sense of pretense, it is not too late to reconcile so that we can spare the country from war.”

Li Qiye laughed and lazily said: “Spare from war? Demon Monarchs, there will be war wherever I stand. Why should I try to reconcile? Very well, if you want peace, then I will think about it.

“... Actually, my demand will be very simple. Tell the Huangfu Ancestor and that whatever Pill King to prostrate and beg for forgiveness. Then, I will think about not bringing war to their door.”

The moment these words came out, all the monarchs were stunned and took passing glances at each other in order to read the situation. If Madam Zi Yan handing this matter over to Li Qiye was crazy, then at this moment, Li Qiye’s decision was truly insane!

The Ancient Pine Demon Monarch hesitated for a bit and had to speak: “Young Noble... Ah... This will make it so that we will face the enemy from all sides. That... would be bad.”

Li Qiye lazily said: “Demon Monarchs, now that all of you are here, I will let you know my creed. First, I will not negotiate. At least, not with my enemies, unless they prostrate before me. Second, the words ‘admitting defeat’ are not in my vocabulary. Third, I will not let go of past grievances unless my enemies beg for forgiveness and accept their sentence. If their attitude is good, then I can think about it. Fourth, a very simple phrase — those who dare to halt my path shall be killed without mercy! Even Immortal Emperors are no exceptions!”

Li Qiye’s lazy remark didn’t carry an aggressive tone or oppressive momentum, but the contents were the most arrogant and overbearing words in the world! However, they came out of his mouth in such a nonchalant and confident manner as if all was within his grasp.

The eighteen monarchs were dumbfounded by this declaration. They looked at each other and felt that Li Qiye had turned mad. At the very least, he was the most insane person they had ever seen.

“Well, Young Noble, what will you do tomorrow then?” One monarch couldn’t help but ask.

Li Qiye didn't even bat an eye as he slowly uttered: "What else is there to do? If they do not prostrate before me, then I will kill all of them! The stone-paved path before the imperial palace has not been washed with blood in a very long time, so it is high time that some people learn that the imperial court is not something they can provoke!"

Speaking up to this point, Li Qiye paused for a moment. He had an indescribable air of gentleness as he softly continued: "I adore peace and also wish for this place to be a tranquil paradise, but when the time comes, I don't mind washing this land with the blood of enemies; even the gods won't be able to escape. Let the people of the Nine Worlds and myriad realms know that those who offend the Giant Bamboo Country, no matter their background or race, will be massacred by me!" His eyes turned fierce at this point.

The gentle expression was replaced by this fierce gaze. It wasn't only the madam, the eighteen monarchs all quivered as an illusion appeared in their minds. At this moment, Li Qiye had become a fierce prehistoric beast. The moment he woke up would be when an ocean of blood forms and when corpses pile up into mountains. It was as if he was sharpening his fangs at the nine heavens and ten earths! Behind him was a scene of carnage where even the gods would wail! The people in the room had to shake off this creepy feeling. After finally calming down, they all took deep breaths. Inadvertently, they would feel a cold chill whenever they looked at Li Qiye.

However, they found Li Qiye lazily seated in a leisurely posture. At this moment, he was but an ordinary and carefree young man, so where was the aura of a prehistoric beast devouring the world from earlier? This disparity, this contrast was hard to accept for the monarchs.

"However, we are about to face two Virtuous Paragons..." The Eagle Demon Monarch paused for a bit before speaking after finally calming down: "Essentially, we alone cannot deal with two Virtuous Paragons. Just one of them is more than enough to slay all of us. If we don't invite our ancestor, we simply can't resist their might."

"We?" At this time, Li Qiye glanced at the Eagle Demon Monarch and slightly shook his head to say: "Eagle Demon Monarch, you are mistaken, it is not we, but I. You all have no part in this, I alone shall deal with them."

This development silenced all the monarchs. Even Ancient Pine was quite skeptical as he repeated: "Just Young Noble alone?"

How could he not be skeptical? The enemy camp had two Virtuous Paragons, so how could Li Qiye do anything by himself? Even if he was a Virtuous Paragon, it would still be impossible.

"Demon Monarch, what else must I say? If I say I want to do it alone, then that is that, there is no need to waste more breath." Li Qiye slightly raised his brows and added: "Also, spread this news. Tomorrow when I see them, those who want to spectate can come. This is something that I'm encouraging so there is no need for an entrance fee. Of course, if people want to join the enemy, then I welcome that too. Killing one hundred with one hand is not as shocking as killing tens of thousands!"

At this point, the monarchs had no words left for Li Qiye. Under such circumstances, others would be afraid of having too many enemies to handle, yet he was actually afraid of having too few enemies. What could the eighteen monarchs say to a person who desired to have even more foes such as him?

They became a bit helpless and had to look at Madam Zi Yan. They hoped that she would come out and try to counsel him because Li Qiye's approach was too crazy. However, the madam didn't say anything and only sat there quietly with a smile on her face; it was obvious that she had faith in Li Qiye.

Seeing as how even the madam was supporting Li Qiye, the eighteen monarchs didn't have anything else to say. They had no choice but to do as he said.

Sure enough, the imperial court released a certain message overnight: "Tomorrow, the court will meet the Huangfu Clan, the Qing Clan, and any other lineage or sect that wants to support them." This news spread across the capital very quickly.

After this news came out, all types of reactions ensued.

"Her Majesty has finally decided to show up?" After hearing this news, there were those who were excited since they were confident in Madam Zi Yan. They trusted that, with her appearance, she would be able to solve this problem.

In fact, her popularity was very high in the country. Even though there were two Virtuous Paragons challenging them, there was still quite a lot of people who believed that the madam was capable of quelling this storm.

However, there were also those who were shaken by this stormy situation. A few gazed towards the imperial court and murmured: "Will the court survive this disaster?"

[spoiler title='658 Teaser']After hearing the eventual appearance of the Pill King, even the Eagle Demon Monarch who was friends with the Qing Clan became enraged. Normally, he would say a nice word or two for them or try to win them some advantages, but in the end, he still came from the court and was one of its disciples as well as a loyal subject! Thus, during this critical juncture, he was on the side of the court.

"What is the Qing Clan trying to do? Are they intending to force the king to abdicate?!" One monarch angrily exclaimed: "I hope they didn't forget that it is not up to their clan to do as it pleases with the country."

The Eagle Demon Monarch was quite worried as well as he spoke: "If the Pill King comes to the capital, I'm afraid we will be in danger. We will have no choice other than to invite the ancestor to come out in the face of two Virtuous Paragons!"

At this time, a disciple rushed over and reported: "Young Noble, the Qing Clan wants to have an audience with Her Majesty!"

Chapter 659: Opening The Gates To Welcome The Enemy

"I'm afraid both the Qing Clan and Huangfu Clan will not easily halt their troops." Any wise man was able to see this. The turmoil in the last two days and the rumors that spread everywhere allowed them to conclude that the Qing Clan didn't just want justice, they wanted to force an abdication.

A cultivator from the previous generation murmured: "If this isn't dealt with correctly, then the Giant Bamboo Country will change. I think the Qing Clan has had ambitions of ruling the court for a long time now."

The sudden upheaval from the Qing Clan was not strange at all. The Qing Clan had been in the country for millions of years. Although they were not considered a great power and could only be considered a first-rate sect at best, they were deeply rooted in the country. Although the clan's biggest weakness was their lack of invincible experts since it was hard for them to produce a Virtuous Paragon, this was also their strength. The Qing Clan was an alchemy clan that was famous for its medicines. For millions of years, many sects had asked for their medicines, and because of this, they had accumulated a great amount of wealth and had extensive connections.

It was no exaggeration to say that the Qing Clan had great relationships with many neighboring sects. Any sect would be happy to become friends with an alchemy clan.

The Qing Clan's descendant died a terrible death in the imperial court, so many of the sects outside either publicly or secretly showed their support for the Qing Clan. Some even sent their disciples to help their cause.

Therefore, this was ostensibly a cry for vengeance, but the truth was that this was a call for abdication. Any knowledgeable cultivator knew that the Qing Clan had coveted the throne of the country for a long time now. This had always been the case, but until now, the imperial court had always held a firm grasp of the country's territories. Moreover, there was very little fighting in the country, so on top of having wise rulers, the Qing Clan never had the chance despite its ambitions.

Thus, the current development was a god-sent opportunity for them. The death of Qing Yu along with the uprising caused by the Huangfu Clan, especially the arrival of its ancestor, allowed for circumstances where they could suppress the imperial court.

In such a situation, the Qing Clan and the Huangfu Clan were quite close. The Huangfu Clan wanted to cause a storm in the country while the Qing Clan wanted the royal power. Moreover, the Qing Clan's Pill King, who had always been in seclusion, finally decided to show himself. This move could only be described as quite menacing.

In fact, they were very optimistic about this situation. The imperial court was not very favored against the Huangfu Clan, so now with the uprising from their Qing Clan, this was definitely the best time to make a move.

If they were successful, then they would seize control of the Giant Bamboo Country. Even if we take a step back and assume that they couldn't seize it instantly, the imperial court would be too busy dealing with the Huangfu Clan. At that time, the Qing Clan would still be able to gain the greatest benefit.

Moreover, the appearance of the Huangfu Clan made even more sects decide to voice their support for the Qing Clan. With their help, the Qing Clan's momentum became quite strong and seemingly flooded the country. If Madam Zi Yan made one wrong move, then the country would be fragmented.

"Will the court survive this disaster? Could it be that the court, which has ruled the country for millions of years, will finally come to an end?" Some of the older generation couldn't help but worry.

A great character looked into the night sky and slowly spoke: "Morning will soon come. At that time, we will quickly find out the outcome."

For many sects in the country and cultivators in the capital, this night was very long and boring. It was nearly torture for many of them. They all knew that tonight would be peaceful, but this was merely the calm before the storm. With a single misstep, the entire country would undergo a massive change tomorrow.

A ray of sunlight finally shone into the capital, waking up many people. At this time, many decided to withdraw, others wanted to watch, and some wanted to offer their support. As for which side they supported, only they themselves knew...

The sun slowly rose and the capital became rowdy with people coming and going. However, compared to the usual bustling scene, the atmosphere was much more somber. Both the pedestrians on the ground and cultivators flying in the sky wore a heavy expression.

At daylight, many cultivators attentively watched for any movement from the imperial court. As the sun was rising, cultivators could already be found standing outside the court in anticipation of the meeting between the two sides.

“Boom!” Finally, it was time. The grand aura of a Virtuous Paragon instantly shot into the sky as if a deity was arriving at this moment.

Under such an overbearing momentum, the entire capital seemed to shake. It was as if the person could crush the entire city with one stomp. The capital was just a tiny boat among the storm that was his aura and could be toppled at any time.

This was the Huangfu Ancestor. Although his hair was completely gray and his once-monstrous blood energy had withered like a sun setting, he still emitted a thunderous aura as if he was riding the storm. This was a power capable of controlling myriad realms.

The Huangfu Ancestor was an extremely powerful existence and was absolutely capable of causing cultivators to tremble. It was as if a slight gesture from him could burn the sky and split the sea. Meanwhile, behind him was a group of experts that included Heavenly Kings, Heavenly Sovereigns, and Ancient Saints. Their blood energies soared to the sky as groups of divine rings pulsed around them. They came with their ancestor and held no one in their eyes as they traveled without any hesitation.

They didn't bother hiding their auras at all. On the contrary, they released them without any scruple and in an extremely arrogant manner without any respect for the capital.

“Does the Huangfu Clan want to go all out? An ancestor alone is one thing, but there are even three high elders and five elders as well, not to mention the other experts.” Many experts took deep breaths and shuddered after seeing the Huangfu Clan's lineup.

It was apparent to them that the Huangfu Clan didn't come for reconciliation. It was apparent that they had no intentions of sitting down for a talk. Even random passersby knew that they wanted to fight.

After the Huangfu people entered the city, the people from the Qing Clan were next. This group was led by the Qing Clan Master, and it was made up of quite a few people, including high elders. Besides the people from the Qing Clan, there were also a few accompanying experts from the other lineages that wanted to assist the Qing Clan.

Although this group was not as powerful as the Huangfu Clan, they made up for it with numbers. They entered the capital one after another with an aggressive momentum as well.

In an instant, the groups from the two clans were right outside of the palace. They were together and created a very powerful aura, causing many spectators to shiver nervously.

At this time, a squeaking sound appeared as the two heavy gates in front of the palace eventually opened. Above the palace on top of a series of steps was a wooden armchair with a very ordinary looking youth sitting on it.

Behind this youth were eighteen Demon Monarchs standing in a line while Madam Zi Yan, the Royal Lord, was standing next to this ordinary youth.

“Who is that guy?” When the cultivators standing far away from the palace saw this scene, they were startled by this unimaginable image.

The eighteen monarchs could be described as lords of their own domains, individuals with great prestige. Moreover, they were all Heavenly Sovereigns! But now, they were lining up behind this young man.

It was even more astonishing for Madam Zi Yan. A Royal Lord and a Heavenly King like her could only stand beside this young man.

A single glance could tell that this young man was the person in charge at the moment and Madam Zi Yan was only standing there to keep him company.

This frightened and confused many cultivators as they tried to uncover the identity of the young man ahead. Just who was he to be able to command the eighteen monarchs and even Madam Zi Yan?

“He is an alchemist that recently appeared in the capital. I think his name is Li Qiye, the one who spent some scary amount at the Golem Square.” A cultivator knew who about Li Qiye told the person next to him.

At this point, many onlookers held their breaths while watching the confrontation between the two sides. It seemed that both sides had shown up with all their forces. All eighteen Demon Monarchs of the Giant Bamboo Country were here, so everyone knew that with one wrong turn, both sides would fight until the very end and bathe the palace in blood.

At this time, the Huangfu Ancestor stepped forward. At this level, each of his steps created an oppressive and terrifying aura. Anyone would have to shudder before this force.

The eighteen monarchs were intimidated and had to take a step back with shocked expressions plastered on their faces. Frankly, this was not shameful at all since the disparity between the two sides was too great. The monarchs were only sovereigns while the Huangfu Ancestor was a true Virtuous Paragon!

Even a Heavenly King like the madam was in awe and unable to withstand the aura of a paragon, leaving her with a shaken expression.

Only Li Qiye remained as calm as water in a well. He remained leisurely seated in his chair as if he was at home and nothing was happening. It could even be said that the Huangfu Ancestor before him was only a passerby — not enough to cause any trouble.

Bao: *"which I think is at the right timing after reading some comments. I, of course, share the same sentiment as well for the long parts before the killing, but it is still demotivating to read the negative comments. However, I'm sure some Chinese readers were complaining at this time as well."*

Yanbi: *"After the big battle in the Ancestral Realm, the first part of the Stone Medicine World starts at a low point. As an author, I, of course, wish that it could always be exciting, but this is a very difficult thing to do. Each story must have their ups and downs."*

In short, the plot afterward will become even more brilliant and I will try to refine it even more in the future.

Good night, sweet dreams."

Chapter 660: Playing With The Enemies

The Huangfu Ancestor was a person who knew his stuff. His eyes narrowed after seeing how Li Qiye was unperturbed by his aura. In his opinion, for a young man like this to not be intimidated by his aura, he had to either be a Virtuous Paragon or have an unshakable dao heart.

At this time, the Huangfu Ancestor asked with an austere voice: "Did your ancestor come into being or not?" Although it was not too sonorous, it was thunderous like a drum next to everyone's ears, creating quite a deterrence and caused them to shiver.

The ancestor hadn't taken action yet, but his aura alone was enough to scare the people present. This was the frightening part about a Virtuous Paragon; those who were present could sense the gap between them and a paragon.

"There is no need to alarm our ancestor about this matter." At this time, Madam Zi Yan answered slowly.

"Good... The descendants of the Giant Bamboo Country are really confident." The Huangfu Ancestor coldly said: "Very well, if that is the case, then are you in charge here?"

"No, Young Noble Li is in charge and can represent our entire country." Madam Zi Yan calmly replied with a solemn expression.

This answer left many people startled as they stared at Li Qiye. They wanted to guess just what kind of background he had to be able to represent the entire country. This was quite unbelievable to them.

However, no one would question it since Madam Zi Yan was the one who said it. They just couldn't guess what Li Qiye did that earned him the trust of the country like this.

"Are you the one who sneak-attacked Hao'er?" At this time, the Huangfu Ancestor glared at Li Qiye as his eyes spewed out terrifying glints as sharp as swords; they were capable of easily piercing through Li Qiye.

However, Li Qiye was too lazy to look at him and smilingly said: "You can put it that way. Alas, he is quite lucky to still be alive. This is me pulling my punches."

The ancestor's glare became cold as he emitted a frightening murderous aura. When waves of this murderous aura shot to the sky, all the spectators felt a chill down their spines. It was as if they had fallen into an icy basement. Many of them couldn't withstand it and had to stagger backward.

Li Qiye didn't care about the sudden expulsion of the ancestor's murderous aura. Instead, he gently waved his sleeve while uttering: "I know you want to kill me, but there is no need to rush. Today, I am here to speak about this matter. I am representing the Giant Bamboo Country. It is not just the Huangfu Clan that has problems with me, and I am willing to hear the complaints. Right now, I have heard about the Huangfu Clan's grievances, so the Qing Clan is next."

Li Qiye's attitude caused many to be dumbfounded. Even the eighteen monarchs were shocked. Very few people here could imagine that a no-name junior would have the courage to talk to a Virtuous Paragon like this.

The Huangfu Ancestor became serious, but he was not angry. After gazing at Li Qiye for a while, he slowly replied: "Fine, I will let you live a bit longer. A monk might be able to run, but the temple can't escape!"

He himself wanted to see what this junior could do to justify such confidence. In fact, he was not in a rush at all since even if Li Qiye could escape, the Giant Bamboo Country couldn't.

Li Qiye smiled and eventually took a look at the Qing Clan to the side and asked: "I heard that your Qing Clan has issues with me as well and cries for justice, so now, I am ready to listen to your complaints. State your grievances and perhaps I can carry out justice for you."

The crowd was rendered dumbfounded by these words, especially the spectating cultivators who were quite puzzled. At this moment, the country was facing a disaster and could meet its end at any moment, but Li Qiye was acting as if it was nothing, as if it was merely a trivial matter.

This caused many people to wonder what the madam and the monarchs wanted to accomplish by picking such an untrustworthy person like this. This was simply picking the wrong person for the task.

"Li! You already know full well, yet you still have the nerve to ask. You set my son up, you shameless wretch..." The Qing Clan Master bitterly said. His eyes were burning with furious flames as he glared at his son's killer in front of him. He couldn't wait to rush forward to kill this brat.

"Oh, so you are talking about this matter." Li Qiye gently waved his sleeve again and interrupted the clan master. He nodded his head and said: "I already know about this, that means I have heard your grievances."

With that, he ignored the clan master and turned his head towards the sects who were supporting the Qing Clan.

The Qing Clan Master was shaking with anger due to Li Qiye's attitude and almost vomited blood. Both the Qing Clan and the Huangfu Clan were extremely outraged by the demeanor of this junior — Li Qiye. Only the Huangfu Ancestor remained indifferent; he wanted to see what ploy Li Qiye would carry out.

In fact, his only concern was the Giant Bamboo Ancestor, so he stood there, waiting to see if the ancestor would come into being or not.

“What are your grievances? Did your sect master die at the capital? Or perhaps your sons were killed at the imperial palace?” Li Qiye slowly asked the lineages who were supporting the Qing Clan.

At this moment, these sects couldn't help but look at each other. They were not afraid of a nobody like Li Qiye, but they were still quite apprehensive of the imperial court. In the end, an expert of one of the lineages came out and spoke: “You murdered the Qing Clan's Young Noble, you slew innocent and loyal subjects, you will be a disaster for the Giant Bamboo Country with your treacherous words that confuse people...”

“Got it.” Li Qiye interrupted this expert and said: “Okay, so all of you want to be the harbingers of justice and defenders of the weak. When you see unfairness, you will unsheathe your blades to lend a hand.”

This expert who was suddenly interrupted by Li Qiye was quivering from anger as well while glaring at him.

“I have now understood all of your complaints.” At this time, Li Qiye still sat leisurely on his chair. He glanced at everyone in front and calmly declared: “Now, I represent the Giant Bamboo Country and will give a satisfactory answer to all those who have complained.”

Here, Li Qiye paused for a bit and cleared his throat before continuing: “Regarding the matter of the Qing Clan's Young Noble, my answer is very simple — this was because of his lack of skill. As for Huangfu Hao who is bed-stricken, it is even clearer; it was his fault for provoking me, and I already showed mercy by not killing him. And as for all you heroes of justice, I will also give you an answer. If you scam right now, you will be able to hold onto your life!”

This type of answer from Li Qiye astounded everyone. The Huangfu Clan, the Qing Clan, and all the other sects who came to help glared at Li Qiye as their anger rose to new heights.

“You feel that this kind of answer will be able to solve everything?” At this time, the Huangfu Ancestor was still not angry. However, his aura was still oppressive, and a murderous glimmer could be found in his eyes. He was determined to kill Li Qiye at this time.

To existences like this Virtuous Paragon, even if they were angry at Li Qiye, there was no need to shout and scream to release their dissatisfaction, they would rather just directly kill him instead.

“Oh? So you have an idea?” Li Qiye looked at the ancestor whose murderous intent was provoked and said: “If you have one, then I am willing to listen. I have always been a humble person who accepts good advice and will not act so arbitrarily. I am happy to listen when others have complaints about me.”

Madam Zi Yan, who was standing beside Li Qiye, was out of words. If he was a humble person who listened to advice, then she would be a wise sage, a real ruler from the legends. She couldn't help but smile helplessly at Li Qiye's self-boasting.

“Your Giant Bamboo Country hurting my Hao'er is a great crime! This is challenging my clan's prestige, looking down on us with disdain, and also a declaration of war!” At this time, the Huangfu Ancestor coldly spoke: “Our clan gives you two choices. The first will be a war until one of us falls.”

Li Qiye cheerfully chuckled after hearing this and asked: “Oh, then the other choice is not war?”

Seeing them talking like this, especially Li Qiye’s relaxed attitude, those who didn’t know the current circumstances would think that they were only friends chattering. Li Qiye’s attitude caused many people to be speechless; in fact, it nearly drove them insane. This nonchalant rhetoric as well as his whatever-goes attitude had no place in national matters! This was more like little children playing around.

The Huangfu Ancestor glared at Li Qiye. At this time, as a Virtuous Paragon, he was one hundred percent certain that the Giant Bamboo Ancestor absolutely didn’t come into being.

So without this ancestor, how could this brat ahead be so confident as if everything was under his control? This caused the Huangfu Ancestor to be quite vigilant.

In his view, Li Qiye had no place to compete with him. This brat before him, at best, would only be a Heavenly Sovereign who had yet to reach the Heavenly King realm.

There was no difference between this brat and an ant in his eyes, yet said ant still dared to act so contemptuously in such a relaxed manner. This made the ancestor feel very strange.

During this staredown, everyone else watched with bated breaths as they all looked on in silence. In the eyes of all, the Huangfu Ancestor was a beast watching his prey, and Li Qiye was only a little lamb. They believed that a lamb like Li Qiye would be swallowed in one gulp by the ancestor; Li Qiye wouldn’t even be enough to be considered a good meal!

[spoiler title=’660 Teaser’]The Huangfu Ancestor was a person who knew his stuff. His eyes narrowed after seeing how Li Qiye was unperturbed by his aura. In his opinion, for a young man like this to not be intimidated by his aura, he had to either be a Virtuous Paragon or have an unshakable dao heart.

At this time, the Huangfu Ancestor asked with an austere voice: “Did your ancestor come into being or not?” Although it was not too sonorous, it was thunderous like a drum next to everyone’s ears.

The ancestor still hasn’t taken action but his aura alone was enough to scare people here. This was the frightening part about a Virtuous Paragon; those who were present could sense the gap between them and a paragon.