

Emperor 3721

Chapter 3721: I Want The Girl

Li Qiye didn't bother defending himself against suspicion as if he wasn't afraid of being viewed as the mastermind behind the assassination.

The crowd thought that his timing was awful, only serving to invite trouble.

Even a fool knew how to act in this situation but not Li Qiye. Of course, they knew that he was no fool.

"Isn't this too unreasonable? It's directly provoking the king." One spectator whispered.

"Right, even with him being the saber messenger." A big shot agreed, thinking that Li Qiye was being unwise and impetuous.

Yes, he had the saber but this was the king we're talking about. He needed to give the guy some consideration or tried to uphold Vajra's prestige.

"Too domineering." A first-timer assessed.

"That's Li Qiye for you, arrogant and overbearing. Not just anyone can do what he does." One big shot smiled wryly.

The group agreed with this logic because Li Qiye flattened the two mansions a while ago. He was ferocious like a madman. His choices and conduct shouldn't surprise anyone at this point.

"Well..." Attendant Hong's expression changed since the request made it quite difficult for the king.

"How impudent!" One captain from War Camp shouted: "How dare you try to protect the assassin..."

His outburst was justified since an assassination attempt on a king was a crime punishable by full clan extermination. Li Qiye's request was contemptuous, to say the least.

"Say one more word and I'll cut off your dog head." Li Qiye interrupted the captain and didn't hold back.

The captain stopped, unable to finish his sentence, and turned red.

Li Qiye's nonchalant comment carried ample weight. He could chop off the captain's head and no one would be able to do a thing.

Even the second princess was killed, a captain like him was meaningless in comparison. The golden saber simply had too much authority in Vajra.

"Your Majesty?" Attendant Hong bowed towards the carriage, awaiting orders.

"If the young master wishes to have her, listen to him." The king seemed bored of this already.

The crowd didn't expect the king to be so straightforward and decisive.

As a king, he should never allow any provocation and disrespect, let alone an attempt on his life. An assassin should be cut to countless pieces.

Anyone who spoke up for her would be disrespecting the royal authority as well, let alone demanding to take her away.

Both Li Qiye's demand and the king's acceptance surprised the crowd. Most thought that the king would refuse and a new conflict would arise.

"Is the king afraid of Li Qiye?" One youth whispered to his senior.

To acquiesce in this situation required exceptional patience.

"Enough drivel." The senior immediately reprimanded. Nonetheless, he thought that the golden saber lived up to its legend. It could actually kill royal members and other citizens. The holder of the blade represented the will of the temple. In other words, Li Qiye was the representative of the temple's ancestors right now.

After receiving the order, the soldiers begrudgingly released the assassin.

"Come here." Li Qiye waved at her.

The latter stared at Li Qiye, bewildered. She didn't know Li Qiye outside of one brief meeting back in a restaurant at Wish Ward.

She was ready to die and wouldn't complain after failing, not expecting to be saved by him - a complete stranger.

Furthermore, he was the saber messenger and should be on the side of Vajra. Why did he save her now?

She couldn't come up with an answer but still walked over and stood behind him.

The crowd wondered if Li Qiye was actually the mastermind behind the assassination attempt. Alas, this didn't make sense since only a fool would reveal it right now.

"Young Master, please visit the imperial palace. Don't be reserved, consider it your own home." The victim, Archaic Sun King, had no anger and actually invited Li Qiye again. His enthusiasm didn't diminish despite the unreasonable request.

"I will." Li Qiye accepted.

People found this strange. The two seemed to be familiar with each other and that this wasn't their first meeting.

"We're returning to the palace." Attendant Hong ordered. The members of War Camp began escorting the king away from Black Robe Alley.

Once they were gone, the atmosphere became normal again in the alley. The things different were the ruins where the two mansions used to be, and that the influential Grand Commander and Grand Chancellor have turned to ashes.

"Okay, the show's over, go do your thing now." Li Qiye stretched and told the crowd.

They stopped ruminating about the shocking events and stared at Li Qiye, speechless.

Chapter 3722: Just Messing With You

Upon the inception of the storm, most thought that Vajra would undergo a monumental change. The older son would be replaced by the third prince.

A bold speculation included the Li and Zhang working together to force an abdication from Archaic Sun King.

As for Li Qiye, they thought that he was inconsequential - only a side character to be killed by the two clans and an excuse for the Li and Zhang to take action.

Now, these prior thoughts turned out to be hilarious to the point of being ludicrous. The supposed victors died and took thousands of clan members down with them.

The two clans fell into disgrace, losing their positions in the court and army. These losses were immense.

Moreover, Li Qiye himself did very little during the process. It was simply no big deal to him.

The crowd stared at him as he stretched lazily, not giving a damn about the situation.

“Let’s go.” Some experts shook their head while staring at the destroyed mansions. The grandiose mansions that demanded respect were no more.

It would take them a while to get over the stark contrast.

“Amitabha.” The monk lingered around as people were leaving. He approached Li Qiye with a beaming smile.

Li Qiye decided to tease him after seeing his joyous expression: “What is it, Monk?”

In fact, many big shots stuck around patiently while staring at Li Qiye’s armor. Their intent was obvious.

The monk became a bit awkward. He scratched his head and smiled wryly: “Young Master, about...”

“About what?” Li Qiye feigned ignorance.

The big shots exchanged glances. They knew that this armor belonged to Wish Ward; the monk merely lent it to him.

However, its power was immense and highly coveted. No one would want to give it back after obtaining it.

What would happen if Li Qiye refused to give the armor back to Untethered Monk?

“Oh, I was just saying that there is some dust on the armor.” The monk hurriedly wiped Li Qiye’s armor in an earnest manner and didn’t let go.

“That’s better, so bright now. I wipe this armor every day back at Wish Ward, it’s my favorite hobby.” The thick-faced monk continued to do so, not wanting to let go.

The crowd didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. Of course, everyone could see that he wanted to ask for it back. It was difficult to start the conversation so he walked around in a circle instead.

“You’re nauseating, stay away from me.” Li Qiye kicked him away and said.

“Young Master, this won’t do.” The monk looked as if he had been mistreated: “I have to look and clean the armor every day, this has been a thing since I joined Wish Ward or I won’t be able to eat or sleep.”

He kept on reminding Li Qiye that the armor belonged to Wish Ward.

“Forget it, this isn’t fun. It’s just a crappy armor, you think I’ll keep it for myself? Here, stop acting so disgusting.” Li Qiye smiled and shook his head.

“Clank! Clank! Clank!” The plates peeled off him and assembled again into a massive bronze statue.

It looked exactly the same as before in front of the monk. One would find it difficult to connect the invincible armor earlier to this statue.

“Amitabha, you’re too generous and kind, Benefactor. I am just a lowly being in your supreme presence.” The monk placed his palms together, as ecstatic as can be.

First, Li Qiye was willing to give the statue back. Moreover, whether it be on purpose or otherwise, Li Qiye taught him about the mysteries of this statue so he greatly benefited.

“Oh my little treasure, I’m taking you home.” The monk kept on wiping the armor with his dirty kasaya, not stopping until it’s completely shiny.

“Stop that.” Li Qiye shook his head: “You’ve never cleaned it before.”

The monk still cheerfully continued with his task, ignoring Li Qiye.

In the past, Wish Ward didn’t really care for the statue too much but henceforth, it would become their defining treasure.

“Young Master!” Yang Ling came over. From start to finish, she trusted him the most.

That’s why she felt fine after seeing Li Qiye despite the precarious circumstances. The sky falling down wouldn’t matter as long as he was around.

Marquis Yang also bowed deeply towards Li Qiye: “Greetings, Young Master.”

Li Qiye nodded and accepted the gesture.

The marquis reflected on the events. He worried about his daughter being too close with Li Qiye previously because the guy provoked so many people, going as far as killing the successors of the big clans. That’s why he wanted his daughter to keep a distance from Li Qiye.

It seemed that he was worried for nothing. His daughter had a better intuition than him. The guy had the ancestral saber and could kill whoever he wanted.

“We’re leaving.” Li Qiye said, telling the father-daughter duo along with the survivor from Snow-shadow Tribe.

Yang Ling happily led the way. The survivor stared at Li Qiye for a bit before following along.

Li Qiye never restricted her movement and action through seals. It wasn’t difficult for her to run away right now. He had no intention of stopping her.

This was her best chance to run after committing the heinous offense. She thought about it as well but ultimately decided on following him.

“Amitabha, we’re going home too.” The monk carried the statue, looking happy as if he was carrying his wife.

The kick earlier from Li Qiye was warranted. This monk was truly vulgar and nauseating.

However, the big shots didn’t think so at all. If they had the same opportunity, they wouldn’t let go of this supreme treasure either.

“Monk, is your ward selling this treasure?” A few big shots immediately followed the monk.

“Yes, Master, how much are you listing it for?” Another said.

Chapter 3723: A Storm At Vajra

The result of the battle surprised everyone. However, this was still ongoing between the various factions. If anything, the scale intensified.

Remember, the Li and Zhang had a firm grip on both branches in Vajra with numerous positions.

The commander and chancellor’s mistake resulted in losing everything. They immediately lost more than half of their influence.

Furthermore, these newly available positions were highly coveted. Not only the officials in Vajra wanted to move up in ranks but other powers in the holy ground joined the fun.

Most didn’t care for joining the court or the personal benefits. It was a matter of widening their reach just like the Li and the Zhang.

As long as Vajra was still in charge, they might earn more influence in the future at the holy ground.

Numerous discussions arose as a result. The biggest question still centered around Li Qiye, or more specifically - his background.

“Isn’t he just a woodchopper from Myriad Beast Mountains?” Someone asked.

This was widely known. No one doubted this despite the miracles that he pulled off later on.

By this point, some skepticism surfaced.

“Yes, he really relied on this to survive, he picked fruits and vegetables too. Many saw it.” One expert had a first-hand account.

Many saw Li Qiye’s way of life back at the temple. He didn’t have a prestigious background.

“Then why does he have the ancestral saber from Vajra? He’s the messenger now.” One big shot wondered.

This was the main focus for numerous cultivators and ancestors.

“Maybe he obtained a fortune in the mountains?” One youth had a rich imagination: “He fell into a mysterious cave or cliff and found the resting place of a Vajra ancestor and got the saber there?”

“Ridiculous, there’s no such fortune.” A senior slapped him in the back of the head and woke him up from his vivid imagination.

The senior went on: “Do you think Vajra Dynasty will just let any guy who finds this saber from a random cave do whatever he wants in their territory? Even their king would obey this person? Vajra would cease to exist long ago in that case.”

“Yes, the ancestral saber isn’t an invincible weapon or anything.” Another senior smilingly added: “If it’s a patrimony weapon, then one can use that to order a clan. After all, being recognized by such a weapon meant limitless potential. On the other hand, the ancestral saber from Vajra is only a symbol of authority. Finding the saber randomly doesn’t give one the right to kill anyone in Vajra. Being bestowed this authority is what matters. Thus, the Ancestral Temple is what matters here.”

“Hmm, maybe there’s some truth to it.” One expert pondered: “Li Qiye might actually be a woodchopper. It’s just that a powerful ancestor from the temple found him and chose to give him the saber.”

“That’s one possibility, albeit extremely unlikely.” An ancestor familiar with the temple shook his head: “Why would they give it to an outsider? It’s enough power to shake the foundation of Vajra.”

Others agreed with this ancestor. Even Archaic Sun King feared the saber. Wantonly giving the saber to anyone was destructive to their dynasty.

“Don’t forget, who’s the one who gained the most from this?” A clan high elder joined in.

The big shots present were shaken because they all had the same answer - Vajra.

The Li and Zhang lost two influential positions at the capital and tens of thousands of disciples. Most importantly, they lost their grasp on the civic and military branches as well.

“Maybe Li Qiye has always been a member of Vajra, a secret genius groomed by the temple. This is all a plan to weaken the Li and Zhang?” The previous ancestor boldly speculated.

“I think so too, that’s why they gave the saber to him. Remember, the guardian is also trained by the temple, maybe he’ll be the next guardian.” Another agreed.

The current guardian of Vajra was one of the four grandmasters. Nonetheless, his true identity remained a mystery.

“I thought the successor is clear already, Hu Ben?” One guy brought this up.

“I heard this too before.” Someone else said.

“Li Qiye being a member of Vajra is plausible, but a genius secretly groomed by the temple? Does he resemble a genius in the slightest?”

The group exchanged glances. All their questions would be answered if Li Qiye was trained by the temple.

However, he was far from a genius since he was still in the conqueror level. In fact, even if he was an Enlightened Being, he was still ten thousand miles away from being called a genius.

All in all, everyone had different opinions of Li Qiye but there was one consensus - that he was a member of Vajra.

Of course, Li Qiye didn't pay attention to these rumors.

After the group returned to the courtyard, Yang Ling and her father smartly left, leaving behind Li Qiye and the Snow-shadow survivor.

Yang Ling was very curious about Li Qiye's risky choice to save her. Was it because they met once back at the restaurant? Nonetheless, she didn't dare to prey.

The survivor felt the same way. No matter how she looked at it, there was no reason for the guy to save her.

Chapter 3724: Snow-shadow Pavilion

Li Qiye observed the female survivor, finding that she was indeed a great, exotic beauty - white hair, jade eyes, and perfect teeth.

The girl did the same. The truth was that she found it astonishing that someone like him could dominate the two factions.

He looked ordinary with shallow cultivation. If she didn't see it with her own eyes, she wouldn't have believed the story.

Alas, the reality was that he was definitely a brutal murderer - a stark contrast to his appearance.

The truly pertinent question for her was his motive. Why did he risk offending the king to save a stranger?

Perhaps lust? She didn't think this was very likely due to his attitude thus far.

Moreover, as the saber messenger, Li Qiye would have no lack of beauties in Vajra. In fact, he could pick and marry any princess in Vajra. She was nothing but a captured assassin compared to their noble selves.

"You have something to say?" Li Qiye could see what's on her mind and smiled.

"Why did you save me?" She got straight to the point.

"Because you're a survivor of the pavilion." He answered.

"I see." She came up with numerous reasons in the past but this answer wasn't at the top of the list.

She hesitated for a while before inquiring: "You have ties with the pavilion?"

She wasn't sure because the pavilion has been destroyed for a long time now. The lucky survivors were few and far in between. As far as she could tell, the remnant members had nothing to do with Li Qiye.

"Not quite." He smiled.

This confused her even more. If he had nothing to do with the pavilion and its survivors, then why? Was her background somehow special to him?

Or, maybe he had ulterior motives. After all, they have reigned the southern West King for millions of years and once had plenty of resources.

“You’re thinking that I’m after your treasury or supreme merit laws.” He laughed after seeing her barely-discernible shudder.

She became awkward, not knowing what to say after having her mind read.

“If your pavilion actually had treasuries left behind, it wouldn’t have fallen to this level.” He added.

This was indeed the truth. She thought that if they had any ace cards left, they would have been able to survive.

Before destruction was dished out by Vajra, the pavilion was already finished and reduced to a third-rate sect. There were no treasuries to speak of during that period.

“Plus, let’s assume that there were still treasures left, they might not be able to get into my sight, not even the Heavenly Jade Cicada.” Li Qiye said flatly.

The survivor was both shocked and angry. First, he looked down on the pavilion’s treasures; the comment was clearly offensive.

On the other hand, he also revealed the peerless treasure of their founder - something their tribe considered invincible.

Though she has never seen it, she heard plenty of legends regarding this treasure. The founder used it to sweep through Eight Desolaces.

It had a special significance in the tribe so Li Qiye’s blatant contempt frustrated her.

“Don’t be chafed, I am merely telling the truth.” He said.

She relaxed and thought about it. All of this no longer mattered. The pavilion and the treasure were mighty once but this was all in the past.

“What is your name?” He asked.

She looked up and stared at him, hesitating. After a while, she still stated her name: “Peng Yingxue.”

“A descendant of the Peng and the six saints.” He revealed, once again startling her.

She had no idea how he knew so much about the pavilion.

Outsiders only knew the bare surface of the pavilion since it had been destroyed. Even descendants like her knew very little about the past and their ancestors.

“Unfortunately, you did not learn your ancestors’ abilities, only random assassination laws and crappy ones at that.” He went on.

“How do you know all of this?” She asked.

They have never even talked before yet he knew everything about her.

“Trivial matters like this cannot elude my gaze. Just one glance is enough.”

She didn't respond. Anyone else uttering the same word would have sounded boastful. Here, Li Qiye's words were convincing to her.

She spent her entire life training. Alas, these laws were indeed average as he said. Nonetheless, she still focused on honing her assassination art in order to exact revenge one day.

She certainly wanted to learn peerless merit laws or the long-forgotten arts of her sect. Rumor has it that these immortal techniques came from a forbidden burial ground back in the ancient age. It's a shame that these techniques have been lost long ago.

“If I had access to my pavilion's immortal arts, I wouldn't be standing here right now.” She stared at him and said confidently. In her mind, the pavilion was still a holy and untouchable existence.

“Not necessarily.” He shook his head: “The journey towards the dao relies on the person more than the technique. Given your current mentality or the mentality at the start, you still couldn't go far with those top merit laws, maybe only a bit stronger than now.”

“You!” Embarrassment turned into anger as she glared at him.

She wasn't a supreme genius but she was still confident in her talents. Moreover, she put in more effort and diligence than anyone else.

She believed that with those merit laws, she would be on the same level as Golden Cicada Buddhist Child or Phantom Saint Child.

Fate didn't let her have them so she was limited to external assassination arts. After years of training, today was her attempt to assassinate the king. She was aware of the most likely outcome - her death.

Chapter 3725: A Different Path

Peng Yingxue naturally didn't appreciate Li Qiye's low evaluation but still swallowed her words.

“Do you want to assassinate me too for revenge?” He smiled and asked.

She hasn't thought of this issue. She hoped to kill the king of Vajra one day since this dynasty destroyed her sect.

However, Li Qiye was a member of Vajra too. With that golden saber, he represented the will of Vajra Ancestral Temple. In fact, his status was actually greater than the king, so killing him would be better.

She smiled wryly, having never thought of doing so.

“No, you saved me.” She answered.

“That's why you're not a proper assassin despite wanting to be. A true assassin has a mission. What is yours?” He asked.

“Kill Archaic Sun King to avenge the pavilion.” She blurted.

“Is that your goal or your seniors’ goal?” He smiled: “Your seniors lost utterly to Vajra and ran away like dogs with their tails tucked between the legs. They knew that they have zero chance of doing anything to Vajra so they decided to train you, hoping that you could assassinate the king and wash away the disgrace back then.”

“...” She opened her mouth but couldn’t come up with a response.

She shouldered this heavy burden since youth. She was taught that the pavilion’s outcome was due to the greedy dynasty so vengeance must be carried out.

“Your goal is the result of useless and angry men.” He went on: “Will Vajra fall after the death of one king? Such nonsense. How naive.”

Of course she knew this. Vajra could always have a second king. As long as its foundation was there, the king actually didn’t matter.

Nonetheless, assassinating Archaic Sun King has always been her goal.

“If killing Archaic Sun King is your goal for cultivation, then your life achievement will be limited. It doesn’t matter which merit laws you had access to, that’ll be your limit. A true assassin doesn’t train for one particular target. They simply want to become the best assassin possible. As for you, you’re only a pitiful girl wallowing in hatred, a tool used by your seniors to compensate for their uselessness and weak mentality. They trained you to show that they’re still doing something about it.” He stared at her and elaborated.

“Absolutely not!” Her expression changed as she denied his sharp analysis.

“Then what is your reason for cultivation, do tell.” He smiled.

She stood there silent, unable to answer. She never asked herself this question before until now.

The answer was to kill the king and avenge the pavilion. That’s the only thing she could come up with.

Her determination shook after being exposed by Li Qiye. In reality, the pavilion was long gone before her birth. What she knew about it was strictly limited to what the seniors told her.

Her education focused on that one goal, to win back some honor for the pavilion.

“There are no lack of stupid and useless people in this world. They’re a true source of tragedy.” He went on: “If your seniors wanted to avenge the pavilion, they would be the ones taking action and fighting to the bitter end instead of relying on you. Why did the pavilion fall? This was precisely why - they were so useless and unable to do anything about its decline. Now, it’s all up to some little juniors. Truly wretched and pathetic.”

His words pricked her heart and rendered her speechless.

“You’re saying that our pavilion deserved to fall?” She asked.

“That’s just a simplistic way to look at it. The pavilion once reigned this region so you tell me how many countries and clans it had destroyed? Do you think it’s unfair that the pavilion went down? No, there’s

no true reason to feel indignation or grievance. It's just a matter of who is the victor and the loser." He smiled.

She was taken aback at first but then again, the pavilion certainly didn't use words to convince others to submit. Words alone wouldn't let them reign for millions of years. They must have destroyed countless powers. The same logic applied to its eventual downfall.

"So we shouldn't seek revenge?" She asked.

"Be clear in this case. Do you want revenge or your seniors? If they want revenge, then let them do it themselves and take some responsibility for the pavilion's downfall." He answered: "But if you yourself seek vengeance, how far do you think you'll be able to go on this path? I'm afraid your achievements will be mediocre. You will be nothing more than another pebble on the road."

She started having doubts about her life goal after listening to him. She never thought about other matters outside of killing Archaic Sun King. This was her sole reason for existence.

This new source of doubts left her in confusion. What was the point of training so hard then?

"What else can I do?" She regained her wits a while later and asked.

"You need to ask yourself what you desire. The path towards the grand dao is long. If vengeance is insufficient as the fuel, you need to keep going and find the true motivation and goal in your heart." He said.

"I..." She couldn't come up with an answer due to her education. She was ready to throw away her life for this goal.

"Revenge is only the tip of the branch. Understanding yourself will let you go farther and stronger. Once you reach the peak and look down, the vengeance and feud between clans and countries, so meaningless. Just one wave of the hand can eradicate everything. The hatred in your heart right now is trivial and will be your downfall. Even if you can obtain this goal, what's next? Your body might be alive but your dao pursuit will be dead."

"Dao pursuit..." She murmured. The seniors never told her any of this.

Li Qiye was right. If she somehow managed to reach the peak, destroying Vajra would only require one hand wave. At that point, this issue of revenge would feel so trivial.

Chapter 3726: Immortal Virtuous Displacement Art

Peng Yingxue didn't quite understand all of this just yet but still looked forward to the future.

At the apex surrounded by winds and clouds, past grudges and resentments didn't matter at all. Perhaps her future self would find her current actions hilarious.

"I don't know what I should do." She said.

"Go where your heart wants to go. If the heart doesn't wish for it, then more effort will still only be a waste of time." He smiled.

She began thinking about her true intentions and feelings, entering a trance. His words managed to pierce the inner depths of her heart and mind - the location of her desires and wishes.

In the past, if someone were to ask for her reason to live and cultivate, she would have answered without any hesitation - killing the king of Vajra.

Now, he had swept away the clouds and fogs blocking the path towards the grand dao, opening a new window for her life.

She was lost in the darkness once and vengeance became her guiding lamp. This was due to education from the seniors during her impressionable years.

Now, Li Qiye's comment became as bright as an illuminating sun. The lamp looked insignificant in comparison.

"One grand dao to another..." She murmured, seemingly having figured out something. However, a thin veil still existed.

Nonetheless, this feeling gave her hope and excitement for the future.

In the past, her training was arduous and dry. The seniors kept on reiterating her mission. Now, she felt a yearning for the grand dao, wanting to reach it and feel its existence.

This was completely different from her previous way. She wanted to train for herself now in order to open the door to a vast world.

"Not too stupid, there's still a chance for you. At the very least, you desire for the grand dao to be a part of your life." Li Qiye smiled while looking at her expression.

"What should I do from now on?" She regained her wits and asked, having never been taught to train for herself before.

"Start over." He nonchalantly said.

"You mean, breaking my foundation?" She became startled.

No cultivator truly wanted to do this, throwing away years of harsh training. The majority would never make this choice.

"Yes, but not an absolute requirement. To re-do is to have a purer beginning with greater potential. It's fine to keep what you have, just improve the foundation by starting with a new mantra." He said.

"A new mantra." She softly said.

"Keep in mind that this process will be painful. The new mantra will gradually destroy the previous. This will take a long time. Each energy channeling is akin to being cut by numerous blades. Are you prepared?" He elaborated.

"Destroy my old mantra." She thought about it for a bit before taking a deep breath and solemnly said: "No matter what happens, I want to give it a shot."

She didn't only want to grow stronger by trying this experiment. Her focus was to obtain the feeling of embracing the grand dao and understand its irresistible properties.

"This determination is enough." He smiled and said: "I will give you a mantra then." With that, he raised his finger and a dao law circled around it.

"Clank!" The dao law then entered her mind and ocean of consciousness.

"Boom!" The law caused massive waves and took roots deeper in the ocean, seemingly wanting to penetrate her dao foundation.

The pain caused her to cry out in fear. She trembled and gritted her teeth in order to endure this agonizing test. She became drenched in sweat before eventually making it through.

After the dao law finished taking roots there, it began to grow like a new tree. Some fruits and flowers would come later.

She felt unprecedented relaxation and happiness after the unbearable pain. The grand dao seemed to be harmonizing with her body. She finally came into contact with the dao.

"Tha-thank you." She bowed deeply towards Li Qiye.

She didn't thank him when he saved her from the king because she didn't know his motive. Now, this showing of gratitude came from the heart. He helped her grasp an entirely new feeling.

He calmly accepted her grand gesture.

"What mantra is this?" She asked, not knowing the name of the law embedded in her mind.

Just this one law was immensely complicated. It seemed to contain a complete grand dao in there.

"Hmm, I don't remember exactly, something like Virtuous Displacement Art." He smiled and answered.

"Immortal Virtuous Displacement Art!" She shouted in astonishment.

"Oh, that's its full name? I see." He said.

"Is it real...?" She became emotional after his confirmation: "This is our pavilion's lost technique, our ultimate merit law."

Rumor has it that their founder - Jadesky Lunar Fairy - also known as Empress Wanxian, obtained it from an ancient burial ground. With the help of an actual immortal, the empress eventually learned this art.

The six saints from their tribe later learned it as well. This art allowed them to contend against True Immortal Sect.

In future generations, some descendants managed to learn it. Alas, their proficiency was far inferior.

Later on, as the pavilion started to decline, no one else understood it. The merit law became lost with time. That's why she was so shocked when Li Qiye supposedly gave it to her just now.

"Why, why do you have this?" She stammered. He wasn't a member of their tribe. Even if he was, he wouldn't have access to this long-forgotten merit law.

Chapter 3727: Choice

"I just happened to remember it after seeing you." Li Qiye answered.

"What?" Peng Yingxue's confusion grew. This answer didn't make any sense.

Remembering this peerless merit law after seeing her? Were the words carved on her face?

She knew that this was impossible. She wasn't a fairy or the son of the grand dao. Just looking at her wouldn't result in understanding a merit law.

Of course, she didn't think Li Qiye was duping her either despite the strange answer. There was no reason for him to do so. This made her question his identity.

"Why?" She asked. The two of them had nothing to do with each other yet he did so much for her.

This was no ordinary merit law as well. Cultivators would commit mass murders just to obtain it.

Furthermore, she was an enemy of Vajra while he was the saber messenger. She certainly didn't think it was due to her beauty and charm. She had nothing else worthwhile for him to scheme either.

"No reason, it's just fate, a connection with your pavilion." He smiled and added.

She remained silent. Fate did seem to be the only answer for his actions thus far.

"Are you really a member of Vajra?" This beckoned the next question.

Vajra certainly had motivations for flattening the Grand Chancellor and Grand Commander's faction. But as for saving an assassin? There was no justification.

Moreover, he knew her background now and still taught her the merit law? Was he unaware of the phrase - nurturing a tiger invites calamity?

Once she became strong enough in the future, she might choose to destroy Vajra. A saber messenger like him shouldn't want this outcome.

"I am me, not a member of Vajra or Buddha Holy Ground." He shook his head.

This was inconceivable to her. The holder of the ancestral saber claimed that he wasn't a part of Vajra. Other members of this dynasty might consider him a traitor after hearing this.

She didn't understand him at all. She knew that he was unfathomable. His cultivation meant nothing.

"I have shown you the path." He went on: "How far you can go depends on your own training. Go rest now."

She took a deep breath and bowed again. She wanted to leave but didn't know how to properly address him for the goodbye.

"Young Master will do." He said.

"Young Master, I will always remember your kindness." She bowed again and spoke with sincerity.

He then told Yang Ling to prepare a room in the courtyard for Peng Yingxue to stay temporarily.

Afterward, Marquis Yang finally greeted Li Qiye in a formal fashion. This seemed like a currying-favor attempt but not exactly. A marquis should indeed act respectfully towards the saber messenger of Vajra.

“Go rest too.” Li Qiye told them.

The father and daughter knew that he had just been in a long fight and didn’t dare to bother him.

In the next several days, they didn’t have a chance to speak with him either, completely preoccupied with the number of guests.

If it wasn’t for Li Qiye’s reclusive nature, their courtyard’s steps might have been crushed already. After all, Li Qiye had a special status in Vajra.

Some believed that he had the same level of authority as Archaic Sun King. Thus, numerous officials wanted to see him and build some connections.

Of course, they didn’t dare to walk in without permission. They talked to Marquis Yang and Yang Ling first, wanting to be introduced for an audience with Li Qiye.

Yang Ling was known to be close with Li Qiye so through her, maybe they could be connected to his faction as well. This would result in a bright future at Vajra.

Therefore, Yang Ling and her father were extremely busy. The marquis didn’t dare to offend the guests but also didn’t want to bother Li Qiye. This left him in a tough position.

Nonetheless, one guest was able to see Li Qiye - the crown prince of Vajra.

“Young Master, may I ask when you’re visiting the imperial palace?” The prince greeted Li Qiye first before getting to the point.

The crown prince came on behalf of his father to invite Li Qiye to the palace - the core of Buddha Emperor Division.

He greatly benefited from recent events. His role as the crown prince solidified quite a bit.

Crown princes usually stayed at the capital so he didn’t have the same opportunity as the third prince.

The latter was stronger on top of garnering military exploits in the border. The king had a high evaluation of his third son. Because of this, the third prince actually had more prestige than the crown prince.

He had the support of numerous sects. This eventually led to the notion of replacing the current crown prince.

This precarious circumstance changed with the downfall of the Grand Commander and Grand Chancellor.

The crown prince’s largest threat has been eliminated by Li Qiye. Moreover, he was able to talk to Li Qiye as well. His status soared immensely as a result. The officials who didn’t care for him previously quickly changed their tune.

All of this culminated in his father trusting him enough to let him come and invite Li Qiye to the palace. This made him awfully happy.

He was also grateful to this saber messenger who came out of nowhere. He would have lost his position as the crown prince otherwise. Now, he saw hope for the future.

“Today is a fine day, let’s go.” Li Qiye smiled and agreed.

The crown prince didn’t expect this at all. He thought that a reclusive person like Li Qiye would show more resistance. Now, his mission given to him by his father was a success.

“Great, let’s go then. I’ll let the palace’s master of ceremonies know to prepare a grand reception for you, Young Master.” The prince couldn’t wait.

Chapter 3728: Buddha Emperor City

Li Qiye told the crown prince that a grand reception wasn’t necessary. He told Yang Ling to stay behind and wanted to bring Peng Yingxue along.

“Well...” The crown prince saw this and became startled.

How could he bring an assassin to the main branch? His father, the royal clan, and other powers would have a negative impression of him. To do so in a direct manner was extremely improper.

“Is there a problem?” Li Qiye asked.

“Young Master, it’s not just a problem...” The crown prince had a pained expression, nearly wanting to cry.

This was a huge, huge problem. If anything were to happen, he might lose his successor status or even his head.

“Young Master, I do have some estates in this area, I can let her pick one to stay at.” The prince looked as if he was at a funeral.

There was no way he could ever defend himself in a worst-case scenario. Everyone might think that he was the mastermind behind the attempted assassination.

“It’ll be fine as long as I’m around.” Li Qiye said.

Peng Yingxue stood quietly behind Li Qiye, understanding the implication of her visit. Of course, she didn’t think Li Qiye had nefarious plans against her so she followed his whim.

“Okay, very well.” The dejected prince had no choice but to give up.

What else could he do? Even his father, the ruler of the holy ground, acquiesced to Li Qiye when he demanded the assassin. A crown prince like him was in no place to refuse Li Qiye.

It became abundantly clear that the authority of the ancestral saber was greater than his expectation.

A while ago, he assumed that the popular phrase with the saber having authority to kill was just an exaggeration and that the saber was still beneath the king’s dominion. This might not be the case.

“Let’s go on our way.” He summoned the courage to keep going, praying that nothing bad would happen.

He hoped that Li Qiye would be able to keep this assassin under control. Another attempt and he would definitely be the first suspect.

There was no grand reception but the crown prince still used a royal carriage to take Li Qiye into the imperial palace of Vajra Dynasty.

This palace was located in the floating city above Metropolis. In reality, it belonged to the holy ground, not Vajra. This area was stately and could be seen from far away.

The members of Vajra were living here right now but could be replaced in the future, whether it be by an order from Sacred Mountain or a loss of sovereignty through inability. Thus, this palace actually belonged to Sacred Mountain.

Nonetheless, Vajra has been ruling for generations so many forgot about this important information.

Buddha Emperor Division consisted of this floating city, serving as a symbol of authority for Sacred Mountain. Its dao lords used to live here.

Later on, Sacred Mountain stopped actively controlling the holy ground and chose a representative instead. This meant that even the strongest power couldn’t take over the holy ground without permission from Sacred Mountain.

Even for Vajra, changing the king or the crown prince required approval from Sacred Mountain.

Though the city was floating, it was as stable as a mountain. It emitted continuous Buddhist lights and the auras of dao lords.

These auras commanded respect and made everyone feel safe. Some believed that it might be the most fortified location in the southern West King - easy to defend and hard to siege.

This statement was logical since it has been blessed by four dao lords. They also stayed here and left behind their marks.

Moreover, the sages of the holy ground added their power as well. All of this culminated in a mighty force within the city.

Of course, others would bring up Sacred Mountain as another candidate. However, its location was transient. Few actually had enough information on it so people only used their imagination.

After entering the city, one would bask in its vastness and think that it was a continent. The imperial palace only took up a small portion of it.

There were also the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Rites. The other four divisions also had their own branch here.

Their presence weakened Vajra’s authority, at least to a certain extent. Tyranny wasn’t possible.

The area taking up the most land here was actually Minor Sacred Mountain. It was visible regardless of one’s location in the city.

I was the source of the Buddhist light and dao lord auras. One couldn't help wanting to bow after seeing it. This place was considered one of the sacred grounds in this region.

Sacred Mountain never stopped moving so people had a hard time seeing it, let alone climbing up.

Fortunately, Minor Sacred Mountain was here, allowing people to at least get a glimpse. The kings of whatever dynasty was in charge would come here for a coronation ceremony. This legitimized their status.

Most believed that Minor Sacred Mountain was built as a copy of the real thing by the progenitor himself. The other three dao lords have also stayed here for a period.

The remnant auras of these dao lords made it impossible for people to climb up. They could only stand at the base to show their respect. Nonetheless, plenty of people still came to do so for millions of years.

This capital was quite lively. Strangely enough, despite having numerous pivotal locations, people only needed to pay the entry fee to get in.

Chapter 3729: Ye Mingshi

The crown prince guided Li Qiye to the imperial palace with Peng Yinxue as well.

The guards were justifiably frightened to see her, immediately readying their weapon. They would have attacked if it wasn't for the crown prince and Li Qiye being present.

The crown prince prayed the entire time, hoping for the best or it would be all over.

Though Li Qiye refused a grand ceremony, the dynasty still treated him with the highest-level standard - one equal to the king.

A high palace solely meant for ancestors from the temple was used for his arrival today.

Of course, Li Qiye only smiled the entire time. The crown prince personally prepared everything, prompting Li Qiye to nod his head approvingly.

The prince was afraid that Li Qiye wouldn't be used to living in the palace so he took Li Qiye around for a tour, fully describing each location. He spoke earnestly, throwing away the pride usually seen in a crown prince.

The imperial palace was quite large, only small when compared to the massive Minor Sacred Mountain towering on the horizon.

It consisted of expensive materials but there were aging signs. It has been around for millions of years as housing for numerous dynasties.

During the tour, the two met many members of the royal family along with court officials.

These groups wanted to win Li Qiye's favor but it wasn't the right time since the crown prince was around. They chose to greet the two from a distance instead.

The crown prince knew that all eyes were on them and that his status had soared due to his involvement with Li Qiye. Nonetheless, he still chose to act with caution since many still wanted to take him down.

Li Qiye had no interest in this power struggle and just focused on the stroll instead.

Strangely enough, Archaic Sun King was nowhere to be found as if he didn't wish to greet Li Qiye.

"Father is busy with pill refinement, it's hard for anyone to see him." The crown prince said so that Li Qiye wouldn't be offended.

"Pill refinement?" Li Qiye chuckled.

"Father enjoys learning longevity art and has deep attainments on longevity pills. He spends more of his time doing alchemy." The prince smiled.

He didn't dare to use the word "obsession" to describe his father.

Cultivators, especially the top experts, had a desire for everlasting life. This was the same for top alchemists. They wanted to create a pill capable of this.

After all, one main goal of cultivation was immortality.

This wasn't the case here for the king. He was completely obsessed with this task and took it to the next level. He would do anything to live longer while ignoring everything else, including his duties as a king.

That's why most viewed him as an incapable and foolish king. This led to the Grand Chancellor and Grand Commander possessing an unreasonable amount of power.

If it wasn't for Vajra's resources and foundation, a king like him would have ended the dynasty's reign over the holy ground.

"I see, longevity pills." Li Qiye smiled and didn't say anything else.

The crown prince didn't wish to dwell on this topic. He certainly had grievances over the king being derelict of his duty, only attending several court meetings each year. It just wasn't his place to say anything.

They eventually made it to the imperial garden and saw an ancient tree with coiling roots. It resembled a horned dragon, brimming with spirit and quite interesting to behold.

Beneath the tree was a man lying in a long chair, looking to be very comfortable. He resembled a fifty-year-old mortal; the hair on the sides was slightly gray. He didn't have any wrinkles; his eyes were as bright as the stars.

He wore an embroidered robe, looking quite scholarly. However, he had an innate aura that instilled pressure - clearly a man of high status.

The man immediately sat up after seeing Li Qiye and got out of his chair. He cupped his fist and greeted: "You must be Young Noble Li."

This was the imperial garden - most would think that he was the king of Vajra given the circumstances. Plus, his aura and bearing resembled that of a king.

"He is the National Teacher." The crown prince introduced.

The teacher of the state didn't put up an act. He lowered his head and said: "My name is Ye Mingshi. Your fame precedes you, Young Noble."

He was a famous existence, widely believed to be on the same level as the four grandmasters.

He originated from Fallen Leaf School, not Vajra Dynasty. This sect could only be described as above average, incomparable to behemoths such as Heavenly Dragon Temple or Myriad-Blood Sect.

It didn't have a powerful progenitor or anything special until Ye Mingshi. He was one of the top geniuses in his generation and joined Duality Academy.

He was in the same class as Five-colored Sacred Sovereign; both were top students. One of their friends became renowned as well - the current king of Vajra.

Rumor has it that Ye Mingshi and Archaic Sun King were friends. That's why Ye Mingshi eventually joined the court of Vajra.

However, Archaic Sun King wasn't exceptional like the other two. He preferred alchemy instead before being obsessed with longevity arts.

Though Ye Mingshi wasn't classified as a grandmaster, the other grandmasters all thought highly of his power and cultivation level. Some believed that he had fought evenly with the grandmasters before.

Due to his impressive abilities, one theory ran rampant in the dynasty - that his secret identity was the guardian of Vajra - a member of the four grandmasters.

People knew nothing of this guardian, only that the guardian was a grandmaster and a member of Vajra.

This made it quite strange - why was this unknown character listed as a grandmaster?

Some said that it was because this guardian fought evenly with the other members. Another stated that the guardian had challenged Buddha Supreme before and lost.

Buddha Supreme approved of the guardian's power, hence the eventual classification.

In terms of power, status, and timeline, Ye Mingshi seemed to be the guardian. He had neither refuted nor confirmed this rumor. This made people even more skeptical.

Chapter 3730: Inscrutable

Ye Mingshi had the trust of Archaic Sun King. This in combination with his power earned him a pivotal role in the entire holy ground.

His polite showing towards Li Qiye was more than enough decorum. Keep in mind that even the late Grand Commander and Grand Chancellor wouldn't dare to act haughty in front of him.

"No need for courtesy." Li Qiye waved his hand and asked.

In this split second, the teacher saw the bronze ring and became startled; his mouth opened wide.

Nonetheless, he was experienced enough to regain his wits with haste.

"Your Highness, please leave for a moment." Ye Mingshi cupped his fist towards the crown prince.

The crown prince didn't know why but he was sensible enough to listen. He bowed to the two before speaking: "Take your time, Young Master and Teacher. I'll take the miss along with me."

Peng Yingxue didn't need Li Qiye to tell her and quietly left.

Li Qiye and Ye Mingshi became the only two left in the garden. Ye Mingshi got on his knees and said: "Please forgive my lack of reception."

"As I've said, no need for courtesy." Li Qiye shook his head and sat down on the long chair.

Ye Mingshi got up and stood next to Li Qiye, stealing another glance at the ring: "How should I address you?"

He was aware of the ring's significance but didn't know how Li Qiye got it.

"Call me Young Master so that I won't be accused of false advertisement." Li Qiye naturally noticed and chuckled. [1]

"Of course not." Ye Mingshi smiled wryly, hesitating to ask about the ring.

In theory, whenever the ring changed master, it should be a big deal with a grand ceremony. However, no one heard a thing about it. This seemed to be unprecedented due to the important nature of the ring.

"Looks like you've seen this ring before." Li Qiye smiled.

Very few had this privilege, only the strongest members of the holy ground. They needed to be at a certain level before being exposed to it. Others would only think of it as an ordinary bronze ring, nothing more.

As for the former crowd, they would be able to recognize it right away. There was no chance of faking it either.

"I was lucky enough to meet the paragon in the past and greatly benefited from some pointers." Ye Mingshi said with sincerity and respect.

"Talking about that fake monk? Or the fake daoist." Li Qiye smiled.

Ye Mingshi couldn't respond because he considered that man to be a teacher. Now, he found it puzzling that Li Qiye would speak of the man in this manner.

The passing of the ring meant that Li Qiye should have a teacher-disciple or a senior-junior relationship with him. This certainly didn't seem to be the case.

Ye Mingshi knew that picking the next candidate for the ring was of utmost importance. There must be a reason why Li Qiye was chosen.

"The paragon is a straightforward and unrestrained man." Ye Mingshi eventually said.

"That's one way to put it, I suppose. Better than calling him a fake monk or fake daoist but in my opinion, being a butcher is more suitable for him." Li Qiye chuckled.

Ye Mingshi coughed awkwardly, becoming more and more confused. A junior definitely wouldn't talk about his senior in this manner.

"You're thinking that I snatched this ring?" Li Qiye knew exactly what the guy was thinking.

"I do not dare, I'm sure there's a reason why you have it, Young Master." Ye Mingshi denied.

"There's no reason." Li Qiye shook his head: "If I wanted it badly enough to rob the monk, he would have given it to me with both hands. But, this broken ring is worthless and isn't worth my effort. I just spent a few coins for it, that's all."

Ye Mingshi became frozen. This ring could drive the entire world crazy from wanting to be the next owner. Li Qiye's expression looked serious enough. He really didn't give a damn about the ring.

Ye Mingshi knew that Li Qiye was aware of the ring's significance and value. This made the statement strike harder.

But most importantly, he claimed that he could have taken the ring effortlessly. This should be impossible.

The previous master or the so-called fake monk by Li Qiye was a frightening being with immense power.

Only one other person in all of the southern West King was qualified to be his opponent. Ye Mingshi was fortunate enough to be taught by him, albeit briefly. That's why Ye Mingshi knew of his power and had nothing but respect for him.

"You're joking, Young Master." Ye Mingshi regained his wits and doubted the claim.

"I'm not." Li Qiye smiled.

Numerous thoughts coursed inside Ye Mingshi's head. He didn't know how to respond. At this point, it seemed that Li Qiye really bought the ring for only a few coins.

How could this be? The priceless ring represented unlimited authority. Nonetheless, Ye Mingshi could tell that Li Qiye wasn't lying.

It was difficult for him to believe even though the facts were laid out in front of him.

"I can't possibly fathom the paragon and your intent, Young Master." He eventually concluded with a forced smile.

He stopped thinking about this matter. First, the paragon didn't follow the mold. This seemed to be the case for Li Qiye as well, hence their strange conduct. No point in trying to understand them without being at the same level and having the same knowledge.

Ultimately, the ring was still the ring regardless of how Li Qiye obtained it.

As for Li Qiye, he knew what the monk was up to. He chose to play along because it was convenient while being devoid of karmic ties and consequences.

“Young Master, since you’re at the capital, is there anything I can do for you?” Ye Mingshi asked. He speculated the reasons for Li Qiye’s visit to the imperial city. The masters of the ring usually had a special mission.