

GOD EMPEROR 2

Chapter 2: The Sacred Mark

The Yunwu Commandery was the place that Zhang Ruochen was currently living in. It was one of the thousands of commanderies in the Eastern Region of Kunlun's Field.

Commanderies were known as counties in the First Central Empire. Each commandery needed to pay tribute and tax to the First Central Empire every year.

The sovereign who ruled the commandery was called "Commandery Prince".

The status of Zhang Ruochen in this reborn life was as the ninth son of Yunwu Commandery Prince.

As Zhang Ruochen laid on the ice-cold, hard wooden bed, he could not stop thinking about Ceremony of Worship to be held tomorrow.

"The owner of this body hadn't yet acquired the Sacred Mark' by the age of 16, as if gods had abandoned him. What should I do to get a greater chance of obtaining the 'Sacred Mark'?"

It was believed that if one wanted to acquire the "Sacred Mark" and become a warrior in Kunlun's Field, approval of the gods would be needed at the Ceremony of Worship.

This practice was known as passing on Martial Arts for posterity.

During the Ceremony of Worship, there would be a bridge linking heaven and earth with the Field of Spirits in Kunlun's Field. It served as a means for the Spirits to enjoy the oblation prepared by the sincere citizens of Yunwu. Once the Spirits had finished, they decided which humans were talented enough to obtain the "Sacred Mark". In this way, they helped the selected humans cultivate the essence of Martial Arts.

Generally, the more talent that a human possessed, the earlier they could obtain "Sacred Mark".

In Zhang Ruochen's previous life, he had obtained "Sacred Mark" when he was still an unborn child in his mother's womb. He was a so-called born to be Genius of Martial Arts.

Unfortunately, he had not yet had the chance to obtain "Sacred Mark" by the age of 16 in this life. In terms of the age of cultivation, the older the person was, the less chance that they would obtain "Sacred Mark", so to speak. Basically, he was classified as being abandoned by gods. Even though he would attend the ceremony, he was unlikely to acquire "Sacred Mark".

Zhang Ruochen could not sleep, the thought of how to obtain "Sacred Mark" spun around his head. Instead, he sat up in bed and started playing with the white, nut-shaped spinel in his hand. It was sharp at both ends and transparent in the middle without any impurities.

Zhang Ruochen was curious about the white spinel. He started studying it, as if it could help him get any one of gods' approval so he could obtain "Sacred Mark".

The White Spinel had meant a lot to Zhang Ruochen in his previous life. It was his 16th birthday present given to him by Emperor Ming for celebrating his transition from childhood to adulthood.

Even though Zhang Ruochen did not know what the White Spinel exactly was, he carried it with him all the time. He never expected that it would still be with him after 800 years.

“I have arisen from 800 years ago to 800 years in the future. Perhaps that has something to do with the White Spinel.” Zhang wondered.

He closed his eyes and squeezed White Spinel firmly. The image of his father, Emperor Ming, gradually appeared in his mind. He speculated on whether or not his father was still alive after 800 years.

The snow fell heavily this evening in Yunwu City.

The next morning, the entirety of Yunwu City was covered by layers of snow. The buildings, a vermilion place, and the surrounding pavilion were also blanketed with frozen coats.

With all the snow, the Winter Solstice was always the coldest day of the year.

Every year on this day, all of the warriors of Yunwu City gathered together outside Imperial Ancestral Temple and worshipped gods, led by Commandery Prince.

Outside Imperial Ancestral Temple, there was an ancient altar made of rocks. Thousands of cattle, sheep, and swine were attached to the altar, as well as the massive savage beasts which were locked up around a formidable iron chain.

Countless people assembled together for the same reason—the queen, concubines, princes, princesses, civil servants, and monks of Martial Arts together with an enormous number of teenagers, who were waiting to obtain “Sacred Mark”. Even the infants awaited in their babysitters’ arms.

The entire city was obsessed with the grand ceremony. It was held in not only Yunwu City, but also in every city, every town, and every village of the Yunwu Commandery.

“Hey, my ninth brother! You’re already 16. Even though you’re attending the ceremony, you will never acquire the ‘Sacred Mark’. So why do you still bother to come here and embarrass yourself?” asked Zhang Ji, the Eighth Prince, as he giggled at Zhang Ruochen.

The Sixth Prince stood next to the Eighth Prince, who put on an arrogant attitude and said, “People always say that the king gave birth to nine children and each of them is different in their own way. Our father is such a hero. I can’t believe that he produced such a piece of crap! 16 years old and hasn’t obtained the ‘Sacred Mark’! You completely embarrass the entire Royal Family! What is the point of you staying alive? Why don’t you go to hell?”

What the Sixth Prince said was quite out of line. Yet, it was exactly what the other princes thought.

It fully demonstrated how mean and fragile the relationships were among the Royal Family.

In Kunlun’s Field, only one out of 10 people would be able to acquire the “Sacred Mark”. It could be said that the status of each warrior was exceptionally superior.

For the superior Martial Arts warriors, it was certainly a different matter. The stronger Blood Meridians that the Martial Arts warriors had, the greater the chance to pass them on to their offspring. Hence, the likelihood of acquiring the “Sacred Mark” would also increase.

Among the sons that the Yunwu Commandery Prince had produced, eight of them had already acquired the “Sacred Mark”. Left behind was Zhang Ruochen, who was already 16 yet still struggling to acquire the “Sacred Mark”. He then became the joke of the Royal Family.

Moreover, many people scorned him with an “outstanding father, cowardly son” status.

There were even rumors in the palace saying that Zhang Ruochen was not the son of the Yunwu Commandery Prince. Being the only child who had not obtained the “Sacred Mark” had no doubt annoyed the entire Royal Family.

That was why all the other princes identified Zhang Ruochen as the shame of the Royal Family. They never treated him like a real brother and even wanted him to die.

In recent years, the Yunwu Commandery Prince also started keeping a distance from Concubine Lin and Zhang Ruochen. After being exiled by other concubines and princes, they had been kicked out of the Jade Palace and were moved to the side hall last night.

Zhang Ruochen stood there quietly and did not say a word. He did not care about what the Sixth Prince and the Eighth Prince had said.

He believed that, before you acquired any actual strength, people would only look down on you with dismay.

Looking at Zhang Ruochen being marginalized, Concubine Lin, who was standing with the other concubines, felt heartbroken. However, she could do nothing to help him.

“The Ceremony of Worship will now begin!”

The minister of the Yunwu Commandery stood at the highest part of the altar, holding a prayer roll and recited it aloud.

Then, an elegant maidservant on the altar started playing 16 different types of musical instruments like bianqing, bianzhong, and bozhong.

That was then followed by killing the animals that had been prepared on the altar and worshipping gods with blood.

“Pfft...”

Suddenly, the rich Spiritual Blood turned into a thick, strong light column that went all the way up to the vault of heaven. The light column shredded the clouds and crashed into the spacious sky.

A star flew in quickly from the sky and reached a six-year-old boy’s eyebrows. It blended in with the boy’s body and turned into a red “Sacred Mark”.

Everyone in the crowd was so surprised and yelled. “The little boy is the youngest child of General Xue. He is only six years old and has been given the ‘Sacred Mark’!”

“The ‘Blaze Sacred Mark’ is classified as the Fourth Class of the ‘Sacred Mark’. This is amazing! This little kid is going to have a bright future!” The crowd continued to praise him.

There were different classes of the “Sacred Mark”, from the First Class to the Ninth Class.

The First Class was the lowest and weakest level while the Ninth Class was the highest and most powerful.

Everyone stared at the six-year-old kid with jealousy.

This talented and luckiest kid, who had acquired the Fourth Class of the "Sacred Mark" at the age of six, was definitely one of God's favored son. His achievements in the future would certainly be significant.

Among all the warriors in the Yunwu Commandery, an excited, massive guy whooped while banging his chest. "Wonderful! This is my son, Xue Liang! Everyone, you are welcome to join the celebration party at my place tonight! Haha!"

"Pfft!"

As that sound was heard, the crowd looked up into the sky again. There were a few more stars that hit some more young boys' and girls' eyebrows. The stars turned into "Sacred Marks" one by one.

For all of the "Sacred Marks" that had been obtained this year, most of them were the lowest class. Very, very few of the teenagers had acquired the Second-Class mark. The most outstanding candidate was still General Xue's child, who had gotten a Fourth-Class mark. He left the people far behind, who would need to catch up to him.

The people who had acquired the "Sacred Mark" were a minority. They were probably only one-tenth of the total population of Yunwu City. The lucky ones who obtained the marks were extremely overwhelmed. They were finally being granted the approval from the gods and given access to the way of making a significance in Martial Arts.

On the other hand, those who did not obtain the "Sacred Mark" were really upset and disappointed. Some of them were even choked with tears. It could be said that "laughter is heard and tears are shed in different households".

The ceremony was moving toward the finish line. Zhang Ruochen had yet to acquire the "Sacred Mark".

At the age of 16 with no sign of the "Sacred Mark", it was now almost impossible for him to acquire it anymore. Living as a normal person would be the only future that he would have in his life.

Everyone in the entire family neglected him as if he was just a speck of dust hiding around the corner and no one even noticed him.

At the beginning of the ceremony, Concubine Lin held on to some hope. She hoped that a miracle would happen to her child, Zhang Ruochen, and he would obtain the "Sacred Mark". She believed that he did not need to be an outstanding warrior, but he could keep himself healthier and stay away from all the illnesses.

As the ceremony drew to an end, Concubine Lin's hope turned to disappointment and despair.

Not only Concubine Lin, but also Zhang Ruochen thought that he could not obtain the "Sacred Mark". At that moment, the White Spinel that he gripped in his hands sparkled slightly.

Right before the end of the ceremony, there was one more star that descended toward Zhang's eyebrows and it turned into a white circular "Sacred Mark".

“Pfft!”

A fierce heat burning from his eyebrows spread throughout his entire body.

“It’s open! It’s happening!” Zhang Ruochen cheered.

Zhang Ruochen was absolutely thrilled. He had finally acquired the “Sacred Mark”!

Indeed, he did not care if it turned out to be a First-Class mark. He would be more than satisfied to have finally obtained it.

At one point throughout the ceremony, no one even noticed that Zhang Ruochen was there, but the moment that he obtained his valuable “Sacred Mark”, he caught the attention of everyone.

“That couldn’t be the Ninth Prince, he is 16 with a feeble body. I can’t believe his luck to acquire the mark at the final moment!” Most of the people could not believe what they saw and started gossiping.

The eyes of the Sixth Prince and the Eighth Prince widened in disbelief, revealing shocked faces as they stood next to Zhang Ruochen.

“How is this possible?”

Concubine Lin turned around and looked at Zhang Ruochen. She finally saw the mark on his eyebrows. She ran over to him and held him really, really tight. “Ruochen, you made it, you finally made it!” Concubine Lin said through tears of joy.

There was an old eunuch who took care of the Yunwu Commandery Prince that walked towards Zhang Ruochen and said, “Congratulations Concubine Lin and my Ninth Prince for acquiring the ‘Sacred Mark’! The queen wants to invite the prince over to her place. She insists to review the class of your mark personally.”

“The queen!”

The smile on Concubine Lin’s face froze right away, as if she realized that something was wrong. She was so nervous and she pulled Zhang Ruochen behind her.

“Mom, let’s go to meet the queen!” said Zhang Ruochen.

Zhang Ruochen recognized the subtle change of Concubine Lin. He instantly knew that the queen was a tricky person. He needed to be more conscious and careful.