

Heavenly Star 81

Chapter 81: Teaching Big Sister How to Paint

“Oh?” Ye Wuchen is somehow having difficulties in responding, he thought for a moment then said, “The Twin Lotus Flowers on One Stalk doesn’t require high painting skills but good judgement and control. This... is most unsuitable for you, sister.”

“Teach me.” Ye Shuiyao remained unmoved not even in the slightest degree, only repeating herself indifferently.

Ye Wuchen shrugged. “Okay. However, based on sister’s current condition, to achieve perfection, even if she focuses all her efforts to painting everyday, it might take five years. Even so, would you still want to learn, sister?”

“Let’s start then.” Ye Shuiyao said coldly, not surprised with his words. For her, five years was not a very long time, too short even, to achieve the same caliber of painting as the renowned God of Sword of Tian Long. Even if within these years she lost touch with her other accomplishments in painting, her true painting abilities would continue to develop rapidly under the imperceptible influence.

“All right.” Ye Wuchen pondered for a moment, then said, “For this type of painting, the most important point is to be able to control the thickness of the ink. Too much or too little, even the smallest deviation can cause problems. The first thing that you must do, sister, is to imagine the entire process of the lotus flower’s budding stage until its blooming time. According to your thoughts, separately draw the pre and post blooming phase of the lotus flower. I think this will make it easier for you to succeed.”

Ye Wuchen picked up a brush, without any preparation, he started to quickly brandish it on the canvas. “I’ll paint some for sister to see, then you will compare them.”

After a few strokes, an outline of a lotus flower began to appear vividly on the paper. Ye Shuiyao’s pretty eyes watched the movements of his hands. The voice beside her ear began to fade the more absorbed he became, her gaze has involuntarily shifted to his face as if frozen; unable to look away....

While concentrating on the painting, Ye Wuchen felt the atmosphere shift. He glanced to the side to discover Ye Shuiyao staring blankly at him. Her eyes were obviously unfocused, almost silly. He could not help but stop his brush, waving his hands past her eyes, “Sister?”

Ye Shuiyao’s body slightly trembled as her eyes slowly drooped. Calmly, she said, “Never mind me, please continue.”

Ye Wuchen bowed his head, easily continuing the strokes that now formed the outline of the stem.

Ye Shuiyao did not change her gaze, her mind began to wander uncontrollably, the once peaceful heart thumping, rippling all around, difficult to calm.

Is he really little Chen?

He did not feel like a close relative, but rather an unfamiliar one--- she felt a peculiar feeling she had never felt before.

He was the first one to see through my heart, making me feel that I wasn't alone. And yet, again and again, he stirred up the heartstrings from the bottom of my heart... but now, his brilliant rays became more dazzling. He is... what kind of person is my brother really? He is a relative, why then does my heart beat faster whenever I see him... and remain difficult to calm.

What is this feeling?

At that same moment, Ye Wei and Wang Wenshu were both perspiring heavily, mouth dry, and tongue hot, almost kneeling over in the hall from the amount of people...

"Superior Zhuge, friendship is friendship, but my daughter, compared to yours, is better in terms of beauty and talent. Young Master Ye will never fancy her, so don't waste your efforts. Please leave early."

"Utter rubbish! Your daughter is not fit to compare with mine. I've even brought her token of love, how dare you argue with me?"

"You two stop arguing. For an event such as this we must take heed from the order of arrival. I arrived here first, one step ahead, so you have no right to argue."

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The grand hall of Ye Family, once a solemn and respectable, has now become a marketplace. Important ministers of the imperial court were becoming more and more like hawkers, using any means to market their own daughters... There was nothing to be done. The Ye Family was classified as a family with a very good moral standing and reputation, plus they produced such a genius favored by the Emperor.

Marrying into the Ye Family would guarantee nothing but pleasant dreams in the future. However, this was secondary to appeasing their spoiled daughters, used to their high living standards, who proclaimed that in this lifetime they would marry only the son of the Ye Family. So long as they could enter the Ye Family, they were very much willing to be his concubines.

Ye Wuchen's performance, in the point of view of daughters who usually stay in their homes, was monumentally outstanding to the point of considering him a celestial being. Even Lin Xiao's achievements were comparably almost nothing, and other young talented men accounted for even less. With such a perfect man, these young women of high standards would no longer be willing to marry other men.

As a result, majority of the fathers rushed over for the exact same reason.

Wang Wenshu thought angrily, 'What of before? All those years I went to all these families to propose marriage, but one by one you avoided me like a plague. Now, hmph... you would know what is meant by having eyes unable to see. Why don't you see whose son he is?'

Of course, she would not say these words out loud. She could only give a bitter smile while dealing with them, "Gentlemen, please hold your horses. This matter will be personally decided by Chen-er. He will be here soon."

Finally, Ye San, who was commanded to call Ye Wuchen over, came running with his head sweaty and without a shadow of Ye Wuchen. Wang Wenshu asked with some anxiety, "Where is Chen-er?"

“Madame, the servants from his courtyard advised me that he went out for a stroll and will be back in the evening.”

“This...” Wang Wenshu was startled. Ye Wuchen must be deliberately avoiding the event by reacting so fast. She addressed the room apologetically, “Gentlemen, Chen-er just went out, so this matter... Why not, once he comes back in the evening, I will ask his opinion for each of you. By tomorrow, we will give word to each of your houses to inform you of the outcome. How about that?”

“Haha, good! Your son even displays his hidden affections for the daughter of the Hua Family in front of a whole crowd, so he is probably a romantic young man. He will like my daughter. I, Ji, won’t trouble you anymore. I’ll take my leave.”

Since one person had started to leave, there was no room for others to push the matter further, and one by one, they each left. After sending them off, Ye Wei and Wang Wenshu were already perspiring all over, and the one who was actually the head of the entire Ye Family, Ye Nu, had already escaped without a trace upon his witnessing the situation.

Back in the grand hall, Wang Wenshu sat down, heaving a long sigh of relief, and then said, “It’s really troublesome this time, Chen-er had inadvertently caused so much trouble with these ladies. Let’s see how he will handle them.”

“.... I’m thinking, if Chen-er marries all these ladies, the power of our Ye family would expand to a very formidable level.” Ye Wei said, touching his nose.

Wang Wenshu spat lightly, displeased. “Marrying so many ladies, Chen-er might tire out. Moreover, based on Chen-er’s excellence, as a mother, I really don’t like such ordinary ladies. No one will be a suitable match for Chen-er; however, the young lady of the Hua Family is pretty good.”

“Superior Yu has arrived!”

The teacup in Ye Wei’s hand swayed and nearly fell. Wang Wenshu’s whole body welled up with the feeling of powerlessness, so weak as though she couldn’t stand up anymore.

Chapter 82: Hidden Plan

“Sister, I’m hungry.”

“Go eat.” Ye Shuiyao said without lifting her head, her gaze still fixed at the two lotus flowers drawn by Ye Wuchen a few moments ago. Even she could not understand why she insisted on being taught to paint Twin Lotus Flower on One Stalk.

“This... me and Xue-er would like to have a meal with sister, right here. Can we?” Ye Wuchen said impatiently, like the behavior of an attached younger brother.

Ye Shuiyao laid down her brush, taking small steps out of the room, a subtle fragrance wafted from her fluttering light blue skirt. This rich and mellow fragrance of a woman caused Ye Wuchen’s heart some loss of control. He couldn’t help but think of that night; that beautiful body, so beautiful that it was suffocating... and the feel of it....

When she returned, her hands held a wooden tray full of food. She set it down in front of Ye Wuchen and Ning Xue. All her meals were delivered by female servants, and she very rarely ate at the same table

as the rest of the family. The more time passed, the more it became the usual practice between her and the whole family.

“Eat.”

“What will sister eat?”

“I’m not hungry.”

“..... It would be better if I asked Xiao Lu to secretly deliver mine and Ning Xue’s food. They won’t notice.”

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The small table which was usually only occupied by Ye Shuiyao is now seating three. Wuchen and Ning Xue squeezed in together on one side. On the other side, Ye Shuiyao bent down poised as she supped. Ye Wuchen completely fills small bowl in front of Ning Xue food. Already used to being spoiled by brother, she lightly chewed her food. Most of Ye Wuchen’s attention was fixed on Ye Shuiyao’s face while the corners of his lips curled upwards.

“Stop staring.” She said lowly when she could no longer stand his gaze.

“But it’s nice to look at you while you’re eating. I must say, sister, you are pleasing to watch at all times. Don’t you agree, Xue-er?” Ye Wuchen said smiling.

“Yeah! Sister is the most beautiful.” Ning Xue said in a loud and clear voice.

Ye Shuiyao went silent while her heart started beating faster.

“Sister, do you normally dine alone, away from the other family members?”

“..... It has become a habit.”

“Then Xue-er and I will come by to visit more often, is that okay?”

Ye Shuiyao lightly moved the white-jade chopsticks in her hand, seemingly not to have heard what was said. After a long while, Ye Wuchen finally received an “Okay” in response, the sound so soft he almost missed it.

For the entire afternoon, Ye Wuchen stayed in Ye Shuiyao’s room, painting comfortably and leisurely. Completely ignorant to what his parents had been dealing with. Both mentally and physically exhausted, their facial expressions have totally become stiff.

On the other hand.

“Anointing the Head with the Purest Powers? The God of Sword really had such a capability. Hmph. So that’s the way it is. No wonder he could acquire such astonishing strength and talent in a very short time. The God of Sword really cared about this young child though, for what purpose?”

“This, your subordinate doesn’t know.”

“Then why doesn’t he fear fire?”

“According to him, the God of Sword had let him eat some round thing, enabling him to be unaffected by water or fire.”

“So that’s the reason. Indeed he’s the God of Sword, to have possessed such a magical object. But to be able to conceal his breath, how did he do that?”

“They didn’t mention anything about it.”

“Hmph. Ye Nu and Ye Wei both command very strong powers in the battlefield, yet they don’t get involved too deeply into military skills. It’s normal to not have a thorough understanding on this matter. However, since the young child of Ye made this knowledge known to you, it means he is not suspicious about you, nor does he have cause to be. Even if he is clever, he could not know that you have been part of this flawless plan which we’ve been planing for more than ten years now. Your presence and contributions all these years has only caused him to dislike you. From now on, you must stand firm on your current position in the Ye family. Avoid close contact with him as much as possible, refrain from any more conflicts, and have the mind to stay out of his way.”

“Then master, what will be your next move?”

“Ye family has been loyal and devoted for generations. They have amassed countless outstanding military services, their popularity is as bright as the midday sun, even surpassing my own imperial household. If they intend to revolt, from just their military prestige and control of the military powers, even the Royal Family will not be able to counter it. Although we know where their loyalties lie, we cannot be at ease. This... leaves the Emperor with no choice. The Ye family is becoming a problem, but openly targeting them is ill advised, especially with regards to Ye Wei and Ye Nu. Instead, we must do our best to protect them. Tian Long Nation still has need of them, without their presence, our biggest threat—the Gale Nation—will be wild with joy. The original plan was to let you take over the Ye family quietly and ease my worries. But the Ye Family had unexpectedly produced this talent. If the Ye Family continue to prosper under his fame, then this will cause me extreme worry and no end of trouble. He must be eliminated!”

“What should your subordinate do?”

“I don’t need you to do anything. I’ll find someone to contact the number one mercenary—Tao BaiBai!”

“Tao BaiBai? Is he the so-called number one mercenary Tao BaiBai who, in those years, even the Heaven-Level Master Ling Yun failed escape his assassination?”

“That’s right! Rumor has it that he is sure to complete any task given to him, never failing to succeed. The target this time is just a man with a tenth level of power, he won’t have any reason to refuse. This will be a easy task, even if the God of Sword tries to investigate, he will only find an insignificant scapegoat.”

“Master, you are brilliant! The young child of Ye will surely be unable to run away this time!”

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Late in the afternoon, Ye Wuchen and Ning Xue are finally back to their small courtyard, discovering Wang Wenshu carrying a long and drawn expression, sipping tea and waiting for them to return. She remained calm and unruffled in the midst of these busy times.

“Chen-er, Ning Xue, you have finally come back, sit down first. Xiao Lu, you may step out.”

Ye Wuchen had just sat down when Wang Wenshu started to ask, “Chen-er, do you know of what happened today?”

“Just a little.” Ye Wuchen said carefully. Recalling what he had witnessed beforehand, he still trembled with fear even now. Trying hard to stay calm, but ultimately failing. After all, he had never before encountered such a “violent” incident.

“It’s a good that you are aware. Some influential officials have taken the initiative to come to our Ye Family to propose marriage. I have already seen the daughters of these families before, they are all from very rich families, have beauty and good manners. It is normal for them to be sought after and receive marriage proposal at their doorsteps. I’m thinking, maybe you can marry all of them.”

Ye Wuchen’s eyes opened wide, thinking something must be wrong with his ears. Waving his hands in a great rush, he said, “Don’t... don’t play jokes on me. It is impossible.”

“Why not? I have an excellent son, a few more wives or concubines than normal is nothing. All of them said they only want to marry you and no other men. Don’t worry about their wishes, it’s really what they want. Besides, all of them have influence based on their family background, some of them are only daughters. If you marry them, nobody will dare to provoke our Ye Family in the future. Chen-er, you are not young anymore, you must have wives and concubines. You need not wait until you marry Princess Fei Huang in three years. For our Ye Family, sacrificing a just a little is enough.”

Chapter 83: After all, He is Also a God

“This cannot be!” Ye Wuchen held up the teacup, drinking a mouthful to pacify his mood. Now a little relaxed, he said, “You think of it as an easy task. If you think about it carefully, they have had very little contact with me before. Today is only because of the excitement from what they saw... and they are acting based on an impulse. These ladies are from noble families, their expectations are normally high, half of them are probably spoiled. If I were to agree to it, not only will they judge me as somebody avaricious and insatiable, scandalous by nature, but they may even think badly of our Ye Family. They will become resentful, and cause unending conflicts among themselves. So this is not possible. It will be better if you refused them all. Ah no, you must refuse them all.”

Wang Wenshu thought for a few moments before nodding. “You are correct. As a mother, I also thought of this as inappropriate. This was your father’s idea. For me, these women are not suitable with my Chen-er.”

“.....”

“Chen-er, tell mother the truth. Do you really fancy the daughter of the Hua Family?” Wang Wenshu asked dubiously.

“Yeah. Love at first sight.” Ye Wuchen answered without hesitation.

“But...” judging by his direct answer, Wang Wenshu did not know how to respond for a while. She hesitated a bit and looked at Ye Wuchen’s face, speaking carefully, “But she is already engaged to Lin Xiao of the Lin Family. Moreover, Hua Zhentian is not a person who goes back on his words...”

“Yes, I know. You don’t have to worry about it. An engagement is just an engagement. As for Hua Zhentian... No one has ever not broken a promise, he might have done it before. It has just never occurred that he has been in a situation that has forced him to break his promise.” Ye Wuchen said laughing. He seemed to already have a plan in mind.

Wang Wenshu suddenly tensed upon hearing this and hurriedly asked, “Chen-er, what are you planning to do?”

Ye Wuchen was still laughing and shook his head, “Don’t worry, I will not do anything that will cause harm to myself or the Ye Family. I would not bring trouble to our Ye Family. Besides, the Hua and the Lin Family marriage is not a desirable outcome for the Ye Family, right?”

“All right. That is your decision to make. I’m a hundred percent confident in you. You have free reign to do anything, but at any mishap, mother will be here to back you up. So long as my Chen-er likes the young lady of the Hua Family, even if we need to snatch her, we’ll do it.”

“Yeah!” Ye Wuchen nodded, feeling warmth bubbling in his heart.

“Tomorrow, mother will send people to go refuse these ladies.” While saying this, Wang Wenshu’s face showed some reluctance... a pity to lose all these possible noble daughters-in-laws after just a few words. “Furthermore, Chen-er, even if Yun-er is not my biological son, he’s still your elder brother and had rescued your father’s life, all these make him belong to our Ye Family. Our family is now inevitably linked to Yun-er. Although there are some misunderstandings between the two of you, don’t stay on bad terms with him. After all, we are one family. In the future, Yun-er might lend you a helping hand to support this Ye Family.”

“Yes, I understand.” Ye Wuchen nodded.

“Then I feel relieved. Your grandfather will handle the matter concerning Yun-er. I have to go back, Xiao Lu will deliver your dinner.”

In the meantime, in Ye Wuyun’s room, Ye Nu repeated the same words, but had an expression totally opposite to Wang Wenshu’s smiling face. His expression was so dull that it made Ye Wuyun palpitate, reduced to being unable to speak up and merely nodding like a yes-man. Living in Ye Family for all this time made it impossible to not develop respect and fear towards Ye Nu.

Ye Nu stood up weakly, turned and made to leave. “Yun-er, I hope you remember what I’ve said today. Also, your invitation has been found, it was found in the bed sheet under your pillow. The servants found it while cleaning your room. I had them leave it under your pillow.”

Ye Wuyun was shocked upon hearing it, his face filled with doubt. He hurriedly proceeded to his bed lifted the pillow. Just like that, he found an invitation card gilded with gold. After opening it, the top had three distinct words printed “Ye-Wu-Yun”, exactly the same as what he had imagined.

Ye Wuyun was suddenly agitated. If it had been found somewhere else, it would have been explained away as being accidentally misplaced. But finding it in his sheets under the pillow... this evidently points to being purposely hidden there, right? And Ye Nu is not a person who would lie about this. Based on all the events, one would conclude that he had hidden his own invitation, to plant false evidence against Ye Wuchen by claiming that his invitation had been stolen.

“Grandpa, this is not what you think, there’s something wrong with this situation.” Ye Wuyun attempted to explain but could not find the correct words.

Ye Nu waved his hand, voice flat, “You don’t need to say anything further. The one that belongs to Chen-er has been destroyed in front our eyes, you’ve seen it as well. Don’t tell me he got yours and tried to fake everything. Men of the Ye Family, no matter whether right or wrong, takes responsibility for their actions.” He sighed, then continued, “Every person has their own selfish desires. What you’ve done is natural behavior, a trivial matter not worth mentioning. This time, I’ll consider it as if it never happened, and refrain from telling your adoptive parents. I only hope, that this kind of matter will not occur a second time.”

Ye Wuyun choked as if a large chunk of metal had been stuffed into his throat. Yet he knew that if he tried to defend himself, it would only result in a negative reaction from Ye Nu. He gritted his teeth and spoke with great difficulty, “Yun-er admits his mistake. This won’t happen again in the future.”

Ye Nu departed with uninterrupted footsteps and the room became silent once more.

Riiip!

Yu Wuyun tore the invitation to pieces. He almost wanted to look up to the sky and roar in frustration. Although this had been a small incident, but he felt intensely humiliated as if he had just been toyed with like some pet monkey. His invitation would not have disappeared on its own, moreover, it would not grow feet and make its way under the his pillow. Yet this minor incident was enough to change Ye Nu’s impression of him.

What is really going on here!?

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“Ye Qi and Ye Ba, tomorrow at dawn, send someone to go fetch two people for me. If I’m not present, please find a place for them here. If madam or master asks, just tell them I requested it.”

“Yes, Young Master.”

“Ye Ba, do you have all the items that I requested?” Ye Wuchen asked.

“They are already prepared in the small room on the east side.” Ye Ba said bowing his head.

“How much did you prepare?”

“Around five kilograms in total.”

“That’s good. Take me there, I want to see.” Ye Wuchen stood, but paused in thought and asked, “How old do you think Feng Chaoyang is this year?”

“He’s...” Ye Qi and Ye Ba’s faces went blank, Ye Qi thought for a while then said, “Young Master, Feng Chaoyang is said to be the youngest among the four Gods, whose age is less than sixty this year.”

“Not yet sixty?” Ye Wuchen muttered to himself bowing his head and continued talking to himself, “His age may have been achieved by force... after all, he is also a god.”

Chapter 84: Doesn’t Kneel Before the World, Doesn’t Kneel Before the Emperor Either

Upon entering the small room where the sulfur, charcoal, niter, kerosene and other miscellaneous items were kept, Ye Wuchen drove out Ye Qi and Ye Ba, instructing them to allow no one entry. Ye Qi and Ye Ba had no choice but to guard the door from the outside, their thoughts straying to guess at his plan.

About half an hour later, Ye Wuchen finally emerges but closed the door behind him, strictly commanding, "From now on, nobody is allowed to enter this room without my permission. In addition, it was absolutely forbidden to light a fire nearby for whatever reason. Do you understand?"

Ye Qi and Ye Ba simultaneously nodded, their heads full of questions but not daring question the command.

Sniffing the lingering smell of gunpowder from his body, Ye Wuchen furrowed his brows, "Have Xiao Lu deliver a new set of clothes for me."

"Yes, yes."

The early next day, the sky was still dark when Ye Wuchen opened his eyes. He slowly shifted Ning Xue, who was tightly wrapped around his arm, and quietly climbed off the bed.

He did not forget that he was scheduled to attend the Royal Court today, but this so called morning was taking place too early, causing him some confusion.

"Today the Lin family might make a public announcement to formalize their wedding with the Hua Family. Then exert their utmost efforts in showing off their influence. Some things cannot be rushed using force. You have underestimated both Hua Zhentian and I. One day is sufficient to take such a delicate woman like Hua Shuiou. Too bad this upright gentleman, Lin Xiao..."

Ye Wuchen headed out quietly to avoid rousing Ning Xue who was still sleeping soundly. Together with Ye Wei and Ye Nu they arrived at the Imperial Palace of Tian Long Nation.

Upon arriving at the main hall, they discovered it to already be full of civil and military officials. The party from the Ye Family had just entered when more than a hundred pairs of eyes shot in their direction. The majority had been witness to Ye Wuchen's graceful performance yesterday. Some had not been present in the event due to some circumstances and were now meticulously observing this only son of the Ye Family who was rumored to be truly impressive.

Facing this kind of attention, an ordinary person would feel uncomfortable, expressions stiffening immediately, but Ye Wuchen simply lifted his head up, chest out, and entered perfectly composed. He positioned himself in a space near the end of the line on the right side, as if he did not notice them looking.

Only through his boldness had his impressiveness been made to the majority of the people, and they nodded their heads approvingly, even feeling a little amazed.

"The Emperor has arrived!"

After a sharp cry, the curtains lifted open to reveal Long Yin striding forward with his head high, entering with dignity. Once he was seated on the gilded dragon throne, the officials immediately knelt down, like puppets on strings, simultaneously calling weakly, "Long live Your Majesty, the Emperor!"

In the entire main hall, the only one who remained seated was Long Yin. The only ones standing were the yellow-clothed palace eunuch beside Long Yin and Ye Wuchen who appeared as though not knowing what to do.

“..... You must remember, we possess the most respectable bloodline between heaven and earth, the most formidable strength. Aside from our own parents, no other is worthy enough for us to bow to, not even the world....”

An increasingly familiar voice echoed inside his head. Every time he came across an unusual situation, corresponding fragments of his memory would emerge from his mind.

Even the entire world was not qualified for him to kneel down to, there's no need to kneel to an ordinary person with the title of Emperor!

“Outrageous! Who are you? How dare you refuse to kneel before His Majesty, the Emperor!”

A sharp yell came from the palace eunuch. He obviously had never met Ye Wuchen before. Long Yin also knitted his brows, but did not say anything. The yell caused the officials to cast sidelong glances; suddenly, every gaze was focused on Ye Wuchen who looked like a crane in a flock of chickens.

“Presumptuous! By not kneeling, you do not show respect to the Emperor!”

The one who yelled this time was Lin Zhan, face full of anger. Ye Nu and Ye Wei's faces changed a little, then said in a low voice, “Chen-er, kneel down quickly.”

Ye Wuchen shook his head, saluted and said, “Your Majesty, please forgive my rudeness. As my teacher had advised me before I left, the descendants of the God of Sword can only kneel down before the parents of heaven and earth. Wuchen's life was saved by teacher, and all my skills and arts were passed on to me by teacher. Even if I don't want to disrespect Your Majesty, at the same time, I don't want to disobey teacher's instructions, otherwise I will not be able to face my teacher again. If Your Majesty wants to order my punishment, Wuchen will definitely not complain.”

So that was the reason... they finally understood. At first, they were of the mind that this outstanding and wise young child could not have done something so unwise. It had actually been instruction from the God of Sword himself. Indeed, in the point of view of a “God” who transcends the mundane world, nobody would be qualified enough to kneel down to. The God of Sword did not even salute when he faced the late Emperor, on the contrary, the late Emperor respected him very much. It was not unthinkable for the God of Sword to enforce such a rule to his one and only descendant, and it was reasonable and fair for Ye Wuchen to abide by this rule. If he were to ignore his teacher's instructions when facing the Emperor, people would despise him instead.

“Hohohoho! So that's it. Since it is a rule given by your teacher, you will not be blamed. I'll give you special permission exempting you from kneeling down before anyone in the Tian Long Nation. This will serve as my show of respect to your teacher. Without your teacher, there would have been no auspicious and peaceful Tian Long Nation.” Long Yin said gently.

Yet another important favor bestowed upon Ye Wuchen. He saluted appreciatively. “Wuchen thanks Your Majesty for your grace!”

“Your Majesty, your humble servant would like to speak his mind. I think this matter is really inappropriate. This rule has been handed down for a thousand years in Tian Long Nation. How can it be abolished because of him? Moreover, the young child of Lin had also humbled himself as an ordinary person to respect Your Majesty. This is simply a rebellious act, looking down on the Emperor’s might!” Lin Zhan yelled as his emotions stirred.

Upon Lin Zhan’s mention of protecting the standards and the Emperor’s prestige, there came a sudden transformation in the atmosphere that caused several pairs of eyes to flash in anger. Even Long Yin’s face appeared to be displeased while Lin Kuang unobtrusively nudged.

All of a sudden he realized he must have said something wrong, but thinking through the words that he had just said, he could not find which part of his words were mistaken.

Seeing his still puzzled look, Lin Kuang hid the anger in his mind. Promptly stepping forward to speak. “Your Majesty and all superiors, please calm down. In the years when Tian Long Nation faced its calamity, my son happened to contract a serious illness for three years. Your Majesty and the superiors here must have heard about this before, so that’s the reason why he had spoken words of disrespect against the God of Sword. As the saying goes, the ignorant man is not guilty of any crimes. My son took consideration of the prestige of the Emperor, forgive me for my son’s lack of proper discipline. I apologize once again, and beg Your Majesty’s pardon for my son’s words.”

The father and son of Lin family were both officials of the same Imperial Court. Among hundreds of officials, their power was sufficient enough to hide the sky with one hand. Today was the first time that Lin Zhan had witnessed Lin Kuang lowering his stance. He now realized that his words had sparked the anger of the crowd, hence he stepped forward to hurriedly repent and admit his guilt.

“If not for the God of Sword, my Tian Long Nation might have been completely defeated by the Gale Nation! If not for the legacy of the God of Sword, do you really think that the reason the Gale Nation has not invaded our Tian Long Nation for the past twenty years was because of the Ye and Hua Families? At most you will be punished for disrespecting me, but if you disrespect the God of Sword... If this matter were to spread, you, Lin Zhan, might suffer from being cursed and spat on!” Long Yin said sternly.

“Your humble servant deeply apologizes for his mistake!”

“Since this was unintentional, I will drop it. You may all rise.”

Chapter 85: Leng Ya Mother and Son

After repetitive expressions of gratitude, the civil and military officials stood up in unison. They aligned themselves to neither side to remain uninvolved. Ye Wuchen’s face composed, his thoughts wandered. Apparently, Grandpa Chu had a good reputation in Tian Long Nation for single-handedly rescuing the entire nation. Could it be that the so-called God-level indeed held such extremely high levels of strength? Furthermore that Long Yin, the better he treated me, the more it indicates that he had strong intentions to kill me. His so-called betrothal to the princess seemed like a particularly special favor, but in reality..... if the person died, then the princess would not have to get married. So the so-called special favor would not only disappear, but it would keep the entire Ye family indebted to such a “favor” compelling them to do their best efforts in protecting the Tian Long Royal Family.

“Ye Wuchen, step in front to receive the command.”

“Yes!”

“Please accept the Mandate of Heaven, the Imperial Order of the Emperor... bestowing the title of third rank marquis, a reward of a thousand pieces of gold, thirty thousand pieces of silver, three boxes of jade artifacts, and a marquis residence for one. Furthermore, the granting of the marriage with Princess Fei Huang, to be completed when Princess Fei Huang has reached the age of sixteen. With the blessings of His Majesty! Wuchen of the Ye Family, please receive this Imperial Decree.”

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Stepping out of the main hall, the sky shone brightly outside. Ye Wuchen yawned, then asked Ye Wei beside him, “Princess Fei Huang is?”

“You’ve already met her.” Ye Wei said with a smile. How could he forgot the incident where Ye Wuchen had offended Long Huang-er previously. It was known to everybody in the entire palace because of this little chaos-starting princess. However, from the beginning to the end Long Yin did not involve himself in this incident, so this matter had been left unsettled.

“Oh, so it was that little princess.” Ye Wuchen shrugged, feeling listless. Long Huang-er did not have any of the graceful and honorable traits that a princess should have. Obviously a spoiled, crafty, and unruly girl. This kind of girl can only be kept for amusement, but was definitely not fit to be a wife.

“Princess Fei Huang is the most favored daughter of the Emperor. Her birth mother had been the most loved imperial consort of the Emperor, who died after Princess Fei Huang’s difficult birth. The Emperor suffered a lot of pain for a very long time. He dearly loved the daughter that was left behind, docile and obedient to her wishes. That is why her character was like that of a spoiled child, it should gradually improve after a few years.” Ye Wei said.

Ye Wuchen laughed nonchalantly, “I hope so.”

However, in his mind, he knew that the marriage was just a pretense. If he still remains with the Ye Family after three years, Long Yin will surely use any excuse to cancel this marriage. If the Long Yin allowed it to push through, he would no longer be a part of the Ye Family after three years. A month... or even half a month, after he does what he needs to do for the Ye Family, he would leave. He would not owe the Ye Family and neither would he agree to be the young master of Ye.

Back at his own courtyard, he saw someone standing beside the pond. The figure looked like a very thin ice sculpture. Before approaching, he felt a distinct coldness. Upon hearing his footsteps, the figure turned, staring directly at Ye Wuchen.

Ye Qi promptly approached them, groveling. “Young Master, you have returned. A while ago I just...”

Ye Wuchen lifted his hand to quiet Ye Qi then gestured for him to withdraw. He faced Leng Ya and said, “Take me to your mother.”

He did not have superfluous words for this kind of person. His kind did not need to be pacified or motivated, his kind only heeded facts.

Leng Ya headed towards a room in the east side, where Ye Qi and Ye Ba had originally resided. They had gone to fetch Leng Ya and his mother, after which they were not able to find a place for them and did not dare to act on their own volition, so they let the sickly woman lay in their room.

Leng Ya slowly pushed the door open, then headed inside. Ye Wuchen saw a woman with half a head of white hair lying on the bed. Upon hearing the sounds, she used her hands to prop up her body, and said weakly, "Xiao Feng, is that you?"

Leng Ya hurriedly go over to help her, speaking softly, "Mom, it's me. Don't get up. You must be tired from the journey, you need to rest."

"No need, I'm okay. I heard two sets of footsteps, are you with the one who has offered us shelter?"

After becoming blind, her other senses would certainly improve, particularly her hearing. In addition, Leng Ya and Ye Wuchen purposely refrained from lowering the sound of their footsteps, so she could clearly hear them. Ye Wuchen smiled and said, "Auntie, it's good to see you. My name is Ye Wuchen, Leng Ya's friend. This is my home."

Leng Ya did not rebuke, or respond at all.

She was moved by emotion and responded, "Good... thank you for offering shelter to us mother and son. Can I call you Xiao Chen?"

"Of course."

Ye Wuchen approached, then his gaze swept across her face, after which he asked, "Auntie, what happened to your eyes?"

Leng Ya's mother forced a smile. "My eyes have been blind for ten years. I've already gotten used to it. The one and only hardship is, despite Feng-er always by my side, I am not able to see him and not know what he has become...."

"Mother..." Leng Ya called out emotionally, his whole body twitching slightly.

Ye Wuchen suddenly reached out a hand, covering her eyes. Slowly brushing over them, a colorless light permeated through her eyes. When he withdrew his hands, he left without saying a word, even as he closed the door.

Leng Ya followed him with his gaze, making no sound or even attempt to stop his actions. When they were left alone in the room, he still did not understand what happened.

As soon as Ye Wuchen left, he turned around to look over his mother to discover her once turbid eyes now clear. Moreover... he had felt her sight, as well as her gaze.

Leng Ya was suddenly stunned, directly looking at the pair eyes in front of him but could not believe the voice in his heart. Those eyes were also flickering with both surprise and confusion, mirroring his own thoughts that refused to believe that this was now reality.

A pair of withered hands trembled while reaching for Leng Ya's face, slowly caressing and stroking, "Xiao Feng.... You are Xiao Feng... mother can now see you, mother is finally able to see you..."

Leng Ya seemed like he was struck by a heavy hammer, his whole body shaking intensely. The next second, his tears gushed out like a small stream. Circumstances hardened him long ago, but now this cold-blooded man tossed everything away at this very moment to throw himself into the embrace of his mother and wailed. Unburdened after the ten long years of pain and resentment. It continued for a very very long time.....

“Struck by a sword, and judging from the wound, both eyes were blinded at the same time. The eyeballs stayed intact, but had completely gone blind. The level of difficulty she experienced was quite unimaginable. There were only a few people in Heavenly Star Continent who could do such a thing.”

He can faintly hear weeping from the mother and son. Ye Wuchen returned to his room still pondering.

Upon entering his room, Ning Xue, still hiding under the quilt, opened her eyes. She extended her petite arms, and said affectionately, “Brother, help me put on my clothes.”

Ye Wuchen laughed, approaching the bedside to retrieve her clothes. “Xue-er, you are becoming more and more lazy.”

“That’s because I like being dressed by brother.” Ning Xue said softly, still acting like a spoiled child. Ye Wuchen gathered her quilt bound body in his arms and helped her dress up.

Chapter 86: The Black Fores

“Xue-er, I have to go out in a bit. Later on, you should go over sister’s place to accompany her and have fun, okay?” Ye Wuchen helped her into the skirt.

“Can I go with you, brother?” Ye Ning Xue asked, longing for an affirmative.

“Not this time. Don’t worry, brother will be back really soon.”

“Okay. I will wait for you to come back.” Ye Ning Xue replied obediently. She would not allow herself become a burden to him.

After having breakfast with Ning Xue, Leng Ya finally came out of his room. His breath was now calm and without any trace of his earlier weeping. The gaze he shot at Ye Wuchen was noticeably warmer, maybe even a little appreciative.

“Your mother’s body is still weak from your long journey, her diet has been unhealthy, along with her depression. However, there are no hindrances anymore, just take good care of her health for half a month, and she will have a complete recovery. There won’t even be any lingering vestiges of the illness.” Ye Wuchen said, “On the other hand, I shall have my people find a place in the madam’s courtyard for your mother to stay. It will be good for her to have interactions with other women of the same age, and they can become companions.

Leng Ya fiercely lifted his head, his gaze fixed on him, “My mother and I are both from the Gale Nation. Your Tian Long Nations hates people from the Gale Nation, and your Ye Family killed the most number of people from the Gale Nation. If you continue to treat us like this, not only your family, though you have yet to inform them, but even other people will despise you.”

“Oh? And I had come to believe you had no sense of forethought,” Ye Wuchen said playfully at him, remembering how he had ruthlessly told Leng Ya of his foolishness yesterday, “Though you are still inexperienced.”

“Hmph.”

“Don’t you worry, I will let you stay here in Ye family. Your mother as well since she is after all, from Tian Long.”

Leng Ya narrowed his eyes, now speaking coldly, “What do you mean? How did you know?”

“I guessed as much.” Ye Wuchen turned around, “You must remember that you promised ten years of loyalty to me. Within these ten years, you should never refuse any task that I have assigned to you. I have already healed your mother’s eyes, you should have no reasons to doubt me! Now, follow me.”

Leng Ya followed after him without responding.

Leaving the house of Ye, they proceeded east, passing through noisy crowds of people until they reached the east gate of the Tian Long City, a first for both of them. Ye Wuchen still did not cease his steps, rather, he passed through the city gate, and continued on eastwards. From beginning to the end he never made any remarks, not even to turn his head, using only his eyes to sweep over the places they passed. Leng Ya followed obediently, keeping quiet. He knew that if they continued to proceed further in this direction, they would reach a certain place. Almost everyone in the Heavenly Star Continent knew that this place was forbidden.

Continuing on eastward, the number of people was significantly less. There had been an expansive road here twenty years ago, and it was now a large neglected area of wild grassland, almost nobody passed by this place anymore. They travelled on foot for another two hours when a pitch-black forest appeared before their eyes.

“Do you know where this is?” Ye Wuchen finally opened his mouth, but did not slow his steps, still proceeding forward.

“.....”

“The name of this forest has long been forgotten. Once, the plants here were as green as can be but had turned into this dead-like grey color in the last twenty years. In the deepest parts of this forest lies a tower called Devil’s Trap Pagoda where terrible villains are locked in, but ever since the prison welcomed a certain individual, the entire area transformed into what it is now. This kind of terrible transformation caused people to stay away from this black forest.” Ye Wuchen said gently, his footsteps did not reveal the slightest degree of hesitation, as if the forest they were approaching was not the same black forest he was talking about.

“A Cursed Woman.” Leng Ya said in a low voice.

“That’s right. If I were to bring you to this Devil’s Trap Pagoda, would you dare to enter?” Ye Wuchen said flatly, his manner of speaking did not contain any implications of a joke.

“Yes!”

Ye Wuchen shoots him a glance, shaking his head, "What a boorish fellow! Did you know that numerous individuals exceeding your power by ten or even a hundredfold have entered but never came out. If you have nothing to lose, you may recklessly dash inside, you will only die at the very worst. However, if you died, who would take care of your mother?"

"....."

"If you are not prepared for death, don't gamble with your life. Even the bravest of men can be despised."

Advancing a step at a time, Ye Wuchen eventually set foot in this place that would have caused anyone else to flinch back. Nobody had dared to enter this black forest for many years but Leng Ya followed without fear.

This place was strangely quiet; no birds chirping, no beasts roaring, not even the sound of the wind. A murky smell filled the air, weighing heavily in the air making it difficult to breathe.

"An air of death!" Ye Wuchen was talking to himself, his brows lowered.

His charm of immunity to the six elements—water, fire, wind, thunder, earth and death—could easily allow him to manipulate and resist them, the element of death included. Although the death was not so potent in this place, too weak that the life of an ant still persisted, but it was indeed the air of death. According to the rumors, the deeper they went, the denser the air of death became. The very center of the forest emitted the air, which must be coming from the Devil's Trap Pagoda!

Due the thin presence of the death element, the vitality of the trees in the area was not completely lost. They had twenty years of imperceptible influence to become adapted to the element of death and eventually transformed its hue into this greyish black.

Ye Wuchen's immunity to the six elements meant he was not afraid of the air in this place. This density would not affect Leng Ya much either.

Ye Wuchen's eyes were like firelights, sweeping through every tree before him, using his extraordinary memory to remember the position of the trees, silently counting the distance that he had traveled.

The further they proceeded inward, the more oppressive the atmosphere became. It was definitely still daytime, but in here, it already seemed like the beginning of the dusk. The two of them could not help but quiet their footsteps, unwilling to break the deafening silence.

A noise sounded when Ye Wuchen stepped on the dried branch of a tree. All of a sudden the dark underbrush stirred restlessly, and a black rabbit quickly fled, in the blink of an eye it disappeared in the shade of a tree ahead of them.

An animal could not have exist in this place. Ye Wuchen's mind was somewhat astonished. The life force of the animal fell short of a plant's, and their reproductive capabilities were much weaker as well. Under the influence of the air of death their life force would have slowly dwindled until death came. Yet the few animals that survived clearly showed natural immunity to the element of death, and would likely be able to pass on this capability, possibly becoming more distinct when they passed the trait on to their succeeding generations.

“Your childhood name is Xiao Feng?” Ye Wuchen, who has been silent, suddenly asked.

“Yes.” Leng Ya answered.

“Your mother’s family name is Leng?”

“Yes.”

“Your father’s family name is Feng?”

Leng Ya abruptly halted his footsteps, both fists clenched tight, and his breath grew as cold as a blade in an instant.

Chapter 87: Probing

“Feng Chaoyang must be your father then? The age disparity is questionable, but other than that, everything fits. Someone who managed to obtain the God of War’s weapon as well as escape the Gale Nation without any injury. Plus your cold and detached manner, impulsively doing things without considering their consequences, even your refusal to be controlled by others, you aren’t weak yet you are not conniving, you would have had to achieve that through other means. Everything points to you being related to Feng Chaoyang. Tian Long’s Emperor should have been able to infer as much, which is probably why he has been secretly trying to capture you.” Ye Wuchen explained indifferently, his footsteps never stopping.

Hatred sparkled through Leng Ya’s eyes, he gritted his teeth as he followed closely.

“You must have harbored a grudge against your father, because no one has heard of the God of War having children. Apparently, you and your mother’s existence were not recognized. If I were to guess, your mother’s blindness must have been personally done by your father. Otherwise, even if you were forced out of the Gale Nation, you would not necessarily hate your father this much.”

“He is not my father, he doesn’t deserve it!!”

Drip.

After a violent howl, a nondescript sound followed as red liquid dripped from Leng Ya’s clenched fists. His fingernails had embedded themselves deeply into his palms. He thought that, by leaving the Gale Nation, he would leave behind his past and that person in particular. What he did not expect was Ye Wuchen uncovering and understating the scars that he had taken great efforts to forget.

“He is almost sixty and you, barely twenty. You are more likely to be his son. Not a grandson because then, you would not exist.”

“Even though I’m not aware what Feng Chaoyang means by hiding your existence, I also have no idea what had happened between the two of you. However, escaping is what a coward would do. I hope that, after your mother’s condition improves, you will return to Gale Nation to make use of three of the ten years I am owed to complete a task for me.”

His request was met with a long stretch of silence with the exception of the sounds of their footsteps as they walked through the black forest. Along with their steps, the air of death grew stronger and stronger, furthermore, no other animals had appeared. Ye Wuchen’s eyebrows started to scrunch up.

After half an hour, Leng Ya's head was still half lowered and his mouth kept silent, seemingly not to have heard Ye Wuchen's earlier remarks. Or perhaps he was still struggling whether to listen and obey to the order of returning to Gale Nation. He was grateful, but still very reluctant to go back. To repay the kindness he was shown, he was willing to be a family servant, a courtyard protector, even kill if he was ordered to do so until he had repaid the kindness. He did not expect that he would be asked to return to the Gale Nation.

"Alright, it's here."

Ye Wuchen finally came to a stop, his gaze fixed upon his feet. Leng Ya followed him exactly and ceased his steps. Looking around their dead surrounding, he became puzzled. He had no idea of his purpose here, but he refrained from asking further.

Ye Wuchen extended his right hand; a faint yellow light radiated from the hollow of his palm. He followed by flicking his wrist and the black earth underfoot exploded, forming a small crater.

Leng Ya's heart jumped. He recognized this to be one of the most basic Earth Binding Enchantments—"Earth Explosion Technique".

He had been witness to the man's mastery of the pen and sword. And now, Earth Binding Enchantments. How many more tricks does he still have hidden... and he was his junior, age-wise, but he had already acquired a great deal of achievements.

Ye Wuchen squatted down, extending his left hand this time and the pitch-black ring of the God of Sword flickered faintly before a tightly bound, white parcel, no more than half a foot, appeared where the ground had erupted.

Leng Ya startled, "A storage ring?"

"Is this thing really worth so much amazement?" Ye Wuchen used his hands to shift the soil until a thin layer covered the white parcel. Due to the excessively bleak surroundings and the greyness of the land, one would not be able to locate this spot if they did not examine it overmuch.

"There are only three of these rings in the entire Heavenly Star Continent." Leng Ya said.

"Only three?" Ye Wuchen was surprised at this information, letting out a soft "oh" in acknowledgment. His thought back, woefully despising Chu Cangming. Only three in the entire continent, and he speaks of them as if they were just some common accessory... He might not have valued them but others certainly did!

Ye Wuchen had previously done research on the God of Sword's ring. He faintly recalled that the ring has some power, something called "Void Space". This kind of power is only possible when the seven natural elements were in perfect harmony. Creating a storage device like the ring required one to first have the ability to manipulate Void Space. Either a person had to simultaneously possess all seven natural elements, or seven different masters of each element with a deep level of connection with each other worked together. A special method was then needed to infuse an object with this kind of power. Using a ring to hold the power would result to a storage ring; using an earring would result to a storage earring.

Therefore, one must go through enormous difficulties to produce this kind of item.

Ye Wuchen produced a long greyish string and coiled it around a not-so-thick tree beside the spot. He lifted his head to look at the sky for a moment, then said in a low voice, "Men and beasts rarely come here, furthermore, rain would not be likely in the next seven days."

Leng Ya became even more puzzled, completely lost to what to recent events in the forest.

"Okay, you may now return home." Ye Wuchen said.

"And you?"

"I'll just go for a stroll."

"Then why did you have me to come here with you?"

"I did not want to meet with any accidents, so I brought along a companion as a precaution. I suppose I worried too much. You may now go home." Ye Wuchen said flatly.

Leng Ya turned around, and departed using their original path. Ye Wuchen did not make any further remarks and continued forward in the same direction, his footsteps were considerably faster this time.

The reason he requested Leng Ya's company was naturally not due to caution, but to probe him. And based on the outcome, he had succeeded. On his journey back alone, it will be enough time for Leng Ya to think through the matters they had discussed.

"Master, where do you intend to go?" a sharp and clear voice came from the Nan Huang Sword.

"Let's go to see the cursed woman."

"What!?" Nan-er cried out in surprise, "You must not, Master, that sounds like a very bad idea."

Ye Wuchen laughed softly, "Don't worry. I'm not about to throw my life away, I just want take a closer. Every time I hear about this woman, my spirit stirs. I thought it might be some kind of premonition or hint from my special spiritual powers, so I need to go take a look.

"Alright, fine! Only just a look, you must not enter..... or else, or else Nan-er will have no one to rely anymore." Nan-er said nervously.

"Don't worry, I won't deceive Nan-er."

Chapter 88: Frightening Eyes

Proceeding onwards, the area become more and more devoid of vegetation. Further still, small trees became rare until only towering ash-gray trees remained, their numbers sparse. The further he walked, the thinning trees became increasingly darker and more withered.

"A single person was the cause of the transformation this place underwent—the Cursed Woman! She alone had slowly tainted this forest in the span of twenty years. Moreover, she neither ate nor drank in that time, but is obviously still alive to this day. Is she really human?" Ye Wuchen asked, puzzled.

"Surely not! Maybe she is a god who escaped to Heavenly Star Continent. Maybe even a god who controls the power of death." Nan-er gracefully answered.

“God? Escaping to Heavenly Star Continent? What do you mean?” Ye Wuchen furrowed his brows when he asked.

“Yes, Nan-er never lies. Heavenly Star Continent is the human world and outside it, there is still the God Continent—the territory of the gods. Where the gods dwell, every one of them is more powerful than the god-level masters of the Heavenly Star Continent.”

“!!”

“Nan-er, how did you know this?”

“It is part of my memories. It emerged when I thought of it.”

“Continue what you were saying.” Ye Wuchen asked, brows lowering. He suddenly realized that this world was very simple just from hearing of the existence of this so-called “god” as described by Nan-er.

“Oh...Master wants to hear more? Then Nan-er will continue. Whether it was Heavenly Star Continent or the God Continent, all of them were formed from the massive explosion of power that resulted from the battle of the Southern and Northern Empires. The God Continent was formed at the height of the chaos of the spiritual powers, while Heavenly Star Continent was born from latter portion of the chaos. The inborn physique of the people who populated the two continents vastly differed. Those who were born in the God Continent naturally possessed the power of a god, and were much stronger than those who were born in the Heavenly Star Continent. So as not to cause imbalance between the two continents, the clan leaders of the Southern and Northern Empire established certain rules and regulations before their disappearance. If there was no particular reason, people from the God Continent were not allowed to enter the Heavenly Star Continent, else they would suffer from a cruel curse! And if the Heavenly Star Continent encountered great catastrophe, the God Continent would have to provide assistance or the king of the God Continent would suffer a curse.”

“..... What kind of curse?”

“I’m..... not really sure. Seems like all kinds of curses are possible. For example, losing all of their god power, or not being able to return, or being unable to see and speak again, or a man might become a woman, or be transformed into a rock, or into a rabbit..... in short, all the scary stuff.”

“Do you know the location of the God Continent?”

“Let me think..... I don’t. Master wants to go and have fun?” Nan-er asked.

Ye Wuchen shakes his head, “Just out of curiosity.”

If the gods and the God Continent existed, Grandpa Chu and the children’s legends might have been real then. Their faces did seem like they were recalling something at that time. The white winged angel and the black winged angel from the Kingdom of God... .. Kingdom of God could be the God Continent. The white and black winged angels could be inhabitants of this God Continent. Based on what Nan-er had said, when they stayed in the Heavenly Star Continent too long, could they have been cursed?

Curse!?

White winged...

Ye Wuchen's brain felt a slight prickling. He halted his steps, cradling his head in his hands and held a his breath tight. A thought had started to form, some really important message. Despite how hard he tried to recall it, expending all his efforts searching for that specific memory that flashed momentarily, it was to no avail.

"What did I think of just a while ago?" He asked himself absent-mindedly.

He vaguely recalled Long Zhengyang's statement before: "Based on a legend, the Kingdom of God has a device that surpasses the power of god....." Could the existence of the God Continent already be a well known fact in the Heavenly Star Continent?

Apparently, he unintentionally missed out on a lot of things.

He continued to advance while chatting with Nan-er. Like a metallic lock, Ye Wuchen was repeatedly left speechless after speaking to Nan-er..... Nan-er had a penchant for fantastic stories that nobody else seems to know, yet she was totally clueless of things that even a three-year-old would know.

At this moment, not a single tree could be seen. All other trees had withered at a crooked angle, leaving behind dead and shriveled trunks. In their line of sight was a thin image of their ultimate destination, after a hundred more meters, they arrived in front of the pitch-black pagoda.

Before their eyes was a fifty meter pagoda, the floor size of which was not overly large, yet it was still the cause of the desolation within a hundred meters. The density of the air of death in this place had reached frightening levels. A normal person would feel exhausted, limp and be in pain. Within an hour, or two at most, their life force would be snatched away.

The pitch-black door of the pagoda was tightly closed, not even a tiny sliver of its interior could be seen. Ye Wuchen calmly stood before the door approximately ten meters away, looking cautiously ahead while simultaneously releasing his power to magnify his spiritual awareness, permeating through the door ahead. Carefully and slowly, he explored the inside.

"Nan-er, are you aware of the pair of eyes staring at us? Like the eyes of a viper." Ye Wuchen focused his mind, his voice staying tranquil.

"Huh? There's none. Nan-er doesn't see anything. By the way master, what is a viper?"

Ye Wuchen remained silent, simply closing his eyes, striving to expand the scope of his spiritual awareness, searching for any living being.

But no matter how hard he tried, there was no response. Unwilling to give up, he took a step forward..... and another, until he was only one step away from the stone door.

Trying one last time, he completely released his spiritual powers. Still nothing. Just as he was about to give up, his mind suddenly produced a pair of dark eyes.

Very, very dark eyes, so deeply black, so frightening, the flickering black rays could cause people to shudder. Similar to the eyes of a demon, they carried a frightful air that seemed as if it would engulf his entire body.

He suddenly felt a sharp pain in his arms. Ye Wuchen was overwhelmed with shock to find that his arms were moving of their own accord, twisting as if being forcibly snapped off. His internal organs suddenly

began to twinge, his viscera trembled from the pain of being twisted..... he turned pale with fright and withdrew his spiritual powers in an instant. The terrible feelings disappeared at the same time and his arms eventually dropped back down.....

Ye Wuchen turned around, escaping at the fastest speed possible until he was a hundred meters away. Only then did he turn around, eyes firmly fixed upon the pitch-black tower. Ever since he arrived in this world, aside from the time Ye Ning Xue had risked her life to steal heavenly beast eggs for him, this was first time he felt frightened. His heart was beating violently, even his back was wet with cold sweat.

No wonder she could still kill people even when trapped, her eyes were deadly. If not for his spiritual powers, had he faced her eyes directly, he might have been turned into ground meat by those eyes. This power... A Cursed Woman. What kind of person was she, a god?

Chapter 89: Tian Long Hua Family

Returning to the Ye residence around midday, he was deep in thought the entire journey back, unintentionally bumping into several passers-by. Arriving at Ye Shuiyao's study, he was met with the figure of a woman who was concentrating on painting an emerald green lotus leaf, not noticing his arrival. Ning Xue was seated quietly on a soft chair, swaying her legs to and fro in boredom. Upon seeing his return, she immediately threw herself on him excitedly, hanging onto his body and refusing to let go.

Ye Wuchen slapped her bottom a few times before he carried her up and turned to face Ye Shuiyao, speaking a little loudly, "Sister, are you hungry?"

"Not hungry."

".....what would you like to eat, sister?"

"Anything."

While he spoke, Ye Wuchen's kept his eyes on the movement of Ye Shuiyao's hands. Placing Ning Xue down, he moved to stand beside Ye Shuiyao, reaching out for the hand in which she held the brush.

Ye Shuiyao's whole body trembled, momentarily forgetting the need to berate him or to break free.

"Sister, your painting technique is quite meticulous, doing so excessively would make the painting more stiff. To best portray a lotus, like the one that you have in mind, you would need to be more natural and smooth which would be easier to achieve by using just one stroke. Or else, it would not be a flower, but a simple painting....."

Ye Wuchen lightly covered Ye Shuiyao's hand, guiding her in gracefully painting the outline.

From the closeness of his breath and the warmth from his hand, her heart and mind grew chaotic until she blanked out. She could no longer hear what he was saying, nor see what he was doing. Eventually, he left, taking Ning Xue along with him, and only then did she slowly regain her consciousness. The paper in front of her already had a beautiful and glistening lotus flower.

She absent-mindedly sat on a nearby chair. He could not restore the tranquility of her mental state for a very long time.

"What's going on with me?" she faintly asked herself, trying to comfort her heart.

At this moment, the marriage between Lin Xiao of Lin Family and Hua Shuirou of Hua Family had become a common topic throughout the entire city. Enthusiasm of this level made it seem as if there was going to be a nationwide celebration. Ye Wuchen brought Leng Ya along, and while passing through a crowd of people, they heard many discussions. However, the more effort the Lin Family put into this wedding, the more they appeared to be in disarray in Ye Wuchen's eyes. He secretly laughed, thinking he might just have overestimated Lin Xiao.

Leng Ya's face remained cold, as if he were wearing a mask made out of dead flesh. Their current journey was still in the direction of the black forest, but this time the only thing that Ye Wuchen had told him was, "Dig a hole, and put in some knives."

When they returned, it was almost dusk. This time, the look he gave Ye Wuchen was full of wonder, having no idea what this young master of Ye was up to. Having nothing to do in broad daylight except head towards that lifeless black forest to dig holes, using the excuse of needing the exercise to strengthen his body and cultivate his mind.

The next day, Leng Ya almost spat out blood.

"Go, take two buckets of manure, the more the merrier."

If this person had not rescued him and his mother, as well as healed her eyes, he might have had strong intentions to stab him. Ultimately, he only gritted his teeth as he carried the two buckets, expression dark, and followed Ye Wuchen once more. The entire way, passers-by avoided their path once the smell assailed their nostrils. He wished very much he could squeeze himself into a crack in the ground, or at least cover his face while on the road.

By the afternoon, at long last Ye Wuchen did not torment Leng Ya any more, but instead put on mediocre clothing before heading towards Tian Long's Hua family discreetly.

The residence of the Hua Family is much smaller than that of the Ye Family, the number of people in the household is also relatively less. The current master is the one and only Hua Zhentian. Compared to the Ye Family, the Hua Family did not particularly flourish, as the most apt description one could give the household was miserable. Hua ZhenTian is the only son from his generation and by the age of thirty was when he finally had a daughter. The main reason for the Hua Family's decline was his parents had passed away very early on, followed by his wife who had died young due to an accident.

Hua Shuirou was Hua Zhentian's only daughter, only family, and also the one and only person he entrusted everything to. He loved her dearly and had spoiled her immensely.

"Where can I enter?" Ye Wuchen was stroking his chin in contemplation while circling the vicinity of the Hua residence.

For families like the Ye and the Hua, aristocratic families of great authority employed the services of great military forces whose achievements in battle numbered greatly. However, they had one obvious flaw. Though aristocratic officials have a lot of experts, they were never the best in the field. Even with the influence of the Ye Family, they only had one Heaven-Level Master Secret Guard. Generally, real experts would only be interested in honing their martial skills, refusing to have any connections with politics.

Contrary to them, some influential families have those experienced in magical arts scattered around every region in the Tian Long Nation. Even though they did not have military training, only pursuing the magical aspects, every single one of them could easily beat a hundred opponents. Their existence caused both awe and fear among the ordinary people. Families with such experts were few, not even the imperial family would want to provoke them, and they in turn would not provoke the royal family. The Ye Family could easily use their amassed forces to eliminate any families with magical martial arts, but the losses would be too great. The military power of the Hua Family was lesser than that of the Ye Family, but there were rumors of the Hua Family possessing mysterious troops called the "Heavenly Mines and Earth Flame", although not even a thousand men strong, each member had explosive strength and tremendous powers of destruction.

Ye Wuchen was able to leap onto a roof and vault over the walls of the Ye residence without being detected, sneaking into the Hua residence was not a very difficult task, else he would not have come today.

".....My second young mistress really likes that painting, could you please let me meet with master Hua."

Before the gate of the Hua residence stood a person dressed in servant's garb, risking his life by bowing to the guards of the Hua residence. It looked as if he would be faced with punishment should he not be able to fulfill his task.

"Our master is not here! He has already stated before to anyone who wishes to buy it, it is not for sale. Please leave." the guard said waving his hand.

"Brother, please just let me see master Hua." His tone was begging while simultaneously squeezing a shiny piece of silver into the guard's hands.

The guard accepted it discreetly and the face of the servant expressed happiness, but instead he heard a serious tone, "Our master really isn't here. Even if he is here, he would not meet with any who wishes to buy that painting."

The servant opens his mouth, scowling miserably, "Brother, please tell master Hua that my young mistress would like to buy the painting for a hundred thousand pieces of silver."

A hundred thousand!? The amount caused Ye Wuchen to flinch, thinking of how little these young masters valued their money. Even going as far as a hundred thousand pieces silver to buy a single painting..... there is much profit in this.

Chapter 90: The Heart of Shuirou

"Our master left orders not to sell it for any amount. You must return." The guard's tone was steadily becoming impatient.

"Two hundred thousand. Two hundred thousand pieces of silver!"

The guard glared. With a quick flash of movement, his hands produced a black ball. "Master commanded us to give this to those who refused to leave."

The servant paled at the sight of the small black ball, frantically retreating from it. Once he had passed a meter of distance, he shakily called back, "Five hundred thousand! Five hundred thousand pieces of silver. Is it still out of the question?"

The guard, now angered, pulled back the hand holding the black ball in a throwing motion and the servant immediately made himself scarce and vanished quicker than a hunted rabbit.

The guard looked pleased, placing the bomb back into its sack. A few moments of silence passed before he let out a burst of swear words, "What the fuck, five hundred thousand pieces of silver for a painting..... If I had known, I would have learned how to paint instead."

Five hundred thousand pieces of silver was enough money for an ordinary family to live comfortably for ten lifetimes.

During his expressions of resentment, he failed to notice the white shadow more than ten meters away climb over the wall. Had he been looking at the exact spot, he might have still attributed it to a trick of the light or a momentary blur of vision.

Hua Shuirou's nature was delicate and mild. Her heart clear as water and her innermost being was ultimately conservative as she scrupulously abided by the standards that all women should follow. A daughter must observe filial piety and depend on her parents. A mother must be compassionate and give affection to her children. A wife must be docile and obedient to her husband, that he may not fear her betrayal. Such was the kind of woman that was thought to be the perfect choice for a wife.

And because of it, though her heart might have developed affections for Ye Wuchen, she would strongly suppress it and even blame herself for committing the mistake. She could not afford to disappoint her father who had chosen her future husband.

Ye Wuchen intended to pressure her to come to a decision. The most immediate way, naturally, was to compel her to fall from grace. Once she falls into the hands of a man, based on her nature, she would not be able to think of other men.

His spiritual powers swept through the residence, easily locating the Hua Family members. As expected, the Hua Family had only a few decent guards. But he was also aware that knows that the seemingly ordinary servants have each been trained in using firearms,. Anyone who dared to invade the residence would be eradicated.

Hua Shuirou was sitting inside her chambers. Unable to help herself, she took out <> that she had already seen numerous times and slowly unfolded it.

From the tender and beautiful lotus flower to the dark green pond water and the image it reflected, all were depicted to perfection. Although that marvelous blooming lotus flower from that time did not reappear, this painting was still an astonishing piece of godly work, so perfect and without a single flaw.

Looking at it for so many times now, she vaguely recalled the implications of the painting, causing her heart to beat faster. The figure of a certain man appeared in her mind whenever she looked at the painting. His meaningful glances and his never fading smile occupied her thoughts at all times, for they would not go away.

The awakening of love in her heart felt vast and indistinct but also it also brought agony and a deep, deep guilt.

Though she knew that her future husband had been decided since six years ago, she had allowed herself to fall for another man. Her feelings towards Lin Xiao had never been like the subtle feelings she had for Ye Wuchen, and now she cannot even remember Lin Xiao's face clearly.

She should not have accepted this painting, nor given him her flute. She had made many attempts to have the maid take the painting away, to discard it or to burn it. But every time she tried to speak, she ends up taking back her words. Every time she handed the painting over to the maid, her heart suddenly felt empty, as if she would lose something extremely important if she continued. How she feared that emptiness. As a result, she would immediately take the painting back and request to be left alone.

If the painting did not exist, perhaps Hua Shuirou's budding feelings for Ye Wuchen might have slowly faded in the midst of painstakingly trying to leave behind everything related to him. Ye Wuchen had affected her thoughts through this painting. Unless she threw it away, which was unthinkable, it remained a constant reminder of him, until she was unable to forget.

"Is it nice?"

A voice lightly floats to her ears, so familiar, like in a dream. Hua Shuirou nodded absent-mindedly, then she abruptly became alarmed. Hurriedly turning around, she almost collided with the man's face. She stumbled back a few steps, finally seeing him clearly. For a brief moment, she did not believe her eyes, "It's..... it's you!"

"It's me. Surprised?" Ye Wuchen's face showed the same smile that invaded Hua Shuirou's mind repeatedly.

Hua Shuirou's head came up blank as she asked in alarm, "You..... How did you get in?"

"I wanted to see you, so here I am. Were you thinking about me? My Xiao RouRou." Ye Wuchen said smiling, at the same time admiring her frightened expression which looked so stunning.

Ye Wuchen calling her intimately caused her face to turn a tender pink, her heart began to beat much faster. She hid the painting behind her back and tried to make sense of the situation. "W-who was thinking of you? You must quickly leave or... or else I will call for someone. My daddy is quite fierce."

She had never before been alone in a room with a man other than her father and her chambers did not allow any men to set foot inside.

"Your daddy is currently not at home. From the tone of your voice, you seem to be worried about me, aren't you? Don't worry, your daddy won't rebuke me." Ye Wuchen sat himself on one of Hua Shuirou's couches, lightly inhaling the delightful fragrance.

"You must leave immediately, or else I will shout." Hua Shuirou retreated a step, her frenetic state looked pitiful.

The smile on Ye Wuchen's face disappeared. He sighed, and his voice came out somewhat desolate, "You dislike me?"

His expression caused her some alarm and subconsciously, she shook her head. "No....."

“Then why are you driving me away?”

“Because..... this is my room, others are not allowed to enter.”

“Not even your future husband?” Ye Wuchen looked at her earnestly.

Hua Shuirou’s eyes widened, unable to respond to the abrupt question.

“If you wish it, you will forever belong to me, Ye Wuchen, alone. No one may interfere.” He smiled softly, every word loud and clear, resolute and decisive, pure and unquestionable.

Her heartbeats accelerated even more, so fast she thought it might jump out of her ribcage. This was not fear, so she could not understand why her heart would not stop beating so fast. She was suddenly reminded of the engagement between Hua and Lin Family.

She exerted effort to shake her head. “No, we cannot do this. You... if you still refuse to leave, I will start screaming.”