

“Furthermore, this year’s Bronze rank challenge will be the harshest one yet. There are many participants, so it won’t be easy to fight your way through,” Gong Tian uttered with dissatisfaction, unable to remain as calm as Zhuang Tang upon seeing how Han Jingru had undervalued the Bronze rank.

Instead of brushing off their reminders, Han Jingru merely nodded in understanding as he said, “Thank you for your advice, but since I’ve already come, I definitely won’t be staying as a Bronze.”

Thereafter, Fang Zhan brought Han Jingru back to their living quarters. Seeing that there were more men than women in Apocalypse, women would often stick out like sore thumbs here. Hence, everyone could not help but ogle at Jiang Yingying.

In the mundane world, Jiang Yingying was not considered a stunning beauty, but she was still quite pretty amongst the average-looking girls. Those in Apocalypse seemed to greatly appreciate her looks as well. In order to prevent

any of those red-blooded men from trying anything funny with her, Han Jingru told Fang Zhan to make arrangements for a room with two beds for them.

“Master, this guy seems to think so little of the Bronze rank. I’d like to see how he gets thoroughly crushed in the competition,” Gong Tian forced out through gritted teeth after Han Jingru left.

Zhuang Tang shook his head lightly. “I’m afraid that you won’t have the chance to see something like that happen.”

“Master, what do you mean? You can’t possibly think that he’d really succeed, right?” Gong Tian furrowed his brows in confusion.

“Do you think that Mr. Yi is someone who jokes around? He wouldn’t have done this if he weren’t completely sure of it. In my view, Han Jingru won’t be able to successfully pass the Platinum rank challenge, but the Bronze rank should be a walk in the park for him,” Zhuang Tang concluded.

Gong Tian was increasingly dissatisfied by this. He had joined Apocalypse a long time ago and had even participated in the Qualifying Tournament twice, but he did not succeed during both tries. To him, a newcomer like Han Jingru did not have what it took to be promoted at all.

“I don’t believe it. In my opinion, he’d have to remain a Bronze rank fighter for at least two years,” Gong Tian spat.

Zhuang Tang patted Gong Tian on his shoulder and advised, “Don’t get upset over this. His master and yours are not of the same level. How could you compare to him?”

There were still five days to go before the Qualifying Tournament. During the following days, Fang Zhan oversaw Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying’s training. Although Jiang Yingying had followed Han Jingru into Apocalypse under special conditions, the rules here still applied to her. To be promoted to a higher rank, she would have to participate in the Qualifying Tournament as well.

Han Jingru did not neglect any of his training. Since he was already here, he planned to go all out. He was more worried about embarrassing himself than Mr. Yi.

Well past midnight on the third day of training, Jiang Yingying had returned to her room to rest. Meanwhile, Han Jingru was still sitting cross-legged under the moonlight. To others, he seemed to be resting in between his training sessions. However, Han Jingru could feel the power in the two skulls pulsing against his chest, calling out to the energy force that was within his own body. The two seemed to be drawn toward each other.

Han Jingru had sensed this on the first day of training itself. Hence, a bold idea soon came to mind. If he merged the power from the skulls with his body, he would undoubtedly become stronger.

Unfortunately, after several attempts, Han Jingru still failed to merge with it. He had no idea as to how he was supposed to do it.

He used to have a splitting headache when he

was asleep. It was a sign of the power from the skulls merging with his own body. Surprisingly, however, this feeling was completely gone now. It was as though his body was oversaturated with power, so the power of the skulls could no longer flow into his body.

Han Jingru's eyes abruptly flew open. Unbeknownst to him, a captivating woman had appeared right in front of him, seeming to glow beneath the silvery moonlight.

“With your instincts, or the lack of it thereof, I would've already killed you a thousand times over if I'd wanted to,” the woman spoke in an icy voice.

“I have no grievances with you, so you won't kill me,” Han Jingru calmly replied.

The woman had her back toward the moonlight, so Han Jingru could not make out her features. Despite that, he could vaguely tell that this woman was beautiful in a cold way from the blurred outline of her figure. Furthermore, she was wearing tight-fitting clothes which molded

her curves, leaving nothing to the imagination. If he were any other man, his mind would have definitely been filled with obscene thoughts.

The woman noticed that Han Jingru was checking her out. Usually, her sexy figure would cause the opposite gender's imagination to run wild. However, she was surprised to see that Han Jingru's eyes were clear of any lewd thoughts.

“What are you staring at?” The woman snapped.

Han Jingru stood up and muttered with indifference, “I was thinking that your status in Apocalypse is probably quite high.”

“A gorgeous woman is standing right in front of you. Shouldn't you be thinking of ways to get her into your bed?” the woman asked. She thought that Han Jingru was deliberately trying to conceal his lustful desires, so she tried to expose him.

All men were the same to her. As long as they were living and breathing, they would forever be shackled to their lustful desires.

Nevertheless, she was bound to be disappointed upon meeting Han Jingru. Even when faced with Qi Bingying's seduction, he had remained completely unmoved. His loyalty was not something that could be shaken by a beautiful face.

“If you're here to throw yourself at me, you don't have to. I'm not interested in you,” Han Jingru stated emotionlessly.

*Throw myself at him?*

Anger flickered in the woman's eyes. *With my status, why would I need to act in such a desperate manner? A single word from me would be enough to send all of the men in Apocalypse flocking over!*

“Do you know that what you've just said is enough for me to kill you?” She gnashed her teeth together.

Han Jingru wasn't fazed by her threat in the very least as he looked directly at the woman and questioned, “Is Apocalypse a place where you

can do whatever you want?”

With that, he strode off. He did not know who this woman was or what her intentions for coming here were. Even so, he was not interested in finding out because, in his heart, no woman could hold a candle to Su Yimo.

The woman balled her fists and wanted so badly to kill Han Jingru. Despite that, she did not lose her rationale because of her anger.

Indeed, they weren't allowed to kill each other in Apocalypse. This was a rule that no one could afford to break.

Even though she was the daughter of He Qingfeng, the head of the Three Halls, she still had to play by the rules.

“Trash. I'll watch you fall during the Qualifying Tournament.” He Xiaoxiao's frosty voice was heavy with disdain. She had come here out of curiosity, wondering just what kind of person he was to be able to stir up the entire Apocalypse, becoming everyone's topic of discussion.



After meeting him up close, she was increasingly convinced that he was exactly like everyone had described him to be. *Han Jingru is a piece of trash who only knows how to act high and mighty.*

The next day while Han Jingru was training, he mentioned the incident from the previous night and described the woman in detail to Fang Zhan, wanting to know who she was.

“I have left Apocalypse for many years. I could not possibly recognize the young woman whom you’ve just described. Perhaps she was curious about you. After all, you’re nothing short of a celebrity now in Apocalypse. Who wouldn’t want to take a sneak peek of you? Don’t think too much about it and focus on your training,” Fang Zhan advised.

“Celebrity?” Han Jingru was tickled pink by Fang Zhan’s choice of words. He was only famous because many people had wanted to see him make a fool out of himself. Hence, he could hardly qualify as a celebrity.

“People are simply waiting to watch me make a

fool out of myself.”

“That’s why you need to train harder and make all of them eat their words. Also, the woman from last night could very well be a Silver rank fighter, or maybe even a Gold rank. If you want to find out who she is, you’ll have to win the Qualifying Tournament. That’s the only way,” emphasized Fang Zhan.

Han Jingru shook his head with a completely disinterested look on his face as he replied, “I only threw it in as a casual question. I don’t care about who she is or what status she holds.”

If He Xiaoxiao were to hear him say this, she would definitely pop a vein or two. As the daughter of the head of the Three Halls, she also bore the title of the Chosen One. Thus, many people wanted to curry her favor. In the entire Apocalypse, no one would dare to think so little of her. However, she was merely an insignificant person to Han Jingru.

“Boy, I really admire you for this,” Fang Zhan admitted with a sigh. When it came to women,

Han Jingru was able to do what most men could not. He did not waver in the face of seduction and remained loyal to Su Yimo. Be it under the scorching sun or within a billowing storm, he would remain as unmoving as a mountain.



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“There’s nothing worth admiring about me.” Han Jingru shrugged nonchalantly.

To him, loyalty was part and parcel of a relationship. If a person’s love wavered in the face of beauty and temptation, it did not deserve to be called love at all. As a man, if he failed to carry out this most basic responsibility and failed to protect his own woman, then what kind of man would he be?

“By the way, don’t you think that it’s time for you to explain about the Fours Gates and Three Halls?” Han Jingru asked Fang Zhan. He had no inkling about the workings of Apocalypse. Now that he was here, he felt that it was time for him to be let in on it.

“Four Gates are named after the Four Celestial Animals in the Eight Trigrams; the Bluegreen Dragon, the White Tiger, the Phoenix, and the Dark Turtle. Each of Four Gates has a gatekeeper, and Mr. Yi is the head of all Four Gates and has the highest authority over all four of them. As for Three Halls, Qiankun Hall, Liangyi Hall, and Yinyang Hall, the head of the Three Halls is a

man called He Qingfeng,” Fang Zhan explained.

“In other words, in the entire Apocalypse, Mr. Yi and the man named He Qingfeng have the highest authority?” Han Jingru asked. If the leaders of both the Four Gates and Three Halls held the most power in Apocalypse, it would resemble a rivalry between two armies. It seemed to Han Jingru that a system like this could easily give rise to internal conflicts. The moment that happened, both sides would no doubt be at odds with each other. Apocalypse would possibly fall apart at the seams in a matter of moments due to this flawed system.

*During ancient times, there were three kingdoms that always kept each other in check, like a tripartite balance of forces. Why didn't Apocalypse choose to have this system instead?*

“Rumor has it that another more powerful figure exists in Apocalypse. Of course, these are just rumors, because this person would be two hundred years old now. Hence, he's probably dead already,” Fang Zhan continued with his explanation.

“Two hundred years old!” Han Jingru asked in surprise, “How far back does Apocalypse go?”

“Almost three hundred years.”

Han Jingru was at a loss for words. *Three hundred years!*

*Wouldn't that mean that Apocalypse was already around during the Qing Dynasty?*

*The secret that Apocalypse is guarding must be very confounding.*

Han Jingru drew in a deep breath before saying, “I wonder when I can finally know Apocalypse’s secret. I can barely contain my curiosity.”

“Don’t you have an opportunity to do so right now? As long as you achieve a Platinum rank, you’ll be privy to the secret of Apocalypse,” Fang Zhan interjected with a chuckle.

Han Jingru’s brows shot up in question as he glanced at Fang Zhan. *Doesn't he have a Platinum rank? That means that he would know what Apocalypse's secret is.*

Fang Zhan knew what was going through Han Jingru's mind when he saw the look on his face. He quickly warned him, "Don't try to change my mind. I won't tell you. This is one of the rules in Apocalypse and no one is exempted from it."

"You don't have to tell me everything. Can't you just drop a few hints?" Han Jingru prodded.

Fang Zhan shook his head decisively and affirmed, "In less than one month, you may very well get to know the secret yourself. So hurry up and train hard, otherwise, you won't get to know Apocalypse's secret. And to make matters worse, you'll even end up as a laughing stock."

Han Jingru could not help but roll his eyes at Fang Zhan. It seemed like it was impossible to extract any information out of him.

To avoid giving Han Jingru any other opportunities to pester him, Fang Zhan quickly slipped away. However, the moment he left, several Bronze rank fighters approached Han

Jingru and Jiang Yingying.

They scanned Jiang Yingying from head to toe and openly made remarks on her appearance. Their gazes were filled with salacious intentions and they even went as far as to ogle certain parts of her body.

“This woman seems to be quite a catch. It’s been so long since I’ve tasted a woman. I’m really tempted to taste one right now.”

“Why don’t you allow her to play with us a little? With our protection, she won’t be bullied by others here anymore.”

“Pretty lady, training must be tough on you. Why don’t you take a break and have some fun with us?”

The men blatantly expressed their desires for Jiang Yingying, making her gnash her teeth together in anger. She did not like being leered at by men, especially trashy ones who did not know their positions.



“Don’t stir up trouble that you can’t handle,” Han Jingru spat icily.

“Oh, boy. You’re a cocky little b\*stard, aren’t you? Just because you’re Mr. Yi’s disciple, you think you can disrespect us like that? In Apocalypse, our competence speaks for us.”

“Why did a spoiled brat like you bother coming to Apocalypse to be humiliated instead of staying home and enjoying life?”

“You know what I think? I think that your Mommy and Daddy must’ve paid a whole lot of money. Otherwise, how could someone like you become Mr. Yi’s disciple?”

The men took turns in taking digs at Han Jingru. There was a rumor going around saying that Han Jingru’s family was filthy rich and that they had paid Apocalypse a lump sum of money so that he could become Mr. Yi’s disciple.

To put it bluntly, they deduced that his apprenticeship was bought with money. This made many people regard him with contempt.

“A piece of advice for you. Get lost, or you can forget about walking away,” Han Jingru uttered indifferently. Their jeers and jabs had no effect on him. In Yan City and Yun City, he had been subjected to worse treatment than this. He was merely worried that Jiang Yingying would blow up and teach these fools a lesson.

Although they were Apocalypse fighters, they were of the lowest level, the Bronze rank. It would be a piece of cake for Jiang Yingying to have roughed them up a little.

“You have quite the talent at bragging, huh? But are you as talented at fighting?”

“Tell you what, if you lose, you’ll hand this woman over to us. How about that?”

“From now on, you can call us Daddy whenever you see us. We’ll protect you.”

With that, the group of men cackled with laughter.

Jiang Yingying’s fists were already tightly

clenched by her sides.

Han Jingru could only shake his head helplessly at their attitudes. With a sigh, he muttered, “Don’t say I didn’t warn you. It’s not my fault for what is going to happen next.”

“Do you guys want to fight?” Jiang Yingying asked them through gritted teeth.

“Pretty lady, we don’t want to hurt you. It’d be a shame to ruin your soft and smooth skin.”

“Yeah. We’re keener on cherishing you. Thus, how could we bear to hurt you?”

“I mean, if you want to battle it out, it’s doable. Seeing as such, shouldn’t we change the location to my room?”

The men continued running their mouths, completely unaware of the danger that was approaching them.

Jiang Yingying was truly angered. Her eyes flashed with a murderous gleam as she strode

toward the men.

Han Jingru turned away, so as to avoid witnessing the grueling scene that was about to happen. Soon, the men's shrieks of pain reached his ears, making him feel bad for them.

“You could've provoked anyone, but you just had to provoke a woman. You'd do well to remember that women are vengeful creatures.” Han Jingru heaved a sigh that was heavy with pity.

However, he had failed to detect the irony in his words. He had also provoked a woman here, and that woman held a rather high position in Apocalypse and wasn't to be trifled with.

“Still want to fight?” Jiang Yingying snapped after their howls of pain stopped.

Han Jingru could not help himself from looking over his shoulder. The men were all sprawled on the ground and staring at Jiang Yingying with horror. It seemed like they had been taught a rather gruesome lesson by her.

They had never expected a delicate-looking woman like Jiang Yingying to have such intimidating power. Although they were only Bronze rank fighters, they had been in Apocalypse for quite a few years. They did not possess a high level of skills, but they were considered superior to those from the mundane world. Hence, they never thought that they would be utterly defeated by Jiang Yingying!

“No, no! We don’t want to fight anymore!”

“We’re sorry! We wouldn’t dare to do it again!”

“Wonder Woman, let us go, please. We swear that we won’t do it again!”

The men begged Jiang Yingying for mercy.

Jiang Yingying inhaled deeply and growled, “Get lost!”

Upon hearing that, they scrambled off at the speed of light.

Han Jingru could no longer suppress his laughter

as he teased Jiang Yingying, “Yingying, you’re a girl. You have to start acting like one.”

Jiang Yingying never showed her aggressive side to Han Jingru. She quickly swapped her fierce expression for a gentler one as she replied, “I’ll tell them to get lost in a gentler way next time.”

Han Jingru did not know whether to laugh or cry at her response. “Let’s continue training. After today, I don’t think that anyone would dare to cause trouble for us anymore.”

Not far away, someone had witnessed this scene, his expression clearly turning ugly. This person was none other than Gong Tian.

Gong Tian had once been defeated by Han Jingru, but because of the latter’s unconcealed disregard for the Bronze rank, Gong Tian could not wait to see him make a fool out of himself this time. However, the skills that Jiang Yingying had showcased just now shocked him to the core.

*If Jiang Yingying is already so skilled, just how powerful is Han Jingru?*

*As someone who's just joined Apocalypse, does the Bronze rank really mean nothing to him?*



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“You were looking for me?”

In the domain of Three Halls of Apocalypse, Lin Tong stared at the alluring back view of a woman, his eyes filled with infatuation. For many men in Apocalypse, the woman before him often appeared in their fantasies. He Xiaoxiao wasn't merely someone of a high position. Rather, she could also make others fall in love with her at first sight. Lin Tong was one of her many admirers. Unfortunately, He Xiaoxiao was stand-offish in nature and had never been attracted to Lin Tong nor his title as the Chosen One.

Due to her father's position as the head of the Three Halls, she had expectations that were higher than most people. Even though Lin Tong was known as the Chosen One, it wasn't all that impressive to her. She only admired those who could pass Devil's Cave to be promoted to a Platinum rank. It was a shame that no one had been able to do so for an entire decade. Furthermore, the current Platinum rank fighter was much older than her.

He Xiaoxiao swiveled around and Lin Tong's



gaze instantly grew increasingly besotted.

This wasn't the first time that Lin Tong had met her, but nonetheless, he would be visually stimulated every single time he laid his eyes on her. To him, her beauty was unparalleled.

Of course, Lin Tong did not deny that He Xiaoxiao's status contributed to such feelings as well.

After all, she was He Qingfeng's daughter. If he could become He Qingfeng's son-in-law, He Qingfeng would undoubtedly cultivate him to the best of his abilities. In the future, he would possibly be next in line to lead Three Halls. The temptation to possess this sort of power was very strong.

"Help me find a way to kill Han Jingru," He Xiaoxiao ordered with an impassive expression.

Lin Tong's brows instantly drew together upon hearing her request. *Why does He Xiaoxiao suddenly want to kill Han Jingru so badly? Could something have happened between them?*

“What did he do to you?” Lin Tong tightened his fists as fury engulfed him.

“Can you do it or not? That’s all you need to tell me,” He Xiaoxiao demanded in a haughty manner. She could not be bothered to explain to Lin Tong her reasons for wanting to kill Han Jingru. He simply needed to follow her instructions and do as he was told.

Lin Tong was more than eager to kill Han Jingru. Well before the latter had joined Apocalypse, Lin Tong had repeatedly caused trouble for him. It was too bad that his plans were foiled. Even though he had tried to get Fang Zhan to do his dirty work, things did not go according to his plan.

Lin Tong knew, more than anyone else, that killing Han Jingru would not be an easy feat.

That day at Bifeng Manor in Yun City, although Mr. Yi had saved Han Jingru at the most crucial moment, Lin Tong had seen the way that Han Jingru had held his own in the fight with Fang Zhan. This was enough proof of Han Jingru’s

abilities. Hence, Lin Tong believed that the best way to kill Han Jingru was to wait.

To wait for Han Jingru to accept the Platinum rank challenge and enter Devil's Cave. Once he did, certain death would await him and Lin Tong would not have to strike out on his own.

“He will die. It's only a matter of time before that happens. Don't you know that he'll be participating in the Platinum rank challenge?” Lin Tong asked.

“Do I still need to wait for that piece of trash to die? As Apocalypse's Chosen One, can't you even do such a simple thing?” He Xiaoxiao's eyes flashed with displeasure. Of course, she knew about Han Jingru's participation in the Platinum rank challenge. She was also well aware of his imminent death upon entering Devil's Cave, but she could not wait any longer. Han Jingru's disregard for her had grated on her nerves. This was the first time in her life that she had been completely overlooked by someone. The feeling left her tossing and turning in bed all night. Han Jingru's death would be the only thing

that would ease the knot in her chest.

Lin Tong sucked in a sharp breath. It was forbidden for one to kill another in Apocalypse. This was a rule that no one could violate. If he killed Han Jingru, even his title as the Chosen One would not be able to save him from punishment if someone were to find out.

His future could very well be destroyed if he chose to do this.

More importantly, Han Jingru's death was already set in stone without him even having to lift a finger.

“He Xiaoxiao, I'm sure that you know more about the consequences of killing others in Apocalypse than I do. I don't know what happened between the two of you, but you don't need to demolish yourself and the interests of Three Halls because of a piece of trash like him,” Lin Tong advised.

“This is my business. What does it have to do with the Three Halls?” He Xiaoxiao scoffed with

disdain. It seemed to her that Lin Tong was looking for excuses because he was a coward. This was evidently her personal agenda as it had nothing to do with Three Halls.

“You are the daughter of He Qingfeng, the head of the Three Halls. Once people discover that Han Jingru’s death was caused by you, do you think that the Four Gates would let go of this opportunity to blackmail your father? Even though the Four Gates and Three Halls have been getting along fairly well over the years, a dispute has existed between both sides for many years now,” Lin Tong explained.

A frown made its way to He Xiaoxiao’s brows when she realized that there was logic in Lin Tong’s words.

Indeed, there were minor conflicts between the Four Gates and Three Halls. Although both sides did not go off at each other in the open, discord definitely existed between them. If Han Jingru died because of her, this incident would not only affect her; it would affect Three Halls and her father as well.

“Lin Tong, what are the chances of him being promoted to a Gold rank?” He Xiaoxiao asked.

Many people now regarded Han Jingru as a joke for participating in the challenges, but Lin Tong was aware of his abilities. It was by no means difficult for him to be promoted to a Gold rank.

Fang Zhan was one of the top ten elites from before, and yet, no one could replace him even now. This was enough to show just how powerful he was during his prime. Even though he had been retired for many years, he was not to be underestimated. Since Han Jingru was able to force Fang Zhan into using his Palm Sword, it went to show just how formidable Han Jingru truly was.

“I’m sure that you know who Fang Zhan is,” Lin Tong murmured.

He Xiaoxiao’s expression soured and she snapped. “I asked you what the chances of Han Jingru being promoted to a Gold rank are. What does it have to do with Fang Zhan? Just answer my question.”

Lin Tong smiled helplessly. He could sense that He Xiaoxiao had an overbearing personality. However, she had the right to behave as such because of her status as He Qingfeng's daughter which made her position in Three Halls much higher than everyone else.

“Han Jingru has fought with Fang Zhan before and had even forced him to use his killing move, the Palm Sword. With his skills, do you think that he'll be promoted to a Gold rank?” Lin Tong asked.

A hint of surprise flickered in He Xiaoxiao's eyes. Although she was only a child when Fang Zhan had left Apocalypse, he remained infamous among the people here. She had heard many stories about him and knew the immense power behind his Palm Sword.

The current top ten elites as well as many others feared Fang Zhan's Palm Sword. She had heard that very few could withstand this killer move of his.

Nevertheless, Han Jingru was able to force Fang

Zhan into using his ultimate move during their fight!

“Even Fang Zhan’s Palm Sword could not defeat Han Jingru?” He Xiaoxiao asked doubtfully.

“Of course not. If Mr. Yi hadn’t rescued him, he would be dead by now. But if he could do something like that, it means that his abilities are no doubt enough for him to be promoted to a Gold rank,” Lin Tong deduced.

He Xiaoxiao nodded. She greatly despised Han Jingru, but not everyone could force Fang Zhan’s hand the way he had.

Suspicion arose in her heart. *How does Lin Tong know so much?*

*The fight between Han Jingru and Fang Zhan definitely happened in the mundane world.*

“I heard that you’d left Apocalypse for a period of time. You planned for Han Jingru to die out there in the mundane world, didn’t you?” He Xiaoxiao laughed coldly. Because Mr. Yi had



taken in Han Jingru as his disciple, many people had voiced their dissatisfaction about it to Lin Tong as they tried to brownnose him. As the Chosen One, Lin Tong was of course unwilling to see his spotlight stolen by Han Jingru. Hence, He Xiaoxiao wasn't surprised that he had wanted to kill Han Jingru due to his dissatisfaction.

It was a shame that Han Jingru managed to enter Apocalypse alive, indicating that Lin Tong's plan had failed.

"This has nothing to do with you," Lin Tong replied blandly.

A soft laugh escaped He Xiaoxiao as a brilliant smile soon spread across her face, once again bedazzling Lin Tong.

"I never thought that the Chosen One would be afraid of getting robbed of his title, by a piece of trash at that. Pathetic," He Xiaoxiao mocked.

If someone else were to utter this to him, Lin Tong would have certainly taught the other person a lesson by now. However, this was the

daughter of He Qingfeng. He did not have the guts or the right to strike out.

“I’m curious to learn why you’re so bent on killing Han Jingru. I dare you to tell me.”



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Lin Tong's words once again filled He Xiaoxiao with anger. Being disregarded by Han Jingru was something that had been humiliating to her. How could she tell Lin Tong about it?

“This is my last warning to you, Lin Tong. This is none of your business. You better not get on my bad side. I know that you want to join Three Halls, and I'm sure that you're well aware of my position in my father's heart. If I'm not willing, my father will definitely reject you,” He Xiaoxiao stated in an icy tone.

Lin Tong had only said it as a defensive counterattack. He never expected to have received such a huge reaction from He Xiaoxiao. This made him increasingly curious about what happened between the two of them that had angered He Xiaoxiao as such.

However, he was smart enough to know that probing further would only serve to antagonize her. The moment she spoke ill of him to He Qingfeng, he could kiss his wish to join Three Halls goodbye.

Everyone in Apocalypse knew how much He Qingfeng doted on his daughter. No matter what mistakes she made, He Qingfeng would always cover them up for her. Hence, offending He Xiaoxiao became some sort of taboo amongst those in Apocalypse.

“I’m sorry, it was rude of me to say that.” Lin Tong, the Chosen One, had actually chosen to compromise. He had even spoken with his head bowed at a degree that was enough to show his sincerity.

Even so, He Xiaoxiao did not feel grateful for his respect. Because to her, it was only normal that he treated her with respect.

So what if he was the Chosen One? It meant nothing to her, the daughter of the head of the Three Halls.

“Don’t tell anyone that I called for you today, or I’ll never let you off,” He Xiaoxiao warned.

“Yes,” Lin Tong replied with his head still lowered.

When He Xiaoxiao left, she did not spare another glance at Lin Tong. It was evident that she could not care less about him even though he was the Chosen One of Apocalypse.

Lin Tong raised his head and watched He Xiaoxiao's retreating figure. Although this woman had a stubborn personality and was a narcissist through and through, she did not evoke a trace of resentment in men because her seductive looks and figure made her irresistible.

“One day, I will conquer you. When that time comes, even with your position in Three Halls, you'll be begging me for mercy in bed.” A lewd smirk played on Lin Tong's lips, his mind very obviously filled with indecent thoughts.

It was the first day of the Qualifying Tournament.

Since the tournament started from the lowest rank, there weren't many important figures from Apocalypse here to watch. After all, those upper-ranking members of Apocalypse were not willing to personally come to the place that had housed the lowest ranking fighters.

Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying had their respective opponents, but both of them had abilities that greatly surpassed those of a Bronze rank. Thus, the Qualifying Tournament for this rank was a breeze for them.

When it was Han Jingru's turn, all the Bronze rank fighters had come to watch. Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian were the most anxious ones amongst them. After all, they had gone to the Nangong family as assessors before. Back then, Han Jingru was as insignificant as a speck of dust to them. Nevertheless, he was currently about to become a Silver rank fighter. The difference in status was far more significant than what the mere title portrayed it to be.

Zhuang Tang sighed. "This is the difference between a prodigy and people like us. Han Jingru has only been here for a short period of time, but he's already about to become a Silver rank fighter." He was overwhelmed with mixed feelings at this moment. He had acted arrogantly in front of Han Jingru in the past, but now, he had to bow in his presence. This was how important a person's power in Apocalypse was.

In Apocalypse, power was the only threshold between rising through the ranks and remaining stagnant. However, this threshold often stood in the way of many.

“Master, Han Jingru’s opponent is the best Bronze rank fighter. Is there any chance that he’ll lose?” Gong Tian asked Zhuang Tang.

Zhuang Tang raised his brows at Gong Tian and chuckled. “Do you really need me to tell you the answer to that question?”

Gong Tian’s shoulders slumped weakly. Indeed, he had known the answer to his question, because he had witnessed Jiang Yingying’s prowess. Those Bronze rank fighters did not stand a chance against her, let alone against Han Jingru. It made little to no difference that Han Jingru’s opponent was the number one Bronze rank fighter.

“Who knew that the gap between our positions and his would become so wide within such a short amount of time?” Gong Tian sighed.

“And this gap will only continue to grow. You shouldn’t think that it’s unfair. All you can do is blame yourself for not being strong enough.”

Just then, the tournament began. It was evident that Han Jingru’s opponent was eager to spill blood as he released an earth-shattering roar, seemingly gathering his strength before pouncing into action.

Han Jingru was only seen strolling leisurely toward him with his hands crossed behind his back, not taking up a defensive stance whatsoever.

This evoked curiosity in the hearts of many spectators.

Most of the people in the audience had never seen Han Jingru in action. A majority of them did not think that he could win the Qualifying Tournament. Hence, to them, his current behavior seemed more like he was courting his own death.

“What is this guy trying to pull? Does he think that he’s taking a stroll in the park?”



“This punk really doesn’t know jack sh\*t. He’s here to make a fool out of himself.”

“And here I was, thinking that I’d get to witness a big battle. Turns out that this guy is nothing but a pretty face. How disappointing.”

While everyone was droning on about what a disappointment it was, Han Jingru suddenly spoke up, “I know that you’ve been preparing for this day for a long time. You can only blame your bad luck for being paired up with me.”

His opponent’s lips curled into a sneer right before he abruptly channeled his energy out into his legs and propelled himself toward Han Jingru like a cannonball.

As he leaped forward, the force of it left two incredibly deep footprints on the ground beneath his feet, showing everyone just how terrifying his power was.

As one, everyone in the audience displayed looks of horror on their faces. No one had expected him to go all out at the very beginning to deal Han

Jingru a fatal blow.

“Han Jingru is finished. Even if he doesn’t die, he’d be crippled at the very least.”

“With Han Jingru’s current standing as Mr. Yi’s disciple, his opponent would no doubt rise to fame if he’s able to win against him. It’s no wonder this guy is giving it his all.”

Just as the crowd was still in a heated discussion about it, the opponent had already reached Han Jingru with his lethal attack.

Faced with such a powerful attack, Han Jingru’s expression remained relaxed and unperturbed, as if his opponent did not bother him at all.

“You’re quite powerful, but you’re still inferior to me in terms of power.” Han Jingru’s mouth arched into a small smile as he extended his right hand. Just when everyone expected his hand to be utterly crushed, his opponent’s attack was neutralized by that very hand.

His body which had been relentlessly charging

forward came to an instant halt as if it were met with huge resistance.

“What... What’s going on?”

“How is that possible? Did Han Jingru just block his attack?”

“Impossible. Absolutely impossible! That fighter is known for his power. How is it possible for Han Jingru to store so much power in that scrawny body of his?”

Everyone was utterly dumbstruck by the scene that was playing out before them.

A chill ran down Gong Tian’s spine as he blurted out, “Master, he blocked it so easily!”

Han Jingru’s opponent was also in complete disbelief. This punch of his should have left Han Jingru half-dead, if not completely.

Nonetheless, Han Jingru was still standing like a giant steel wall in front of him, blocking him head-on.

“How is this possible? How?” The fighter’s eyes widened at Han Jingru in horror.

The edges of Han Jingru’s mouth lifted imperceptibly before he announced, “My turn.”

These two simple words managed to instill great fear into his opponent. Just as the opponent was about to withdraw, a tremendous amount of force struck him in his chest.

He felt himself become weightless for a split second before he flew backward at a breakneck speed.

With a loud *bang*, his body hit the ground hard. The entire place fell into pin-drop silence.

In the quiet arena where the Qualifying Tournament was held, only the sounds of breathing could be heard. Everyone’s eyes were glued to Han Jingru. Other than disbelief, some began to feel fear surging within them.

*Who would dare to go head-on with such a terrifying opponent?*

After a long stretch of silence, some amongst the crowd eventually recovered from their shock.

“It... It’s over just like that?”

“Han Jingru... indeed deserves to be Mr. Yi’s disciple. Look at the terrifying power that he has just wielded.”

“Who would dare to fight him? None of us stand a chance of winning against him!”

Amidst their sighs and exclamations, they began to understand the true power that Han Jingru possessed. They also realized how absurd they were to have mocked him previously.



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Jiang Yingying's match also ended smoothly with a single move. Both of them managed to impress everyone after merely one battle each. No one dared to look down on them anymore.

“Fang Zhan, how many more matches do I have?” Han Jingru asked Fang Zhan after the Qualifying Tournament.

The results of the tournament did not surprise Fang Zhan at the very least. He had experienced Han Jingru's prowess first-hand after all and knew that earning a mere Bronze rank was nothing to him.

If it weren't for Apocalypse's rigid rules, Fang Zhan believed that Han Jingru could directly participate in the Qualifying Tournament for the Silver rank.

“None. You're done for today,” Fang Zhan answered with a chuckle.

“That's it?” Han Jingru's face showed evident surprise. There were many participants in the Qualifying Tournament, so it would not have

made sense for him to be matched with only one of them.

Fang Zhan patted Han Jingru's shoulder and explained, "Well, all of your opponents backed out just a while ago. No one dared to fight you, so of course, the tournament's over."

Han Jingru touched the tip of his nose and broke into a sheepish smile. "Was I too high profile just now? People won't start seeing me as a threat, will they?"

"You can't afford to keep a low profile in Apocalypse, because only power speaks in a place like this. If you don't display your power, others would continue to look down on you. Right now, you and Yingying stand a chance at being able to get directly promoted to a Silver rank. In fact, you should get ready to participate in the Gold rank Qualifying Tournament," Fang Zhan declared.

Han Jingru placed both hands behind his neck and uttered indifferently, "Countless martial arts practitioners go out of their way to join

Apocalypse, but it turns out that this place isn't all that impressive after all."

Fang Zhan shook his head and reminded him, "Don't slack just yet. There is a big gap between the Bronze and Gold ranks. Your upcoming opponents won't be so easy to deal with. Also, to be promoted to a Gold rank, besides battling Silver rank fighters, you'd need to pass the Gold rank Power Test. This is the real challenge that you'll be facing."

"For me, the real challenge is Devil's Cave," Han Jingru corrected. Being promoted to a Gold rank was merely stepping across a threshold for him; it did not qualify as a challenge.

His confidence stemmed from the fact that he could feel the power from the skulls entwining with his own. He even sensed that he had made a breakthrough, tapping into a whole new realm of power. As his body continuously absorbed the skulls' power, he would undoubtedly improve at an exponential rate.

Previously, Han Jingru was worried that he would



be faced with obstacles during the Qualifying Tournament, but now that he had the power of the skulls, the tournament became child's play to him.

Fang Zhan knew that Han Jingru's ultimate goal was Devil's Cave because this was what Mr. Yi had expected of him. However, the Qualifying Tournaments were not to be underestimated either because they would be the factors that would determine whether or not Han Jingru could make it to Devil's Cave.

“Don't get too full of yourself now, or you'll suffer the consequences later on,” Fang Zhan reminded.

Truth be told, Han Jingru wasn't getting cocky, nor was he underestimating the Qualifying Tournament. Rather, it was just that he was fully confident that he would succeed.

The news of Han Jingru's instant ascension soon reached He Xiaoxiao's ears. Despite that, she still showed contempt toward him because the Bronze rank was of the lowest level. Hence, Han Jingru's

victory in the Qualifying Tournament was barely noteworthy.

“It seems like Han Jingru does possess some skills after all. It’s not without reason that Mr. Yi values him.” A man with thick eyebrows, large eyes, and a sturdy built commented in a deep voice. He was He Xiaoxiao’s father, He Qingfeng, the head of the Three Halls!

He Qingfeng was an elegant name that did not really suit him because he had a physique as strong as a bear’s. By right, he should have gotten a vicious name that would be more suitable for him.

“Dad, he’s only won the Bronze rank tournament. What’s so impressive about that?” He Xiaoxiao’s mouth twisted with disdain.

He Qingfeng smiled faintly. He had never once been strict with his daughter. Even though he knew that Han Jingru was not to be underestimated, he would not castigate He Xiaoxiao for her attitude toward this matter.

“My dear daughter, Mr. Yi isn’t someone who would merely pick a useless person to be his disciple, now is he?” He Qingfeng chuckled.

He Xiaoxiao had already regarded Han Jingru as her enemy. It did not matter to her whether he was really skilled or not, for she would never acknowledge it. She only had one wish right now, and that was for Han Jingru to die.

“Who knows? Mr. Yi could’ve been bribed by him. Isn’t everyone in Apocalypse talking about this now?” He Xiaoxiao countered.

He Qingfeng burst into laughter. *Only fools would say something as ridiculous as this. Who would actually believe all of that nonsense?*

It was true that Apocalypse needed financial support from some influential families in the mundane world. Otherwise, Apocalypse would not be able to continue its operations. After all, everyone here still required the basic necessities. However, it did not mean that people could buy their way into Apocalypse.

Besides, Mr. Yi was the head of the Four Gates. How could he have been tempted by something so substantial as money?

“Silly girl. Do you think that I can be bought off by money?” He Qingfeng asked.

“Of course not.” He Xiaoxiao did not even hesitate when she answered, “You’re such a virtuous person. How could you be bought off by money? Besides, it’s not like Three Halls are lacking in money.”

“Since I’m not lacking in money, Mr. Yi can’t possibly be lacking in money either,” He Qingfeng replied.

He Xiaoxiao did not know how to refute his statement, so she could only throw a tiny tantrum. “Dad, can’t you just play along with me? Why do you have to contradict me?”

Upon seeing that his daughter was about to get upset, He Qingfeng hurriedly corrected himself, “Yes, yes, yes. My dear daughter is right. The old man is definitely lacking in money.”

“Hmph.” He Xiaoxiao lifted her chin haughtily, causing He Qingfeng’s mouth to tug into a helpless smile.

“I have some things to do, so you should entertain yourself for now.” He had no choice but to rack up an excuse to leave.

He Xiaoxiao’s expression instantly turned sullen. Han Jingru had won the Qualifying Tournament without breaking a sweat. All of his opponents had even backed out from fear. This was an evident display of Han Jingru’s power.

Although she was reluctant to admit it, she wasn’t an idiot. To be able to display such deterrence was enough proof that Han Jingru was no simple man.

However, the stronger he was, the more dissatisfied she felt. She could not bring herself to accept this fact.

“No. I must find a way to stop that piece of trash.” He Xiaoxiao clenched her teeth with resentment.

One should never get on the bad side of a petty woman, for she would bring about unimaginable trouble if it were as such.

Han Jingru still had no idea of the trouble that he had brought upon himself by treating He Xiaoxiao in such a manner. To him, it was merely a trivial matter. Besides, he had a wife and a child, so it was normal that he did not give other women the time of his day.

Upon arriving in a new environment, Han Jingru found that apart from the difference in statuses of the Bronze and Silver ranks, there was also a huge difference in treatment. The living environment was better, and even the food they provided was of a higher quality. This was clearly due to the ranking system.

“Everyone speaks of equality nowadays, but I never expected Apocalypse to draw such a clear line between the weak and the strong,” Han Jingru lamented.

“Jingru, all that talk about equality is just that; talk, but no action. There’s no such thing as

equality in real life,” Jiang Yingying responded.

“That makes sense. Our abilities correspond directly to our status. How can equality be possible?” Han Jingru nodded.

Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying became famous overnight because of the Bronze rank tournament, so many Silver rank fighters had also heard about their feats. Thus, their appearance had garnered a lot of attention from everyone. Some looked at the two of them with reverence, while others scoffed as they did not think that winning a Bronze rank was all that.

Nevertheless, Han Jingru had never once paid heed to any of these. No matter what others thought of him, he would remain focused on his goal, Devil’s Cave, because this was the only way that he could find out the secret that Apocalypse was guarding and finally get the answers to all of his questions.

For the second round of the Qualifying Tournament, both Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying spent a lot of time honing their skills, never once slacking off. They were well aware of the difference in the difficulty level between the Silver and Bronze ranks. Han Jingru did not want anything to go wrong during this Qualifying Tournament.

His goal wasn't to prove himself or show everyone else how good he was, rather, it was to quickly solve his unanswered questions in the shortest time possible.

At the same time, Lin Tong and He Xiaoxiao were both plotting to ensure that Han Jingru would die in an accidental death.

Lin Tong did not want his title as the Chosen One to be robbed away by Han Jingru. On the other hand, He Xiaoxiao wanted Han Jingru to pay the price for disregarding her.

Even though both of them had different reasons for doing this, their end goal was the same. Thus, they had been meeting up quite frequently these



days.

Mr. Yi had long known about Lin Tong's desire to join Three Halls. Moreover, Lin Tong made it no secret whenever he made a trip to Three Halls.

“Mr. Yi, if Lin Tong switches over to Three Halls, it'll be a great loss on our side. He will add on to Three Halls' power. We cannot lose him,” a middle-aged man voiced out to Mr. Yi. As his assistant, he had been keeping Lin Tong under close surveillance recently, and Lin Tong's frequent contact with He Xiaoxiao made him very anxious.

After all, Lin Tong was a talented person and his future was limitless. He even had what it took to represent the future of the Four Gates. If they allowed a person with his potential to join Three Halls, it would undoubtedly fuel their arrogance.

Mr. Yi wore a faint smile on his face. He did not care if Lin Tong joined Three Halls or not because people with his nature were not ones who'd impress him. To Mr. Yi, the pursuit of fame was the greatest taboo for martial arts

practitioners.

“Do you know why I didn’t take Lin Tong in as my disciple?” Mr. Yi asked.

“No.” His assistant shook his head. This remained a mystery for everyone in Apocalypse because Lin Tong was a thousand times better than Han Jingru and had been in Apocalypse for a longer time as well, giving him an edge over Han Jingru. However, Mr. Yi had made a decision that had dumbfounded many people. He had abandoned the Chosen One and instead, selected someone from the mundane world as his disciple.

“Although Lin Tong is indeed strong, he will not be the strongest in the days to come. More importantly, even after so many years, he hasn’t gotten rid of his egomania. His title as the Chosen One has caused him to lose himself. With that kind of mentality, it’d be impossible for him to become a top fighter and carry the future of the Four Gates,” Mr. Yi clarified.

His assistant shook his head in disagreement. In

his opinion, it was normal for youngsters to be egoistic. Furthermore, since Lin Tong was indeed powerful, having a little bit of ego would not harm him. Even if it were someone else, things would probably be more or less the same because it was something out of their control.

“Then Mr. Yi, is Han Jingru able to become the strongest of them all? I’ve heard about his match in the Qualifying Tournament. He did show great potential, but that was only a Bronze rank Qualifying Tournament. Lin Tong is a Gold rank fighter, which makes Han Jingru leagues away from his level. Besides, Lin Tong has talent. I’m afraid that Han Jingru wouldn’t be able to catch up to him even if he were given a lifetime to do it,” the assistant expressed his concerns.

Mr. Yi laughed aloud and uttered, “Your concerns are unwarranted because you don’t know Han Jingru well enough. Would you believe me if I told you that he could hold his own in a fight against Lin Tong?”

“I wouldn’t,” answering him with certainty, his assistant did not once hesitate. It was because the

fighters in Apocalypse and those from the mundane world were not of the same level. Even if Han Jingru were able to crush all of the invincible fighters in the mundane world, it would not be sufficient for him to have been called a fighter in Apocalypse. Furthermore, Lin Tong grew up in Apocalypse. His talent and experience in martial arts weren't something that Han Jingru could easily surpass.

“Since you don't believe me, we can only wait and see. What I can tell you is that Han Jingru will be the first one throughout the past decade who'll step into Devil's Cave and come out alive,” Mr. Yi stated.

His assistant's eyes widened in horror. Disbelief was apparent in his voice as he asked, “Mr. Yi, are you really going to let him try out for a Platinum rank challenge?”

“Did you think that I was joking about it?” Mr. Yi queried in a flat tone.

His assistant indeed thought that Mr. Yi was joking previously. He even thought that Mr. Yi

had done it to increase Han Jingru's popularity in Apocalypse so that everyone would know who his disciple was. Never in a million years did he expect Mr. Yi to be serious about allowing Han Jingru to participate in the Platinum rank challenge!

*Isn't this outrightly asking Han Jingru to die?*

For an entire decade, no one in Apocalypse had been promoted to a Platinum rank.

Furthermore, in the past ten years, dozens of participants had entered Devil's Cave, with none of them coming back out alive. To make matters worse, they were all top Gold rank fighters.

In his assistant's eyes, Han Jingru's chances of succeeding were slim to none.

"Mr. Yi, no one has been able to get past the Platinum rank challenge in ten years. How could Han Jingru possibly succeed?" His assistant's brows creased in a slight frown.

Mr. Yi sighed and seemed slightly agitated as he

uttered, “It’s exactly because no one has been able to succeed that Devil’s Cave has become a nightmare to the Gold rank fighters in the past two years. They have come to fear Devil’s Cave, so much that no one is willing to take up the challenge anymore. Apocalypse’s power is dwindling, slowly and surely. If this continues, it’s only a matter of time before Apocalypse crumbles.”

His assistant knew about the predicament that they were in, but this wasn’t something that could be resolved overnight, nor was it one that Han Jingru could change. *Mr. Yi wants to use Han Jingru to dispel the fear in the fighters’ hearts. Although this is an excellent idea, he has chosen the wrong person for the task.*

Han Jingru had only just joined Apocalypse. To the assistant, he resembled a baby just born from his mother’s womb, still swaddled in garments and growing. Perhaps, he could eventually succeed, but there was no way he could succeed now.

“Mr. Yi, are you making a gamble? Are you

placing your bet on Han Jingru, a newcomer, to come back from Devil's Cave alive, so that it would elicit a response out of the others?" his assistant asked, bewildered.

Mr. Yi nodded. "This is slightly unfair to Han Jingru, but I believe in him."

His assistant shook his head and murmured, "Mr. Yi, I don't know where your confidence in him comes from, but this is something that is completely impossible. In fact, I don't even think that he's qualified to be promoted to a Gold rank."

Mr. Yi heaved a great sigh. He had made a big gamble by bringing Han Jingru into Apocalypse. Now, he could only leave it to fate. Whether or not Han Jingru could be promoted was beyond his control. If he really ended up becoming a laughing stock, Mr. Yi would have no choice but to bear with it.

"I'm going back to my room to rest. You don't need to interfere with Lin Tong's decision on whether he'd like to stay or leave. Let him make

his own choice,” Mr. Yi ordered.

His assistant was reluctant to allow Lin Tong to join Three Halls, but since Mr. Yi had already put it this way, he had no other choice but to obey.

“Mr. Yi, you’re placing your hope on Han Jingru and giving up on someone with pure talent such as Lin Tong. I’m really worried that you’ll one day come to regret your decision,” his assistant mumbled under his breath.

Other than Mr. Yi, everyone in the Four Gates were perplexed by this matter, and some were even slightly enraged.

The gatekeepers of the Four Gates gathered together and discussed ways to persuade Lin Tong into staying.

“Mr. Yi has truly lost his mind this time. Lin Tong has frequently been in contact with He Xiaoxiao throughout the past two days. Is he really going to turn a blind eye to it?”

“Lin Tong was cultivated by the Four Gates into



the fighter that he is today. How can we simply allow Three Halls to reap all of the benefits of our hard work? Since Mr. Yi isn't going to do anything about it, we'll have to think of a way to persuade Lin Tong into staying."

"I've sent someone over to spy on Han Jingru. He is indeed quite skilled, but he is still far from Lin Tong's level. To lose Lin Tong for Han Jingru's sake would be a great loss for the Four Gates."

"I've already informed Lin Tong about this. He'll be here soon. It's up to the four of us gatekeepers to persuade him. Let's hope that he'll agree for our sakes."

Before long, Lin Tong arrived. Due to his unique status, he wasn't inferior to any of the gatekeepers. Moreover, he was very dissatisfied with the Four Gates now. He Qingfeng only needed to say the word and he would immediately abandon the Four Gates and embrace Three Halls. Hence, he did not show these four gatekeepers an ounce of his respect.

"I wonder why the four mighty gatekeepers have

gathered here and requested to see me,” Lin Tong uttered blandly with a trace of disdain and arrogance in his tone.

“Lin Tong, we know that you’ve recently been in contact with He Xiaoxiao and we’re aware that you intend to join Three Halls. Nevertheless, you are a fighter who has been trained by the Four Gates, so we would like you to stay. Go ahead and tell us your terms.”



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Lin Tong's lips curled into a frosty smile upon hearing this, but at the same time, he was rather pleased by their actions. He never expected the four gatekeepers to have stepped forward to convince him after knowing about his desire to join Three Halls. This was enough to prove how big of an influence he had in the Four Gates.

This kind of treatment wasn't something that ordinary people were worthy of receiving.

Despite that, Lin Tong would never change his mind.

It was simply because he did not want to be affiliated to Han Jingru in any way, even if it meant leaving the Four Gates.

"I won't stay in Four Gates with a piece of trash. I'll only change my mind if Mr. Yi drives him out of Apocalypse," Lin Tong coldly stated.

*Drive Han Jingru out of Apocalypse!*

The expressions of the four gatekeepers took a drastic change. *The news of Mr. Yi accepting a disciple has already spread throughout the entire Apocalypse.*

*How can we drive Han Jingru out of Apocalypse? Wouldn't.*

“Lin Tong, you literally grew up in the Four Gates, and you are who you are today because of the Four Gates. Are you really going to become a traitor?”

“That’s right. Your achievements today are all thanks to the Four Gates’ efforts in cultivating you.”

“All thanks to the Four Gates’ efforts?” Lin Tong glanced at the four gatekeepers with a scornful expression and continued, “It’s all thanks to my own talents. Even if I grew up in Three Halls, I would’ve become as powerful as I am right now. What right do you have to make such baseless claims?”

“No matter how great one’s talents are, they would be useless if not properly cultivated. Without the Four Gates, would your current self even exist today?” The Bluegreen Dragon gatekeeper pressed forth with discontent spread across his face. The Four Gates had directed all

of their energy and resources on cultivating Lin Tong. But right now, Lin Tong was completely discounting all of their efforts, claiming that his success today was based solely on his own talents. That was a load of bullshit.

“Sure. If you think that cultivation is more important, why don’t you just produce another me by cultivating another person? Isn’t Han Jingru the best candidate? He was personally taken in by Mr. Yi as his disciple after all,” Lin Tong’s tone oozed with sarcasm.

The four gatekeepers were unable to refute his statement as they did not place their hopes in Han Jingru.

“Unless Han Jingru leaves Apocalypse, you can forget about discussing this matter altogether.” With that, Lin Tong left. He was very adamant and left no room for discussion.

Dejection lined the features of the four gatekeepers. Mr. Yi had personally brought Han Jingru back, so there was no way they could drive him out of Apocalypse.

“It seems like there is no stopping this. That old man He Qingfeng is really striking it lucky this time. All of our efforts were spent on cultivating a talented individual, and now he’s going to be an asset of Three Halls.” The White Tiger gatekeeper had a disgruntled look on his face.

The Bluegreen Dragon gatekeeper let out a long and deep sigh before adding, “The Four Gates might have been dealt a big blow because of this matter. If we get suppressed by Three Halls in the future, Mr. Yi would have to bear the responsibility.”

The Phoenix gatekeeper had a hesitant look on her face as she asked, “Is it possible for Han Jingru to create a miracle?”

The other three gatekeepers shook their heads with bitter smiles upon hearing her question.

*A miracle?*

*Perhaps it’s possible, but Han Jingru won’t be the cause of it.*

“Phoenix, don’t be naive. Han Jingru had only joined Apocalypse less than a month ago. Do you truly think that he’ll be able to do it?”

“This is how women are like, always holding on to false hope. Everyone with eyes can tell that it’s impossible.”

Phoenix, too, thought that it was highly unlikely for a miracle to happen. However, she did not think that Mr. Yi had lost his mind. He definitely had a valid reason for doing this.

“So what if I’m a woman? Am I any less skilled than all of you? Why don’t we have a go at it right now?”

When the three gatekeepers heard what Phoenix had uttered, they could not help but gulp in fear.

Although she was a woman, she could become even more violent than a man during a fight.

“I have some matters to attend to, so I’ll be taking my leave first.”

“Me too.”

“Wait for me. Let’s leave together.”

The three of them swiftly left, leaving Phoenix alone.

“Show me just what kind of person you are, boy,” Phoenix muttered to herself. Thereafter, she made her way to the Silver domain.

Han Jingru was resting between training sessions at that moment. When he saw a charming middle-aged woman approaching him, his heart raced for some reason. He had never experienced something like this even when faced with a stunning beauty like Qi Bingying.

This woman’s looks did not take one’s breath away. Although she had a great figure, it wasn’t to the point of rendering others infatuated at first glance. However, the charm that she exuded caused men to be unable to tear their gazes away from her.

She gave off a strong feminine vibe, making her



look extremely captivating.

Before Han Jingru knew it, he had already gotten up from his seat.

“I’m Phoenix.” Phoenix immediately halted in front of Han Jingru as she introduced herself right away.

*Phoenix?*

*Could she be one of the gatekeepers of the Four Gates?*

“You’re the gatekeeper of the Phoenix Gate?” Han Jingru asked doubtfully.

Phoenix nodded in response. Then, she took another step forward and studied him from head to toe.

Han Jingru subconsciously drew in a deep breath as her fresh scent wafted toward him, noting that this kind of natural scent smelled much better than perfume.

“Do you know that your appearance here has caused a major upheaval in the Four Gates?” Scanning him up and down several times, Phoenix soon discovered that besides his good looks, there wasn’t anything special about him.

“Major upheaval?” Han Jingru slanted his head at her in confusion. “Care to elaborate?”

“Lin Tong is the Chosen One whom the Four Gates put a lot of effort in, to cultivate. But because of your appearance, he’s going to join Three Halls now. Do you think that you’re worthy enough to be compared to Lin Tong?” Phoenix was blunt with her words. She was never one to beat around the bush or hide her emotions, and she had never once considered the feelings of the recipient of her harsh words.

Han Jingru had heard about the discord between the Four Gates and Three Halls from Fang Zhan before. Lin Tong would be betraying the Four Gates if he joined Three Halls.

“I never expected Lin Tong to feel threatened by me. Other than plotting to kill me, he’s even

planning to betray the Four Gates,” Han Jingru muttered with a short laugh.

“Lin Tong wants to kill you?” Phoenix asked, puzzled. She had never heard about any of this. *If that were what Lin Tong had truly wanted, how could Han Jingru still be alive?*

*Could it be that his skills are already comparable to Lin Tong’s?*

*How is that possible?*

“He’s attempted to kill me twice. It’s a shame that he didn’t succeed,” Han Jingru answered.

“He personally attacked you?” Phoenix’s eyes widened in shock. If Han Jingru was really able to stop Lin Tong twice, then she would no doubt be impressed.

“No,” Han Jingru shook his head.

Phoenix smiled blandly at that. She had thought that Han Jingru was able to defend himself against Lin Tong twice. It turned out that Lin

Tong did not even personally take action. She guessed that he had found some random people to test Han Jingru out.

However, Phoenix was completely stunned by what Han Jingru uttered next.

“It was Fang Zhan the second time. You should know who Fang Zhan is, right?” Han Jingru asked.

“What?” Phoenix’s calm exterior instantly shattered upon hearing Fang Zhan’s name.

She did not know what happened in the mundane world, but she knew that this time when Mr. Yi returned to Apocalypse, other than bringing Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying in with him, he had also brought back Fang Zhan, one of the top ten elites.

She was well aware of how powerful Fang Zhan was. She also knew that the effect of a personal attack from Lin Tong would, by no means, be better than Fang Zhan’s.

Yet, Han Jingru was able to survive an attack by Fang Zhan!

“Phoenix, long time no see,” Fang Zhan’s voice sounded out from behind her just then.

Phoenix whipped around abruptly. Even though his familiar face had aged quite a lot, she would never be able to forget it.

“Fang Zhan, did he really survive an attack by your hands?” Phoenix blurted out.

Fang Zhan smiled slightly and walked over to her side. “It’s been so long since we’ve seen each other. Shouldn’t we be reminiscing about the past instead?”

An agitated Phoenix instantly grabbed Fang Zhan by his collar and urged, “Stop dallying and answer me right now.”

Fang Zhan put on a look of helplessness. He never expected that even after so many years, Phoenix would remain as hot-tempered as ever. She was almost forty years old, but she still had

an impulsive streak.

“You’re almost in your forties. Can’t you just take it easy?” Fang Zhan asked.

Phoenix froze for a moment before she soon exploded with anger. She hated it when others talked about age-sensitive matters right in front of her, especially when her age was thrown into the mix.

What happened next absolutely stunned Han Jingru. Without so much as a warning, the two of them broke out into a fight. Phoenix was ruthless all the way, refusing to show her opponent any mercy.

“What the heck is going on?” Han Jingru smiled helplessly. Truth be told, Phoenix did not look a day older than thirty.

“Phoenix, can’t we just talk things out? Why did you start attacking me?”

“Talk? I’ll tear your mouth right off your face! Let’s see how you can talk then!” Phoenix bellowed ferociously.

Fang Zhan was at a complete loss of what to say. *How would I have known that the slightest mention of her age would evoke such a huge reaction out of her? If I had known that this would happen, I would’ve just kept my mouth shut.*

“Didn’t you want to know of Han Jingru’s level of skill? Stop attacking me and I’ll tell you,” Fang Zhan pressed forth.

“I’m not interested in anything else right now. All I want is to tear your mouth off!” Phoenix did not give him a chance at all. Age was clearly a forbidden topic when it came to her.

“Serves him right. Doesn’t he know that age is a very sensitive topic for women? He was asking for a beating the moment he brought it up,” Jiang

Yingying added fuel to the fire while standing beside Han Jingru to watch the show.

Han Jingru took a mental note of this. He reminded himself to be careful with his words from now on and to avoid such a topic altogether.

“Fang Zhan has lived in seclusion for far too long. I’m afraid that he’s long forgotten how to interact with the opposite gender,” Han Jingru remarked.

Jiang Yingying pursed her lips together. *Living in seclusion shouldn’t be used as an excuse. This is the most basic taboo when it comes to dealing with women, especially older ones.*

At that moment, Fang Zhan was obviously cracking beneath Phoenix’s relentless attacks. After all, he had been in seclusion for many years. Although he had recently been working hard to regain his strength, it was still quite impossible for him to return to the days of his prime. Martial arts practitioners had to constantly work on improving themselves, otherwise, it would go downhill for them at some point. This



was something that none of them could change.

“He forced me to use my Palm Sword,” Fang Zhan blurted out all of a sudden.

Phoenix instantly ceased all movements and swiveled around to face Han Jingru.

*Palm Sword!*

Fang Zhan’s Palm Sword was rarely used. However, when it was used, lives would undoubtedly be lost. However, Han Jingru was still alive, which meant that Fang Zhan’s Palm Sword could not kill him. This revelation shocked Phoenix beyond words.

*Does this young man really possess such unrivaled power?*

Phoenix shot a sidelong glance at Fang Zhan and announced, “I’ll settle the scores between us next time.”

With that, she moved at an unimaginable speed and appeared before Han Jingru in the blink of an

eye.

“You managed to block his Palm Sword?” Phoenix’s chest was heaving slightly from the earlier fight.

A view like this would no doubt make a man water at the mouth. However, Han Jingru was an exception to this. His gaze never once strayed down for a glimpse.

“No,” Han Jingru answered truthfully. If Mr. Yi had not appeared in the nick of time that day, Han Jingru could have very well have died under Fang Zhan’s Palm Sword.

Phoenix’s brows furrowed. Upon seeing her confusion, Han Jingru explained, “When Fang Zhan used his Palm Sword, Mr. Yi appeared in the nick of time and stopped him, saving my life in the process.”

Phoenix suddenly circled Han Jingru, looking him up and down, as though trying to find a clue as to what made him so special.

Han Jingru could not block Fang Zhan's Palm Sword, but he was able to force him into using it. This was enough proof of Han Jingru's abilities.

In spite of that, no matter how much she looked at him, she was still unable to see what it was that had made him so powerful.

"Boy, tell me the truth. What's so special about you?" Phoenix halted in front of Han Jingru. Standing chest-to-chest with him, she seemed to suppress him with her powerful aura.

Their noses were almost touching. Han Jingru could even feel her breath tickling his face. Her fresh and enticing scent became stronger with her close proximity, immediately invading his senses.

Han Jingru could not help but ask, "May I know what perfume it is that you're using?"

A cold glint appeared in Phoenix's eyes as she asked, "Are you flirting with me?"

Han Jingru quickly shook his head. He would never have dared to disrespect such a fierce

woman. Besides, Fang Zhan had just mentioned that she was nearly forty years old. Han Jingru did not have a fetish for older women.

“No. I was just thinking about giving my wife the same perfume,” Han Jingru clarified.

“Don’t change the subject. Tell me, why are you so powerful? Fang Zhan was once among the top ten elites. How is it possible that you’d forced him into using his Palm Sword?” Phoenix narrowed her eyes into slits.

Everyone in Apocalypse never took fighters from the mundane world seriously. This wasn’t prejudicing. It was merely a fact that when compared to Apocalypse fighters, those from the mundane world weren’t worth mentioning at all. In what seemed like an eternity, no one out there was an exception to this fact.

Nonetheless, Han Jingru turned out to be the exception. He was able to force Fang Zhan’s hand even before he joined Apocalypse. This was simply an impossible feat to Phoenix.

Han Jingru's power came from the skulls, but he had never told anyone this secret, and he sure as hell wasn't going to start now.

"It's probably... because of my unmatched talents, that even Lin Tong can't top?" Han Jingru answered.

Phoenix clenched her jaw. *Is this really just a matter of talent?* However, apart from this, there seemed to be no other way to explain it.

"Boy, you'd do well to remember that you're the reason that the Four Gates has lost Lin Tong, the Chosen One. So, let me give you a piece of advice. If you can't replace Lin Tong, I'll never let you off," Phoenix threatened.

"You should calm down for now. Women are prone to wrinkles when they get angry. That's not really worth it, don't you agree?" Han Jingru advised.

Phoenix's expression immediately relaxed upon hearing what he had uttered.

Wrinkles were a woman's worst enemy!

“During the next Qualifying Tournament, I'll be there to watch you in person. I hope that you won't disappoint me.” After that, Phoenix turned on her heels and left.

At the side, Fang Zhan held his breath for fear of attracting Phoenix's attention.

Unfortunately, Phoenix had only taken but a few steps before she stopped and turned to look at him.

His heart squeezed in his chest. *I never should have offended this woman.*

“Fang Zhan, until next time.”

Fang Zhan was unsure of how to react to her words. *What sins have I committed, seeing that I have managed to incur this woman's wrath?*

Phoenix left and immediately made her way over to the Phoenix Gate.

Amongst the Four Gates, the Phoenix Gate had the least number of people, the main reason being that women were greatly disadvantaged in martial arts. It was extremely difficult for a woman to enter Apocalypse and to achieve a Gold rank.

However, amongst the Four Gates and even Three Halls, the Phoenix Gate was considered an extraordinary existence. This was because women had something fatal that men lacked, and that was the power of attraction. Besides, the women in the Phoenix Gate were all beauties, causing many people to treat the Phoenix Gate especially well.

“Gatekeeper, what happened? Is Lin Tong really going to betray the Four Gates?”

“Lin Tong is really inhumane. After so many years of being with the Four Gates, he doesn’t feel the slightest bit of guilt.”

“To be honest, Lin Tong can’t be blamed for this either. He’s the Chosen One of Apocalypse, but he hasn’t been treated like one. His limelight was completely robbed by a piece of trash. No one

would be able to take it lying down.”

Several pretty women by the gate expressed their opinions on the matter. Between Han Jingru and Lin Tong, the latter was obviously more popular amongst the women. After all, he had been in Apocalypse for many years and everyone could clearly see how much of an outstanding fighter he truly was.

Han Jingru, on the other hand, was a nobody to them. He had snatched Lin Tong’s limelight the moment he stepped into Apocalypse, making it impossible for Lin Tong to tolerate it.

“Do you girls think that Han Jingru and Lin Tong aren’t comparable?” Phoenix asked.

“It’s not just us, rather, it’s likely that everyone in Apocalypse is of the same mind as us.”

“Gatekeeper, Lin Tong has been in Apocalypse for so long. How can an outsider even compare to him?”

Phoenix nodded imperceptibly. Before meeting



Han Jingru, she had shared the same thoughts as well. However, after meeting him, her impression of him changed for the better. As someone who was able to force Fang Zhan into using his Palm Sword, his skills should not have been discounted.

“Would you believe it if I told you that Han Jingru may very well be better than Lin Tong?” Phoenix continued asking.

*Better than Lin Tong?*

The girls covered their mouths to stifle their laughter upon hearing this.

“Gatekeeper, how is that possible? He’s someone from the mundane world who has only just entered Apocalypse. How can he compare to Lin Tong?”

“To Apocalypse, the fighters from the mundane world can only be considered as amateur martial arts practitioners. Gatekeeper, why would you say something like that all of a sudden?”

“Gatekeeper, you’re not saying this in a fit of anger, are you?”

Seeing their reactions, Phoenix shook her head. She initially planned to tell these three girls about what she had learned. However, it seemed rather unnecessary now because no one would believe her anyway.



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For people to believe in Han Jingru's abilities, words would be useless; they had to see it with their own eyes.

Phoenix did not have any high hopes in the beginning, but things were different now. In fact, she was starting to look forward to it.

Right now, everyone in Apocalypse looked down on him, waiting for him to humiliate himself. Those from Three Halls even found Mr. Yi's actions to be extremely stupid as they were looking forward to seeing him shoot himself in the foot.

If Han Jingru were truly able to prove himself, he would be bringing glory to himself as well as to all the Four Gates.

Under such circumstances, it would not matter if Lin Tong were to switch sides because Han Jingru would not merely replace him; rather, he would likely be stronger than him too!

“Gatekeeper, what's wrong?”

“Should we go and talk some sense into Lin Tong?”

Their features were lined with worry when Phoenix remained silent.

Phoenix shook her head and reassured them, “I’m fine. As for Lin Tong, his decisions are his own business. The Phoenix Gate doesn’t have to intervene.”

The girls sighed inwardly. It seemed like the Four Gates was about to be destroyed by Han Jingru. It did not seem worth it to them at all. The Four Gates had been on par with Three Halls for many years. If they suddenly became inferior to Three Halls because of Han Jingru, their spirits would be completely crushed.

At the Silver domain, Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying had wrapped up their training just as night fell. After having their dinner and washing up, they finally returned to their own rooms to rest.

When they were still at the Bronze domain, Han

Jingru was worried that Jiang Yingying would be disturbed by the men there who harbored evil thoughts toward her. Hence, they had slept in the same room. Nonetheless, ever since they were promoted to the Silver rank, the two had separated because after Jiang Yingying's performance during the Qualifying Tournament, many men had dispelled their dirty thoughts toward her. Moreover, Jiang Yingying was a grown woman and it would not look good if Han Jingru slept under the same roof as her.

Back in his room, Han Jingru took out his phone to flip through the photos of Su Yimo and Han Xiang. This was his daily night routine. Only after seeing them would he have the strength and motivation to do what had needed to be done.

“Honey, I miss you,” Han Jingru muttered softly to himself.

Meanwhile, at Genting Villa in Yun City. Su Yimo hugged Han Xiang as she held her phone in one hand, looking at her old photos with Han Jingru. She could only alleviate the ache in her heart the same way that he did; by looking at

their photos.

Even though they were just one call away from each other, Su Yimo was afraid of disturbing him. After several tries, she still could not muster up the courage to dial his number.

“Xiang, this is your father. Take a good look at him. You need to remember what he looks like, okay? When he comes back, you’ll have to learn how to call him,” Su Yimo cooed as she held the phone in front of Han Xiang.

In the middle of the night, Han Jingru was in a deep slumber when his body abruptly twitched, his features contorting in pain at the same time. Things escalated very soon as his body began to jerk violently on the bed.

Han Jingru grabbed his head with both hands, feeling like his head was about to explode at any moment. In a haze of pain, he also felt like something was forcing its way into his brain.

In just a short while, his body was covered in a cold sweat. The sheets were completely soaked

through too. This was the worst headache that he had ever experienced. It would not have been an exaggeration to say that he felt like he was on the brink of death.

His headache had yet to diminish even after a long time. When he felt like he was on the verge of blacking out, he hammered his head with his fists, hoping to make the pain stop.

However, this kind of internal pain could not merely be affected by external forces. It wasn't only until he passed out on the floor that he finally stopped moving.

At that moment, a faint red light appeared on his forehead.

Early the next morning, Jiang Yingying was waiting outside Han Jingru's door to begin their training together.

As time ticked by, Han Jingru did not come out, which made Jiang Yingying suspicious.

*Han Jingru has never slacked off when it came to*

*training, and he*

“Jingru,” Jiang Yingying called out as she knocked on his door.

There was no movement on the other side of the door. Jiang Yingying’s suspicion grew. *He’s a light sleeper and he’d often wake up at the slightest noise. How is it possible that he didn’t hear me knocking?*

“Could Jingru have gone to the training grounds already?” Jiang Yingying made her own speculation but thought that it did not make sense because the two of them had been going there together every day. It was impossible that he would have gone ahead of her all of a sudden.

With suspicion flooding her, Jiang Yingying finally pushed open the door.

The next instant, she paled with shock upon finding Han Jingru curled up on the ground.

“Jingru, what’s happened to you?” Jiang Yingying immediately ran over and knelt down



beside him. She realized that he was shivering slightly and that his skin was ice-cold.

At the end of the day, Jiang Yingying was still a woman, and tears pricked at her eyes as panic set in.

“Jingru, what’s wrong with you? What’s happened?” Jiang Yingying carefully heaved him up onto his bed and continuously called out to him.

Seeing that he remained motionless, Jiang Yingying was close to having a mental breakdown.

Just then, Fang Zhan had come to check on Han Jingru as well, thinking that he was beginning to get lazy when he had not shown up even after a long while.

Upon reaching his room door and hearing Jiang Yingying’s cries, Fang Zhan immediately dashed into the room.

“Yingying, what’s wrong?” Fang Zhan frantically

asked.

Jiang Yingying shook her head and cried out, “I don’t know either. I saw Jingru lying on the ground the moment I came in. Someone must’ve sneaked an attack on him. Lin Tong! It was definitely Lin Tong!”

Fang Zhan gritted his teeth and pressed forth, “Let me take a look at him first.”

He scanned Han Jingru’s body for any signs of trauma but it was to no avail. However, it was evident that he was suffering from excruciating pain because even after collapsing, his body was still trembling.

“Turn around. Let me check if he’s injured elsewhere,” Fang Zhan ordered.

Jiang Yingying shook her head stubbornly. Even though it was inappropriate of her to do this, she wanted to know what had happened to him.

Fang Zhan could only sigh in defeat before instructing her, “Come and help me remove his

clothes then.”

Jiang Yingying nodded and reached out without hesitation to take off Han Jingru’s clothes.

Han Jingru wasn’t overly muscular, but the dips and grooves on his body were beautifully proportional, dazing Jiang Yingying for a moment as she began to harbor thoughts to herself. *This is what I call the epitome of perfection.*

“What’s this?” Fang Zhan asked in bewilderment when he saw the string resting against Han Jingru’s chest. The string looked ordinary and had nothing hanging from it. It was just a simple string.

Jiang Yingying shook her head, similarly confused. She wasn’t close to Han Jingru to the point of knowing the answer to that question. However, they both found it weird that there was no amulet or jade pendant hanging from the otherwise ordinary-looking string.

“Perhaps it belongs to Yimo. For Jingru to carry

something everywhere with him shows just how much he cherishes it, which can only mean that it belongs to Yimo,” Jiang Yingying deduced. This was the only possible explanation for the string’s value.

Fang Zhan nodded and stopped trying to unravel the string’s mystery because he knew how strong Han Jingru’s feelings for Su Yimo were. Even a single strand of her hair deserved to be treasured.

“There are no external injuries or signs of him being beaten up. What in the world is going on?” After examining Han Jingru’s body, Fang Zhan still did not find any injuries, leaving him utterly nonplussed.

*Since he isn’t injured, where is his pain coming from?*

“Could it be his head?” Jiang Yingying asked tentatively, afraid to entertain this possibility because a blow to the head would bring dire consequences.

Fang Zhan sucked in a deep breath. If it turned

out to be a head injury, the aftermath would be catastrophic. After all, the fate of the Four Gates rested on Han Jingru's shoulders.

Just as Fang Zhan reached out to check his head for injuries, his eyes flew wide open.

“Jingru!” Jiang Yingying shouted in a voice thick with emotion.

“What... What happened?” Han Jingru's gaze was unfocused.

Seeing that he could still recognize them, Jiang Yingying wept with joy and questioned, “Jingru, what happened to you? Who attacked you?”

*Attacked me?*

Han Jingru slowly recalled the events from the previous night. His headache was so severe that he had lost consciousness. He surmised that he must have been passed out for a long time, which prompted both Jiang Yingying and Fang Zhan to come to his room to check on him, which then resulted in a misunderstanding.

Han Jingru was well aware of what happened last night. He wasn't attacked by anyone, but it was the pain caused by the skulls which rendered him unconscious until now.

He only realized that he was named after thinking about the skulls, to which he subconsciously tried to cover his chest with his hand.

“What are you doing? It's not like you're a woman. What are you so embarrassed for?” Fang Zhan chuckled when he saw Han Jingru's actions.

Han Jingru's facial expression remained the same, but his mind had gone completely blank.

*The skulls. They're gone!*

He glanced at Fang Zhan, then at Jiang Yingying. They were the only ones who had entered his room. *Could they have taken the skulls?*

“Jingru, put on some clothes first, then try to remember what happened last night.” Jiang Yingying turned around while speaking.

“I want to rest for a bit. Both of you should make your leave first. I won’t be training today,” Han Jingru announced.

Fang Zhan opened his mouth to speak but soon stopped himself. The second round of the Qualifying Tournament was just around the corner. Han Jingru had to step up his game, or he would possibly fail to pass the challenge.

However, given the current state that Han Jingru was in, it would be inappropriate for him to train. Hence, he could only agree, “Alright. Get a good rest. After that, you’ll have to double up your training.”

Thereafter, he turned to Jiang Yingying and said, “Nonetheless, your training can’t be delayed since you’re weaker than Han Jingru.”

Jiang Yingying nodded. “Jingru, rest well. Come to me if you need any help.”

After two of them left, Han Jingru looked at the bare red string and wondered who it was who had taken the skulls.

*Fang Zhan and Jiang Yingying wouldn't have done something like this, but other than them, did someone else come into my room while I was passed out?*

Meanwhile, at the Platinum domain, Mr. Yi's assistant had come to his room early in the morning. Both men were wearing solemn expressions which were lined with a hint of dread as well.

“Mr. Yi, you probably sensed what happened in the Restricted Area last night,” his assistant uttered to him.

Mr. Yi nodded somberly, suspecting that it wasn't just him who had sensed it, but all of the Platinum rank fighters as well.

The biggest secret of Apocalypse was tucked away in the Restricted Area, demonstrating the sizeable danger that it posed. The reason for the establishment of Apocalypse three hundred years ago lay in the Restricted Area.

“I've always known that they'd return sooner or



later, I just never expected it to be at a time like this,” Mr. Yi admitted.

The assistant’s face instantly drained of all color upon hearing what Mr. Yi had said. “Mr. Yi, do you mean that they’re coming again?”

Mr. Yi grimaced as he replied, “For so many years, there haven’t been any signs of activity in the Restricted Area. Isn’t the change from last night a sign that they’re going to reappear?”

With that, he got to his feet and spoke only after a long silence, “It seems like it’s time for me to make a trip to that place.”

The assistant panicked upon hearing this and instinctively went over to stand in front of Mr. Yi. “Mr. Yi, you’re the head of the Four Gates. How can you so casually make such a huge decision? Once you go there, there’s no coming back. In fact, no one has ever returned from that place.”

“Should I be afraid and cower from it just because no one has ever come back? This was going to happen sooner or later. Instead of

waiting for them to show up, it's better for me to go in to investigate the current situation. Perhaps I'd be able to come up with a solution," Mr. Yi suggested.

His assistant shook his head, evidently very opposed to Mr. Yi's decision. "In spite of that, the Four Gates still require your guidance and support."

"No, the Four Gates has Han Jingru now. As long as he's here, I have faith that the Four Gates won't crumble," Mr. Yi murmured calmly.

His assistant clenched his jaw in frustration. *Han Jingru again! How can this young man be qualified to shoulder such a huge responsibility?*

"Mr. Yi, you won't like what I'm about to say, but in my opinion, a useless piece of trash like Han Jingru isn't qualified to take over your position. I don't know why you're placing your hopes in him, but I can tell you with all certainty that this decision of yours will destroy the Four Gates." His assistant did not dare to speak these words aloud previously, but he could not afford to

hold back any longer because Mr. Yi's decision would send the Four Gates onto a path of destruction. Hence, he felt he had the responsibility to talk some sense into Mr. Yi.

Mr. Yi's brows furrowed slightly as he argued in return, "Han Jingru has abilities beyond your imagination. I know that everyone in Apocalypse is looking down on him now, but he will shock each and every one of you."

"Mr. Yi, is this young man really deserving of your trust?" His assistant asked, displeased.

"He is," Mr. Yi answered without missing a beat. He would never have brought Han Jingru to Apocalypse if he weren't, let alone place all of his hopes in him.

The assistant sighed in defeat. He knew Mr. Yi's temperament well. Once he made up his mind, no one would be able to change it.

"Mr. Yi, I know that I can't change your mind, but could you at least wait until Han Jingru is promoted to the Platinum rank before deciding

whether or not to go to the Restricted Area?" his assistant pleaded, seeing no other way.

"Don't worry. I'll definitely wait until after he's promoted. But now, we have to pay Three Halls a visit."

At Three Halls.

He Qingfeng had stayed up all night, causing his face to look slightly haggard. He could not sleep last night when he had sensed a shift in the Restricted Area. This matter involved Apocalypse, as well as the survival of the entire world.

"Dad, what's the matter with you? Why do you look so serious this early in the morning? Your dear daughter couldn't have made you angry, right?" When He Xiaoxiao got up and saw the grave look on He Qingfeng's face, she walked over with a sweet smile and held onto his arm in a childish manner.

He Qingfeng pampered He Xiaoxiao to the point that others had called it outrageous. When it

came to his daughter, He Qingfeng never once used his authority as her father to order her around, but today, he remained unsmiling even when he saw her.

It was because he had lost the mood to think about anything else due to his mind being plagued with worry.

“Xiaoxiao, not now. I’m dealing with something very important,” He Qingfeng muttered.

He Xiaoxiao’s expression immediately fell, because no matter how serious her father was, he always broke into a smile upon seeing her.

“Dad, what’s wrong with you today? Why are you acting like this so early in the morning?” He Xiaoxiao pouted.

Just then, a member of Three Halls approached He Qingfeng and reported, “Master, Mr. Yi is here.”

“Mr. Yi? What is that old fool doing on my territory?” He Xiaoxiao grumbled. Although both

the Four Gates and Three Halls belonged to Apocalypse, both sides seldom had interactions with each other. Hence, He Xiaoxiao was very displeased that Mr. Yi had personally come to visit Three Halls. After all, Han Jingru was his disciple. The moment she thought about Han Jingru, her blood began to boil with anger.

From a young age, not a single man had dared to treat her with such impassiveness. Han Jingru was the first, and that was why she harbored bitter resentment toward him.



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“Xiaoxiao, don’t speak of such nonsense. Go back to your room!” He Qingfeng admonished her for speaking in such a manner.

In the past when He Xiaoxiao bad-mouthed Mr. Yi, He Qingfeng had never outrightly told her off, but today, he was aware of Mr. Yi’s purpose of visiting. Hence, he could not allow He Xiaoxiao to continue behaving so impudently.

The survival of Apocalypse was equivalent to their survival. Even though He Qingfeng and Mr. Yi had their differences in the past, for the sake of the Four Gates and Three Halls, they would have to unite.

This was the first time that He Xiaoxiao was reprimanded by her father, which scared her so much that she was rendered unable to find the right words to speak. Although she was a spoiled princess who always did whatever she wanted, she wasn’t completely ignorant. She knew that her father’s sudden change in attitude must have been because something major had happened.

Not to mention, Mr. Yi’s appearance in Three

Halls was a strange occurrence in itself.

“You must give me an explanation for this afterward, otherwise I won’t forgive you,” He Xiaoxiao accused as tears welled in her eyes.

He Qingfeng wasn’t in the mood to comfort her. Instead, he immediately strode to the door to greet Mr. Yi.

“Mr. Yi, what brings you here?” He Qingfeng greeted him politely.

“The Four Gates and Three Halls have always been one body, so it shouldn’t be odd that I’ve come here for a visit,” Mr. Yi answered with a smile.

“Of course, of course. Come in and have a seat,” He Qingfeng offered.

“That won’t be necessary. I’m sure that you know why I’ve come here. I’m not in the mood to sit down and talk now,” Mr. Yi declined.

He Qingfeng inhaled deeply as his expression



morphed into somber. “I guess that you’ve also sensed the shift in the Restricted Area, Mr. Yi. What are your thoughts about it?”

“The Restricted Area has remained silent for so many years. The shift last night must be a sign that the other side is preparing to wage a war against us. Apart from that, I can’t think of any other possibilities,” Mr. Yi stated.

He Qingfeng could not suppress the shiver that ran down his spine. Even though this was his exact thought process, he had hoped that he was wrong about it. Nonetheless, it seemed like even Mr. Yi was of the same mind. Hence, it had to be true.

“Come. Let’s go to the Restricted Area and check things out,” He Qingfeng suggested.

“Mhm.” Mr. Yi nodded.

No one had the right to casually stroll into Apocalypse’s Restricted Area. Other than the leaders of the Four Gates and Three Halls, anyone who appeared there would be killed at

will. This was the first rule of Apocalypse and no one dared to break it because the foundation of this rule was built on the blood of those whose curiosities had gotten the better of them.

Even someone as haughty as He Xiaoxiao was forbidden by He Qingfeng to set foot there. Thus, even though she was very curious as to what secrets lay hidden in the Restricted Area, she had never dared to take it upon herself to find out.

Since it was a restricted area, there would naturally be a guard patrolling the area, and that guard was one of Apocalypse's top ten elites.

"Mr. Yi, Mr. He." The guard stepped forward to greet the two of them respectfully.

"What happened last night?" He Qingfeng asked, feeling restless.

"Without both of your orders, I did not enter the Restricted Area, but I felt very strong energy fluctuations last night," the guard answered.

A dark and unfathomable cave stood before them.

After exchanging glances, Mr. Yi and He Qingfeng walked toward the cave.

The cave had a downward slope, meaning that it extended directly to the center of the earth. After walking for a full ten minutes, their pitch-black surroundings were finally illuminated by a dim light coming from the bottom of the cave.

He Qingfeng's heartbeat accelerated. Even though he had known the secret of this place for many years and had ventured here more than once, he still could not suppress his anxiety every time he came here.

It turned out that the powerful leader of Three Halls wasn't without fear either.

"Mr. Yi, do you feel something different?" He Qingfeng asked Mr. Yi.

Mr. Yi nodded and replied, "The energy fluctuations are clearly much stronger than before. It seems like this place can't hold them back for much longer."

After some time, they finally arrived at their actual destination.

In the deepest part of the cave, within a glaring breach was endless darkness, like a black hole that could devour everything in its way. There was a fog that was visibly surging inside the dark aperture, resembling a beast trying to break free from its cage.

Upon seeing this, He Qingfeng's expression took a turn for the worse. "I remember that the fluctuations weren't this pronounced the last time. This should be at least ten times stronger than before. What happened? Why is there such a massive change all of a sudden?"

Sensing He Qingfeng's fear, Mr. Yi was not as calm as he usually was either. "It seems like the time has come. I'm afraid that the secret of Apocalypse cannot be kept under a lid any longer."

Apocalypse's secret that Han Jingru was so keen on knowing was right here. The establishment of Apocalypse three hundred years ago was also

because of this black hole. On the opposite side of this hole was another world. No one knew what that world was like, but the creatures there were powerful beyond comprehension. They had once wreaked havoc on earth, causing the deaths of many. If it weren't for countless fighters sacrificing themselves to contain the attacks of the creatures from the second world, planet earth would have ceased to exist a long time ago.

He Qingfeng began trembling slightly. He took a deep breath to calm his nerves before saying, "Mr. Yi, the current Apocalypse isn't what it used to be. We aren't strong enough to defeat them. Is the world really going to perish?"

As the head of the Three Halls, He Qingfeng knew Apocalypse's history like the back of his hand.

In the past, Apocalypse was able to counter the attacks of the second world because they were immensely powerful. At that time, there were thousands of top Platinum rank fighters.

Nonetheless, all that was left now was only a few dozens of them. With this level of strength, they

would never stand a chance against the second world.

This was a very distressing matter for He Qingfeng.

Mr. Yi nodded. Comparing the current Apocalypse with the one from back then was like comparing an infant to a strong adult. They weren't at the same level at all. *How could Apocalypse defend itself against the second world this time?*

"I'm going to personally investigate things in there," Mr. Yi announced abruptly.

He Qingfeng was taken aback as he stared at Mr. Yi with incredulity.

*Personally investigate things!*

Of course, Apocalypse had sent their fighters in there to unravel the mysteries of the second world. However, no one had come back alive so far. It resembled the jaws of a devil, and certain death awaited upon entering it.

“Once I’m certain that Han Jingru will be promoted to the Platinum rank, I’ll make one last contribution to Apocalypse. I don’t have much time left anyway. Instead of dying in Apocalypse, I might as well die in the second world,” Mr. Yi explained.

*Han Jingru? Promoted to the Platinum rank?*

Even amidst the heaviness in his heart, He Qingfeng still felt like laughing upon hearing Mr. Yi’s words.

For someone who had just entered Apocalypse to be promoted to the Platinum rank was something that was unheard of; it was absolutely ridiculous.



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“Mr. Yi, why do you value this young man so much?” He Qingfeng asked, utterly flummoxed. This question had been gnawing on his mind for quite some time. He did not have the chance to ask him before, but now that he did, he wanted to relieve himself of his curiosity. After all, Han Jingru was merely someone from the mundane world. Hence, he was unable to comprehend Mr. Yi’s reasons for having such high regard for him.

“The Four Gates needs someone who can take over my position. Lin Tong is capable, but it’s a shame that his personality isn’t suitable for my position. Han Jingru, on the other hand, meets all of my requirements,” Mr. Yi explained.

He Qingfeng shook his head in disagreement.

“Even though he meets your requirements personality-wise, in terms of abilities, he’s not even worth mentioning. In a place where ability is valued above anything else, how can he convince the rest of Apocalypse that he’s capable enough to lead?”

Apocalypse was a place where abilities spoke louder than words. The only way that one could



prove himself was through his abilities. He Qingfeng believed that Han Jingru would fail to meet these criteria. Perhaps he could succeed if he were given a decade, but it was absolutely impossible at this point in time.

### *Abilities?*

This was the prejudice that the entire Apocalypse had against Han Jingru. Because everyone here had always looked down on fighters from the mundane world, they were convinced that no matter how skilled a fighter from the mundane world was, after coming to Apocalypse, he would need time to become a true fighter.

In spite of that, Han Jingru was different. Although his time in Apocalypse was short, it wasn't because he was a weak fighter. Rather, it was because Apocalypse had failed to notice him all this time.

“What if I were to tell you that Han Jingru might very well be the only one who can save Apocalypse?” Mr. Yi challenged.

*Save Apocalypse?*

*Just Han Jingru alone?*

The corners of He Qingfeng's mouth unwittingly rose into a sneer.

This was no longer a joke, but an outrageous conjecture.

It took thousands of Platinum rank fighters to stop the attack from the second world back then, but now, Mr. Yi was saying that Han Jingru would be able to do it alone? It was all but a ludicrous joke.

“I, too, hope that a person like that exists, Mr. Yi. But if you tell me that Han Jingru is that person, I'm afraid that this is where I'll have to disagree with you.” He Qingfeng shook his head.

Mr. Yi smiled faintly. He did not try to justify his statement because this was only a hunch on his part. Even so, he certainly trusted his instincts.

From the moment he saw Han Jingru, he could

feel that the young man was beyond extraordinary. In fact, his thought process was instantly directed to the second world. Perhaps, this was an unexplainable twist of fate, but he firmly believed in it.

“He Qingfeng, I hope that you can support Han Jingru to fortify his position as the head of the Four Gates after I enter the second world. From now on, he will definitely play a key role in the fight against the second world.” Even though he did not utter it out loud, it was clear that he was warning He Qingfeng against making trouble for Han Jingru. Because if he intervened in the Four Gates’ internal affairs, it would only serve to make things more difficult for Han Jingru.

“Mr. Yi, you may be willing to place your hopes in him, but I’m not. Rest assured though, I won’t interfere with matters regarding the Four Gates.” He Qingfeng could not bring himself to place all of his hope in a youngster, because this was no different from sitting idly and waiting for things to spiral out of control.

“Perhaps you might be surprised if you keep an

open mind,” Mr. Yi suggested.

“You don’t need to persuade me anymore. As the head of the Three Halls, how can I place my hopes in him? If news of this were to spread, wouldn’t I become a laughing stock to everyone?” He Qingfeng turned him down firmly.

Mr. Yi shook his head helplessly. Since He Qingfeng was unwilling to listen, there was nothing else that he could say. Nonetheless, his beliefs remained unshakeable.

After leaving the Restricted Area, Mr. Yi had just arrived at the Four Gates when his assistant suddenly rushed over to him.

“Mr. Yi, what’s the current situation?” the assistant inquired.

“Things aren’t looking optimistic right now.” Mr. Yi smiled slightly. The energy fluctuations coming from the second world were abnormal, which likely indicated that the creatures from there would return. This was tragic news for

everyone.

“If that’s the case, why are you still smiling?” His assistant wore a speechless look on his face.

“Should I be crying then? Tears are useless anyway.” Mr. Yi sighed in defeat. His emotions were all over the place now. Instead of facing this matter with dampened spirits, he would much rather relax. What was meant to come would come eventually and no one would be able to hide from it. It was all the same whether one smiled or cried, so why not choose to be happy instead?

“Is there no way to solve it?” his assistant questioned. He knew that the consequences would be serious if word about this got out because billions of people’s lives were at stake here.

“There is,” Mr. Yi answered without hesitation.

His assistant’s face instantly brightened. *No wonder Mr. Yi is so happy. He’s already found a solution to this.*

“Mr. Yi, why didn’t you tell me that you had a solution to this? Do you know how worried I was?” his assistant exclaimed.

“It’s not that I didn’t want to tell you; rather, I was afraid that you wouldn’t believe me,” Mr. Yi replied.

“You’d have to tell me first to find out. Who knows? Maybe I’ll believe you.” his assistant chuckled.

“Han Jingru is the Messiah. He is the only one who can resolve this. Do you believe me?” Mr. Yi asked.

The assistant’s expression instantly fell. “Mr. Yi, how can you still joke at a time like this? Has Han Jingru put a spell on you? How can you actually regard him as the Messiah? It’s pure nonsense!”

“See? You wanted me to tell you, and now that I have, you don’t believe me. What would you have me do then?” Mr. Yi exclaimed.

“It’s not that I don’t believe you, but who would? You shouldn’t go too far with your jokes, Mr. Yi.” His assistant sighed aloud, wishing that he could open up Mr. Yi’s brain. He wanted to see just what it was that resided in there because the degree to which he valued Han Jingru was incomprehensible.

His decision to hand over the Four Gates to Han Jingru was appalling enough as it was, but now, he claimed that Han Jingru was the Messiah. It wasn’t funny at all.

“How long have you known me?” Mr. Yi suddenly asked his assistant.

Without hesitation, his assistant answered, “Forty-three years. I’ve remained by your side ever since I’d first joined Apocalypse. I kept count of it.”

“In these forty-three years, when have I ever joked about such matters with you?” Mr. Yi’s gaze abruptly turned intense.

His assistant froze for a moment. *Mr. Yi? Telling jokes?*

In these forty-three years, Mr. Yi had indeed never made any jokes. He treated everything with a serious attitude and he was also known for this particular characteristic.

“Never.” The assistant furrowed his brows.

“Since you know that, do you think that I’d really make a joke out of something so important?” Mr. Yi leveled a steady gaze at his assistant as he spoke in a flat voice.

His assistant inhaled deeply as disbelief was evident in his eyes.

“Mr... Mr. Yi, is what you’re saying true? Is Han Jingru really the Messiah?” the assistant asked in a trembling voice.



After a long silence, Mr. Yi's gaze became increasingly determined. He believed that Han Jingru was the only one who could solve the current predicament that they were in. He was the sole person who could save their entire world.

“Yes,” Mr. Yi's tone was calm, but filled with unyielding resolution.

His assistant drew in another deep breath, left with no choice but to change his own views about Han Jingru.

Even though he still felt that Han Jingru wasn't someone worth mentioning, if Mr. Yi displayed such unwavering belief in him, it meant that he was trustworthy and should at least be given the benefit of the doubt.

“The second round of the Qualifying Tournament is about to begin. Do you want to watch it, Mr. Yi?” the assistant asked.

Mr. Yi shook his head and replied, “There's nothing much to see. I'm a hundred percent sure that he'll be promoted.”

At the Silver domain, ever since Han Jingru had lost his consciousness the other night, he found that his body had undergone a very large transformation. That power was no longer limited to his right hand, as his whole body was now pulsing with it.

He had also discovered that whenever he tensed his muscles and took on a fighting stance, the strength in his body would be greatly amplified, thereby enhancing his ability to resist the force of an attack.

To further validate this speculation of his, he had asked Jiang Yingying to attack him. She had channeled all of her strength into that blow, but not only did Han Jingru feel nothing, rather the impact of it had also rebounded and dislocated Jiang Yingying's wrist. This discovery shocked Han Jingru as it left him very puzzled.

On the night before the Qualifying Tournament, Han Jingru sat against the head of his bed as he stared blankly at the red string from which two skulls should have been hanging.

*The skulls had simply disappeared into thin air. Fang Zhan and Jiang Yingying didn't take them away, and it's impossible for someone else to have made their way to my room for no reason. The skulls couldn't have grown wings and flown off, right?*

“Where did you disappear off to? Why can't I find you?” Han Jingru's brows scrunched together as he mumbled to himself. He had racked his brains for an answer, but he could not come up with a logical explanation for the events that had occurred.

Even if someone really broke into his room before Jiang Yingying had arrived, Jiang Yingying was the one who had taken off his clothes. He had also been lying on the ground at that time. It was impossible for anyone to have found out about the skulls.

He could clearly remember that the headache he experienced that night was the strongest episode that he had yet, up to this moment. It felt as though something had been forcing itself into his mind.

He abruptly snapped his head up.

*It felt like something was forcing itself into my mind!*

*Could it be...*

Han Jingru scrambled off the bed with a look of horror sprawled across his face. Soon, he came to stand in front of a mirror, wanting to see if there was anything strange about his head.

*Don't tell me... Were the skulls not taken by someone? Had they actually integrated themselves into my mind?*

Han Jingru's heart almost stopped in his chest. Even though this explanation seemed rather ridiculous, it wasn't impossible because ever since that night, his strength had increased exponentially and his body had also undergone tremendous changes. These changes would not have happened for no reason.

Furthermore, the most plausible reason for all of the changes was that the skulls had merged with

him.

“What on earth are you? Why did you merge with my body?” Han Jingru questioned through a clenched jaw. Although he was indeed much stronger now, he could not predict the side effects that would be brought about by the fusion of the skulls with his body. Hence, worry crept into his heart.

Han Jingru tossed and turned all night, unable to fall asleep. It wasn't until Jiang Yingying knocked on his door the next morning did he realize with a start that he hadn't gotten a wink of sleep. In spite of that, he was still very energetic as he did not appear to have a single exhausted bone in his body.

“Jingru, today is the second round of the Qualifying Tournament. We have to be there early,” Jiang Yingying urged him when he opened the door.

“Let's go then. It's time to leave this place,” replied Han Jingru.

At the location of the Qualifying Tournament, almost all the Silver rank fighters were present. Those who were participating had begun warming up, while those who weren't were waiting in anticipation.

As soon as Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying made their arrival, everyone's gazes shifted toward them.

Han Jingru's name was well-known amongst everyone in Apocalypse, but not many people had seen him in person. Catching sight of young he was, they could not help but exclaim.

Previously, many of them had made fun of Han Jingru for participating in the Qualifying Tournament, but after the Bronze rank challenge, the extent of his skills had become widely known. Hence, quite a number of them began to view him in a different light. There were even some who were looking forward to his performance in the Silver rank Qualifying Tournament.

“So, this is Han Jingru. He's so young. I can't

believe that he's already a Silver rank fighter even though he's only just joined Apocalypse.”

“It's not just him. Rather, even the lady beside him had been easily promoted to the Silver rank. It seems like the rumor that Mr. Yi had been bribed by their families, taking him in as his disciple is just a load of bullshit.”

“It's impossible to become Mr. Yi's disciple with mere money and no skills. Can you believe that people actually said that?”

“I wonder how he'll perform today. Let's wait and see. If he can pass this challenge, that would mean that he's truly an incredible fighter.”

Although the place was filled with the crowd's excited chatter, the noise was still acceptable. All of a sudden, the scene grew chaotic as though everyone had gone mad.

“It's He Xiaoxiao!”

“He Xiaoxiao is here to watch the tournament!”

“Really? Where? Where? Is He Xiaoxiao really here?”

A mere name was enough to send the entire crowd of hundreds into a frenzy. Everyone stood on their toes and craned their necks as they began to scan their surroundings.

Han Jingru had a mystified expression on his face. *Who is this He Xiaoxiao and why is she garnering so much attention? Everyone here seems to know her.*

“He Xiaoxiao is my goddess. Ever since I saw her previously, I’ve been thinking about her day and night. I didn’t expect that I’d be lucky enough to see her today.”

“Goddess! Goddess! I love you!”

The current scenario was exactly like a fan meeting. Everyone seemed to be wearing infatuated looks on their faces, making Han Jingru increasingly curious about He Xiaoxiao.

“Fang Zhan, who is He Xiaoxiao?” Han Jingru



queried.

Fang Zhan shook his head helplessly. Apocalypse today was indeed filled with a bunch of morons. It was absurd that they would react so fanatically just because of a woman. Their purpose here wasn't to pick girls up; rather, it was to improve their skills.

“If my memory serves me right, she is probably the daughter of He Qingfeng, the leader of Three Halls,” Fang Zhan replied.

*The daughter of the head of the Three Halls!*

*No wonder she has such a huge influence. She's nothing short of a celebrity in Apocalypse. Even if she's ugly, she'll probably still be highly sought after. After all, becoming He Qingfeng's son-in-law would unequivocally signify a getting status upgrade in Apocalypse.*

At that moment, He Xiaoxiao finally emerged from the crowd. When Han Jingru saw her, his jaw almost collided with the ground.

*Isn't this woman the one I'd encountered the other night? I never thought that she'd be He Qingfeng's daughter.* This fact shocked Han Jingru.

*Come to think of it, why would a woman of such status in Apocalypse seek me for no reason? Could I already have an admirer here?*

Han Jingru felt a headache approaching. For other men, having her as an admirer would probably be a good thing. Those men would be incapable of refusing a beautiful woman such as her, but it was the complete opposite for Han Jingru. He did not fancy women like her and had even turned Qi Bingying down more times than he could count.

When He Xiaoxiao spotted Han Jingru, the faint smile on her face turned extremely cold. For some reason, the sight of him induced heartfelt hatred in her. Perhaps it was because she had never been disregarded by a man before which made her unable to accept it when Han Jingru had treated her so coldly the other time.

She approached Han Jingru with a glacial expression. “I didn’t expect you to have some tricks up your sleeves, but the Silver rank is still trash in my eyes.”

Han Jingru could feel a strong sense of animosity coming from her. *Don’t tell me that this woman’s unrequited love has turned into hate? Things would get really ugly if that was really the case.*

*Offending a woman, especially a petty one, would bring about colossal consequences.*

“I never expected you to be the daughter of the head of the Three Halls. You’ve really surprised me,” Han Jingru threw in a casual comment.

There was a hint of arrogance in He Xiaoxiao’s eyes that was brought about by her status in Apocalypse.

“Scared?” He Xiaoxiao challenged.

“Hmm?” Han Jingru asked with a bewildered expression, “Why would I be scared?”

He Xiaoxiao seethed slightly. *Is this guy pretending to be stupid or does he really not know? Isn't he scared that he'd get into trouble for offending me?*

“Han Jingru, things won't end well for you if you offend me. I only need to say the word and everyone here would trip over themselves trying to end you,” He Xiaoxiao warned icily.

The atmosphere had already changed by now because the fact that Han Jingru was having a conversation with He Xiaoxiao made many people envious and displeased. Furthermore, Han Jingru seemed to have provoked He Xiaoxiao, upsetting her in the process. This immediately incited everyone's wrath.

*How dare he offend my goddess? Does this guy have a death wish?*

Seeing the ferocious expressions of the people around him, Han Jingru did not think that He Xiaoxiao was joking. Those crazy fans of her were definitely capable of doing as such.

“I believe you, but my time with them will soon be over. Even if they want to end me, they won’t have the chance to do it.” Han Jingru smiled thinly.

He Xiaoxiao gnashed her teeth together when she sensed the confidence that was oozing from Han Jingru. Instead of being promoted, what she hoped the most was for him to die in the Qualifying Tournament. However, he appeared rather confident, as though he was a hundred percent certain that he would be promoted.

“You can’t be promoted to the Gold rank just by winning against a Silver rank opponent. There is still the Gold rank Power Test. Do you really think that you’ll be able to pass it?” He Xiaoxiao had an icy expression on her face and there was even disdain, gleaming in her eyes. The Silver rank was a threshold that kept many people stuck as Gold rank fighters, which was why the Silver rank had the largest number of fighters. This showed how difficult the test was, and for someone who had only been in Apocalypse for half a month, the chances of passing it were slim to none.

More importantly, He Xiaoxiao had already instructed Lin Tong to specifically arrange for an appraiser to ensure that Han Jingru would not pass the test.

“He Xiaoxiao, if you weren’t He Qingfeng’s daughter, what rank would you have been by now?” Han Jingru feigned curiosity.

His question hit a nerve in her. If she weren’t He Qingfeng’s daughter, based on her own abilities, she would likely be a Bronze rank fighter at best.

She had a unique advantage and was even personally trained by He Qingfeng himself. However, she was spoiled and never wanted to endure hardship. Thus, her skills had remained rather stagnant.

Nonetheless, her status in Apocalypse was high enough for her. What did it matter if she wasn’t a skilled fighter? She was the daughter of He Qingfeng, which gave her the right to scorn everyone else.

“No matter what my ranking is, my status isn’t

something that you can ever surpass. It was given to me by my father. It's a shame that you don't have a powerful father as I do." He Xiaoxiao curled her lips upward in contempt.

Han Jingru never imagined that He Xiaoxiao would be proud of it instead of feeling ashamed. It was clearly impossible to reason with such a woman.

"Indeed, you were born lucky, but your luck is your father's misfortune." Han Jingru shook his head with pity lining his features.

"Han Jingru! What did you say?" He Xiaoxiao's anger skyrocketed as she yelled at Han Jingru.

"I'm sure that you heard me loud and clear. Isn't it sad to have a daughter like you?" Han Jingru refused to shy away from her murderous eyes.

Blinded by rage, He Xiaoxiao raised her fist to teach him a lesson but was stopped by Lin Tong who was beside her.

Attacking him with such a large crowd bearing

witness would only serve to make her look bad. Furthermore, if such news were to spread to the Four Gates, many people would hold a grudge against her.

“Xiaoxiao, why bother getting mad at a piece of trash like him? He’ll be gone from your sight very soon,” Lin Tong uttered to her. He Xiaoxiao was the only one who understood what his second sentence had meant. Lin Tong had ordered the appraiser to kill Han Jingru under the guise of an accident. Once Han Jingru was dead, naturally, he would never appear in front of He Xiaoxiao again.

He Xiaoxiao took a deep breath to suppress her anger.

Han Jingru glanced at Lin Tong. He had long since heard about him, but this was the first time that he was seeing him in the flesh.

“Lin Tong the Chosen One?” Han Jingru asked, even though he knew the answer to it.

Lin Tong subconsciously squared his shoulders



and glanced down his nose at Han Jingru as he replied, "That's me."

"A piece of trash like me had actually shown up on the Chosen One's radar? You did get people to kill me several times. You're not afraid of me, are you?" Han Jingru's mouth curved up into a grin. *Chosen One my ass. If he really is that powerful, why did he get others to kill me? From his actions, it's clear that he feels threatened by me.*

Lin Tong's expression darkened and he unconsciously glanced at Fang Zhan from the corner of his eyes. He knew that there was no denying the things that he had done, but he would never admit that he had gotten others to deal with Han Jingru out of fear.

"I just didn't want Apocalypse to be tainted by your filth. Why would I be afraid of you?" Lin Tong coldly retorted.

"The only way to prove who's the real trash is through a battle. Are you up for it?" Han Jingru raised his brows in question.

Han Jingru's provocation forced Lin Tong to clench his fists by his sides. As the Chosen One, how could he cower from a challenge?

Although Han Jingru had some skills, Lin Tong had deemed them far from his level. There was no way that Han Jingru could close the gap between their abilities within half a month of being in Apocalypse.

“Han Jingru, you're smart, I'll give you that. With your current status, are you qualified to fight against Lin Tong? Even if you lose, others would merely brush it off and say that it was expected. Putting aside the fact that you wouldn't suffer any losses, you could even brag that you had fought with Lin Tong before, and in turn, you would build your own reputation,” He Xiaoxiao ridiculed Han Jingru.

“I like your creative thought process.” Han Jingru shook his head, unable to fathom how she could come to such a conclusion.

“Han Jingru, if you want to fight me, sure. I can make it happen. After you're promoted to the

Gold rank, I'll be waiting for you. So, don't let me down." Lin Tong eventually loosened his fists after hearing what He Xiaoxiao uttered.

With Han Jingru's current ranking, he was indeed unqualified to become his opponent. Lin Tong refused to be goaded into a fight and to be used by him to build a reputation for himself.

"Very soon now. In fact, you only have to wait for a day," Han Jingru replied.

"Be a good dog and get lost. I don't want to waste my time on someone like you," He Xiaoxiao interjected.

Han Jingru stepped aside and made way before he murmured to Jiang Yingying, "Let the dogs pass. Don't let them bite you."

Jiang Yingying's face twitched slightly as she was evidently trying to conceal her smile.

Meanwhile, He Xiaoxiao and Lin Tong were purple with rage, wanting so badly to witness Han Jingru's approaching demise.

Upon arriving at her designated seat amongst the audience, He Xiaoxiao angrily plopped herself down and asked Lin Tong, “Have you made all of the arrangements? I want Han Jingru to die here today. If anything goes wrong, you can forget about joining Three Halls.”

Lin Tong’s mouth arched into a flinty smile. “Don’t worry. Would I mess up something of such importance? Besides, you’re not the only one who wants him dead.”

“That idiot will be the death of me! How dare he call me a dog? After he dies, I’ll whip his corpse beyond recognition!” He Xiaoxiao spat through gritted teeth. As if this wasn’t enough to vent her anger, she continued saying, “And I won’t spare his family in the mundane world either. This is the painful price that you’ll have to pay for offending me.”

“Stop getting so worked up and lower down your voice. You’ll be in trouble if someone hears you. Do you really want him to persist in causing you trouble even in death?” Lin Tong warned her in a barely audible voice.

Even though He Xiaoxiao had a nasty temper, she knew the gravity of this matter. Apocalypse had forbidden its members from killing each other. If someone were to find out about their ploy, it would prompt the Four Gates into carrying out an investigation. Once that happened, even her father would be implicated.

After taking in a deep breath, He Xiaoxiao returned to being the elegant daughter of the head of the Three Halls, plastering a sweet smile on her face that was especially alluring, bewitching those who were around her.

Lin Tong admired He Xiaoxiao's ability to switch expressions so quickly. She could control her emotions and she was aware of how she should act in front of others.

He had to admit that although she was captivating, her scheming ways proved to be fatal to a man.

After the Qualifying Tournament began, the first few rounds appeared to be slightly boring. Despite it being a showdown between fighters,

most of the spectators had come to watch Han Jingru. After all, he had already turned Apocalypse upside down before even setting foot inside. Everyone had varying opinions about his participation in all of the Qualifying Tournaments, but right now, the same thought was running through everyone's minds. All of them wanted to witness just how capable Han Jingru was.

At long last, it was his turn to fight. The listless spectators instantly livened up. Even He Xiaoxiao and Lin Tong unconsciously straightened in their seats.

“Did you arrange for this opponent the battle against him too?” He Xiaoxiao curiously asked upon noticing that Han Jingru's opponent looked as strong as a bull. He was evidently stronger than the ones before him.

“He's the best amongst the Silver rank fighters this time. In addition to that, he is also the one who is most likely to be promoted to a Gold rank,” Lin Tong explained.

“Han Jingru won’t lose to him, will he? Otherwise, your arrangements will all go to waste,” He Xiaoxiao muttered with a mocking smile.

Although Lin Tong did not want to acknowledge Han Jingru’s skills, he had seen him squaring off against Fang Zhan. His current opponent was indeed a skilled Silver rank fighter, but using him to stop Han Jingru would give them a success rate that was close to none.

“No, I just want to use this fighter to deplete Han Jingru’s strength,” Lin Tong answered.

“It’s the Gold rank Power Test that we’re talking about. Do you really need to deplete his strength?” He Xiaoxiao scoffed. In her opinion, even if Han Jingru was at his peak, it was impossible for him to win against a Gold rank fighter. This arrangement of Lin Tong’s was completely unnecessary.

“I did this to ensure that nothing would go wrong,” Lin Tong explained. Having witnessed the fight between Han Jingru and Fang Zhan, he

did not want his own negligence to doom his plans.

In the arena, Han Jingru's opponent was already prepared to launch an attack. The clamorous shouts from below grew louder by the second.

“Han Jingru, you're a popular guy. And today, you will become my stepping stone toward fame.” His opponent flashed a grin at Han Jingru, seemingly confident that victory was already his.

“I can understand why you would think as such. After all, I'm indeed popular in Apocalypse. In spite of that, using me as your stepping stone won't be that easy,” Han Jingru threw forth nonchalantly. This opponent did not excite him at all, because he had already exceeded the level of a Silver rank fighter, thus the reason for his complete disregard toward his opponent.

“You'd better grab the chance to say a few more words. After this match is over, I'm afraid that you'll lose the ability to speak forever,” the man threatened.



“It seems like you were bought off by Lin Tong. The Chosen One really is afraid of me.” Han Jingru chuckled.

Just then, the referee gave out an order, signifying the beginning of the match.

The man immediately chose to use brute force. Evidently, he had no plans of going easy on Han Jingru as he seemed to have wanted to end the match in the shortest time that was possible.

On the contrary, Han Jingru stood in place with his hands behind his back, seemingly having no intention to fight back, let alone avoiding his opponent's attack.

“What is this guy trying to pull? Is he going to just stand there and allow himself to be killed?”

“F\*\*k. And to think that I had high hopes for him. I didn't expect him to remain still, unwilling to fight back. How did this piece of trash end up as Mr. Yi's disciple?”

While the crowd was puzzled by this scene, Jiang

Yingying cracked a faint smile on the sidelines. She was the only one who knew what Han Jingru was up to.

Her strongest blow had caused her own wrist to be dislocated. Hence, it was impossible for this guy to even harm Han Jingru.



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