

Huang Xiaoyong knew exactly what kind of a person Chen Tiexin was. After all, they grew up together in Longyun City. Chen Tiexin was an entitled kid all along. He was insolent because he had his family at his back. He never needed to be nice to anyone. Rather, it was always people around him who had to cater to him.

This was why Huang Xiaoyong found it hard to believe when Chen Tiexin actually admitted that he just bootlicked Han Jingru. It was as if he had become a different person altogether!

Currying favor with other people was something Huang Xiaoyong had done his whole life. He grew up in the governor's residence and they had to kowtow to the Three Major Families all the time. But still, he cocked his head and let off a hearty laugh when Chen Tiexin did exactly the same to win Han Jingru's favor.

“I have to flatter others because over at the governor's residence, we're under the heel of the Three Major Families. But you're different. You're the eldest son of the Chen family! You never had to grovel to anyone!” Huang Xiaoyong

exclaimed,

Chen Tiexin chuckled uneasily as he listened. He knew Huang Xiaoyong was teasing him about how cocky he used to be.

But things were different now. Han Jingru was a skilled fighter and Chen Tiexin did not mind fawning on him just so he could be his disciple.

Chen Tiexin raised his eyebrows slightly and shrugged in indifference. “Well, what can I do? People change. If you can put up with it for years, why can’t I?”

Opposite him, Huang Xiaoyong nodded in agreement. “Desperate times call for desperate measures. I’m glad you finally understood this. But I bet you never saw this coming when you chased my Master out of the Chen residence.”

Chen Tiexin smiled wryly as he recalled that incident. What he did turn out to be his biggest regret. If he had not kicked Han Jingru out, he would not have been caught in a thorny situation like this today.

If he could undo the past, he would never behave imperiously towards Han Jingru—nor would he throw him out of the Chen residence.

“I have to admit it’s my fault. Things would be different if I weren’t being foolish back then. I guess I can only make up for my mistakes.” Chen Tiexin replied as he lowered his head.

Huang Xiaoyong adjusted his seat uncomfortably and took a quick look at Han Jingru, who seemed unmoved by Chen Tiexin’s apology. “You want to make amends? Do you think that means anything to my Master? He’s not interested in whatever your family has to offer. It means nothing to him.”

Chen Tiexin knew he should humble himself before Han Jingru. It was true that there was nothing the Chen family could offer that the latter could not get himself.

From how capable Han Jingru was, it was just a matter of time before he made it to the Imperial Court. By then, he would be able to have anything he wanted.

“Huang Xiaoyong, this has nothing to do with you.” Chen Tiexin replied. He was already having a hard time trying to please Han Jingru.

“Of course, this is none of my business. But I still have to say this.”

Chen Tiexin furrowed his brows in confusion, trying to understand what Huang Xiaoyong meant.

“My Master is not interested in talking to you, that’s why I’m asking you to leave on his behalf.” Huang Xiaoyong continued.

His cold and blatant rejection struck Chen Tiexin like a thunderbolt. But there was no way he was giving up just like that.

“Han Jingru, please give me a chance to make it up to you. I’ll do anything you ask me to. I’m even willing to hand over the whole Chen family to you as long as you take me in as your disciple.”

But the truth was, the Chen family meant nothing

to Han Jingru.

Before long, Han Jingru stood up and pointed towards the door. “It’s time for you to leave. I’m willing to bury the hatchet with the Chen family, but you should just give up on the idea of becoming my disciple.”

Beside him, Huang Xiaoyong stood up and smiled politely at Chen Tiexin. “It’s time my Master gets some rest. Please see yourself out or you’ll only have yourself to blame for what happens next.”

Before Chen Tiexin could further implore Han Jingru to take him in, a blinding flash swept across his view and the Manticore appeared beside Huang Xiaoyong.

Its deep and threatening growl reverberated in the room and the creature bared its teeth at the guests.

Chen Tiexin’s heart sunk. He knew all hope was gone. But it was not like he did not expect things to turn out like this. It was impossible that he and

his father could change Han Jingru's mind when even Chen Yanran had failed to do so.

Although Chen Tiexin knew this would be the outcome, he still found it hard to come to terms with the reality.

Throughout all these years, his only wish was to learn under a strong master. Now that he had finally met someone worthy of his respect, he was denied the chance.

What was more disheartening was that even someone like Huang Xiaoyong could have Han Jingru as his master—but not him.

Beside Chen Tiexin, his father finally spoke. He felt he had to give it a last try. "Han Jingru, can't you just give my son a chance?"

"I've already shown enough mercy by not destroying the whole Chen family." Han Jingru replied calmly. What he said was not an understatement considering what Chen Tiexin had done to him. Han Jingru had all the reasons to kill them, but he did not because that was

simply not how they did things back on earth. Life was precious to him and it was not his nature to butcher his enemies although he knew that was what any fighter in Xenos would readily do.

Chen Yuanhai let out a sigh of resignation as the last ray of hope he clung to vanished completely. He had no choice but to leave with Chen Tiexin.

After seeing the father and son out, Huang Xiaoyong returned to Han Jingru. “Master, the news about you has spread far and wide. I think it’s just a matter of time before the Imperial Court sends someone to Longyun City.” He said.

Han Jingru nodded in silence. Now that things had come so far, he knew he could not hide forever.

“Whatever comes, comes. We’ll take one thing at a time.” He replied.

Huang Xiaoyong lifted his gaze and scanned the garden. A flicker of anxiety fled across his eyes as he recalled the three corpses of the people from the Imperial Court buried in the garden. He

wondered if his Master was also worried about the Imperial Court finding out about it.

“Master, what if they ask about the three people?” Huang Xiaoyong asked in a whisper. This was a secret only the two of them shared. Huang Xiaoyong did not even dare breathe a word to Bailing Wan’er despite the deep-rooted enmity between her and the Imperial Court.

Han Jingru turned towards him and shot him a clueless look. “I thought the three of them already left Longyun City?”

Huang Xiaoyong was taken aback by his Master’s words. It took him a while to finally understand what his master meant. “Oh, yes! Of course. How can I not remember that? A lot of people saw them leave the city.” He replied.

“By the way, what brings you here today? Don’t tell me you’re here to talk about the Imperial Court.” Han Jingru asked.

“Well, my dad invited you over to the governor’s residence. He wanted to thank you in person. But

of course, that's if you feel like going. You don't have to feel obliged." Huang Xiaoyong said.

"Oh, I don't feel obliged to go, actually." Han Jingru replied brazenly.

Huang Xiaoyong blinked his eyes hard trying to process his Master's honesty. *Dang, I shouldn't have given him the option. He would've agreed if I said my dad insisted.*



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The Xie family patriarch paced about as he awaited admission into the Wang residence.

“Have you heard about what happened the last couple of days?” He asked the moment he saw the Wang family patriarch.

“You mean at Han Jingru’s house?” The latter asked in return.

The Xie family patriarch nodded hurriedly. The Chen family had been behaving suspiciously lately. Twice had they gone over to the humble abode. At first, the patriarch thought it was nothing he ought to be concerned about. But when he found out that Chen Yuanhai even went over himself, he felt something was fishy.

There must be something going on—else Chen Yuanhai would not pay a visit himself.

What was more perplexing was that the father, the son, and the daughter all left the place looking dejected.

So the Xie family patriarch did some background

check but the findings of his investigation left him baffled.

The person staying there was Han Jingru—the useless guy who was chased out of the Chen family earlier on. If he were a nobody, why would Chen Yuanhai go to meet him himself?

“I really don’t understand why people from the Chen family keep going over!” He cried out in frustration.

Likewise, the Wang family patriarch had been keeping tabs on what was going on. But neither could he get his head around what was really happening at the house. It was not until Huang Xiaoyong arrived at that place did he finally understand everything.

“The Chen family made a huge mistake. They’re trying all they can to make amends. But obviously, things didn’t turn out as they wanted.” He explained.

The Xie family patriarch got even more confused. “Huh? What did they do? I don’t understand.”

“Mr. Xie, don’t you know that Huang Xiaoyong also went to the house?”

The patriarch nodded. He had asked his people to keep a sharp eye out, and he had gotten reports about that.

But to the Xie family patriarch, Huang Xiaoyong’s presence was simply to bring the Chen family down a peg or two. That man went over just to show off and gloat over the family.

“I bet Huang Xiaoyong was there to make Chen Tiexin look bad. After all, the latter never once respected him. But the tides have turned now that Huang Xiaoyong is a Fifth Stage fighter.”

“No, that’s just partially true.” The other patriarch interrupted.

“Come on, Mr. Wang, just say whatever you want to say. I don’t like this suspense.”

The Wang family patriarch smiled and shook his head disapprovingly. “Everything is so simple. You need to think harder. Don’t you know that

Huang Xiaoyong has a Master?”

The Xie family patriarch had obviously heard about it. Ever since words spread in Xiaoling City, not a single person in Longyun City did not know about what happened. But still, he did not see any link between these two things.

He tilted his head trying to figure it out but still, he got nothing. Seeing him struggling, the Wang family patriarch finally told him everything in plain terms. “Has it never occurred to you that Han Jingru is actually Huang Xiaoyong’s Master?”

“What? Han Jingru is his Master?” That dropped like a bomb. *Han Jingru is just a piece of trash, how can he be Huang Xiaoyong’s Master?*

This is ridiculous!

Everyone in Longyun City knows how useless he is. Many mocked him when he was chased out of the Chen residence. Everyone treats him as a joke. How is he possibly a fighter?

“I don’t believe it. How is he Huang Xiaoyong’s Master?”

The Wang family patriarch tittered and rolled his eyes. “What do you think it takes to be a fighter? I think Han Jingru totally has what it takes to be one. Imagine the humiliation he had gotten when he was thrown out. But this man looks back at his suffering as if it’s nothing. To him, the Chen family is not even an enemy worthy of his attention. This is the kind of man who knows what is really important. After all, why does a mighty lion need to waste its energy on a harmless ant?”

The Xie family patriarch nodded faintly as everything finally made sense. His lips quivered in fear as he struggled to bring up another matter of grave importance.

“Wait... Does this mean Han Jingru killed the Fourth Stage fighter last time?” It suddenly dawned upon the frightened patriarch that that was the only reason why he had since lost all contact with the fighter after Han Jingru brought him away.

He could finally connect all the dots now.

Since Han Jingru was such a seasoned warrior, it was totally possible that the Fourth Stage fighter died in his hands.

The Wang family patriarch nodded solemnly and pursed his lips. That was also how he figured out who Han Jingru was. It was by pure luck that they left the Chen residence just in time—else they could have died that day.

“Mr. Wang, what should we do now?”

“Don’t worry, Mr. Xie. The Chen family is bearing the brunt of Han Jingru’s wrath. Besides, we’ve never offended him in any way. But we do have to realize that we can no longer stand in the way of the governor.” Huang Houyi used to be their puppet who had to say yes to all the Three Major Families’ demands—but things had changed.

“What about Han Jingru? Should we do something to get on his good side? After all, he’s able to tame a seven-star familiar. Judging from

his ability, I think he is at least in one of the last three Stages.” The Xie family patriarch inquired worriedly.

“No, we shouldn’t do that. All these petty tricks won’t work on someone as competent as him. What we need to do is always be on our guard and make sure we never cross him.”

But the Xie family patriarch begged to differ. He had got a plan of his own on and was ready to instigate it there and then. He stood up and reached for the door.

“I’ll make a move first then. See you, Mr. Wang.”

Right after he left, the Wang family patriarch quickly summoned his servants and gave explicit orders. “Prepare some expensive gifts, including some of the precious treasures I keep in my study!”

Likewise, over at the Xie family, everyone was busy putting their gifts together before making for Han Jingru’s house.

Although the important families knew a capable man like Han Jingru would probably not even cast his eyes on their gifts, they still had to at least try getting on good terms with him.

Last time, anyone who was able to make it to the Fourth Stage could declare themselves lord and rule over Longyun City. And Han Jingru was someone who made it to the ultimate three Stages. This was nothing like what the two families had seen before. It went without saying that they should grab hold of this opportunity to flatter Han Jingru.

Over at Han Jingru's house, everything was relatively calm and uneventful. He was not the very least concerned about the Imperial Court coming after him because of the three people he killed. After all, they had no proof. Besides, judging from how things were, he was pretty sure they would not pick a fight out for anything. It was more likely that they would be here to summon him over.

But Bailing Wan'er remained his biggest concern. The Imperial Court would be furious if they

found out who she was since her real identity was taboo. Thinking of it, Han Jingru cleared his throat and turned towards her as he phrased his words carefully.

“Wan’er, the Imperial Court will send someone to Longyun City soon. If you’re not ready to meet those people, I can arrange for you to stay elsewhere for the moment.”



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Bailing Wan'er seemed surprisingly composed when she lifted her head and locked her gaze on him. No one could imagine how much she hated and despised the Imperial Court. But she was aware that she should not let vengeance overtake her before she had the ability to take revenge. She should lie low so the Imperial Court did not see her as a threat and would not take their guard up against her.

"Don't worry. I know what I can and can't do. I have no right to talk about revenge if I can't even control my emotions." Bailing Wan'er replied calmly.

It turned out that Han Jingru worried for nothing. He could not detect the slightest hint of resentment in her gaze. Her eyes were cold and her tone was indifferent.

Han Jingru was relieved she was able to look at the situation realistically. It was still not the time for revenge and she had to get her act together before she was ready to do what she was supposed to.

Outside the house, a clamor of voices broke the silence as two groups of people from different directions met at the entrance.

It so happened that people from the Wang and Xie family ran into each other, each bringing elaborate gifts for Han Jingru.

"What a surprise to meet you here, Mr. Wang. I thought someone told me we shouldn't be too eager to get on his good side?" The Xie family patriarch teased.

Likewise, the Wang family patriarch was not expecting to see him here either.

"It seems like this is the end of our friendship, Mr. Xie." He replied.

The former let off a haughty scoff and ignored him. Instead, he asked the servants to knock on the door.

But the Wang family patriarch was not letting it slide. He went over and knocked on the door himself to show his sincerity.

“Ha, do you think I’ll lose to you?” The Xie family patriarch said, racing himself to the door.

Both of them knocked on the door furiously, trying to outdo each other.

On the inside, Bailing Wan’er sighed as she heard the commotion outside. “I guess I was wrong—your house is not as quiet after all.”

Han Jingru shrugged and shot her a smile. It was true that this used to be a quiet place. But since everyone knew who he was now, it was impossible that people would leave him alone.

“If you don’t like it, make them leave then.” He said nastily as Bailing Wan’er slowly made for the door.

“What’s wrong with y’all? Are you trying to break the door?” She shouted, staring the two patriarchs down after opening the door.

The two quickly bowed and apologized profusely although it was not Han Jingru who came to get the door himself.

“I’m so sorry I got ahead of myself. I can get the door fixed. I can even get you a new one!” One of them replied enthusiastically.

“I’ll get you a gold-coated door!” Another cried out passionately.

Bailing Wan'er opened her mouth in disbelief as she listened to their bizarre suggestions. *Gold door? How heavy will that be? I'm not interested!*

"What do y'all want?" She asked curtly.

"We are here to see Han Jingru!" They replied in unison.

"He's not available!" The testy lady snapped and slammed the door behind her.

Before they could even reach for the door again, Bailing Wan'er opened the door and shouted, "Knock on my door again and you'll be dead!"

Bang!

The door slammed against the door frame like an ear-shattering thunder.

The two patriarchs eyed each other awkwardly and then turned to look at all the gifts they brought in disappointment. It was really an unlucky day for them. Not only was the relationship between the two families on rocky ground, but their gifts also went to the drain.

"Mr. Xie, it seems like it's no easy task trying to get close to this man."

"Mr. Wang, we're not friends anymore. We should each go our way."

The two glared at one another before the Xie family patriarch made a move and ordered his servants to head home.

Behind him, the Wang family patriarch shook his head grimly. "Ha... It seems like Longyun City won't be the same anymore, and neither will the Wang family." True

enough, he thought this would be a good chance for the family to consolidate their influence by controlling the governor—but it turned out that the only way the family could survive was to mind its own business from now on.

The patriarch saw it as a timely opportunity to gain dominance over the Chen and the Xie family, but from how things looked, further strife between the Xie and Wang family would only make things worse.

As for the Chen family, it would be wise to stay away from them since Han Jingru did not even lift a finger against them.

“Who is it?” Han Jingru inquired when he saw Bailing Wan’er coming back stomping her feet.

“Those two old men had better not come again!” She shouted.

“Old men?” Han Jingru repeated her words and sunk into thoughts. *Hm... It’s probably the heads of the Wang and Xie family. It seems like they’ve found out who I am. I don’t think I should stay in Longyun City any longer. Besides, there’s no news about Jiang Yingying over here either.*

“Do you want to go to other cities?” He asked Bailing Wan

’er.

“I don’t think it’s a good time to leave though. The Imperial Court will definitely get suspicious and think you’re up to something.”

Han Jingru nodded slowly as he chewed on what she said. “True that. Then we’ll leave after the people from the Imperial Court come.”

Three days later, the second group of people from the Imperial Court arrived at Longyun City. Like the last time, there were three of them, just that they were stronger than the last group of men.

Two of them were in the Eighth Stage, and the other was as good as a Ninth Stage fighter. These three were the creme de la creme in the Imperial Court. It would take a Ninth Stage fighter and a Pinnacle Master to counter these three.

But a pro like a Pinnacle Master would usually be in the Imperial Court instead of roaming the mundane world. As for Ninth Stage fighters, they would not even bother spending time in the mundane world.

When Huang Xiaoyong found out about the three men from the Imperial Court, he rushed over to Han Jingru and told him everything. After all, the disciple had never seen such a powerful combination of fighters and he was afraid. He was fully aware that retribution awaited whoever dared go against the Imperial Court.

“What’s wrong with you? Are you scared?” Han Jingru asked when he saw Huang Xiaoyong running frantically over.

“Master, you have no idea how I felt when I saw the three fighters. I felt they could even kill me with just one glance. I’ve never seen anyone so scary in my entire life.” Huang Xiaoyong replied timidly.

Han Jingru smiled upon hearing his answer. *You’ve never seen anyone so scary? Wait till you see me unleashing my full potential.*

The Imperial Court was never a threat to him. Even the Emperor meant nothing to him. But Han Jingru would still avoid a direct conflict with the Imperial Court because he thought that would be too much of a hassle. Unless the situation called for it, he would not confront them. He would rather move elsewhere, since venturing through the Dark Forest was easy as ABC for him.

He would try not to let things go out of hand, considering the fact that he still had not found Jiang Yingying.

Since he brought her to Xenos, he must also bring her back.

“Master, are you really not afraid at all?” Huang Xiaoyong asked worriedly.

“Afraid? You can cut all ties with me if you’re so scared.” Han Jingru said with a laugh.

Cutting ties with my Master?

Huang Xiaoyong had never thought of that.

He knew in his heart that Han Jingru was the only reason why he was where he was. Also, his Master was the only person who could help him advance his Stage.

“Master! I’ve never thought about cutting ties with you. I’m your disciple till death do us part. I’ll stand by you even if it means going against the Imperial Court!” Huang Xiaoyong exclaimed.

“You sure?” Han Jingru said, eyeing him unbelievably from the top to the toe. After all, it would take a lot more courage to oppose the Imperial Court.

“Of course!” Huang Xiaoyong reiterated without any hesitation.

"Alright, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. You can go back to the governor's residence if there's nothing else. As for the three men, I'm sure they'll be here in no time."

Huang Xiaoyong looked at his Master reluctantly before taking leave. He knew Han Jingru wanted him to go home because the people from the Imperial Court might smell something fishy if he were here.

"Alright. Don't worry, Master, I won't do anything that will give you away." He replied before heading home.

After Huang Xiaoyong left, Han Jingru called Bailing Wan'er over.

"What is the meaning of this? You called me here but you're not saying a single word to me. Do you think this is funny?" Bailing Wan'er fretted as she glared at him.

"The people from the Imperial Court will be here anytime. Do you think it'll be better if you stay away?" Han Jingru finally asked.

"There's no need for that. I would have died a long time ago if I weren't able to control myself." She replied coldly.

Han Jingru nodded in concession.

Over at the Chen residence, everyone had been gloomy and downcast for the past few days.

Everyone knew how talented Han Jingru was.

Huang Xiaoyong moved up the Stages and even tamed a seven-star Manticore under his guidance. Han Jingru was exactly the kind of Master Chen Tiexin had wanted to learn under all this while.

It was a shame the family got on his bad side when they

chased him out.

Chen Tiexin could not even express how regretful he was over what he did.

He stood beside the pond in the backyard, staring blankly at the koi swimming carefreely in the water.

A growing twinge of frustration burned within him as he looked at those fish.

I definitely deserve better if even the animals get to live a good life!

Regret ate him up every time he thought about what he did to Han Jingru. *If only I'd treated him better and didn't chase him out, I would be in Huang Xiaoyong's place right now!*

But who did he have to blame but himself? There was no turning back and Chen Tiexin had to face the consequences of his action.

Seeing his son's misery, Chen Yuanhai came up to him and patted him on the shoulders, thinking how he should break the news to his son.

"The Imperial Court has sent for Huang Xiaoyong. I heard that they dispatched a group stronger than the last." He said.

Chen Tiexin let off a scoff and rolled his eyes. "Who does he think he is? The Imperial Court is definitely there for Han Jingru, not him!"

Chen Yuanhai nodded in agreement. It went without saying that Han Jingru was way better than Huang Xiaoyong. It must be for the former that the Imperial Court had sent for over and over again.

“True. It must be Han Jingru that they want. Even the Imperial Court thinks highly of him. It’s a pity our family didn’t seize the chance when we could.” The father replied.

Chen Tiexin clenched his fists and his gaze hardened. No doubt, he sealed his own fate when he kicked Han Jingru out and he only had himself to blame. But it was not like he showed no remorse—he was willing to do anything to undo his mistake! But Han Jingru rejected all his advances and turned him down mercilessly. How could his blood not boil in anger? He was so exasperated he wanted to destroy Han Jingru!

But Chen Tiexin knew he stood no chance against him.

“Father, have you ever heard of fighters in the Imperial Court taking in disciples?” He asked.

Chen Yuanhai raised his brows and looked at his son from the corner of his eyes. He did not expect him to be this ambitious. But those fighters at the Imperial Court were known for having high standards. They would not simply recruit anyone as their disciples.

There were numerous skilled and good fighters in the Imperial Court and they all fared way better than Chen Tiexin. There was no way he could outperform them.

“I think that’s just wishful thinking. Those people in the Imperial Court will not even spare a look at us. They have a strong sense of superiority. They will never think of choosing a disciple from a small place like Longyun City.” Chen Yuanhai said truthfully.

“Is family background really that important? Is it my fault that I was born in Longyun City?” Chen Tiexin scowled.

Chen Yuanhai smiled helplessly at his son as the

question echoed in his mind.

Is family background really important? To people in the Imperial Court, it definitely is. This is especially the case for those fighters. They would rather invest their time and energy training the nobles rather than a nobody from a small city.

Just as the two were talking beside the pond, a servant rushed in and came toward Chen Yuanhai.

“Mr. Yuanhai, people from the Imperial Court are in the city inquiring about stuff.” The servant said.

Earlier on, Chen Yuanhai had ordered the servants to keep tabs on those people so he knew what they were up to.

“What are they looking into?” He asked the servant.

“They are asking about the three people sent out by the Imperial Court last time.”

The frown on Chen Yuanhai’s brows deepened. Beside him, his son looked at the servant, perplexed.

“I thought those people left Longyun City? Why are they looking for them?” Chen Tiexin asked.

“I don’t exactly know what’s going on but I think they were asking around wanting to know how many people saw those three leaving the city.” The servant replied.

The father and son exchanged doubtful glances and fell into silence. They could sense there must be more to what they thought happened. If those three really left the city, the Imperial Court would not need to dispatch more people to look for them. Not unless something happened to them.

Chen Tiexin bit his lips trying to wrap his head around the riddle. He gestured the servant to leave them alone, to which the servant bowed courteously and left without further ado.

“Father, what do you make of it?” He asked in a solemn tone.

Chen Yuanhai clicked his tongue and drilled his gaze into the pond as he thought hard. *The three people who came last time should probably be back at the Imperial Court by now. Why on earth does the Imperial Court still need to send more people over to find out about them?*

It seems like Han Jingru is not the only reason for their trip.

“What bugs me the most is why they want to find out more about the three people who already went back to the Imperial Court.” Chen Yuanhai noted.

“Those who came last time were all in the Seventh Stage. This trio is invincible, so I don’t think there are any chances of them getting into an accident after they leave the city.” Chen Tiexin analyzed.

His father’s expression suddenly became severe. He straightened his back and slowly turned towards his son. “Unless they didn’t even manage to get out of the city in the first place.” He suggested carefully.

Chen Tiexin jerked and looked at his dad in alarm. “Father, are you implying that this has something to do with Han Jingru?”

Chen Yuanhai shook his head slightly before saying cautiously, “I can’t say for sure. Besides, it’s not like I have the guts to suspect Han Jingru of anything, unless...”

He stopped and looked at his son in the eyes.

“...unless we know exactly why those people sent by the Imperial Court are probing into this matter this time.”

To know the real reason behind it, they had to get those three people to speak.

But from the Chen family’s standing, they had no right to meddle with the issue. Besides, who were they to even meet people from the Imperial Court?

But Chen Tiexin had a hunch that something must have happened to the three people who came the first time—that was why three more were sent this time around.

And his intuition told him that if anything really did happen to them, it must be related to Han Jingru. After all, those people were all in the Seventh Stage. There was literally no one else in Longyun City who could defeat them.

If his guess were spot on, it was impossible the Imperial Court would let Han Jingru off the hook just like this. They would definitely vanquish him.

Hmph, no one else is gonna get what I don't. I'll destroy Han Jingru!

Looking at his son’s countenance, Chen Yuanhai knew he had an evil plan concocted in his mind. “I warn you, Chen Tiexin, you’d better not do anything reckless before getting to the bottom of it. I don’t care what you have brewing in that head of yours, but you’d better hold your horses or the whole Chen family is going to perish with you!” His father cautioned him.

Chen Tiexin nodded half-heartedly and assured his father—but deep down, he already had a scheme of his

own.

He could not stand the sight of that useless brat gloating over him. He would do simply anything to crush Huang Xiaoyong and Han Jingru—that was the only way he could preserve the last shreds of his pathetic dignity.

After making up an excuse to leave the backyard, Chen Tiexin went to look for his sister.

After Han Jingru turned her down coldly, Chen Yanran had locked herself up in the room for days. She refused to come out and stubbornly wallowed in despair and sorrow. To her, everything lost its meaning the moment she lost Han Jingru.

Chen Yanran underestimated her own feelings for him. Never once did she expect that one day, this man would actually become someone so important to her. Remorse consumed her as past incidents of her giving him the cold shoulder flashed back in her memory. If she had not been so cruel to him, things might not have ended up like this.

“Ms. Chen, Mr. Tiexin is here.” The maid said as she inclined towards Chen Yanran.

The lady stared at her servant blankly and nodded weakly.

Chen Tiexin’s heart wrenched when he came in to see how a broken relationship had left his sister bereft. As her brother, he had always cared for her deeply. He never failed to come to her rescue whenever she was bullied. But on the matter of relationship, there was nothing he could do for her. He could only watch her suffer alone helplessly.

“Do you still want to get Han Jingru back?” He asked

softly.

Upon hearing that name, hot tears started welling up Chen Yanran's eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

"Tiexin, is there still a chance for us?" She sobbed desperately.

Chen Tiexin took a deep breath and thought of how he should reveal his plan to her. He needed Chen Yanran to cooperate in order for his plan to work. Although he knew it was wrong to make use of his sister, he had no other choice.

He had never expected anything from her for all the love he had showered upon her over all these years; but when he thought about it, it was time Chen Yanran do something for him in return.

"Yes, there is a way you can win him back." He finally said.

Chen Yanran stared at him in surprise. She leaped to her feet and quickly dried her tears. "Tiexin, is there really a way?"

"Yes. But you'll need to make some sacrifice." He replied.

"I don't care, and I'm not afraid. I will do anything for him! Tell me, what is it that I need to do?"

"At the end of the day, Han Jingru is still a man. The only way to win over his heart is to stay by his side, take care of his daily living and make sure everything is comfortable for him at home. You'll make your presence felt and longed for after some time. He won't be able to live without you then." Chen Tiexin suggested.

To put it in simple terms, he was asking his sister to do

all the chores at Han Jingru's house.

This might not be an unreasonable demand for most people. But to the daughter of the Chen family, who never once needed to lift a finger to do anything at home, this was an outrageous request.

But Chen Yanran took it well. As long as it could salvage this relationship, she was willing to put up with anything. She could learn how to do all the chores.

"But, Tiexin, will he even let me stay at his place?" She asked.

"You just need to go over to his house and do whatever chore you see needs to be done. You don't have to say or explain anything to him even if he questions you. I bet he'll let you be." Her brother replied.

Huh? Does this mean I'm supposed to be thick-skinned and just stay no matter what he says?

I'm the daughter of the Chen family! How can I put up with such humiliation?

But on second thought, Chen Yanran knew she should at least give it a try. Her pride was nothing compared to her love for Han Jingru.

She nodded firmly and shot her brother a determined look. "Tiexin, what else do I need to do?"

Chen Tiexin evaded her gaze and turned away as hints of hatred glimmered in his eyes. "You have to do exactly as I say."

"Tiexin, I will do everything you say. You've always been the nicest person to me. Who else should I listen to if not you?" Chen Yanran did not even realize something was

off. To her, Chen Tiexin was the best brother she had ever had since she was young. He had always protected her and he would never do anything to harm her.



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After the Chen family received the news, the governor's residence too, found out about it. It was because the three people from the Imperial Court did not conceal themselves in their investigation, seemingly wanting to let the news spread.

Upon hearing the news, Huang Xiaoyong's face paled, and he hid in his room as cold sweat soaked his clothes.

It was a fact that Han Jingru had killed the previous three fighters from the Imperial Court. Even a fool would know the consequences if someone found out about it.

To go against the Imperial Court within its territory was like digging himself a grave.

Huang Xiaoyong now had a way to protect himself, which was to reveal Han Jingru's deeds. Yet, that was something he could not do, for the latter was his master. To ascend to the next stage, he needed Han Jingru's help. Otherwise, he would stay stagnant at the Fifth Stage.

Now, Huang Xiaoyong was at a loss as to what he should do.

He was afraid of what would happen to him if Han Jingru's actions were exposed, but he was also afraid that he would lose his master.

"Xiaoyong, why are you hiding in your room? Open the door. I have something to talk to you about." Huang Houyi shouted from outside the room.

"I'm not feeling well. I need some rest. Let's talk tomorrow." If Huang Houyi were to see his panicking state right now, he would sense something amiss. Thus, he chose to avoid his father.

“Dad, even if you ask me, I can’t give you an answer. Why don’t you ask them instead?” Huang Xiaoyong queried.

Huang Houyi shot a glare at Huang Xiaoyong. “Brat, don’t assume I won’t hit you just because you’re at Fifth Stage. How can you talk to your father like this? If I had the courage to ask them, why would I be asking you?”

Huang Houyi dared not to intervene in the matters of the Imperial Court. He was only asking Huang Xiaoyong about it because he was curious.

“I really don’t know. It’s pointless for you to ask me.” Huang Xiaoyong repeated.

Huang Houyi fixed his piercing gaze on Huang Xiaoyong. He sensed something odd about his son today, especially when he pretended to be sick. Evidently, the younger man was hiding something.

“Brat, why did you pretend to be sick. Did you not dare to see me?” Huang Houyi questioned.

“Of course not. How can that be? You’re not a tiger that feasts on human flesh. How can I possibly not dare to see you?” Huang Xiaoyong responded as he shifted his eyes away.

Immediately, Huang Houyi knew that Huang Xiaoyong had hidden something from him.

“Since you were a child, you roll your eyes when you lie. How dare you say you’re not hiding something from me?” Huang Houyi sternly said.

Lying was Huang Xiaoyong’s best skill. He had been doing it since he was a boy; His servants and friends were always the victims. He had even pranked strangers on the street, but Huang Houyi was the only one Huang

motherly love.” Huang Xiaoyong explained, exasperated.

His mother had passed away while giving birth, so he had not received much motherly love. This was something Huang Houyi could never give him.

“Cease your nonsense. I’m here to have a serious talk with you.” Huang Houyi divulged.

Guiltily, Huang Xiaoyong glanced at his father. “What is it?”

“I remember you were the one who sent those fighters from Imperial Court out of the city last time, weren’t you?” Huang Houyi questioned.

“Y-Yes.” Huang Xiaoyong wiped his forehead, which was beaded with cold sweat.

“Did they really leave?” Huang Houyi continued.

“Dad, are you kidding me? Where else can they go? They can’t possibly have stayed in Longyun City, right?” Huang Xiaoyong did his best to remain calm. If Huang Houyi were to interrogate him upon sensing something amiss, he was doomed.

“That’s weird.” Huang Houyi frowned. “If they’ve left, why are the current three searching for news about them? Did you know this? They’re asking around in the city. This is odd.”

Huang Xiaoyong too, felt it was odd. It was as though they were trying to create some commotion. They were not keeping a low profile for their investigation. Soon, the entire Longyun City would find out about this. *Is this the way the Imperial Court does things? They don’t hide what they’re doing?*

Xiaoyong could not lie to calmly; he always unintentionally reveal signs of his guilt.

However, even when Huang Houyi had found out that he was lying, Huang Xiaoyong dared not tell him the truth. If his father were to find out that Han Jingru had killed the three people from the Imperial Court, he would probably get a heart attack from fright. Alternatively, they would be doomed if his father were to do anything impulsive.

“Dad, trust me. It’s best that you don’t know about this. It’s not that I don’t want to tell you about it, but I can’t.” That was the only reply to Huang Xiaoyong could give his father to stop the latter from further interrogation.

“I’m your father. What can I not know?” Huang Houyi gravely uttered.

Huang Xiaoyong dropped his head. “What I’m hiding from you is related to my master, and he has warned me not to tell anyone about it. Are you hoping to ruin my future?”

Upon hearing that it was related to Han Jingru, Huang Houyi instantly softened his expression. This was the man who could change the fate of the Huang family. Huang Xiaoyong’s position in the Imperial Court was closely related to Han Jingru. Hence, he would not intervene in Han Jingru’s matters without a good reason.

“I wouldn’t have kept asking if you told me this earlier.” Huang Houyi reprimanded.

Huang Xiaoyong sighed in relief when he realized his father was not planning to continue the topic.

At Han Jingru's house.

When Chen Yanran arrived and got to work without a word, both Han Jingru and Bailing Wan'er were dumbfounded.

"What is she doing?" Bailing Wan'er whispered to Han Jingru as she looked at Chen Yanran.

The man was equally interested to know the answer to her question. "You're asking me? Why don't you ask her instead?"

To Bailing Wan'er, Chen Yanran was a threat. Therefore, she could not care less about the latter's dignity.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Bailing Wan'er questioned after walking toward her.

Before Chen Yanran came here, she had mentally prepared herself to be as shameless as she could. Thus, at that moment, she threw away her dignity and

said, "I want to stay here."

"Stay here?" Bailing Wan'er was displeased with her answer. This was a kingdom too small for two queens. She had yet to win over Han Jingru. How could she let Chen Yanran interrupt her plan.

"I can do anything. If you want me to leave, you'll have to kill me." Chen Yanran uttered in determination.

"You-" Her words infuriated Bailing Wan'er. *This woman is too shameless! How can she say this?*

"Hey, hey, hey. You're the daughter of the Chen family. Why are you acting so shameless? Moreover, look at what you've done. Can you really do this?" Bailing Wan'er scoffed.

"I can learn. All I need is time to learn." Chen Yanran answered.

“Do you think I don’t dare to kill you? You’d better scram now and stop embarrassing yourself.” Bailing Wan’er hissed.

“I don’t care whatever you’re gonna say. The only way I’m leaving here is when I’m dead.” Chen Yanran responded, fearless.

Immediately, Bailing Wan’er was at a loss. Naturally, she could not actually kill Chen Yanran, but the latter was adamant.

Without any other choices, Bailing Wan’er returned to Han Jingru’s side. She could only hope that he would do something to resolve the problem she couldn’t.

“Won’t you do something about it?” Bailing Wan’er grumbled.

Han Jingru glanced at Chen Yanran, finding her actions odd. It did not seem like she was trying to get him back to her side, as her actions would only make him dislike her more.

“Chen Yanran, you have other motives, right?” Han Jingru inquired.

“I want to become your wife again.” Chen Yanran revealed.

Han Jingru’s brows furrowed as he looked at her sincere expression. It did not seem like she was lying, but Han Jingru would not believe that she had a motive as simple as that.

“All right. If you want to stay, then stay.” Han Jingru said.

“Han Jingru, have you lost your mind? How can you let her stay?” Bailing Wan’er fumed when she heard Han Jingru agreeing to the other woman’s request. She was worried that Han Jingru still had feelings for Chen Yanran, and that was why he was not merciless to her.

Following Han Jingru back to the room, Bailing Wan’er reminded, “Don’t you already

have a wife and child? Aren't you doing them wrong?"

Han Jingru smiled bitterly. Bailing Wan'er was throwing herself into his arms as well, but now she was reprimanding him with words like these.

"So?" Han Jingru questioned.

"You still have feelings for this woman, and that's cheating on your wife!" Bailing Wan'er explained.

"I still have feelings for her? I never had feelings for her. You're overthinking this." Han Jingru muttered.

Bailing Wan'er did not believe him. For him to keep Chen Yanran around meant that he still had feelings for her. Otherwise, he would have thrown Chen Yanran out immediately.

"Men are all indeed the same. What they

say and feel is the complete opposite. Despite saying he will stay faithful to his wife forever, but there he is, falling in love with another woman. Why am I not that other woman? Am I not pretty enough?" Bailing Wan'er lamented.

Bailing Wan'er was definitely more beautiful than Chen Yanran, but her undeveloped figure was not as good as the latter's. However, this was not the reason Han Jingru kept Chen Yanran around.

"She must be here for other reasons. I've asked her earlier, but she's not talking. So, I've decided to let her stay. Her motives will eventually be exposed." Han Jingru shared.

Bailing Wan'er had never thought of that. But looking at Han Jingru's somber expression, he did not seem to be lying.

"Really? That's all?" Bailing Wan'er inquired tentatively.

"I told you I won't have any feelings for anyone other than my wife. That includes you." Han Jingru stated.

Bailing Wan'er easily ignored the last three words he said. "With me monitoring you, I hope you don't have the guts to do anything inappropriate."

Han Jingru smiled helplessly. *This girl is overthinking things. If I wanted to do something to Chen Yanran, do I have to wait until now?* The last time she was here, Chen Yanran had made herself clear that she would give Han Jingru anything he wanted. If he were truly interested in her, she would have slept with him a long time ago.

After Chen Yanran moved in, she did not do anything suspicious. The entire time, she had been working on house chores. In just two days, she had cleaned his entire house.

Two days later, the sun had just started rising when Han Jingru heard sounds of hoeing coming from the yard.

The bodies of the three from the Imperial Court were buried in there. If Chen Yanran accidentally dug them out, he'd be doomed.

"What are you doing?" Han Jingru questioned as he walked to the yard.

Chen Yanran was baffled. All she did was hoeing. *Why is Han Jingru reacting like this?*

"I'm just raking the soil. Don't you like gardening? I was hoping to help you." Chen Yanran answered.

Han Jingru walked to her and ordered, "Stay away from the garden from now on. If you do this again, I'll kick you out of this place."

Chen Yanran felt bewildered. *Does Han Jingru love those flowers this much? I'm just digging the soil. Why is he having such a huge reaction?*

However, all she could do was listen to him. "All right. I won't do that anymore. I'm sorry. I didn't know you love these flowers that much."

In the beginning, Han Jingru was suspicious of Chen Yanran. However, after hearing her words and seeing her innocent look, the skepticism he had for her turned into doubt.

For the past two days, Chen Yanran was immersed in doing house chores. It seemed like she bore no other intentions. *Is she really planning to get me back like this?*

At Longyun City's Royal Inn.

The governor had built this place to receive only distinguished guests. It was now where the three fighters from the Imperial Court stayed.

The three were in their late fifties. It was normal as they were in Eight Stage and above. Time was needed to ascend up the stages. People like Han Jingru were a rare sight in Xenos.

"When are we meeting up with Han Jingru?" Fu Shan asked the other two. Although he was at Eighth Stage, he had to consult the one who was nearing Ninth Stage for his opinion first.

"I'm sure he knows we're investigating the previous trio's whereabouts. It's best for us to meet him now, he'll easily divulge his secret in a panic state. What do you think, Sir Bi Yang?"

Bi Yang was the one among the three who was closest to reaching Ninth Stage. He once announced he would reach it within five years. Hence, he had a higher position in the Imperial Court than the other two.

“If he really killed those three, how powerful do you think he is?”

“It isn’t that difficult to kill that three at Seventh Stage; even I can do it. After all, the last three stages’ powers aren’t describable with words.” Fu Shan noted.

Bi Yang nodded. Only those who were in the last three stages were the true elites. Moreover, for this group of people, ascending by each stage was a major obstacle. Therefore, there was a massive difference in power between each stage for the last three stages.

This three were a good example. Although Bi Yang was still in Eighth Stage, he was much more powerful than the other two.

The moment he ascended to the Ninth Stage, the gap between their powers would widen.

For someone in Eighth Stage to kill a person at Seventh Stage was like a battle between a lion and a rabbit. It was a hopeless fight for the rabbit.

However, Bi Yang sensed that Han Jingru's power was not as simple as it seemed to be.

"You should know about what happened between him and the Chen family, right?" Bi Yang continued.

"The Chen family kicked him out. Many in Longyun City laughed at him for it, but it might also be his plan to hide his true power. That's why he took in all the humiliation. As to why he did it, I'm afraid he's the only one who knows." You Hai responded.

“What I’m concerned about is not why he did this.” Bi Yang mumbled as he shook his head.

Fu Shan and You Hai shared a look. Both wondered why he would ask about Han Jingru and the Chen family’s relationship if he was unconcerned about it.

“Sir Bi Yang, speak what you have in mind.”

Bi Yang sighed, “To become the Chen family’s son-in-law, he must either be young or look young.”

At that, the other two finally understood what Bi Yang was trying to say. Both paled in unison.

They had overlooked this matter; now that they thought about it, it was a terrifying revelation.

Time was needed to ascend each stage, and no one, even the gifted ones, could

escape from this rule. It was impossible for someone to reach Eighth Stage in their twenties. Moreover, Bi Yang suggested that he 'might' look young.

"You should know that only the Pinnacle Masters can maintain their youth." Bi Yang continued.

Fu Shan and You Hai had grim looks now. Only those at Pinnacle Stage were capable of changing their physical appearance to look younger. It was highly likely that Han Jingru looked young because of this.

In that case, their opponent was a horrifying one.

The three nations had been fighting for years, but never had there been any Pinnacle Masters involved in those fights. It was because they were too strong and destructive. Hence, the three nations made a deal to never send out any Pinnacle Master, no matter how terrible the war

was.

“Sir Bi Yang, are you suspecting that this man is at Pinnacle Stage?” You Hai whispered in disbelief.

“I’m afraid it’s not just a hypothesis. The truth is right in front of us. That terrifies me too.” Bi Yang confessed.

He then continued, “Before I came to Longyun City, I met with the Emperor.”

“Does he have any instructions for us?” Fu Shan inquired.

“The Emperor told me that if he was the one who killed the three, the Imperial Court still has to treat him with courtesy.” Bi Yang answered.

Neither Fu Shan nor You Hai thought there was anything wrong with those words. If Han Jingru really were at Pinnacle Stage, him killing the three men at Seventh Stage

would be something insignificant. After all, the Imperial Court would never declare a powerful man like him as their enemy.

Furthermore, even if the Imperial Court were determined to pick a bone with Han Jingru, it would not be easy. A Pinnacle Master could easily destroy the city in their defense. Therefore, the Imperial Court only had one way—to get him on their side.

“When will we meet him then?” You Hai queried.

“This afternoon. Since we’re already speculating it, we might as well find proof for it.” Bi Yang stated.

At Chen residence.

Telling the others that she was out shopping, Chen Yanran went back home. She just wanted to grab some clothes, but she ended up encountering Chen Tiexin.

“Yanran, how is it? Is he treating you better now?” Chen Tiexin asked with a false sense of concern.

Although Han Jingru did not seem happy that Chen Yanran was around, she was still living in his house. This made her feel that things were getting better. She was sure that soon, she would be able to do what she wanted. After all, they had spent so much time together and Han Jingru was no heartless individual.

“Everything’s good, but I still need some time.” Chen Yanran replied.

Chen Tiexin paused before asking, “Did Han Jingru do anything different recently? Has he left his house?”

“Leave his house?” Chen Yanran shook her head. “No. He’s at home all day, doesn’t seem to be doing much.”

At home all day?

Chen Tiexin was disappointed by her answer. It seemed like Han Jingru had yet to expose himself. However, he did not mind that. As long as Chen Yanran was still staying at Han Jingru's house, he still had a chance.

"By the way, Tiexin, can you buy me some expensive plants?" Chen Yanran suddenly inquired.

"Why do you need them?" Chen Tiexin questioned.

"Han Jingru loves them a lot, so I was thinking of giving him some. This morning, I was just hoeing the garden, but he had a really huge reaction. He even asked me not to step into the garden anymore. I can see that he's someone who loves plants a lot." Chen Yanran explained.

Hoeing?

Huge reaction?

That was the different action Chen Tiexin was looking for.

There must a reason for him to react so dramatically.

Chen Tiexin was sure that Han Jingru would not react in this way just because of some plants.

“Tell me, how did he react?” Chen Tiexin hastily asked.



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“Tiexin, why are you asking?” Chen Yanran wondered.

Chen Tiexin quickly hid his eagerness and smiled at her. “I’m just curious about how much he adores plants. After all, I haven’t come across a man who loves plants.”

Chen Yanran smiled back as her suspicion dissipated. Chen Tiexin was her best brother, and she placed all her trust in him.

“He was solemn and furious when he said those words to me. Besides, he said he’ll kick me out of the house if I ever do that again.” Chen Yanran responded.

Chen Tiexin’s heart skipped a beat. He thought, *There must be a secret in the yard. That’s why he had such a huge reaction to it.*

What’s the point of him getting mad over some plants?

That's just impossible.

What's in there?

Why did the Imperial Court send someone to Longyun City again; and why are they investigating the trio who came previously? Something must have happened to them. They might be dead.

Dead.

In the yard!

Did Han Jingru kill the previous trio from the Imperial Court and buried them in his own garden?

If that's the case, I've found a way to defeat Han Jingru. As long as I reveal the secret in the garden to those three from the Imperial Court, they will definitely come after him.

Chen Tiexin was thrilled.

If he could not get what he wanted, he would destroy it.

“Go ahead with your things. I’ll settle the plants for you.” Chen Tiexin reassured his sister.

Chen Yanran nodded. As she had already packed up her clothes, she left the Chen residence at once.

In the afternoon, Chen Tiexin received news of the trio from Imperial Court leaving Royal Inn and heading toward Han Jingru’s house.

This news made Chen Tiexin’s heart swell with excitement. He never thought that the opportunity would present itself right after he talked to Chen Yanran in the morning.

With no further thoughts, he headed to Han Jingru’s house as well.

At Han Jingru’s house.

Huang Xiaoyong appeared with a panicked expression on his face. He uttered, "Master, those men from the Imperial Court are on their way here. They must be here for you."

"Do you need to be in such a panic? So what if they're here for me?" Han Jingru muttered calmly.

There was no way Huang Xiaoyong could stay calm. If he had not known that the three dead men were murdered by Han Jingru, he would not be panicking as badly as he was now.

"Master, aren't you worried at all?" Huang Xiaoyong asked.

Han Jingru shook his head. Not only was he not worried, but he did also not even take this matter to his heart at all. If these three were going to make things difficult for him, he would kill them too.

Han Jingru had a lot of leeway in doing things in Xenos, which was why Huang Xiaoyong's scruple meant nothing to him. Even though he had yet to find Jiang Yingying, he could just come back again the next time.

"If you can't calm down, then get lost. Don't make things worse for me." Han Jingru told him.

However, Huang Xiaoyong could not possibly leave at a time like this.

"I'll take a shower to calm down." With that said, Huang Xiaoyong rushed to the backyard.

Although Bailing Wan'er seemed calm, Han Jingru could sense a trace of aggression in her eyes.

"Wan'er, stay in your room later." Han Jingru instructed.

“Do you know who’s coming?” Bailing Wan’er abruptly questioned.

Han Jingru did not know what she was trying to tell him, but he did not need to know either. “You’re not in the right state to meet them now.”

“Bi Yang is a fighter close to reaching the Ninth Stage. Back then, the Imperial Court sent out ten units to go after the Bailing family. He led one of them and killed countless lives of the Bailing family.” Bailing Wan’er divulged. “My nanny told me, he was the one to kill my father.”

Han Jingru frowned. *No wonder she couldn’t compose herself. The murderer of her father is on his way here.*

Therefore, Han Jingru had to make sure Bailing Wan’er would not appear in front of Bi Yang, in case she lost control of her emotions.

“Why don’t you take a stroll? You’ve been cooped up at home for a long while. It’s time to take a walk outside.” He suggested.

Bailing Wan’er walked toward him and stared at him with determined eyes. “I just want to take a look at him. I want to remember how he looks like. That way, when I avenge my father in the future, I’ll know who to kill.”

Her tone carried that of hostility. To Han Jingru, her current state was not one she should have now. If Bi Yang sensed something amiss, the last member of the Bailing family, Bailing Wan’er, would be killed before she could take revenge for her father.

“You have got to listen to me if you want to take revenge. If Bi Yang sees you in your current state, he’ll notice something wrong.” Han Jingru persuaded.

Bailing Wan'er still shook her head.

Right then, Chen Yanran walked out of the house. Instantly, the two stopped the topic.

"Don't worry. I'll control myself." Bailing Wan'er whispered.

Han Jingru sighed. He could not do anything about her stubbornness.

Soon, Bi Yang and his companions arrived.

This was the first time Han Jingru saw someone at Eighth Stage. Indeed, their presence was unlike an average person. They seemed different even in comparison with the previous three who were at Seventh Stage.

All they did was just standing there, but he could sense their oppressing presence.

"I've been waiting for you." Han Jingru voiced.

Bi Yang took a step forward and gestured a polite greeting. It was him showing courtesy to Han Jingru, for he was someone who was close to the Ninth Stage after all.

“I’ve been waiting to meet you for some time too, but I was delayed by some matters. I hope you’ll forgive me.” Bi Yang replied.

His demeanor instantly eased the tension out of Huang Xiaoyong. Subconsciously, he straightened his back. If Bi Yang were expressing such respect for his master, he could not possibly embarrass Han Jingru.

“Speak what’s on your mind.” Han Jingru uttered.

“The Imperial Court has always appreciated talented people. Hence, the Emperor has ordered us to invite Mr. Han to the Imperial Court. Mr. Han, you can choose any position you’d like to have

there.” Bi Yang revealed.

Huang Xiaoyong’s eyes widened. *Does he get to choose whatever position he wants? Doesn’t that mean Master will be second to just the Emperor?*

“If I pick none, I’m sure the Imperial Court won’t make things difficult for me, will it?” Han Jingru inquired.

“Of course not. It is normal for the Imperial Court to entice someone as strong as Mr. Han into the team. However, we will not intervene in your choice. Regardless, I hope that you can think twice before rejecting the offer. I believe no one else can possibly offer a better position to you.” Bi Yang persuaded.

“Reputation and status are not important to me. I just want to lead a free life and go anywhere I want to. I don’t want to be restricted by anyone.”

Right after Han Jingru said his piece, the door abruptly swung open. With a sinister grin, Chen Tiexin entered the compound.



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The atmosphere in the house changed when Chen Tiexin showed up.

Both Han Jingru and Huang Xiaoyong knew that he came with no good intentions, but they couldn't figure out the reason for his visit.

Chen Yanran immediately walked up to her brother and asked, "Tiexin, why are you here?"

He smiled coldly as he stared at Han Jingru. "I'm here to expose the stuff he did."

The latter remained emotionless. He didn't know what Chen Tiexin was referring to. But there wasn't a single hint of fear in him even if the latter found out that three people from the Imperial Court had died.

The worst that could happen would be to go against the Imperial Court. It wasn't something that Han Jingru couldn't

handle.

However, fear started to creep into Huang Xiaoyong and his face paled upon hearing the man's words.

He was born within the Imperial Court, so he knew just how capable they were. Once they found out that Han Jingru had killed their people, they would never spare his life.

Besides, the three fighters standing before them were more than enough to kill his master.

"Tiexin, what are you up to? Don't do anything stupid," Chen Yanran said in a hurry. She had finally found the chance to salvage her relationship with Han Jingru. Even though she wasn't successful yet, she believed that with patience, she could definitely succeed. *If Tiexin does anything stupid right now, it'll ruin my plan!*

“This has nothing to do with you. Don’t say anything if you want to enjoy the show. If you don’t want to watch, you can head back home,” Chen Tiexin said coldly.

Chen Yanran suddenly noticed how cold and distant her brother was, and she couldn’t believe it. *Tiexin would never have this kind of attitude when talking to me. What on earth caused the change?*

Chen Tiexin walked towards Bi Yang and the other two before giving them a martial salute. Then, he said, “Sirs, I know you are here to investigate what had happened to three of the people sent to Longyun City. I know where they are.”

“Oh?” Bi Yang raised a brow and glanced at him. *Even though I don’t know who this man is, he should know what kind of position I hold. He wouldn’t have dared to sprout nonsense. Since he has the guts to say something like that, I’m afraid he really does know what happened.*

Huang Xiaoyong was sweating buckets by now. *How did Chen Tiexin find out about it? Master and I are supposed to be the only ones who know about this.*

“Master, what is happening? How does he know?” he whispered.

Han Jingru stole a glance at Chen Yanran. *Is she behind this?*

But she has been acting normal recently and this is definitely not an act.

Then, could it be that Chen Tiexin has used his sister?

“I’m not quite sure too,” he answered.

Huang Xiaoyong let out a shaky breath before he continued, “Then what should we do? We’ll be dead meat if they find out.”

Han Jingru replied with a slight smile, “It wouldn’t get to that point. Don’t worry. I’ll

be responsible for anything that happens. It won't have anything to do with you."

His words didn't comfort his disciple at all. Even though Huang Xiaoyong was told that he wouldn't be held responsible for it, he couldn't help but continue worrying about it. While he hoped that nothing would happen to himself, he didn't want anything to happen to Han Jingru either. The latter was his Master after all. He needed to rely on him for his breakthroughs in the future.

"Where are they?" Bi Yang questioned.

A huge grin appeared on Chen Tiexin's face as if his plan for revenge had succeeded. He had never expected that a chance like this to appear so suddenly. *Now I can finally destroy Han Jingru. As long as he dies, the governor's residence would surely be affected. When that happens, Longyun City would change drastically too.*

Besides, if I succeed in exposing the truth, the Imperial Court will recognize my contribution in this matter and even pass words of recognition. When that happens, the status of the Chen family will be upgraded and nobody in Longyun City will be able to shake it ever.

“Han Jingru, do you really think you can continue hiding the truth? Do I have to say more about that odd patch in your garden?” he asked.

Han Jingru never thought that Chen Tiexin actually knew what had happened. But now that he thought about it, his overreaction when Chen Yanran was plowing the land must’ve had raised her brother’s suspicions. *I was too careless. I can’t believe Chen Tiexin managed to piece everything together with something so small.*

“What do you mean odd patch in my garden? Please point that out for me,” Han

Jingru said.

Chen Tiexin's lips tilted upwards into a mocking smile. *Han Jingru must be afraid since he isn't admitting it.*

"I've never thought that there will be a moment in your life where you'd be scared. Are you afraid of death, or are you afraid of the judgement by the Imperial Court? I heard that they have a way to cause pain that's worse than death. Maybe you could have the opportunity to experience it," he said.

"I'm going to leave this place today and nobody will be able to stop me. Besides, would you buy it if I said I could kill you before I leave?" Han Jingru asked.

Chen Tiexin froze in an instant as he didn't want to risk his own life to test the truth of the man's words.

In truth, he was the one who was actually

afraid of death. If it weren't because he didn't want to take the risk, he wouldn't have stayed in the Second Stage.

Chen Tiexin subconsciously took a few steps back as if he were seeking protection from the three sent by the Imperial Court.

Although, his safety was actually none of their concern. They had also taken Han Jingru's words seriously.

I'm going to leave this place today and nobody will be able to stop me.

His words meant that none of them had the capability to stop him.

"Sirs, I want to reveal the truth, but someone wants to kill me. You have to protect me," Chen Tiexin said.

Bi Yang was starting to get impatient. He wanted the truth but he didn't want to get

involved in a conflict with Han Jingru because of it.

The Emperor had already given the order so the Imperial Court wouldn't even care much if the three died in the latter's hands. That was why he only wanted to find out what had actually happened.

"Just spit it out since you know the truth. Don't waste our time any further," Bi Yang ordered.

Chen Tiexin was stumped. *I only figured out that the bodies are in the garden. But the place is so big. How am I supposed to tell them the actual place the bodies are buried in?*

"Sir, their bodies are buried in this garden. However, only Han Jingru knows the exact place they are buried in," he stated.

Upon hearing the word 'bodies,' both Fu Shan and You Hai furrowed their brows.

This was the last possible outcome they expected but it had actually happened.

This is preposterous! Han Jingru killed people of the Imperial Court!

Ahem. Bi Yang cleared his throat, signaling both of them to pay attention to their emotions.



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They quickly composed themselves upon getting his reminder. After all, he had told them once that even the Emperor wouldn't get worked up over this matter. So who were they to be angry about it?

Even if Han Jingru really had the guts to ignore the Imperial Court, it wasn't something that they can interfere with.

"Mr. Han, is he telling the truth?" Bi Yang asked.

Han Jingru was faced with a tough decision. If he lied, he could at least live another day peacefully. But Bi Yang and his companions wouldn't let this go just like that.

The other choice he could make was to openly admit what he did. If there was the need, he could just kill the three of them and leave the territory of the Imperial Court.

“Yes.”

It was just a simple word, but it shocked everyone.

Huang Xiaoyong couldn't hide the fear on his face as he stared at Han Jingru. *Master admitted to it just like that! Does he have a death wish?*

Chen Yanran was dumbfounded as well.

She hadn't expected him to be so gutsy. *He killed people of the Imperial Court within their territories. Would he even be able to make it out alive?*

Chen Tiexin was stunned for a moment but a smile immediately appeared on his face after that. To him, Han Jingru's admission wasn't some kind of heroic act. After all, if Sir Bi Yang dug deeper into this matter, he wouldn't be able to hide it anymore.

Most importantly, three of them are so much more powerful than the other three. Han Jingru wouldn't have dared to hide the truth from them.

"M-Master... y- How can you..." Huang Xiaoyong didn't know what to say. He felt as if the world had collapsed all around him.

"Huang Xiaoyong, you knew about this, didn't you? You hid the truth and it's considered lying to the Imperial Court. I didn't expect you to be so daring. Don't tell me you have no regard for the Imperial Court just because you're a governor's son." Chen Tiexin purposely emphasized his deed as he was trying to drag the former into the mess too.

Huang Xiaoyong is a Fifth Stage fighter now. If he doesn't die, I'd always have a lower status than he has in Longyun City.

"That's bullsh*t, Chen Tiexin. I would never

disregard the Imperial Court,” Huang Xiaoyong retorted.

“Sir Bi Yang, Huang Xiaoyong clearly knows the truth but he deliberately hid it. Please don’t be deceived by him.” With a smile on his face, Chen Tiexin turned to Bi Yang and lowered his head slightly.

Huang Xiaoyong’s legs almost gave away. *I’ll be doomed if Bi Yang really wants to hold the governor’s residence responsible. My father would also be dragged into this mess. The Huang family would be ruined because of this!*

“Mr. Han, where are the bodies buried?” Bi Yang asked, but he didn’t sound like he was blaming Han Jingru at all.

The latter was rather puzzled by his attitude. *I’ve already admitted to it, why doesn’t he sound angry at all? Is it possible that he’d already guessed it? Or does he not care about the people at all?*

Han Jingru wasn't anxious to strike since nothing was happening yet. "Chen Tiexin should do it since he was the one who brought this matter up."

He then pointed to the spot where the bodies were buried and said to Chen Tiexin, "This is your chance to prove yourself. Aren't you going to seize the opportunity?"

Not doubting him in the slightest of things, the latter went to look for a shovel and began digging for the bodies.

He dug with all his might, thinking that his future would be bright. He felt that it would be a great achievement if he could find the three corpses from the Imperial Court and even thought that he could get the approval of the Emperor. Maybe, even getting the chance to get into the Imperial Court.

If I manage to get in, I wouldn't need to get frustrated over looking for a Ma

ster anymore.

Chen Tiexin was also confident that as long as he could get into the Imperial Court, his strength would definitely improve tremendously.

“Han Jingru, it has never hit you that you would have a day like this, did you?” he sneered.

The bodies would soon be found the deeper he dug and Huang Xiaoyong had no idea what he was supposed to do anymore.

“What is wrong with you, Master?” he asked in confusion.

“Don’t worry. No matter what happens, I’ll make sure you won’t die,” Han Jingru promised.

Huang Xiaoyong stiffened. *He’s going to make sure I won’t die?*

Does he mean that he's going to fight Bi Yang and the other two?

I don't doubt Master's capabilities but what's the point even if he manages to win against them?

This is the Imperial Court's territory after all. If the Emperor sent fighters one after another on a manhunt for us, we're all as good as dead.

Not only that, but there are also Pinnacle Masters in the Imperial Court too. We'll definitely be brought to justice one day.

"Master, will you be able to beat them?" he asked softly.

However, Han Jingru smiled but said nothing.

Soon, the bodies were finally found.

Chen Tiexin could barely contain his

excitement as he said to Bi Yang, "Sir Bi Yang, their bodies are really here."

The latter walked over and confirmed that they were indeed the three people from the Imperial Court. It was also irrefutable evidence that Han Jingru had killed them.

"Sir Bi Yang, Han Jingru blatantly disregarded the Imperial Court and killed people of the organization. These are all punishable acts!" Chen Tiexin said restlessly.

Bi Yang sighed. "They got what they deserved as they were simply unskilled."

The former was dumbfounded at his comment.

What do you mean unskilled? Or that they deserved it?

They were killed by Han Jingru! He disregarded the Imperial Court and it's an insult to the organization. How can Sir Bi Yang say that they got what th

ey deserved?

“Mr. Han, why did you kill them?” Bi Yang then asked.

Han Jingru got curious upon hearing his question. After all, Bi Yang’s reaction was completely different from what he had expected earlier. *He isn’t angry about it but the other two are obviously suppressing their anger.*

Does that mean that they wouldn’t get revenge for their people even if they have conclusive evidence?

“They barged into my house in the middle of the night and tried to kill me. Don’t you think I should kill them?” Han Jingru replied with a question.

It was the truth. If they hadn’t barged into his house in the middle of the night, he never would’ve killed them. So in some ways, they really deserved it.

“Serve them right,” Bi Yang said without hesitation.

Chen Tiexin was completely flummoxed by this. He thought that once he revealed the truth, Han Jingru would be punished by the Imperial Court. Actually, he wouldn't even mind if the latter were killed.

However, instead of picking on what Han Jingru had said, Bi Yang was speaking for him.

What's going on?

Huang Xiaoyong was dumbfounded by the situation as well, the fear in his heart was replaced by bewilderment. *How is it possible that Sir Bi Yang isn't trying to do anything to Master? Anyone who challenges the Imperial Court would end up dead!*

But now Master is completely fine even though he killed people from the organization?

“Sir Bi Yang, he killed three people from the Imperial Court! How could you say that they deserved it?” Chen Tiexin was exasperated since things had not developed according to his plan. That was why he was so anxious to remind Bi Yang that Han Jingru had killed someone, and they were all people of the Imperial Court.

However, the man glanced at him indifferently. Bi Yang knew what exactly he was doing. *It's too bad his plan failed. He must've never expected the Emperor's attitude on this situation, nor did he expect the Emperor to view Han Jingru with such great importance.*

What's the big deal with their lost lives if we could win over Han Jingru?

“The Emperor ordered me to investigate this incident before I came to Longyun City. I was told to execute them on the spot if they had done anything that had offended you, Mr. Han. But since they've

already paid for what they did, this will be the end of this incident,” he said.

The Emperor!

Offends Han Jingru.

Execute immediately!

All these words shocked Chen Tiexin to the core.

He had never expected the Emperor to have such an attitude towards the situation even though Han Jingru killed three people from the Imperial Court. Not only were they not bringing him to justice, but they also even thought that he did great.

“Sir Bi Yang, you’re not kidding, right?” Chen Tiexin asked, unwilling to accept the truth.

After glancing coldly at him, Bi Yang

asked, "Are you questioning me, or are you questioning the Emperor's decision?"

The former was scared to his wits upon hearing that. *How could I have the guts to question him or the Emperor?*

This is just beyond my imagination. I can't accept it.

"Mr. Han, I will be sending the bodies back to the Imperial Court. I'm sure you don't have any objections, right?" Bi Yang asked.

Han Jingru never expected things to turn out like this. But he felt that Bi Yang wouldn't have lied. Even though the latter was almost a Ninth Stage fighter, he wouldn't have dared to use the Emperor just to clear his name.

This also meant that the Emperor already knew what had happened but still viewed him with great importance.

“Of course not,” he said.

“Also, this man was disrespectful towards you. If you’re willing, I, as part of the Imperial Court, will help you finish him off,” Bi Yang said while pointing at Chen Tiexin.

The latter immediately collapsed to the floor.

He was supposed to accomplish something. But instead of doing that, he was about to die because he had been disrespectful towards Han Jingru.

It was as though the world had collapsed all around Chen Tiexin. His life and death depended on what Han Jingru said. *As long as he agrees, I’d definitely die in Sir Bi Yang’s hands within a blink of an eye.*

“I’m sorry, Han Jingru. I was wrong! Please give me a chance. I didn’t know you were so important to the Emperor. I would do anything to make up for my foolishness!”

he begged. Chen Tiexin knew that begging for forgiveness would be his only way out if he wanted to live.

That was why he got down onto his knees and kneeled before Han Jingru. The once high-profile eldest son of the Chen family was nowhere to be seen anymore.

He had treated Han Jingru like rubbish and chased him out of the Chen residence previously.

Chen Tiexin had always wanted to ruin the latter even though he knew of his capabilities.

Until this moment, he finally came to his senses and understood that it wasn't worthy of him to go against Han Jingru, nor was he worthy of being Han Jingru's opponent.

"I'll handle this myself. But thank you for looking out for me, Sir," the latter said.

“Mr. Han, since I’ve found out what had happened, I have to leave Longyun City as soon as possible. I hope that we’ll meet in the Imperial Court one day,” Bi Yang said.

“There will be a chance,” Han Jingru replied.

Bi Yang and his men left with the corpses, but they didn’t return to the Royal Inn. Instead, they headed to the Imperial Court immediately.

Fu Shan and You Hai were both unhappy with how things had turned out. After all, they used to be comrades with the three who died. Not only were they wrongfully killed, but there was no justification for their death at all. That was why both of them were unable to accept it.

“I know what you’re thinking. But this is the Emperor’s orders. How can we defy a direct order from him? Besides, even I am not able to pinpoint exactly how strong

Han Jingru really is. He could be a new Pinnacle Master. I don't really have to elaborate that power, right?" Bi Yang explained.

Fu Shan sighed. Pinnacle Masters reigned supreme among all other positions in three of the countries. No matter which country it was, people would do all they could just to win over these fighters because if they could secure such strong fighters in their country, it meant that they would be much more powerful than other countries. That was why he could understand why the Emperor was doing this.

How could the lives of three Seventh Stage fighters ever be compared to the importance of a Pinnacle Master?

"Sir Bi Yang, is Han Jingru really a Pinnacle Master?" You Hai couldn't help but ask.

After hesitating for a moment, Bi Yang

shook his head. He wasn't an actual Ninth Stage fighter yet, so he couldn't tell if Han Jingru was a Pinnacle Master. He could only confirm the latter's capabilities if he were still unable to pinpoint his strength when he was successfully a Ninth Stage fighter.

"I don't know. No one can confirm what stage he is in besides Fei Lingsheng," he said.

Upon hearing that name, Fu Shan and You Hai's expression changed.

She was the Imperial Court's only Pinnacle Master now. It was also because of her that the organization could maintain its powerful position. The current Emperor also received her support so it could be said that the glory of the Imperial Court was all thanks to her.

However, Fei Lingsheng had not shown herself for a very long time. There were

even rumors that she was dead.

“Is Fei Lingsheng... still alive?” Fu Shan asked meekly.

Bi Yang smiled slightly and answered, “I don’t expect you to believe in the rumors too. The lives of Pinnacle Master can’t be compared to that of ours. They even have the ability to turn young again. So even if she appeared right in front of you, you wouldn’t have recognized her.”

The former nodded. *A Pinnacle Master dying of old age definitely seems impossible. I don’t even know how the rumor started to spread.*

Just then, a young girl with a ponytail walked up to them and asked, “Is Longyun City right in front?”

The girl looked ordinary and well-behaved. She had eyes as clear as a lake devoid of any pollution from the mundane world.

“Yes, it’s right in front,” Bi Yang told her with a smile.

Upon hearing that, the girl hopped away.

You Hai then said in displeasure, “Young girls nowadays are so ill-mannered. She didn’t even thank you.”

Right after he finished his sentence, he fell on his knees as a tremendous force pressed down on his shoulders.



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“What’s wrong?”

“What’s going on?”

Bi Yang and Fu Shan were puzzled since both of them weren’t able to feel anything.

“I- I don’t know...” Sweat covered You Hai’s forehead. The force earlier seemed to have almost crushed him.

“The- I felt a tremendous force earlier and it almost crushed my body!” he explained after he caught his breath.

A tremendous force?

Panic immediately replaced Bi Yang’s puzzled expression. He quickly said to both of them, “Quick! We have to leave this place now.”

Seeing that he was so flustered, they knew they had to leave instantly even though they didn’t understand the reason.

Meanwhile, at Han Jingru’s house, Chen Tiexin was still trembling and on his knees.

He had not expected things to end up this way.

Bi Yang didn’t hold Han Jingru accountable even though they had already found the dead bodies. Most importantly, it was under the Emperor’s orders. This meant that even though the latter hadn’t gotten to the Imperial Court, he had already caught the Emperor’s attention.

I’m not worthy to even go against someone like him.

Now that he had offended Han Jingru, Chen Tiexin was

stepping on the thin line between life and death.

Huang Xiaoyong looked pleased and gleeful as he made his way towards the kneeling man. *This fella tried to use the Imperial Court to ruin Master but his plan failed. Now he's the one who ended up in humiliation. It's so hard not to laugh at him.*

"Chen Tiexin, you tried to harm my Master. It's too bad my Master is so strong. Even the Emperor showed his sign of respect to him. You didn't expect that did you?" he said smugly. He was scared out of his wits earlier but now, he was all relaxed and was even ridiculing Chen Tiexin.

The latter was pale as he buried his head in his hands. He really hadn't expected an outcome like this and could only beg for his life now.

"I would be willing to be your slave if you don't kill me, Han Jingru," he begged.

"Be his slave?" Huang Xiaoyong scoffed. "You're overestimating your worth here, Chen Tiexin. Do you really think you're worthy enough to even be a slave? You don't even qualify to be my Master's dog."

Not even worthy of being a dog?

These words triggered Chen Tiexin. He had always been a superior person over Han Jingru. But now, their positions had changed drastically.

"You're not in the position to tell me if I'm worthy enough," he said.

"Master, can you leave him to me? He still can't get over what has happened yet," Huang Xiaoyong said.

"Sure," Han Jingru replied without any hesitation. *Chen Tiexin's well-being is none of my concern. Handing him over to Huang Xiaoyong saves me the trouble too.*

Chen Tiexin's expression changed abruptly when he heard that. He knew that things wouldn't end well if he was in Huang Xiaoyong's hands.

"Han Jingru, my sister saved you once. You can't do this to me," he quavered.

Chen Yanran got onto her knees instantly and burst into tears. "Please... I'm begging you, please spare my brother!"

"I've already returned whatever I owed you. He tried to get me killed. Am I supposed to spare him with an act of mercy after all that?" Han Jingru said indifferently.

The woman couldn't stop crying. She knew that she didn't have the right to convince Han Jingru to spare Chen Tiexin. After what the Chen family had done to him, her brother really did deserve to die. *But he's still my brother. How can I watch him die just like that?*

"Please, I beg of you. Please give him a chance." Chen Yanran didn't know what she should do to get Han Jingru's forgiveness, so she kept kowtowing while begging.

However, Han Jingru was expressionless as he said to Huang Xiaoyong, "Take them away. Make sure they don't show their faces in the house again or I'm going to come after you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Master."

The disciple lifted Chen Tiexin with ease. Since he was a Fifth Stage fighter, the latter didn't have any chance to

fight back at all.

“Chen Yanran, you better get out if you don’t want this piece of trash to suffer any further.” He then dragged her brother out once he finished his sentence.

She was aware that the only one who could save her brother was Han Jingru. If she followed them out now, that would be the end of Chen Tiexin.

“Han Jingru, you’re really not going to give him another chance? If it wasn’t for me, you would’ve died long ago!” she shouted indignantly.

“Do you think you could’ve lived if I hadn’t saved you in Longyan Mountains? A life for a life. I don’t owe you anything since a long time ago,” Han Jingru stated coldly.

Hopelessness swelled inside Chen Yanran.

Right at that moment, Bailing Wan’er said, “Why did you come here? It was your brother’s idea, wasn’t it? Don’t you understand that he was just using you? He had ulterior motives planned the moment you stepped foot in this house. You pleading for him isn’t worth it at all.”

Of course, Chen Yanran wasn’t an idiot. She knew about his motives the moment her brother came to the house and pointed at the garden, about to expose Han Jingru. But it didn’t matter. No matter what happened, Chen Tiexin was her brother after all and she would never blame him.

“So what if he’s using me? He’s my brother. Am I supposed to blame him, then?” she retorted.

Bailing Wan’er sneered, “He needs to suffer the consequences. You better get home and set up a mourning hall for him. Otherwise, he won’t be the only

one who's going to die in the Chen family."

Chen Yanran shuddered uncontrollably.

The Chen family!

With Han Jingru's abilities, he could finish off the entire Chen family easily. She was afraid that the catastrophe would befall on her family.

"I'll hate you for life, Han Jingru." With that said, she quickly ran out of the house.

He was unfazed by it and acted as if he hadn't heard anything.

Bailing Wan'er felt strange when she saw his reaction. Han Jingru was always calm and collected as if nothing could disturb him. Just like how there wasn't a single change in his expression when they found the corpses earlier.

Is he not afraid of the Imperial Court, or is there nothing in this world that is worthy of his attention?

"She's going to hate you for life. A woman's curse can be very scary," she told him.

"Is the opinion of someone I don't care about really that important?" he asked. If Su Yimo was the one who said it, his heart would've been torn to smithereens. But Chen Yanran was just an insignificant passerby in his life, so her hatred for him wasn't important at all.

"Do you know why she said that?" Bailing Wan'er asked with a smile.

"So that I would remember her," Han Jingru grinned.

She raised her brows and asked, "Then would you?"



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Han Jingru smiled and said nothing.

What is it about Chen Yanran that made me remember her? A woman like her doesn't even deserve even the slightest place in my heart.

“Trying to beat around the bush? Are you conscience-stricken?” Bailing Wan'er was persistent with her questions.

“I will forget her sooner or later—and that goes for you too. How do you like this answer?”

That got Bailing Wan'er up in arms. What she was asking about was Han Jingru's attitude towards Chen Yanran. How on earth did it hurl back to her? And those words were pretty hurtful.

“I'll make sure to brand my name into that thick skull of yours, so it'll be impossible for you to forget me,” she spewed angrily.

Han Jingru didn't bother to respond and went back to his room.

Right now, the Imperial Court was aware of his existence. Even the Emperor tried to polish the apple. Others would deem it as something splendid, but for Han Jingru, things were moving too fast that they were getting out of control. The Imperial Court was one of the three prominent nations in Xenos. Being affiliated with an upper-crust like the Imperial Court without having a good grasp of what Xenos was like wasn't good news to Han Jingru.

Of course, there were two sides to every coin. If Han Jingru went to the Imperial Court, he would know sooner why they wanted to invade the earth.

Unfortunately, Jiang Yingying was yet to be found. For that reason, Han Jingru couldn't just leave like that.

Meanwhile, Huang Xiaoyong was heading

straight to the Chen residence after apprehending Chen Tiexin.

Right in front of the gate of the Chen residence, he made Chen Tiexin kneel. That caused quite a stir, which attracted more and more passersby gather around them.

“What are you trying to do, Huang Xiaoyong!”

“Chen Tiexin, from what I could recall, you deliberately got tons of people to gather and witness as you chased my master out of this very residence. On top of that, you sent those blabbermouths bestrewing around Longyun City. Isn't that right?”
Huang Xiaoyong dropped a sly grin.

Back then, his intention was to tarnish Han Jingru's reputation and to make him a joke. Little did he know that the latter was actually a fighter whom even the Emperor would not belittle.

“So what if I did?” Chen Tiexin asked defiantly.

“In that case, I want every single soul to know that you’re going to pay for that deed of yours. Right here, right now.”

Seeing Chen Tiexin on his knees, Chen Yuanhai rushed out from the residence to help him up.

“Chen Yuanhai, a bloodbath shall fall upon the Chen residence if he dared to rise!” roared Hang Xiaoyong.

Chen Yuanhai was still yet to be filled in. He felt uneasy as he spoke to the intimidator after he declared the threat, “Huang Xiaoyong, I know that you’re remarkably powerful. But please bear in mind, the Chen family is not something you can fiddle with.”

“Chen Yuanhai, I don’t know if the Chen family is something I could fiddle with. But

what I'm certain is that Chen Tiexin's wrongdoings are enough to wipe the whole Chen family out," bellowed Huang Xiaoyong.

A wipe-out!

Chen Yuanhai rattled. *What could my son have possibly done to induce such calamity?*

Chen Yuanhai recovered from his quiver and challenged Huang Xiaoyong, "You think I can be easily fooled?"

"Just ask him what happened and then you'll know if I'm just spilling empty threats."

"What's going on?" murmured Chen Yuanhai.

Huang Xiaoyong's the governor's son. Nevertheless, he must've had a solid backing to be so blatant. If not, he wouldn't have the guts to speak about the slaughter of the Chen family outright in public.

Chen Tiexin was as pale as a ghost. Instead of eradicating Han Jingru, he sent himself into a dead-end. It wasn't that Chen Yuanhai didn't warn him not to act recklessly. *How am I going to explain this to my father now?*

"Father, I'm sorry," Chen Tiexin apologized.

"What for? Don't worry. As long as I'm here, you're safe," reassured Chen Yuanhai.

"You might've overestimated your capabilities, Chen Yuanhai. Do you think you could challenge the Emperor?" Huang Xiaoyong let out a scornful laugh.

The Emperor!

His eyes were filled with trepidation. *What exactly is going on! Why is the Emperor dragged into this?*

The Emperor was the head of the Imperial Court. Even a family as strong as the Bailing family was exterminated under his peremptory order, let alone the Chen Family.

“Chen Tiexin, tell me what’s going on. Explain yourself!” Chen Yuanhai inquired in a steely tone.

Chen Tiexin had no choice but to confess. *Thud!* After that, Chen Yuanhai

’s quivering legs could carry him no more and he slumped onto the ground.

Even the Emperor deemed that those three brought it upon themselves for trying to kill Han Jingru. Chen Tiexin just dug his own grave!

“Have you turned a deaf ear to all my warnings? I’ve told you not to act recklessly! Why didn’t you talk to me before all this?” Chen Yuanhai said as

gritted his teeth.

Chen Tiexin never thought of running past his father regarding the matter. His verdict was that Han Jingru would be executed once his killing of the Imperial Court's members was exposed. Who would have guessed that the Emperor would be so lenient?

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm not sure if you still remember Han Jingru? The guy who was chased out of the Chen residence by Chen Tiexin?" Without any warning, Huang Xiaoyong raised his voice and asked the crowd.

That incident ran rife in Longyun City. Almost everyone knew about it and treated it like a shaggy-dog story. It was only natural to gossip about Han Jingru back then. They remembered as one would expect.

"Mr. Huang, everyone in Longyun City

knows about it. How would we not know?"

"Mr. Huang, are you trying to stand up for Han Jingru, can you?"

"I wonder who this Han Jingru is to you that you are willing to take up the cudgels on his behalf."

Huang Xiaoyong only responded with a faint smile on the face of those bombardments. "I believe that all of you present know that a powerful master played a crucial part in my remarkably swift ascension, right?" he then asked.

The onlookers nodded. Since the news of Huang Xiaoyong having a powerful master broke out, people from all walks of life joined the guessing game. With zero clues, they could only speculate. Till now, the identity of this maestro was still a mystery.

"C'mon, Mr. Huang. Cut the chase and tell us."

“Exactly. We’d quite like to see how strong this extraordinary fighter is for ourselves.”

“To have such a skillful fighter in Longyun City makes us look good too.”

Seeing the people on tenterhooks made Huang Xiaoyong merrier. *Master has been living in the shadows for years. On top of that, he was even the joke of the town. Now, he can finally regain his reputation.*

“My master—is Han Jingru.”

His words were ensued by prolonged silence. The crowd had their eyes popping out from their sockets and jaws dropping onto the floor.

No one could believe their ears. They were astonished, thunderstruck, and above all, stupefied. Those words slammed right in their faces.