

## **Martial 2621**

### Chapter 2621, Big Chest But No Brains

“Serenity City...” Yang Kai pondered as he exited the inn, and then came to a realisation, “Isn’t this the city that Yan Xue Man woman comes from?”

Earlier on, when those three people had blocked their path and demanded to buy Ji Yao’s ship, the old man had introduced the young man as the Young Master of Profound Thunder Pavilion, and the young woman as the daughter of Serenity City’s City Lord.

When they entered the city yesterday, Yang Kai had been preoccupied with Ji Yao’s condition and had not paid attention to the city’s name. Only now did he find out that they were actually in Serenity City.

This was quite the coincidence.

Still, Yang Kai was not afraid. A mere city was not sufficient cause of concern for him.

He led Ji Yao on the way out of the city, and in a short time they had reached the city gates.

There were quite a lot of people in line waiting to exit the city, as well as a number of cultivators keeping guard at the city gate. Each person leaving the city had to undergo inspection by those guards.

“Hm?” Yang Kai frowned at the sight, wondering if this was part of Serenity City’s normal regulations, or if something had happened.

“Honoured Master, it’s not because of those three people from yesterday, is it?” Ji Yao suddenly asked him in a low voice, “Could they be looking for us?”

“That would be too much of a coincidence,” Yang Kai laughed, “We didn’t alert anyone when we entered the city yesterday. Perhaps some other incident happened within the city.”

Ji Yao gave a small nod.

The two of them chose not to barge through the city gates even though they were more than capable of doing so. Since they were in someone else’s territory, it was not a big deal to follow their rules. Thus, the pair quietly joined the back of the line amidst the crowd, waiting to exit the city.

The cultivators guarding the gate were very careful with their inspections, even covertly using Divine Sense to check those who were ready to leave.

Cultivator after cultivator was checked and let through with no issue, and the queue gradually moved forward.

“Patriarch Dong!” Suddenly, a voice was heard from inside a guard station by the city gate.

“Still nothing?” Another person, who seemed to be Patriarch Dong, asked.

“We’ve found nothing just yet.” The first person replied, “But, please rest assured, Patriarch Dong, the other three city gates have been closed already. If your wife wishes to leave the city, she will definitely go through this gate. As long as she appears, we’ll be able to find her.”

“Thank you for your hard work, Commander Yu. Ah, what a misfortune that has befallen my household,” Patriarch Dong sighed deeply.

Commander Yu suddenly laughed lightly, “Patriarch Dong, as far as I know, you and your spouse have always been affectionate, often entering and leaving Serenity City together, a sight which made many onlookers deeply envious. How did the two of you have such a big argument that it could not be resolved? And why did she choose to run away suddenly, forcing your hand to request the aid of us people from the City Lord’s Mansion to find her?”

After those queries from Commander Yu, the guardhouse instantly fell into silence as it seemed like Patriarch Dong found it difficult to answer.

Commander Yu then commented, “If it is not convenient for you to answer, Patriarch Dong, then just act as though I never asked.”

“Ha...” Patriarch Dong sighed heavily, then began to speak, “You know how the saying goes, one’s dirty laundry should not be aired in public. I originally wished to keep it under covers and not make a big deal out of it, but that foolish woman truly left me no choice! It’s nothing too inconvenient to say, really. It’s just that foolish woman was suddenly consumed by greed, and stole the most valuable treasure of my Dong Family, that’s all.”

“Thievery!?” Commander Yu was astonished, “Surely that can’t be? Madame Dong holds the second-highest position in the Dong Family, and I’ve even heard that she apparently comes from some big Sect. What could the Dong Family have that she would want to take without giving notice?”

“I don’t know if she’s lost her senses or not, to have done such a shameful thing,” Patriarch Dong said in anguish, then solemnly continued, “Commander Yu, the Dong Family has treated you well in the past, and for that sake, I hope you will find that foolish woman and capture her quietly. Please do not alert others, especially not City Lord Yan!”

“I understand, Patriarch Dong,” Commander Yu replied, “Please do not worry.”

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Though the two of them were speaking quietly inside the guardhouse, Yang Kai could hear them quite clearly.

He was not intentionally eavesdropping but had overheard them by accident. Now, however, he understood why Serenity City was on high alert.

It turned out that the wife of a Patriarch of a big family had stolen the family’s most important treasure, leading to her being hunted down with the help of the City Lord’s Mansion. This was indeed a great embarrassment to such a family. The helplessness and anguish in Patriarch Dong’s words had Yang Kai snickering internally. He figured that the man was probably floundering in desperation, wanting to both retrieve the stolen item while also keeping this shameful deed a secret.

Yang Kai wondered what the stolen item could be, to have triggered such greed in the Patriarch's wife. The queue continued moving forward though, and in no time, Yang Kai and Ji Yao had reached the city gate.

Just at that time, a stream of light suddenly appeared outside the city, flying towards the city gate.

"Who is it? Such impudence is not permitted at the gates of Serenity City!" One of the cultivators guarding the gate roared as he flew up to meet it.

The stream of light stopped, revealing a man and a woman.

"Are you blind, you lowlife? You dare to holler at this Young Master without even seeing who I am!?" The man snapped angrily.

The gate guard looked at them, and immediately began trembling uncontrollably, "Young Master Bai, Young Lady Yan!"

The couple was evidently the same people who crossed paths with Yang Kai just yesterday. He did not know where they had returned from, but noticed that Old Yan, who had been by their side yesterday, was now nowhere to be seen.

"Scram!" Bai Lu seemed to be in a foul mood. As he spoke, he struck the cultivator standing in their way with his palm, sending the guard flying backwards with blood spraying from his mouth. It was a pitiful sight.

As everyone around them watched, Bai Lu and Yan Xue Man charged right through the city gates and landed on the ground. Their eyes were full of arrogance, with an attitude of utter confidence of being the strongest present.

But very soon after, Bai Lu's face twitched and his body trembled as he suddenly looked in one direction.

At the end of his gaze, Yang Kai was looking coldly at him.

Bai Lu had embarrassed himself in front of Yang Kai yesterday, and nearly lost his life as a result, so it was impossible for him to forget what Yang Kai looked like. Who knew that in just a day's time, they would meet again at the gates of Serenity City?

The sight of Old Yan, who was an Emperor Realm Master, having his arm shattered in one strike was still fresh in Bai Lu's mind. He was extremely terrified of Yang Kai and could not help but shrink in fear, his haughtiness from early withering in an instant.

"What happened?" Yan Xue Man asked, having noticed him acting strangely. As she spoke though, she followed his gaze, and in the next moment, her pretty face turned white as if she had seen a ghost and she immediately looked away.

She had no doubt caught sight of Yang Kai as well.

"Quickly, we need to leave!" Bai Lu muttered under his breath, casting aside his gaze and dragging Yan Xue Man along as he fled, rushing into the city immediately. This caused the cultivators from the City

Lord's Mansion great astonishment, and they all looked at each other as they wondered what was wrong with Young Master Bai and Young Lady Yan today.

A moment later, Bai Lu and Yan Xue Man peeked their heads around a street corner, quietly gazing towards the city gate.

"W-w-why are those two here?" Yan Xue Man asked in a trembling voice.

Bai Lu's face was ashen as he answered, "If you ask me, who am I supposed to ask?"

The nasty encounter from the previous day had given the couple quite a shock, and they were as afraid of Yang Kai as a pair of mice would be in front of a cat.

Suddenly, Yan Xue Man thought of something, frowned deeply and declared, "No, this is Serenity City, why must this Young Lady fear them? I have to go tell Lord Father about this and have him seek justice for me!"

After saying so, she really turned around and started walking towards the City Lord's Mansion, apparently eager to find her father.

Bai Lu hurriedly grabbed her arm though and said in a cold tone, "How can you have such a big chest but no brains!"

"Who... who has a big chest but no brains!?" Yan Xue Man screamed angrily.

Bai Lu bluntly continued, "The cultivation of Old Yan and your father is essentially equal, but Old Yan wasn't that man's opponent at all! Did you even stop to think about what would happen even if your father did come? Do you want to kill your father? When that happens, don't come crying to this Young Master for help!"

When Yan Xue Man heard this, his pretty face turned pale and she thought about it again. Even Old Yan had his arm shredded in a single punch, so how could her father do any better? If she really called her father, the only one to suffer a loss would be him.

"What should I do then!?" Yan Xue Man panted anxiously, "Why don't you call your Father over then? Uncle Bai is a Second-Order Emperor, so it shouldn't be a problem for him to clean up that person."

Bai Lu shook his head and said, "I don't know how to tell my father about Old Yan. Profound Thunder Pavilion doesn't have many Emperor Realm Masters, and Old Yan has already suffered such a serious injury. Speaking of which, this is all your fault, isn't it!? Why did you insist on buying that ship? Old Yan lost an arm thanks to your selfish whims!"

After being accused by him, Yan Xue Man's eyes reddened immediately and she snapped back in a trembling voice, "Surnamed Bai, after you and this Young Lady shared such a time together under the moonlight, you're now accusing me of such crimes? Do you still have any conscience?!"

Seeing her cry like this, Bai Lu only felt more disgruntled, but he had no choice but to comfort her, "Good, good, don't cry. What happened yesterday was my mistake, it has nothing to do with you."

"Bad, you're a bad man, bad..." Yan Xue Man yelled, pounding him with her fists while weeping.

“Don’t make trouble!” Bai Lu didn’t have the presence of mind to deal with her now so he quickly grabbed her hand and said, “What’s important is to send these two disasters away first. Fortunately, it seems that they are leaving the city... sii...”

Mid-sentence, Bai Lu took Yan Xue Man and quickly hid back behind the corner.

Because when he looked up, he actually saw Yang Kai turn his head and glance in their direction with an expression that nearly stopped his heart from fright.

At the city gate, Yang Kai, who was waiting in line to leave the city, turned his head back and sneered.

He didn’t expect that Young Master Bai and Young Lady Yan would react that way when they met him today, but it did save him some trouble. If they really didn’t know what was good for them and wanted to gather up forces to seek revenge, Yang Kai wouldn’t have minded teaching them a final lesson for bothering him.

“Cough cough cough...” A violent cough suddenly sounded as an old woman at the front of the line stumbled, losing her balance and nearly falling to the ground.

Ji Yao moved swiftly at that moment and supported the old woman, asking with concern, “Grandma, are you okay?”

Chapter 2622, Madame Dong

The old woman started coughing again, and she coughed so violently that it seemed like she was about to hack up a lung. It was a long time before she managed to catch her breath, and she turned to say weakly to Ji Yao, “It’s alright, it’s alright, I’m just getting on in years... Thank you, little girl.”

Ji Yao shook her head, but before she could even let go of the old woman, her knees buckled again.

Ji Yao hurriedly pulled her to her feet again, and said with a frown, “I’ll help you stand, Grandma.”

“Thank you, thank you,” said the old woman, “You have a kind heart, little girl, you will be rewarded for it one day...” She coughed again.

Ji Yao smiled, “My Honoured Master often taught us Disciples that we should be respectful and kind to the elderly and the young when we’re outside. It’s only a small matter.”

The old woman chuckled lightly, “You’re a good girl, and your Master has taught you well. Which Sect are you from, young lady?”

Ji Yao shook her head and smiled, but did not answer.

Yang Kai’s eyes flashed at that moment though and he said with a smile, “It is indeed virtuous to be respectful and kind to the elderly and the young, but it’s also important to keep your eyes wide open when travelling outside. You mustn’t let yourself be easily tricked by others; after all, there are so many

deceitful and sinister people in this world, and who knows when you'll be taken advantage of when you're just trying to do a good deed? Now, that would be the same as helping a tyrant to oppress the innocent, wouldn't you say so, 'Grandma'?"

The old woman trembled in spite of herself, and she forced a smile, "You are quite right, Little Brother."

Ji Yao nodded her head seriously, "Disciple will take Master's words to heart."

"Disciple?" The old woman jolted at her words, realising that the Honoured Master that Ji Yao had mentioned earlier was actually the man standing behind her. She could not help but find this somewhat incredible.

Then came the sudden non sequitur from Yang Kai, "Your earrings are quite exquisite, Grandma."

The old woman was startled and touched her earlobe with a hand, but found nothing there. She gave him a strained smile at that point, "Little Brother, you're still so young and yet your eyes are fooling you. How could I wear earrings at my age?"

"You didn't wear them today, but you probably did yesterday," said Yang Kai, "The holes from the piercings are quite distinct. It would appear you've worn such ornaments for many years."

His words were so pointed that there was no way Ji Yao would not have realised something was wrong. Her brow furrowed as she stealthily channelled Emperor Qi into the old woman's body.

A moment later, Ji Yao's expression turned icy and she tightly gripped the old woman's arm, asking coldly, "Who are you, and why did you deceive me?"

It had escaped her notice previously, but upon closer inspection, she discovered that the seemingly terminally ill old woman was actually someone whose body was teeming with vitality. Her aged face was clearly not her true appearance, merely a camouflage of some kind.

This made Ji Yao quite furious. She had just been helping the woman out of the kindness of her heart, and had no idea that the woman actually had ulterior motives, which sent her into a rage.

The woman was not a true Master like them, only a Third-Order Dao Source Realm, so she was completely unable to move with Ji Yao grabbing her like this. All the Source Qi in her body was suppressed, and the inability to channel her Source Qi made her panic. She looked pleadingly at Ji Yao and said in a low voice, "Senior, I mean no harm, I only did this because I had no other choice! Please be magnanimous, Senior, and don't expose me."

Ji Yao's expression changed as she cast a glance towards the cultivators closely guarding the city gate and asked, "They're here because of you?"

The woman nodded silently.

"Why did you choose to take advantage of me!?" Ji Yao asked coldly.

"Earlier, Young Master Bai and Young Lady Yan seemed very fearful of the two of you when they were entering the city, so..."

Yang Kai raised an eyebrow and said, "Madame Dong is sharp-eyed indeed. You even took notice of something so minor."

At his words, the woman's whole body trembled as she looked at him in despair, "You know me?"

"Madame Dong?" Ji Yao frowned, wondering how her Honoured Master was able to reveal the woman's identity so easily. As far as she knew, it was their first time in Serenity City, and they did not know anyone there.

"I don't," said Yang Kai, "But I heard some people talking about you."

"What... what did they say about me?" The woman asked shakily, seemingly very keen to find out.

"The wife of the Dong Family Patriarch," Yang Kai said lightly, "She stole the family's greatest treasure, sending the Patriarch into a fury, causing him to request assistance from the City Lord's Mansion's guard to seal all the gates but this one and then perform a tight inspection of everyone trying to leave the city. If anyone found the criminal, they were to quietly arrest her!"

"Stealing the family's treasure..." The woman smiled bitterly, "I dare not bear such a crime on my name."

Ji Yao frowned, "Are you saying my Honoured Master is wrong?"

Madame Dong shook her head, "What family treasure? I never saw anything like that. The Dong Family doesn't even have such a thing. I married into the Dong Family so many years ago, and was the wife of the Patriarch. If there really was a family treasure, how could I not know of it?"

"Then why would they frame you?" Ji Yao asked curiously.

"Because they need to catch me," Madame Dong answered.

Ji Yao seemed curious to find out more, but Yang Kai waved his hand and discontinued the conversation, "Madame Dong, we're not interested in your matters. As for your attempt to use us to escape the city, I won't hold a grudge for it either. You'll just have to pray for good fortune!"

"Sir..." Madame Dong looked pleadingly at Yang Kai, "It was my fault earlier, and I can only beg you to help me leave Serenity City. I will definitely repay your kindness one day."

Yang Kai smiled coldly, "What can you use for repayment? I'm not interested in getting mixed up with other people's affairs!"

"Sir..."

"If you say another word, I'll expose you right now!" Yang Kai looked coldly at her.

Madame Dong shuddered. She did not doubt that Yang Kai was capable of doing this as his Disciple, Ji Yao, was able to instantly subdue her, and as Ji Yao's Honoured Master, he would not be any weaker.

She had hoped to be able to persuade him to help her, but it was all wishful thinking in the end.

Madame Dong turned around miserably and stood in line, not daring to say anymore.

“Honoured Master, this person’s Disguise Technique is extremely profound!” Ji Yao whispered to Yang Kai. If it hadn’t been for Yang Kai’s observation earlier, she probably would have never suspected that the old woman was just a disguise.

This was no Secret Technique, but purely a Disguise Technique, but not one that could be mastered by just anybody.

Yang Kai gave a slight nod and agreed, “It is indeed. If I didn’t have prior knowledge, I may not have noticed anything off either.”

It was only because he had overheard part of Commander Yu and Patriarch Dong’s conversation, and then noticed the fresh piercing holes on the old woman’s ears, that he started to suspect her.

“Honoured Master, are we really going to do nothing? She really seems like she has some secret she can’t reveal.” At the sight of the woman’s frightened expression, Ji Yao grew sympathetic.

“People are deceitful,” Yang Kai said lightly, “We don’t know who’s right and who’s wrong in this situation. If we arbitrarily interfere, we may be aiding the villain instead.”

“Yes!” Ji Yao nodded.

As they spoke, the old woman had reached the front of the queue.

One of the cultivators guarding the gate waved his hand at the old woman and she walked unsteadily up. The cultivator was holding a bag in his hand, which he opened and placed before the old woman.

She took only one look at it before her demeanour changed completely. Immediately after, a chirping sound was heard from within the bag, like the cry of some Monster Beast.

The old woman moved quickly, with none of her previous frailty or unsteadiness. She was as agile as any youth as she bolted straight for the city gate.

“Seize her!” Cried the guard.

“Since you’ve shown yourself, then you may as well stay,” came another person’s voice, followed by a flash of a blade as it swung towards the old woman’s path.

The old woman’s expression changed again, and she knew that she was bound to be critically injured if she tried to force her way forward. Having no other choice, she reluctantly retreated a few steps.

\*Shua shua shua...\*

Several figures came dashing out from all around, charging towards the old woman.

After that moment’s delay, the old woman found herself completely surrounded by those people just as she realised what was going on.

“Oh!” At that sight, Ji Yao could not help but sigh. She knew the woman had no hope of escape.

The woman was only a Third-Order Dao Source Realm cultivator, while the people surrounding her included at least six with equal cultivations. Being so greatly outnumbered, it would be a joke if they let her escape.

“It’s the Elders from the Dong Family!”

“You’re right. It really is them!”

“Strange, what are they doing here? Who is that old woman? How did she get on the Dong Family’s bad side?”

The cultivators nearby were all discussing amongst themselves, full of curiosity about the scene going on before their eyes.

Though the Elders from the Dong Family had the old woman surrounded, they were in no hurry to actually make a move. It was clear that they all knew who the old woman really was, and they looked at her with conflicted expressions.

This was the Patriarch’s wife, after all. She held a higher position than all of them.

Two more people stepped out towards the city gate then, causing those guarding the gate to cup their fists in greeting.

“Greetings Commander Yu.”

“Greetings Patriarch Dong!”

Yang Kai glanced over, and saw that one of these men was clad in full armour and looked very imposing, while the other was wearing a blue robe and looked very stern.

Both of them were also Third-Order Dao Source Realms.

The person in armour was most likely Commander Yu, and thus the other one would be the Dong Family Patriarch.

The old woman turned, and her gaze fell upon the Dong Family Patriarch. Through gritted teeth she pleaded, “Let me go!”

Patriarch Dong shook his head slowly, “You know that is impossible.”

“I beg you, please let me go. If I can’t leave today, then I’ll leave tomorrow. You can’t stop me forever!”

“How will you leave if I break your legs and cripple your cultivation?” Patriarch Dong said coldly.

At those words, the old woman’s whole body trembled and she said in disbelief, “We have been husband and wife for so many years, are you really going to be so heartless?”

“Husband and wife?”

At those words the onlooking cultivators were all greatly astonished, wondering how the Dong Family Patriarch’s wife, who was as beautiful as a flower, had turned into an old hag.

The crowd whispered amongst itself, and Patriarch Dong’s expression was as dark as it could be.

The old woman standing in the street raised a hand at that moment and rubbed across her face, removing the disguise and revealing her lovely appearance.

“Wow... It really is Madame Dong! How could this be?”

“Heh heh, what drama is going on in the Dong Family?”

“We’re up for a good show now! The Patriarch’s wife is trying to escape the Dong Family, and they’re sending all their forces to stop her here. I wonder what happened behind the scenes!”

Chapter 2623, Severed Sentiment

“Perhaps Madame Dong found a new flame, so she wants to leave Patriarch Dong, but since he could not possibly agree, he brought his men to get her back?”

“Brother, your hypothesis is very compelling...”

Now, everyone was gazing sympathetically at Patriarch Dong as though he was already wearing a bright green hat. This made Patriarch Dong’s expression grow darker and he roared, “Foolish woman, look what you’ve done!”

Madame Dong stood her ground, gazing miserably at Patriarch Dong, “Dong Hai!” She said in anguish, “Are you really not going to care about the feelings we had as husband and wife?”

Dong Hai’s face twitched as a trace of struggle flitted across his eyes, “Tian He,” he sighed, “If you still care about any spousal feelings between us, then return to the Dong Family with me quietly. From now on, you will not leave Serenity City again, and we will live out our days as husband and wife.”

Tears fell from Madame Dong’s eyes, and she shook her head, “Dong Hai, you know why I have to leave, and you know what I’m going to do. Please don’t make this any more difficult.”

“You are forcing the Dong Family into desperation!” Dong Hai scolded harshly.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry...” Tears were pouring down Madame Dong’s face, which was full of guilt and regret. It was as though she really had done something unforgivable, and the onlookers were even more confused as they had absolutely no idea what was going on.

“Come back with me and I’ll overlook what happened today, and so will the Dong Family. You will still be my wife!” Dong Hai reached a hand towards her, gesturing his intentions to Madame Dong.

Madame Dong only shook her head though as her tears continued to fall.

Any trace of tenderness in Dong Hai’s face gradually vanished and was slowly replaced by cold sternness. He finally lowered his hand and spoke calmly, “The foolish woman, Shi Tian He, since her marriage into the Dong Family, has not had any offspring in a hundred years. Her inability to produce an heir is a great enough crime on its own, but she is also vain and envious, a source of corruption to the Dong Family. Worse, she is guilty of the crime of theft, trying to take the Dong Family’s greatest treasure for herself. She has shown that she has no shame! On this day I, Dong Hai, as the Dong Family Patriarch, declare that Shi Tian He is banished from the Dong Family. From now on, all our spousal ties are severed, and we will have no further relations!”

His words stunned every single person present.

The local cultivators in Serenity City were especially shocked, and they all stared with their eyes wide in disbelief.

Though most had never even spoken a word to Madame Dong before, according to the gossip in the city, she was a good person with a kind and charitable heart. She would often help the city's poor and downtrodden, yet in the words of the Dong Family Patriarch, she was shameless, vain, and shallow.

But gossip was only gossip, after all. If her own husband said such things about her, how could it be false?

Not only that, she had even stolen the Dong Family's greatest treasure! This could not merely be described as having a poor character, it was a complete corruption of morality.

At that moment, everyone in the crowd was making their own judgments on the situation, wondering why the wife of the Dong Family Patriarch would throw away her good life to do such a thing. It was no wonder that the Dong Family would send all their Elders out to capture her.

Any man in that situation would not be able to endure such a woman as his wife, right?

\*Pu...\*

A low sound was heard as blood suddenly sprayed from Shi Tian He's mouth. Her face was flushed red, and fresh blood vividly stained her clothes at the chest.

She staggered a little, clutching her chest, as though she was enduring unbearable pain in her heart. She gazed at Dong Hai with despair in her eyes, as she had never thought that Dong Hai would truly be so heartless.

A single day together as husband and wife was supposed to mean endless devotion for the rest of your life, while she and Dong Hai had been married for a hundred years!

Back then, she was willing to deeply offend her Honoured Master and be driven out of her Sect just so she could be together with Dong Hai. Though she had gotten what she wanted in the end, it had been a hundred years since she had last been to her Sect. As for all the Senior Sisters and Junior Sisters that she often thought of, she had never seen them again.

She had spent all her time in the Dong Family, at Dong Hai's side. She had once thought that she had found the perfect husband for her entire life, and never thought that he would wound her heart so deeply.

This was the man she had viewed as her whole world and the only man for her entire life, and he had wounded her so cruelly.

"Honoured Master, this seems like no simple matter!" Ji Yao suddenly said to Yang Kai in a low voice, after observing what was going on.

Yang Kai remained indifferent though and simply commented, "It's other people's business, why pay so much attention?"

Despite his words, he was also quite unsettled. The despair in Shi Tian He's eyes was like a layer of dark clouds, completely blocking out every last speck of light. It was evident that she was entirely heartbroken.

After a pause, Yang Kai asked, "Yao'er, do you want to help her?"

"I will do as you say, Honoured Master," Ji Yao answered.

"En," Yang Kai could not help but sigh. Though he was not very willing to intervene in this matter, it was evident that the people of Dong Family had gone a little too far, Dong Hai in particular. He and Shi Tian He had clearly lived together as husband and wife for a hundred years, so how could they not understand each other? Even if there were some little conflicts, it could be resolved peacefully through talking things through. Was it really necessary to cast her out of the Dong Family so publicly while completely tarnishing her name and honour?

How would anyone respect her after this?

[What an undependable man. Shi Tian He must've been blind to marry someone like him.]

"Ha...ahaha...hahaha..." Standing there, Shi Tian He suddenly started laughing as if she had gone insane, fresh blood still dripping from the corners of her mouth, turning her into quite the ghastly sight.

Her laughter was full of bitterness, and it was horrifying to the people who heard her.

"Dong Hai!" Shi Tian He suddenly screamed, "You are willing to go so far for the Dong Family? You really are... A fitting Patriarch!"

"There's no need to say more!" Dong Hai said, unwilling to keep going on like this. With so many cultivators watching the scene, dragging it any longer would only cause himself and the Dong Family to lose even more dignity. He gave a light wave of his hand and ordered, "Elders, do it!"

Hearing this, the Elders' faces grew grim as they said, "Pardon our offence!"

As they spoke, they each channelled their Source Qi and lunged at Shi Tian He.

\*Zheng...\*

The sound of a blade rang out as an icy longsword suddenly appeared in Shi Tian He's hand. As the blade swung, the temperature around her plummeted, and an ice-cold domain suddenly spread outwards.

As her blade flashed, large snowflakes suddenly descended from the sky and enveloped the Dong Family Elders within. Each snowflake was like a deadly dangerous weapon, and the Dong Family Elders all grew pale as they did not dare to act rashly.

"It's snowing?"

"No, this is her Ice Attribute Secret Technique!"

"To think Madame Dong is actually this strong!?"

The crowd exclaimed in surprise.

As Dong Hai saw Shi Tian He use her Secret Technique, his face grew grim and he hastily shouted, "Foolish woman, why are you still struggling?"

Commander Yu frowned and said, "Patriarch Dong, your wife... Ah, this woman's attack seems to be similar to the Secret Technique used by Ice Heart Valley?"

Dong Hai forced a smile and pushed the matter aside hastily, "You must be joking, Commander Yu. This foolish woman had cultivated an Ice Attribute Secret Art since she was young, and she had learnt some fairly powerful Secret Techniques. She has nothing to do with Ice Heart Valley."

From his words, it seemed like having anything to do with Ice Heart Valley would mean certain doom.

Commander Yu did not question him, only nodding lightly, "That would be for the best. You know how Ice Heart Valley is like right now. If she really was an Ice Heart Valley disciple, then your Dong Family would be finished."

Cold sweat seeped from Dong Hai's brow as he gave a strained laugh, "She's her own person, and no longer has any connection to the Dong Family."

"Clear Sky Snowfall!"

Ji Yao suddenly cried out, her brow knitting tightly as she stared fixedly at Shi Tian He who was struggling now with all her might.

As the Third Disciple of Bing Yun, Ji Yao was extremely familiar with all the Secret Techniques of Ice Heart Valley. Once Shi Tian He used her attack, Ji Yao recognized it as the Ice Heart Valley's Clear Sky Snowfall, a Secret Technique that only Core Disciples of Ice Heart Valley could cultivate.

Up in the sky, Shi Tian He forced back a few of the Dong Family Elders with one attack, but just as she was about to escape, others swooped in, sticking around, cutting off her path. She had no choice but to turn her sword and attack again.

The weaving of her sword appeared like pear blossoms blooming in the sky, beautiful yet hiding an indescribable murderous intent. Shi Tian He darted between these blossoms, going in and out of visibility as she looked for a chance to escape.

"Pear Flower Ice Snow Sword!"

Ji Yao exclaimed once more.

Even if she had not been entirely certain that Shi Tian He was an Ice Heart Valley disciple when she recognized the Clear Sky Snowfall Secret Technique earlier, she was now certain.

If she was not an Ice Heart Valley disciple, how could it be possible for her to know these two Secret Techniques?

She was greatly shocked, not expecting that she would meet a fellow disciple of Ice Heart Valley in Serenity City, when she had only just returned to Northern Territory and not yet reached her Sect.

Just then, one of the Dong Family Elders fought hard and broke through Shi Tian He's defences. He drew her attention while another Elder appeared behind her in a flash and struck towards her back with a palm.

Though Shi Tian He was quite powerful, she could not fend off multiple attacks at once. She was already at her limit after just a few rounds of attacks, and even though she sensed the attack coming from behind, she could do nothing about it other than feeling helpless frustration.

"Die!"

At that moment, a voice suddenly echoed and the onlookers saw a blur of movement as an incomparably beautiful woman with an icy demeanour suddenly appeared behind Shi Tian He. With what seemed like a casual strike, she turned a Third-Order Dao Source Realm Elder of the Dong Family into a blood mist.

Naturally, it was Ji Yao. As the Third Disciple of Bing Yun, Ji Yao held an extremely high rank within the Sect. Now that someone was not only bullying another Ice Heart Valley disciple right before her eyes, but also ganging up on her and embarrassing her, Ji Yao had no mercy at all and killed the Dong Family Elder in one blow.

She reached out with her hand and pulled Shi Tian He behind her, protecting the woman as her delicate hand dealt with outgoing blows.

\*Hong Hong Hong...\*

With that, several clouds of bloody mist were seen in the sky as every single one of the Dong Family Elders surrounding Shi Tian He exploded into blood mist, their bodies disintegrating before they even realized what was happening.

"An Emperor Realm Master!"

Someone cried out as everyone gasped in shock.

Shi Tian He's situation had been desperate, and all the onlookers had thought that she would not be able to escape with her life today; but to everyone's surprise, a beautiful and icy Emperor Realm Master suddenly intruded and completely flipped the tragic situation, instantly killing all of the Dong Family's Elders.

Chapter 2624, Expelled Disciple of Ice Heart Valley

"Ah!" Dong Hai's face went pale, and he almost collapsed.

He had deployed all the Third-Order Dao Source Realm Elders of the Dong Family this time in order to capture Shi Tian He as this was an important matter with no room for mistakes. He had thought it was an adequate arrangement, but little did he know that it would result in all of them getting slaughtered.

With the Dong Family losing so many Elder level figures at once, their power was sure to plummet. After that, it was entirely possible that they would be consumed by the other great families in the city.

Dong Hai could hardly accept this reality, and his mind went blank.

“Who are you!?” Commander Yu was shocked as well. As the Commander of Serenity City’s Guard, an Emperor Realm Master appearing all of a sudden in his city without his knowledge was a serious dereliction of his duties.

Not only that, but the pressure he felt from Ji Yao was even greater than that of the City Lord.

In other words, this icy woman was even stronger than the City Lord.

A Master who was stronger than the City Lord... Had to be a Second-Order Emperor! Commander Yu felt cold sweat lining his brow at such a thought.

Around the corner, Bai Lu and Yan Xue Man saw everything that happened and were both filled with terror.

They had thought that between Yang Kai and Ji Yao, only the Honoured Master Yang Kai was an Emperor Realm Master. Only now did they realise that Ji Yao was one too.

Yan Xue Man, who had tried to buy her ship just yesterday, clearly realized that Ji Yao had been merciful back then, otherwise, the two of them would have long lost their lives.

Commander Yu hurried over while wiping the sweat from his forehead, “Greetings, Senior, I am Serenity City’s Guard Commander, Yu Zhen. May I know your honoured name?” He asked Ji Yao respectfully, cupping his fists.

Standing before someone he suspected to be a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master, he did not dare to show any rudeness; after all, even the City Lord was only a First-Order Emperor Realm Master. If he angered this Master into losing her temper and she decided to go on a rampage, Serenity City would disappear from the Stary Boundary today.

Ji Yao did not seem to hear Yu Zhen’s words, only turning her head and staring at Shi Tian He with a frown.

Shi Tian He was also stunned, still holding her sword in her hand. She looked around, but saw that every single one of the Dong Family Elders that had been attacking her was now dead.

“Senior...” Shi Tian He looked very emotional as she gazed at Ji Yao, saying gratefully, “Many thanks to you, Senior, for saving me!”

She had felt certain that she was about to die, only to suddenly receive someone’s assistance at the last moment and have her fate completely changed. The gratitude in her heart was more than she could express.

“You’re a disciple of Ice Heart Valley, right?” Ji Yao asked, frowning.

Those words fell like a giant boulder being thrown into the surface of a calm lake, creating humongous waves of shock.

“What? Patriarch Dong’s wife is an Ice Heart Valley disciple? Is this for real?”

“Surely not? If it is true, then the Dong Family is doomed!”

“It’s no wonder that Patriarch Dong was willing to drive his own wife out of the Dong Family in order to sever ties with her. It turns out she’s an Ice Heart Valley disciple!”

“Patriarch Dong is resolute indeed, how could anyone else bear to cast out such a pretty wife?”

The air was full of the crowd’s chatter, which made both Ji Yao and Yang Kai frown deeply as they wondered what was going on.

At Ji Yao’s query, Shi Tian He gave a bitter laugh, “I dare not call myself an Ice Heart Valley disciple anymore. I was expelled from the Sect by my Honoured Master one hundred years ago.”

“Expelled from the Sect? What crime did you commit?” Ji Yao asked after a shocked pause.

It was impossible for Ice Heart Valley disciples to be driven out of the Sect unless they had done something seriously wrong.

Shi Tian He’s expression was bitter as she cast a glance at Dong Hai below.

Ji Yao understood her meaning, and snorted coldly, “So, it was for a man! You really are blind to go with him even when it meant being driven out of the Master Sect. And look at you now, he even cast you out of the Dong Family!”

At those words, Shi Tian He’s eyes reddened again. This was her greatest source of anguish, but she was unable to say anything.

“It’s over, it’s over...” Dong Hai’s face seemed to grow old and weary as he heard Ji Yao and Shi Tian He’s words. His body swayed as he looked like he was about to fall.

He knew that this really was the end of the Dong Family. Not only did they lose their Elders and fall greatly in strength, the relationship between Shi Tian He and Ice Heart Valley had also been exposed. There was no way the Dong Family could ever recover from this!

From this day on, there would be no place in Serenity City for the Dong Family. Even if the other great families in the city didn’t deal with them, the City Lord would not possibly bypass them.

Even though Shi Tian He had been expelled from Ice Heart Valley a hundred years ago, she had still once been their disciple. Right now, in the entire Northern Territory, anyone who had anything to do with Ice Heart Valley would face a nasty end.

“So, she’s from Ice Heart Valley...” Yang Kai looked astonished as well.

When he had been eavesdropping on Commander Yu and Dong Hai’s conversation earlier, Commander Yu had said that Madame Dong was from some Major Sect. He had not paid attention to it then, but now he knew that the ‘Major Sect’ was actually Ice Heart Valley!

In the Northern Territory, Ice Heart Valley was considered one of the top forces. For their disciple to marry down and join the puny Dong Family of Serenity City was an incredible honour.

“Whose disciple are you exactly?” Ji Yao asked.

Shi Tian He said quietly, “Senior, this Junior’s Honoured Master’s surname is An, and her given name is Ruo Yun!”

“You’re Eldest Senior Sister’s disciple?” Ji Yao jolted.

An Ruo Yun was a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master and held the highest rank amongst Bing Yun’s direct Disciples. She was the Eldest Senior Sister amongst them all. During the years Bing Yun had gone missing, it was An Ruo Yun who took charge of Ice Heart Valley in her stead and kept it going.

It could be said that almost all the cultivators in the Northern Territory knew her name.

Upon hearing that Shi Tian He’s Honoured Master was An Ruo Yun, the crowd was shocked. None of them had thought that Dong Hai’s wife had such an astonishing origin!

The glances they cast towards Dong Hai were now filled with complicated emotions. The disciple of An Ruo Yun herself had chosen expulsion just to marry him! What had Dong Hai done to deserve such an honour? It was a pity, however, that what was once a great honour was now a death sentence for the Dong Family.

“Eldest Senior Sister?” Shi Tian He was stunned and stared blankly at Ji Yao, “Senior, you are...”

Since this person referred to her Honoured Master as Eldest Senior Sister, then she was evidently also from Ice Heart Valley. Shi Tian He recalled all the faces of her Martial Aunts in Ice Heart Valley, but none of their faces matched the person before her, which caused her great confusion.

“I am your Third Martial Aunt!” Ji Yao said coldly.

Shi Tian He’s eyes lit up and she cried out, “You are... Martial Aunt Ji Yao!”

Back when she was still in Ice Heart Valley, Ji Yao had never appeared in the Sect as she had been wandering outside. She had thus never seen Ji Yao in person, but during the days she spent in the valley, she had often heard her Honoured Master speak of this Martial Aunt who had been missing for so long. The other Martial Aunts in the valley were all concerned about her safety, but none of them knew where to begin looking for her.

She had never thought that she would run into Ji Yao in Serenity City today.

Quickly, Shi Tian He was overjoyed, and the sorrow in her heart was greatly reduced by seeing Ji Yao. She hurriedly knelt down before Ji Yao and greeted, “Greetings to Third Martial Aunt from the expelled disciple of Ice Heart Valley, Shi Tian He!”

“Get up!” Ji Yao raised Shi Tian He to her feet with one hand, and said with a cold snort, “You were the disciple of Eldest Senior Sister, and yet you went against her for the sake of such a man. If I was her, I would’ve killed you right away and not let you live to this day!”

Shi Tian He smiled bitterly and said nothing.

Ji Yao continued, “But since Eldest Senior Sister decided to spare your life, I will not go against her wishes. Since you were cast out from Dong Family today, then you are no longer one of them. Come

back with me to Ice Heart Valley and apologize to Eldest Senior Sister! Whether you live or die will be up to her to decide.”

Tearfully, Shi Tian He answered, “Many thanks, Third Martial Aunt!”

Ji Yao turned her head and looked coldly at the distraught Dong Hai below, then scolded, “Though Tian He is an expelled disciple of Ice Heart Valley, that doesn’t mean any random trash can mistreat her! If you had cared for her after she abandoned her Sect to be with you, then it would’ve been fine, but now that you’ve cast her aside for your own selfish needs, your death isn’t worth pity!”

As she spoke, she was about to strike downwards with her palm.

“No!” Shi Tian He turned pale, and in a flash she had thrown herself in front of Ji Yao, falling to her knees as she pleaded, “Third Martial Aunt, don’t kill him! I beg you, please don’t kill him!”

The Emperor Qi was surging in Ji Yao’s palm, but she held it back and did not unleash it. She glared at Shi Tian He and snapped furiously, “You would protect him even now?”

Shi Tian He shook her head, crying, “He saved my life all those years ago. Please spare his life today, Third Martial Aunt, and just take it as me repaying that life debt. From now on, there is nothing between us, and there will never be any further contact!”

Ji Yao was unbearably livid, and she almost wanted to kill her foolish Martial Niece here and now. The Emperor Qi in her palm surged several times, but in the end, she could not bear to do it. After all, Shi Tian He’s life had been difficult enough already.

Given no other choice, Ji Yao could only turn her head to look at Yang Kai, “Honoured Master, what do you think?”

“His life may be spared, but he cannot escape punishment!” Yang Kai answered coldly.

As he spoke, he appeared before Dong Hai and landed a palm strike on his chest. Dong Hai could not even react before he was sent flying and was knocked out as he crashed into a nearby building.

Since Yang Kai had already acted, Ji Yao naturally had no objections and retracted her Emperor Qi.

“We’re leaving!” Yang Kai waved his hand and flew into the air first.

Ji Yao hurriedly followed, with Shi Tian He turning to look at Dong Hai unconscious on the ground for a moment before ultimately also averting her gaze and quickly disappearing from the onlookers’ view.

Only then did the many cultivators at the city gates heave a sigh of relief. With an Emperor Realm cultivator present, they didn’t even dare to breathe loudly in case they somehow caused offence.

“So, she’s from Ice Heart Valley!”

Around the corner, Bai Lu looked like he had discovered some great secret treasure, and his face was full of excitement. Thoughts spun rapidly in his head for a while before he suddenly said, “Xue Man, hurry and tell your Father that an Emperor Realm cultivator from Ice Heart Valley has just left Serenity City. Tell him to quickly gather all his forces and chase after them! Remember to tell him not to alert them! He just needs to make sure they’re followed!”

“What about you?” Yan Xue Man stared at him.

“I’m going back to Profound Thunder Pavilion to tell my Father what happened here. I believe he will be very interested in that woman.”

Having said so, he dashed towards the Space Array in Serenity City from where he could directly return to Profound Thunder Pavilion and inform his Father.

“To think someone from Ice Heart Valley dared to come out and stir up trouble. Now, I can finally get revenge!” Bai Lu thought with a cold smile, feeling gleeful as he thought about what it would look like when his father stepped in and took down those two.

Silavin, Ok. So, slight adjustments. Technically, Ji Yao is not supposed to be gone 100 years ago. So, changed it to her just leaving the Sect for long periods of time, which is true.

Pewpew: Made another adjustment to erase all mention of how long she was gone for, so nothing needs to be adjusted from before.

Chapter 2625, Ice Heart Valley’s Crisis

A group of three people flew through the air.

Perhaps it was because of her intense disappointment in Shi Tian He, the expression in Ji Yao’s eyes when she looked at her was one of extreme frustration. As for Shi Tian He, she had just gone through a great change in her life, and though she had come out of the ordeal alive, she was distraught and depressed. If she did not have a goal to keep her going, she would’ve probably lost all desire to live.

“Honoured Master, you should have killed that man for what he did. Why did you spare his life!?”

After they had been flying for some time, Ji Yao finally could not hold herself back. Her words were filled with murderous rage and it was evident that she was still thinking about how Dong Hai had only received some small injuries instead of the death penalty.

Yang Kai shook his head and said nothing.

“Honoured Master?” Shi Tian He was shocked hearing these words though and stared at Yang Kai in amazement. She then cupped her fists and asked, “Greetings Senior, how may I address you?”

She had been in a state of dismay so far, and had only just remembered to ask about Yang Kai’s identity. She found it strange that her Third Martial Aunt would call him her Honoured Master.

Since she was her Third Martial Aunt, shouldn’t her Honoured Master be the Ancestral Founder of the Sect? Why was she calling a man her Honoured Master? Likewise, why would the Ancestral Founder be here?

“What do you mean, Senior? This is the Ancestral Founder! You really are blind!” Ji Yao said through gritted teeth, her heart full of outrage at the woman who had been driven out of the Master Sect by the Eldest Senior Sister all those years ago and could not even recognize the Ancestral Founder right before her.

[Shi Tian He’s eyes must be failing her!]

[How could Eldest Senior Sister have taken in such a Disciple?]

“Ancestral Founder...” Shi Tian He was astonished, staring wide-eyed at Yang Kai and wondering how he could possibly be the Ancestral Founder.

“Tian He,” Yang Kai stealthily communicated using his Divine Sense, “Something seems to have happened to your Third Martial Aunt during her years away from the Sect, and there’s a bit of an issue with her mind. She has mistaken me for Senior Bing Yun, and I can’t expose the truth now because I don’t know if that will cause her to lose her mind again. I’m here to escort her back to Ice Heart Valley, so she can come to her senses when she sees Senior Bing Yun. Just play along for now and don’t make her suspicious.”

Shi Tian He was aghast. She could never have imagined that her Third Martial Aunt, who looked to be in an entirely normal state, was actually suffering from such mental issues. It must be something serious for her to mistake a man for the Ancestral Founder...

Shi Tian He was quick on the uptake though, so she quickly calmed herself and gave a respectful bow, “Please forgive this disciple for her short-sightedness, Ancestral Founder.”

“Hmph!” Ji Yao snorted coldly, looking disdainful.

Shi Tian He gave a bitter smile, but her expression soon changed as she asked, “Ancestral Founder, have you only just returned to the Northern Territory with Third Martial Aunt?”

“How did you know?” Yang Kai asked curiously.

“So, you don’t know what is happening to the Sect?” Asked Shi Tian He.

“What’s wrong with the Sect?” Ji Yao frowned.

Shi Tian He’s face was pale as she said, “The Sect... Has been surrounded! And within the Northern Territory, many Senior Sisters who married out of the Sect have been murdered! The Sect’s foundations outside have all been entirely destroyed, and now, Ice Heart Valley has been completely blockaded, and is on the brink of disaster.”

“What!?”

Hearing this, Yang Kai and Ji Yao bore expressions of shock.

“Who dares!?” Ji Yao demanded furiously.

“Seeking Passion Sect!” Hatred flashed across Shi Tian He’s eyes.

“Seeking Passion Sect!?” Ji Yao’s pretty face grew grim as she snapped angrily, “How dare they! Why are they doing this to Ice Heart Valley!?”

Yang Kai frowned, suddenly realising that this matter... might have something to do with him.

With that in mind, he spoke, "Tian He, tell us everything from the beginning. We really don't know anything about what has happened to the Sect."

"Yes!" Shi Tian He said, and summarized the events of the last few years in the Northern Territory.

A few years ago, when the Star Boundary's Shattered Star Sea opened, Seeking Passion Sect's Sect Master, Feng Xuan, suddenly went to Ice Heart Valley, bringing many of his strongest subordinates with him. On that day, there were many Masters from Seeking Passion Sect present to pressure Ice Heart Valley with their power. It was unknown what kind of conflict occurred, but the two forces had a great battle outside Ice Heart Valley, and each side suffered immense losses.

From then on, Ice Heart Valley and Seeking Passion Sect were like fire and water.

As time passed, the grudge between the two Sects grew greater and their hatred ran deeper. Many of the disciples of Ice Heart Valley who married out of the Sect were hunted down and cruelly murdered by those from Seeking Passion Sect. Some of Ice Heart Valley's external industries were completely destroyed, and the great forces connected to Ice Heart Valley received suppression and persecution.

And then, half a year ago, countless Masters from Seeking Passion Sect occupied Ice Moon City under the command of their Sect Master Feng Xuan, sealing off Ice Heart Valley's connection to the outside world. It looked like they intended to destroy Ice Heart Valley in one go.

Ice Moon City was the city closest to Ice Heart Valley, and it had been the foundation of Ice Heart Valley's external affairs ever since the founding of the Sect. It was an important hub connecting Ice Heart Valley with the world outside, but now, even that had been taken over. It was evident that Ice Heart Valley's situation was dire.

Half a year had passed since the occupation took place.

It was only because of Ice Heart Valley's powerful Sect Defending Array that it could survive until now.

"Seeking Passion Sect and Ice Heart Valley are both top Sects of the Northern Territory, and they're about equal in power. If it was not for some unresolvable conflict, they could not possibly start a war. Tian He, do you know what the cause of all this is?" Yang Kai asked grimly.

"At first, no one had any clues," said Shi Tian He, "Only later did there start to be rumours, saying that Seeking Passion Sect was so determined to wage war because Feng Xuan's son, Feng Xi, was killed by someone while in the Shattered Star Sea."

Ji Yao laughed coldly, "His skills were lacking, leading to his death. Was Feng Xi's killer a disciple of Ice Heart Valley?"

Shi Tian He shook her head, "No, I heard that he was killed by a man named Yang Kai! Because this Yang Kai seemed to have a close relationship with the Ancestral Founder, the only way for Feng Xuan to learn about Yang Kai's background and seek his trail was to pressure Ancestral Founder. But Ancestral Founder refused to tell him anything, so Feng Xuan's anger boiled over and he was even willing to start a war between the two Sects to take revenge for his son."

"Yang Kai..." Ji Yao frowned, vaguely sensing that the name was rather familiar.

Yang Kai saw that something was off about her expression and hurriedly changed the topic as he wiped cold sweat from his brow, "Seeking Passion Sect may be strong, but Feng Xuan is only a Third-Order Emperor Realm Master. How can he alone drive Ice Heart Valley into such a situation?"

Shi Tian He shook her head, "I don't know the specifics, I only know that Ice Heart Valley is on the brink of disaster."

Yang Kai's eyes flashed as he suddenly asked, "Were you leaving the Dong Family and Serenity City because you wanted to return to protect the Sect?"

"Yes!" Said Shi Tian He bitterly, "I may have been expelled from the Sect by my Honoured Master, but ultimately, I am still a disciple of Ice Heart Valley. Now that my Sect is in danger, how can I stand by and do nothing? But the Dong Family didn't want to let me leave, because if my identity as an Ice Heart Valley disciple was exposed, it would undoubtedly implicate the Dong Family as well. Right now, no one in the Northern Territory dares to have anything to do with Ice Heart Valley."

Ji Yao stared at her, stunned for a moment, before she nodded, "Your loyalty is admirable."

She had been full of disappointment earlier, thinking that her Martial Niece Shi Tian He was hopeless. She had such horrible judgment that she got expelled for the sake of a man, only to have that same man expel her from his family a hundred years later.

But now, she thought that her Martial Niece still had some redeeming qualities. At the very least, she had the desire to go back and help when her Sect was in danger. Knowing how dire the situation was, with the Sect on the brink of annihilation, but still boldly and without any hesitation trying to return... That was not something just anyone could do.

Shi Tian He shook her head, "The Sect raised me and educated me. In life, I will belong to Ice Heart Valley, and after I die my ghost will belong to Ice Heart Valley!"

Ji Yao nodded, "Good. With such an attitude, Eldest Senior Sister will surely take you in once more!"

"Really?" Shi Tian He stared at Ji Yao in surprised delight.

Ji Yao gave her a small, rare smile, "Rest assured, if she doesn't take you back, then she's no Eldest Senior Sister of mine."

Shi Tian He was horrified and said quickly, "No, no, Third Martial Aunt, please don't jest!"

"Honoured Master," Ji Yao turned to look at Yang Kai. "Now that the Sect is in danger, we must hurry back! Eldest Senior Sister must be having a hard time holding up the Sect on her own."

Yang Kai gave a nod, "Yes, but first we must get rid of those on our tail. It looks like someone's got their eye on us."

"Hmm?" Hearing this, Ji Yao immediately turned and looked behind them. She saw a few tiny black dots on the horizon which were rapidly flying closer, evidently chasing their group.

Shi Tian He's face turned pale, "Oh no! It must be because we revealed our identities back in Serenity City and someone took notice."

“Tian He, do you know who these people are?” Yang Kai turned and asked calmly.

Shi Tian He’s brow furrowed as she replied, “If my guess is correct, then they must be people from Profound Thunder Pavilion.”

“Profound Thunder Pavilion...” Yang Kai’s mouth rose into a playful smile.

“Serenity City is very closely connected with Profound Thunder Pavilion,” said Shi Tian He, “They have a Space Array connecting the two for easy access, and Profound Thunder Pavilion is currently attached to Seeking Passion Sect. Since our identities have been exposed, there’s no way Profound Thunder Pavilion will do nothing about it. They must want to capture us to obtain rewards from the Seeking Passion Sect.”

“That will depend on whether they have the ability!” Yang Kai laughed coldly, “What’s the cultivation of their Pavilion Master?”

“Pavilion Master Bai Yu has reached the Second-Order Emperor Realm!” Shi Tian He’s pretty face was grim, “They also have four Elders who are in the First-Order Emperor Realm. With Serenity City’s City Lord Yan Dong, that makes five of them. Martial Aunt, we had best hurry and leave.”

“Why leave when they’ve offered themselves up on their own?” Ji Yao glared at her.

Shi Tian He was stunned, wondering how her Third Martial Aunt was so confident. Remembering that the Third Martial Aunt’s mind was not in the right state though, she quickly turned to look at Yang Kai for his opinion.

Yang Kai smiled, “Worry not! It’s just a few pitiful weaklings.”

“Pitiful weaklings...” Shi Tian He was speechless. How could a Second-Order Emperor and five First-Order Emperors be classified as pitiful weaklings?

Did this man also have something wrong in the head like her Third Martial Aunt?

Shi Tian He’s mind was full of anxious thoughts, but when she saw that both Yang Kai and Ji Yao looked as calm as a lake, she found herself gradually calming down as well.

Since the moment she had decided to leave Dong Family and return to her Sect to do what little she could, she had been fully prepared for death.

It was entirely possible that she could be killed even before she could return to the Sect; after all, with Ice Heart Valley completely surrounded, she was bound to get attacked the moment she showed her face.

She had already put life and death out of her mind, so what was there left in the world that could make her afraid?

Her only wish was that she could return to the home of her Honoured Master before her death to ask for her Honoured Master’s understanding and forgiveness.

Chapter 2626, Don’t Be Afraid, All Of You Come Together

“Tian He,” Ji Yao said calmly, “Stand behind Ancestral Founder.”

“Yes!” Shi Tian He didn’t say any more, hurriedly ducking behind the impostor Ancestral Founder that was Yang Kai.

At that moment, the people pursuing them could be clearly seen, just as how the waves of their Emperor Qi could be clearly felt. The group, however, was slightly different from what Shi Tian He had expected. While the leader was indeed a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master, most likely, Profound Thunder Pavilion’s Pavilion Master Bai Yu, he was only followed by four First-Order Emperor Realm cultivators instead of five.

Yang Kai recalled that there had been a fellow named Yan Qing accompanying the Young Pavilion Master Bai Lu, who had his arm wasted in one strike by him. That Yan Qing was probably also an Elder of Profound Thunder Pavilion, and Yang Kai surmised that he was still recovering from his injuries at the moment, and thus unable to come along.

Even so, Profound Thunder Pavilion had sent out almost all of their Emperor Realm Masters, which showed just how important Yang Kai and Ji Yao were to them.

\*Shua shua shua...\*

With the sound of rushing wind, five figures came to a stop some distance away from Yang Kai and Ji Yao.

Their leader was fair-skinned and beardless, bearing some resemblance to Bai Lu. He was probably the Profound Thunder Pavilion’s Pavilion Master, Bai Yu.

Two middle-aged men and two elderly men made up the other four. Their expressions were impassive yet stern, gazing menacingly towards Yang Kai’s group.

“The leftmost one is Serenity City’s City Lord Yan Dong, and the other three are Elders of Profound Thunder Pavilion,” Shi Tian He conveyed to Yang Kai, “Senior, you and Third Martial Aunt need to be careful.”

Yang Kai nodded lightly.

“So, you are Bing Yun’s Third Disciple, Ji Yao?” The leader Bai Yu suddenly shouted. He did not know Ji Yao’s identity because he had seen her before, but because people had heard Shi Tian He address her as Martial Aunt Ji Yao when they were at Serenity City’s gates.

“How dare you refer to Honoured Master by name!?” Ji Yao snapped through gritted teeth, her beautiful eyes filled with anger.

“Hahahaha!” Bai Yu laughed scornfully, “Even Bing Yun has hidden herself inside Ice Heart Valley with her tail between her legs, not daring to come out. Yet her Disciple here has quite the temper. I wonder where you get the guts to wander about the Northern Territory!”

The four people behind him also laughed mockingly, and it was clear from their attitudes that they were confident in beating Yang Kai and Ji Yao.

It was not at all strange for them to be so confident; after all, Bai Yu was a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master, just like Ice Heart Valley's First and Second Elders, An Ruo Yun and Sun Yun Xiu.

As the Third Disciple, Ji Yao's cultivation was at best also Second-Order Emperor Realm, equal to Bai Yu.

If they were to battle, Bai Yu did not fear her in the slightest. Not to mention, he also had four First-Order Emperor Realm Masters with him. When it was time, they just had to take care of Yang Kai first before ganging up on Ji Yao, and there would not be much that she could do against them.

"Honoured Master, I want to tear his mouth off and rip his corpse into ten thousand pieces!" Ji Yao was evidently incensed, as her chest heaving in anger.

"Alright, go on. Leave the others to me," Yang Kai nodded.

At his command, Ji Yao's slender form immediately leapt above Bai Yu and she launched a barrage of attacks at him with her sword.

"Arrogant slut!" Bai Yu roared, reaching out and summoning a long spear into his hand. He channelled his Emperor Qi into his spear and instantly deflected Ji Yao's attacks before sending a wide sweep towards her. Ji Yao's expression remained unchanged as, with a flourish of her sword, she met his attack head on.

The two of them were immediately entangled in a fierce battle, with Emperor Qi surging and Principles colliding as they fought.

As he was battling Ji Yao, Bai Yu shouted to the others, "Go kill the other two and then come assist me!"

"Yes!" At his order, Yan Dong and the three Elders were immediately on the move, spreading out to surround Yang Kai and Shi Tian He.

"Madame Dong..." Yan Dong's gaze fell coldly on Shi Tian He as he said, "I really didn't expect you to be a disciple of Ice Heart Valley. What lengths have you gone to in order to conceal this from me, the City Lord?"

Shi Tian He grit her teeth, "I was expelled from Ice Heart Valley a hundred years back, so I don't count as a disciple anymore."

Yan Dong chuckled, "Still, you once belonged to Ice Heart Valley. I heard you're also An Ruo Yun's disciple?"

"So what if I am?"

Yan Dong sighed and said, "Many years back, when I was still touring the world, I had become acquainted with a disciple of Ice Heart Valley. That person... She was clear as ice and pure as jade, with a lovely face and a sharp mind, much like Madame Dong. I greatly admired her, yet my feelings went unrequited. That woman thought I wasn't good enough for her, and it was such a regrettable thing that even now, I feel quite heated when I think of it."

“There was such a romantic encounter in City Lord Yan’s past?” One of the Profound Thunder Pavilion’s Elders could not help but chuckle, “This is news to me.”

“Indeed, if that woman had accepted City Lord Yan back then, then you would’ve been dragged down for the crime of associating right now. Luckily, City Lord Yan is blessed with good fortune!” Another Elder laughed.

Yan Dong waved a hand dismissively, “This all happened many years ago, don’t laugh at me. Still, even though such a long time has passed, I still remember that woman was named Yu Dan. I wonder if you know her, Madame Dong?”

“Senior Sister Yu Dan?” Shi Tian He was astounded, “You actually know Senior Sister Yu Dan!”

From her expression, it was evident that she knew this Yu Dan too.

Yan Dong chuckled, “As expected, you know her because you were both An Ruo Yun’s disciples. Good, very good!” He nodded repeatedly as he spoke before a dangerous glint flashed across his eyes.

The Profound Thunder Pavilion Elder who had not spoken up until then looked thoughtfully at him, then asked, “City Lord Yan, you’re not thinking of making up for that past regret now, are you?”

Yan Dong smiled, “Why can’t I?”

The others were taken aback by his words. Then, the same Elder commented, “City Lord Yan has unique tastes indeed. This Madame Dong... Has been married for many years, you know?”

“I’m very fond of charming and beautiful women. Besides, she was Sister Disciples with Yu Dan. Since I can’t get the Senior Sister, then it’s not too bad to have some fun with her Junior Sister instead. Now then, when you, Elders, are attacking later, please be a little more careful to not hurt her.”

The Profound Thunder Pavilion Elders had no idea what to say to that, but they knew that Yan Dong bore a grudge in his heart for what happened in the past. If he could get Shi Tian He today, then he could resolve that grudge. Thinking this wouldn’t be any extra trouble, they all nodded and agreed, “Since City Lord Yan has said so, then of course we have to comply.”

Yan Dong chuckled, “Many thanks in advance.”

Shi Tian He’s face was crimson with embarrassment as she shouted furiously, “Yan Dong, I never thought you could be so despicable and shameless! To think Dong Hai spent all these years doing your bidding and obeying your orders!”

“Dong Hai?” Yan Dong coldly snorted, “Why bring up that dead man? Rest assured, he didn’t cherish you, but I’ll make sure to cherish you thoroughly in the future.”

“Dead... man...” Shi Tian He’s pretty face went pale, and she cried out, “What did you do to him?”

Yan Dong smiled coldly, “He was the Dong Family Patriarch, yet he married an Ice Heart Valley disciple, what do you think happened to him? Now that he’s been ripped into ten thousand pieces by me, the Dong Family is no more.”

Shi Tian He’s slender form trembled as she was completely stunned.

Even though she already knew that nothing good would happen to the Dong Family after her identity was exposed, when she actually heard the news, she still found herself unable to accept it immediately.

That was the man who had been her husband for a hundred years, the man she had been willing to leave her Sect for, and now... Just like that, he was dead.

"I'll kill you, you vile beast!" Shi Tian He's eyes reddened, gripping her sword in her hand and drawing up all the strength she had as she prepared to charge at Yan Dong.

But before she could even move, she felt a light tap on her shoulder and was instantly frozen in place, completely unable to move. If not for Yang Kai's Emperor Qi supporting her as well, she would have most likely fallen out of the sky right then.

Yan Dong looked coldly at Yang Kai, and snorted, "Little brat, your own death is upon you, yet you still want to stick your nose into other people's business?"

Yang Kai grinned, "Are you all really so confident that you can kill me?" As he spoke, he pulled Shi Tian He behind himself and made sure she had a firm footing.

He looked so calm that it made Yan Dong and the three Elders frown a little, wondering where he was getting all his self-confidence from.

They knew Ji Yao's identity but had absolutely no idea who this man was, or what kind of power he held. That made them rather wary of him.

"Just who may you be? Right now, within the Northern Territory, Ice Heart Valley is hated by all and will be destroyed any day now. If you're a smart man, you shouldn't get involved in this mess!" Yan Dong said, looking coldly at Yang Kai.

"Indeed, if you can find your way back from this wayward path, it's not impossible for us all to be friends!" One of the Profound Thunder Pavilion Elders said, nodding his head.

"Friends like you people... Are a little too far beyond my reach, I'm afraid." Yang Kai grinned, "Let's just get to the actual fight, shall we?"

"What are you dawdling for? Hurry up and deal with him!"

Just then, Bai Yu's furious yell was suddenly heard.

His allies quickly turned their heads towards him, and they could not help but look alarmed when they realised that Bai Yu, a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master, was actually clearly on the losing side of the battle. An ice-cold domain had spread through the air, filling up a large region as Bai Yu struggled to fend off Ji Yao's attacks, his face looking a little pale.

From the looks of it, he could not hold on much longer.

The others were all shocked as they realised they had underestimated Ji Yao's strength.

Though she was also a Second-Order Emperor Realm Master, she was far more powerful than Bai Yu.

"If you don't go and help out soon, your Pavilion Master's going to die," Yang Kai smiled as he looked at them while also letting out his Emperor Qi with the intention of showing his cultivation, "Rest assured,

I'm not that strong, just a First-Order Emperor Realm. Don't be afraid now, you can all come at the same time!"

"First-Order Emperor!"

"So, he's just a First-Order Emperor!?"

"What the Hell!? A mere First-Order cultivator dares to pretend he's some big shot to intimidate me!?"

Yan Dong and the three Profound Thunder Pavilion Elders all started yelling. They were wary earlier, because they were afraid that Yang Kai had a higher cultivation than them. That was why they did not dare to attack recklessly and had originally intended to probe his strength before doing anything. What they did not expect was for him to reveal everything himself.

What was there to fear from a First-Order Emperor Realm Master? The four of them were all First-Order Emperors as well. Even if one of them could not match him alone, they couldn't possibly be outmatched if they all attacked together.

"Go!" One of the Elders shouted, and in the next moment, the four of them were lunging at Yang Kai, Emperor Qi surging as they each attacked with their Secret Techniques, full of confidence in their swift victory.

Chapter 2627, Who Are You?

The sight of four Emperor Realm Masters flying at them all at once was quite terrifying.

Shi Tian He, who had been fixed in place by Yang Kai, had a sudden feeling of heaviness come over her body, as though several mountains were suddenly pressing down at the centre of her chest, making it impossible for her to breathe.

In the next instant, the four men's attacks were upon them.

\*Hong hong hong...\*

Shi Tian He's heart almost leapt out of her chest from the sound, and she thought her death was certain, but when she looked again, she found that she had somehow mysteriously appeared at a different location, and those four people's attacks had not hurt her!

Yang Kai was still in front of her, waving his hands casually.

A gigantic, pitch-black Moon Blade formed, pulsating with terrifying waves of power. It was like the scythe of the reaper, biding its time until it could harvest the lives of all in existence.

With a slicing sound, the Moon Blade flew outwards, straight at the four Emperor Realm Masters.

"This is bad!" Yan Dong shouted, his face turning pale.

After the failure of the last attack, he had realised that he and his companions had greatly underestimated Yang Kai's strength. Although this youth was also a First-Order Emperor like them, he was shockingly fast. Such incredible speed was enough to make him almost impossible to defeat in battle.

Just as Yang Dong looked up, he saw the gigantic Moon Blade flying towards them, and was so terrified he immediately retreated backwards.

"Quick, dodge!" He yelled to the others.

He was quick to notice and swift to dodge, but the three Profound Thunder Pavilion Elders were not as agile. They were still wondering what had just happened, as they had not seen Yang Kai make any movements, yet he had suddenly vanished.

By the time they heard Yan Dong warning, the Moon Blade was already upon them.

The three Elders all cried out as they pushed their Emperor Qi and Principle Strengths to defend themselves.

\*Chi chi chi chi...\*

Despite their efforts though, all they met was a sight that filled them with despair.

Everywhere the Moon Blade passed over, it left desolation in its wake, tearing apart their Emperor Qi and Principles like they were paper as it cut towards them.

\*Pu...\*

With only a soft sound, the pitch-black Moon Blade sliced through the chest of the foremost Elder before it continued onwards to the second Elder without weakening in the slightest.

The second Elder did not survive either as he was swiftly bisected by the Moon Blade.

By now though, the last middle-aged Elder had managed to shift his posture just enough so that the Moon Blade only cut through his shoulder.

In that instant, Yan Dong's eyes bulged as he stared in horror at the two Profound Thunder Pavilion Elders, who had been cut in half by the Moon Blade, not even daring to blink.

With a loud splatter, the two Elders' bodies suddenly split in two, sending blood and guts scattering in the air. At the same time, a horrible scream was heard, startling Yan Dong who hurriedly turned to its source.

He saw that the third Elder's arm had been severed at the shoulder, with blood spraying out like a fountain from the wound. From the open wound, he could vaguely see the Elder's heart beating in his chest. It was a critical injury.

\*Siii...\*

Yan Dong drew in a breath of cold air, and his clothes were instantly soaked in sweat. Turning his head creakily, he stared at Yang Kai in terror and nervously asked, "Who... who are you!?"

With one move, only one move, this young man had instantly killed two First-Order Emperor Realm Elders of Profound Thunder Pavilion while heavily wounding another.

How was a First-Order Emperor capable of such a thing? Was he even Human?

Yan Dong was truly scared now. If it hadn't been for Yang Kai voluntarily channelling his power and showing his First-Order Emperor Realm cultivation earlier, he would've thought that Yang Kai was a Third-Order Emperor Realm Master hiding his true strength.

Standing behind Yang Kai, Shi Tian He was also bewildered and couldn't help gulping nervously.

At that moment, she suddenly noticed that the force that had been binding her had disappeared, and she had regained her freedom of movement.

Yang Kai smiled widely and said, "You don't even know who I am, yet you come and seek trouble with me. It seems like City Lord Yan doesn't know how to write the word 'death'."

"Death..." Yan Dong's eyes narrowed as he cast a glance at the two deceased Elders of Profound Thunder Pavilion. Then, he looked at Bai Yu, who was barely able to defend himself and didn't seem like he could hold on much longer. Realizing his situation, Yan Dong grit his teeth and whirled around, turning into a flash of light as he hurriedly fled.

He did not dare to stay any longer. His opponent was able to instantly kill two Emperor Realm Masters that had comparable strength to himself, so it would obviously be easy for Yang Kai to take his life as well. If Yang Dong stayed any longer, he was sure to die.

However, faced with his opponent's frightening speed, Yan Dong did not have much confidence in his ability to escape.

Thus, even as he fled, he cast an anxious glance behind him, only to see that Yang Kai was still standing there, seemingly not intending to pursue him.

The speed of an Emperor Realm Master was great, so in the blink of an eye, Yan Dong had vanished out of sight.

Only then did he start panting heavily, his face full of terror from what had just happened while at the same time he felt relieved to have survived such an ordeal.

He didn't know why Yang Kai did not pursue him, but since he was allowed to escape, he did not intend to waste this opportunity.

After flying forward for several dozen breaths more, Yan Dong finally regained some sense of security. Regardless of how fast that youth was, since he had shown no signs of pursuit even until now, it meant that Yan Dong was safe.

Before he could finish that thought though, Yan Dong's steps faltered as he stared grimly at a spot not far ahead of him.

The space before him rippled, as though the air was the surface of a pond after a rock had been thrown into it. Immediately afterwards, waves of some strange energy emanated from the centre of those ripples.

His vision blurred for a moment, but soon, Yang Dong saw a figure appear before him like some terrifying apparition.

\*Deng deng deng deng...\*

Yang Dong backed away in terror, looking like he had just seen a ghost in broad daylight as he stared at Yang Kai, muttering incoherently, "Y-Y-You... H-H-How did you..."

As he fumbled his words, Yang Dong suddenly seemed to think of something and shouted grimly, "A Spatial Technique!"

He had heard in the past that cultivators who cultivated the Dao of Space and had profound understanding of Space Principles were able to do fantastical things like moving instantly across vast distances, but that had been merely hearsay to him while the Dao of Space was not something an ordinary genius could cultivate. After all, the Dao of Space was one of the most esoteric Daos of all, and people with no innate talent for it could not even begin to comprehend it even if they spent their entire lives trying.

In the entire Star Boundary, there was only one Master who had an extremely deep comprehension of the Dao of Space, and he was said to be the strongest Master below the Great Emperors.

That man was the famed Li Wu Yi of the Eastern Territory's Spirit Beast Island.

Yang Dong could never have imagined that he would run into an opponent who was proficient in the Dao of Space, and with abilities quite comparable to those of Li Wu Yi.

Yang Kai had not allowed him to escape. Rather, he had confidence in being able to stop Yang Dong with his ability. No matter how Yang Dong tried to run, he could not escape from Yang Kai's grasp.

"City Lord Yan is quite perceptive," Yang Kai chuckled, a light grin plastered on his face.

Yang Dong's face darkened, and he growled through gritted teeth, "I've not given up yet!"

He knew he could not escape, and seeing from how he had slaughtered the Profound Thunder Pavilion Elders earlier, Yang Kai was unlikely to let him go even if he begged for mercy. His only hope for survival was to go all out with Yang Kai and pray he could win.

Yang Dong was a decisive man, so at those words, he drew forth all his strength and summoned a sword into his hand. The gleam of the sword's edge was dazzlingly bright. Man and blade moved as one, slashing towards Yang Kai.

Yang Kai snorted coldly, casually lifting his hand to deliver a palm strike.

As his Emperor Qi surged, the blade's gleaming light was instantly extinguished, and the palm landed squarely upon Yang Dong's chest.

\*Pu...\*

Blood sprayed from Yang Dong's mouth as he flew backwards and fell onto the ground, smashing a deep pit where he landed.

Crawling out of the pit with much difficulty, Yan Dong looked at Yang Kai with a trembling gaze as the latter gradually descended from the sky, "Aren't you only a First-Order Emperor?" Yang Dong screamed, "Just who are you?"

How could a First-Order Emperor Realm Master injure him so heavily with just a light palm? How could a First-Order Emperor Realm Master kill two Elders from Profound Thunder Pavilion and injure a third with one move?

Yan Dong was almost certain that Yang Kai had concealed his cultivation so he could toy with them.

It was laughable that they had all thought Ji Yao was the more powerful of the two, but ended up kicking an even thicker iron plate instead.

"Why don't you guess?" Yang Kai blinked at him as another pitch-black Moon Blade appeared in his hand, though it was not as large as the previous one.

Sensing the waves of power hidden in that Moon Blade, Yan Dong's face turned ashen. This blade was made of concentrated Space Principles, and he was powerless to defend himself against it.

"Wait..." Yan Dong hurriedly yelled. Since he could not defeat Yang Kai, the only option left was to beg for mercy.

Yang Kai had no intention of letting him speak, however, and with a flick of his wrist, the Moon Blade flew out.

With a soft sound, the Moon Blade cut through Yan Dong's body. The City Lord's eyes went wide as he fell to the ground, his body splitting in two as it collapsed.

Yang Kai waved his hand and took the Space Ring from Yan Dong, then turned and disappeared without a trace.

When he reappeared, he was once more standing beside Shi Tian He.

Hearing the sounds of battle still, Yang Kai looked over and saw that Ji Yao and Bai Yu were still locked in a life or death struggle. Bai Yu was in quite a bad state, his hair was dishevelled while his body was covered in bloody wounds. However, due to the effect of Ji Yao's ice-cold domain, his blood froze the moment it spilled.

Bai Yu's hair had also turned white with frost while his movements had become sluggish.

It was evident that his mastery of Principles was vastly inferior to Ji Yao's, and it was only a matter of time before he was defeated and killed.

"Senior, these are the Space Rings of those three," seeing Yang Kai return, Shi Tian He respectfully handed over the three Space Rings.

The heavily wounded Profound Thunder Pavilion Elder from earlier was already dead, as Yang Kai had quickly taken his life before pursuing Yan Dong to finish things off.

The pungent stench of blood permeated the area, and the ground was covered in a dark crimson.

“En,” Yang Kai nodded and accepted the three Space Rings, putting them with the one he had obtained from Yan Dong just now. He did a quick check and found that these fellows had been quite wealthy, especially Yan Dong, who had a sizable amount of Source Crystals in his Space Ring, as well as some precious treasures.

“Senior...” Shi Tian He called out anxiously. Ever since Yang Kai had demonstrated his terrifying power, she looked at him quite differently, with none of the ease from before but rather with respect and awe, “Just... Who are you?”

“Me? My name is Yang Kai,” he replied with a grin.

Chapter 2628, Recruitment Order

“Yang Kai?” Shi Tian He was stunned for a moment, then exclaimed, “Senior, you’re the one that...”

Yang Kai smiled, “Indeed, I am the one who the Seeking Passion Sect is looking for.”

Shi Tian He smiled wryly as she heard Yang Kai admit it himself.

When she had previously heard the rumours of what happened, she had admittedly criticized Yang Kai greatly; after all, he was the root cause of the crisis that Ice Heart Valley was currently suffering. It was his killing of Feng Xi in the Shattered Star Sea that made Feng Xuan fly into a rage, which then led to all the subsequent conflicts which placed the Northern Territory in its current state of chaos.

Shi Tian He had never thought that the culprit who started all the mess in the Northern Territory would one day appear right before her own eyes.

As she mused it over, another thought struck Shi Tian He with astonishment.

She suddenly recalled that Feng Xi was killed only a few years ago in the Shattered Star Sea. In other words, Yang Kai had been in the Shattered Star Sea a few years ago, but only cultivators below the Emperor Realm were able to enter that place.

Wouldn’t that mean that Yang Kai was only a Dao Source Realm a few years ago? And now, he had just reached the First-Order Emperor Realm.

But even though he was a First-Order Emperor Realm Master like the Elders of Profound Thunder Pavilion and Serenity City’s Lord, none of them were any match for him.

The cultivation that he had displayed was his real cultivation, and he had not concealed anything!

If such a thing had not happened right before her eyes, Shi Tian He would not have believed it in the slightest. Since when were First-Order Emperor Realm Masters so easy to kill?

In the past, she had even fantasized about one day finding that fellow Yang Kai, capturing him, and handing him over to the Seeking Passion Sect to resolve her Sect's crisis. But now, she did not dare to have such intentions.

"It's over for Bai Yu!" At that moment, Yang Kai suddenly spoke.

Shi Tian He hurriedly looked over and saw a dazzling light burst out from where Bai Yu and Ji Yao were fighting. A bone-chilling coldness spread everywhere as there was the flash of a blade, and the battle was finally over.

As the light faded, Ji Yao stood mid-air, only giving a light swing of her longsword, her expression indifferent.

An ice crystal had formed before her, and frozen in its centre was a man, Pavilion Master of Profound Thunder Pavilion, Bai Yu.

Trapped inside the ice, Bai Yu's face was full of shock and terror. He seemed to still be in disbelief that he had completely, utterly, helplessly lost the battle.

*Shua...*

The ice block plummeted and broke apart with a loud boom as it hit the ground.

Trapped within, Bai Yu also shattered into many pieces, such that there was not a complete part of him to be found.

Just as Ji Yao had sworn, she had shredded his corpse into ten thousand pieces.

With another whoosh, Ji Yao was back at Yang Kai's side. She cast a glance around, and did not bother asking where the other four opponents had gone. The fresh blood and torn flesh scattered everywhere was more than enough explanation. She nodded at Yang Kai and said, "Honoured Master, let us hurry back to the valley!"

There had not been much urgency earlier on, when she had been ignorant of Ice Heart Valley's situation, but after hearing from Shi Tian He that Ice Heart Valley had been surrounded, Ji Yao felt intensely homesick. She wished she could instantly return to the valley and weather out the crisis with all her Sisters.

"Good!" Yang Kai nodded, casting a meaningful look at Shi Tian He.

Shi Tian He was quick on the uptake and hurriedly flew over to retrieve the Space Ring from Bai Yu's corpse.

Ji Yao had brought out her ship by this time, and the three of them boarded it in order. Ji Yao formed hand seals, and the ship instantly flew forth as swift as the wind.

"Senior Yang, this is for you," Shi Tian He handed over the Space Ring, which was still encased in ice and with a severed finger attached.

Yang Kai took it and channelled his Emperor Qi, melting the ice. He then tossed the severed finger away before throwing the ring back to Shi Tian He.

“Senior Yang, this is...” Shi Tian He looked at Yang Kai in confusion.

“This is your Third Martial Aunt’s spoils, and since she isn’t interested, you can have it instead. Once you’re back in Ice Heart Valley, you should focus on your cultivation so you don’t disappoint your Master again,” Yang Kai smiled.

“Many thanks, Senior Yang,” Shi Tian He said gratefully, “Many thanks, Third Martial Aunt...”

“What do you mean, Senior Yang!?” Ji Yao glared at her, “I already told you, this is the Ancestral Founder!”

“Yes, of course. Many thanks, Ancestral Founder.” Shi Tian He’s face paled and she hurriedly corrected herself. She had no idea how to explain any of this to Ji Yao and snuck a glance at Yang Kai, only to see that he looked even more awkward than she did.

.....

Two days later, on a snowy mountain three thousand kilometres from Ice Heart Valley.

Snow was falling heavily upon a frozen landscape while Yang Kai and the others stood on the mountain’s peak, gazing out into the distance.

Ji Yao was full of emotion, unable to stop trembling as she looked upon the familiar sights and breathed in the familiar cold air. Feathery snowflakes fell onto her, gradually melting, and she felt as though she had been reborn. Her joy could not be suppressed.

Perhaps it was the anxiety of being so close to home, but there was also a trace of timidity and worry in Ji Yao’s eyes.

“That’s a lot of people,” Yang Kai let out a breath which turned into white mist.

It could be clearly seen from where they stood that a constant stream of cultivators was patrolling outside Ice Heart Valley, and it was obvious that they were not its disciples. Some of them were gathered together in small groups of three to five while larger groups had up to twenty members, all of them seemingly guarding the key entry and exit points of Ice Heart Valley.

The entirety of Ice Heart Valley was tightly surrounded.

“How did the Seeking Passion Sect gather so many people?” Yang Kai frowned slightly.

Based on what he had heard from Shi Tian He, he knew that not only had Ice Heart Valley been surrounded, but even the neighbouring Ice Moon City had been occupied as well.

Ice Moon City was a crucial hub for Ice Heart Valley’s connection to the outside world. After it had been taken over, Ice Heart Valley’s communications to the outside world had also been cut off.

But how was it possible that Seeking Passion Sect would have enough manpower to both surround Ice Heart Valley and occupy Ice Moon City?

“There are many Sects in the Northern Territory that are subordinate to the Seeking Passion Sect,” explained Shi Tian He, “For them to be able to cause such a ruckus, they must’ve called upon all the great forces from their subordinate Sects.”

“That’s still not enough people,” Yang Kai shook his head slowly, then suddenly added, “Ice Heart Valley and Seeking Passion Sect are both major forces. Since Seeking Passion Sect has its subordinate Sects, doesn’t Ice Heart Valley have some as well? As far as I know, quite a number of Ice Heart Valley’s female disciples have married out of the Sect. With such connections, aren’t any of the other great forces coming to help with Ice Heart Valley’s current crisis?”

Shi Tian He smiled bitterly at his words, not knowing how she should respond.

Ji Yao spoke up instead, “Honoured Master, didn’t you establish rules about this when you founded the Sect? The Sect does not forbid marriage, but disciples who marry out no longer have any connection to Ice Heart Valley. You were concerned at the time that people would misunderstand Ice Heart Valley to be spreading its influence through marriages, and wanted to avoid controversy.”

Yang Kai was shocked, “There is such a rule?”

“You set those rules yourself...” Ji Yao said reproachfully.

Yang Kai gave an awkward laugh, “I must’ve forgotten.”

“Who’s sneaking around over there!”

Just as they were looking around, a sudden shout was heard.

It was immediately followed by several whooshing sounds as a group of five appeared in front of Yang Kai and the others.

Amongst the group, an elderly man was the leader while the others looked like they were under forty years old. All of them were men.

Yang Kai did a sweep with his Divine Sense, and observed that these five were merely Dao Source Realms. The old man, who appeared to be their leader, was Second-Order, while the other four were merely First-Order.

“And who are you?” Yang Kai asked, narrowing his eyes. As he spoke, he released a little of his Emperor Qi and let it wash over the five newcomers.

All of them instantly turned pale, and the old man’s face was full of terror. He cupped his fists and said, “This one’s name is Fang Ming Hui. Greetings to you, Sir, please forgive the rudeness.”

Fang Ming Hui did not dare to show any more brazenness after realising that Yang Kai was an Emperor Realm Master. He hurriedly put on a subservient air, anxious to avoid upsetting Yang Kai in any way.

“What are you people doing here?” Yang Kai asked coldly.

Fang Ming Hui hurried to answer, “This humble one is leading a few people to patrol this area, on orders.” As he spoke, he gave Yang Kai a forced smile.

“Patrol? You are disciples of the Seeking Passion Sect?” Yang Kai frowned.

Fang Ming Hui shook his head, “No, no, we belong to Double Jade City’s Fang Family. The people behind me are all Fang Family disciples.”

“Double Jade City’s Fang Family...” Yang Kai said, comprehending, “Subsidiary great force, I see.”

“Sir, surely you jest,” Fang Ming Hui was still giving a strained smile, “Our Fang Family is merely a small force, how could we gain the interest of a top Sect like the Seeking Passion Sect? Even the entire Double Jade City would most likely be unworthy of their interest.”

Yang Kai was puzzled, “Since you’re not an attached force of the Seeking Passion Sect, what are you doing here? And on whose orders are you patrolling this area?”

This area was extremely close to Ice Heart Valley, so now that the Seeking Passion Sect and Ice Heart Valley were like locked in a life or death struggle, ready to start fighting at any moment, surely people who had nothing to do with the matter would not remain in the area.

Fang Ming Hui was astonished, “On orders from the Seeking Passion Sect, of course.”

Yang Kai snorted, “Are you talking nonsense just to try to confuse me? If you don’t speak clearly, I’ll rip out your tongue!”

Fang Ming Hui paled, “Please quell your anger, Sir,” he said hurriedly, “This humble one really is under orders from the Seeking Passion Sect to patrol this area. But our Fang Family really does not have any connections to the Seeking Passion Sect. This one is not lying, Sir.”

The faces of the four behind him were also pale. They were thinking that Emperor Realm cultivators were indeed not to be provoked, as this guy was threatening to pull out someone’s tongue just because he was in a bad mood. Such violence! If they could ascend to the Emperor Realm someday, they could do the same thing if they ever felt slighted...

“Since you have no connection, why would you obey their commands? You think I’m easy to deceive?” Yang Kai looked coldly at Fang Ming Hui.

Fang Ming Hui wiped the cold sweat from his brow and explained, “Sir, what are you saying? Currently, there are many forces like our Fang Family in the area around Ice Heart Valley...”

As he spoke, he suddenly seemed to realise something, and cast a timid glance at Yang Kai, “Sir, have you not heard of the Seeking Passion Sect’s Recruitment Order?”

“What Recruitment Order?” Yang Kai frowned.

Fang Ming Hui let out a breath, “Sir has not heard of it, then.”

“Explain in detail. If your explanation is satisfactory, I won’t rip out your tongue.”

“Yes, yes, of course...” Fang Ming Hui hurriedly nodded, and began explaining, “A few years back, when the Seeking Passion Sect and Ice Heart Valley started fighting, both of them were top Sects of the Northern Territory. Their strength was about equal, so both sides suffered losses. After the initial battles, in order to avoid further losses, the Seeking Passion Sect sent out a Recruitment Order. It informed all cultivators of Northern Territory that as long as they temporarily joined with the Seeking Passion Sect’s forces and obeyed their commands to help fight against Ice Heart Valley, they would be rewarded with Source Crystals, artifacts, and Secret Arts. Not only that, but depending on their contributions, they could even become Seeking Passion Sect’s subsidiary forces in the future. In

addition, after Ice Heart Valley was destroyed, some cultivators who make great contributions would also get a share of Ice Heart Valley's disciples."

Chapter 2629, Senior and Junior Sisters Meet

"Obtain a share of Ice Heart Valley's disciples?" Yang Kai's eyes went wide with astonishment.

Fang Ming Hui leered, "The women of Ice Heart Valley are all cold beauties, clear as ice and pure as jade. Not only that, but they are all quite gifted. Anyone who can get hold of one or two will have no regrets for the rest of his life!"

Ice Heart Valley had quite a reputation within the Northern Territory. To the cultivators from less impressive backgrounds, its female disciples were like goddesses, ones they could only ogle from afar, but could not come close to, afraid to defile them.

Throughout history, many men of the Northern Territory had viewed it as an immense honour to be able to marry a disciple of Ice Heart Valley.

However, only a small number of them were able to actually accomplish this feat. Now though, countless men from the Northern Territory had been driven into a frenzy by the Seeking Passion Sect's Recruitment Order. The rewards were trivial compared to the chance to obtain one or two female disciples from Ice Heart Valley after it was defeated. It would be quite impressive to make them into servant girls, but even going as far as to take them as proper wives would not cause any embarrassment, as it would only make others envious.

"You're all here for Ice Heart Valley's disciples?" Yang Kai looked curiously at Fang Ming Hui, not expecting him to have such desires at his advanced age.

Fang Ming Hui gave a wry smile, "I dare not have any extravagant expectations. I only seek to get a few of the Seeking Passion Sect's rewards, which the Fang Family would be able to enjoy for many years. If we can also become a Seeking Passion Sect's official subordinate, that would naturally be the best result."

Yang Kai chuckled, "How many people has the Seeking Passion Sect recruited already?"

"There are at least a hundred thousand, most comparable to my Fang Family's disciples in terms of strength, but there are also a few Masters from second and third class Sects."

"And you're not afraid that Ice Heart Valley will come to seek revenge if they manage to recover someday?"

Fang Ming Hui shook his head, "Ice Heart Valley has no such chance anymore."

"What makes you say that?" Yang Kai raised his brow.

“This lowly one does not know the exact details but...” Fang Ming Hui explained, “I only know that there are currently two Third-Order Emperor Realm Masters in the Seeking Passion Sect, and even though Ice Heart Valley’s Ancestral Founder Bing Yun is also a Third-Order Emperor, she is but one person. How can she stand against the Seeking Passion Sect like this? Ice Heart Valley has also suffered heavy losses over the last few years of conflict. Else, they would not have retreated within the valley and relied on their Sect Defending Array to barely survive. Besides...”

“Besides what?” asked Yang Kai.

Fang Ming Hui smiled slightly, “Ice Heart Valley won’t hold on for much longer. In half a month, or a month at most, they are bound to be defeated.”

Yang Kai snorted, “You’re merely in the Second-Order Dao Source Realm, how can you be so certain?”

Fang Ming Hui glanced around cautiously, then said in a low voice, “Sect Master Feng Xuan has invited Grandmaster Nanmen here, and he’s currently investigating how to break the Sect Defending Array. It probably won’t be long before he is able to crack it. Once Ice Heart Valley’s Sect Defending Array is destroyed, we will hit them with all we have. They will be completely helpless.”

Standing behind Yang Kai, Ji Yao and Shi Tian He’s expressions had been growing more and more concerned and both of them were now quite pale.

After all Fang Ming Hui’s chatter, he finally asked, “Sir, why don’t you join in as well? Seeking Passion Sect is currently still recruiting, and I’m sure they will welcome someone of your strength.”

Yang Kai raised an eyebrow, “I can also apply?”

Fang Ming Hui nodded, “Naturally. You only need to go register at Ice Moon City and explain your background, and then, you’ll be able to serve the Seeking Passion Sect. Benefits are, of course, distributed according to contributions... That reminds me, Sir, I have not yet asked where you come from. If you have any connection to Ice Heart Valley, then the Seeking Passion Sect won’t be interested.”

Before Yang Kai could answer, Ji Yao had already taken a step forward and coldly declared, “This Queen is Ji Yao of Ice Heart Valley!”

At those words, the faces of everyone in Fang Ming Hui’s group paled, and they all started backing away.

The members of the Fang Family had never expected that they had been chatting for so long with someone actually belonging to Ice Heart Valley.

Wasn’t it common knowledge that everyone from Ice Heart Valley was hiding inside their Sect, too afraid to come out? And with the Sect Defending Array active, how did these people get out?

“Run!” Fang Ming Hui was a decisive man, and he knew that his words were sure to have upset these strangers. With that yell, he turned to flee.

The four Fang Family cultivators behind him were also quick to respond, each of them pushing their Source Qi desperately.

But before they could even take a step, a bone-chilling domain suddenly spread out.

\*Kacha...\*

With a soft sound, the ground was frozen over and it seemed like the whole place was being sealed by ice. The five of them were all stuck in place, unable to move.

“Leave him alive!” Yang Kai hurriedly shouted.

Ji Yao frowned, but still held back some of her strength. She froze the other four Fang Family cultivators into ice statues, leaving only Fang Ming Hui standing there stiffly, his lips blue from the cold and his teeth chattering as he pleaded pitifully, “Please spare my life, Sir, the Fang Family has not done anything to harm Ice Heart Valley directly after joining the Seeking Passion Sect’s forces! All we did was patrol the perimeter, we’ve never harmed any Ice Heart Valley disciples!”

Yang Kai tapped his forehead and knocked him out, then reached over and lifted him up. With a wave of his arm, he turned the four frozen Fang Family disciples into dust.

“Honoured Master, what did you spare his life for!?” Ji Yao’s eyes were icy as she looked at the unconscious Fang Ming Hui, unable to comprehend.

“I need him to convey what he just said to someone else. Perhaps we’ll be able to get some more information from him as well,” Yang Kai explained calmly, then added, “We’re returning to the valley!”

“Yes!” Ji Yao and Shi Tian He answered.

Channelling his Space Principles, Yang Kai wrapped the two women in his power and with a flicker, vanished from the spot.

They reappeared outside Ice Heart Valley’s Sect Defending Array. The array was extremely large and sturdy, looking like a translucent dome of light which enveloped all the vital areas of the Sect.

From afar, it looked as though there was a gigantic crystal bowl inverted upon the ground, and everything inside the dome of light was indistinct, unable to be clearly perceived.

A Sect Defending Array of this calibre was not something that could be easily broken. Though the Seeking Passion Sect was quite powerful, they could not break through by force, and could only hire an Array Master to handle it.

But the Source Crystal upkeep for keeping such a massive array functioning at full strength was also astronomical. Under normal circumstances, a Sect Defending Array would only be activated at full power when the Sect was in danger of extinction.

After spending a long time observing from the snowy mountain, Yang Kai had a good idea of the patrol schedule for this area. Thus, he did not alert anyone when he brought Ji Yao and Shi Tian He over.

“Yao’er, open the array!” Yang Kai scanned the area with his Divine Sense, keeping a close watch over their surroundings as he instructed Ji Yao.

“Yes!” Ji Yao nodded, and hurriedly retrieved a token from her Space Ring. She channelled her Emperor Qi into it and lightly waved it at the curtain of light before her.

A mystical light burst out and a small gap instantly opened in the array. Before the gap closed again, Yang Kai's group had already slipped inside.

Ordinary people could not open the Sect Defending Array, but Ji Yao was Bing Yun's Third Disciple, so she had a way to get through.

"Who goes there!?"

They had just entered when a feminine voice was heard, immediately followed by a flash of light from a blade. A petite form was concealed within the streak of light, which was bright and piercing as a comet.

Emperor Intent instantly expanded and the temperature plummeted from the approaching icy aura, causing Shi Tian He to shiver slightly.

"Seventh Junior Sister, is that you?"

Ji Yao was not even thinking of defending against the deadly attack coming towards her, only calling out with a trembling voice as she looked at the person within the streak of light.

"Huh?" A surprised cry was heard and the light quickly dispersed, revealing a petite and delicate figure.

The person landed on the ground, sword in hand, and looked carefully at these intruders.

"Seventh Junior Sister!" Ji Yao's slender form was trembling a little as she called out.

"T... Third Senior Sister!" The petite figure was also instantly overcome with emotion, almost unable to believe her eyes, rubbing them vigorously, and looked again before confirming that the person before her really was her Third Senior Sister, Ji Yao, who had been missing for many years.

Both Senior and Junior Sisters were very emotional as they looked at each other before they sprinted forward and embraced one another.

"Third Senior Sister, you've finally returned! Where have you been all these years?" The petite girl threw herself into Ji Yao's arms, sobbing.

Ji Yao's eyes were also red-rimmed, but she tried to contain her emotions and gently patted the other girl's hair, "I'm sorry I made you all worry."

At that moment, many other Ice Heart Valley disciples had heard the commotion and came running. In an instant, there were hundreds of people gathered all around, each of them holding a sharp blade and full of battle intent, thinking that enemies must have broken in. When they saw their Seventh Martial Aunt tightly embracing an unknown woman though, they were all bewildered.

Upon hearing what the two said though, the confusion of the crowd was cleared.

"She's our Third Martial Aunt!"

"What? She is Third Martial Aunt Ji Yao, who's been missing for so many years?"

"Yes, it's her! I've seen her portrait before in the Sect's main hall, there's no mistake!"

"To think Martial Aunt Ji Yao actually came back..."

“With our Sect in danger, it is our good fortune that Third Martial Aunt is back. Ancestral Founder will surely be delighted!”

“Finally, some good news for the valley!”

The crowd of women chattered incessantly like a flock of pretty birds, noisily conveying the joyful news.

“Junior Sister?” Another voice suddenly called out.

Amongst the crowd, a tall woman with refined features was staring in shock at Shi Tian He, who was standing behind Yang Kai.

“Junior Sister Tian He?” she exclaimed in astonishment.

At that cry, Shi Tian He looked over and her body trembled slightly as she tried to restrain her emotions, calling out haltingly, “Senior Sister Yu!”

Her expression was a little wary and timid, not entirely daring to face her Senior Sister Yu, as though she was a child who had gotten into trouble.

Yang Kai naturally heard this conversation and looked over curiously, soon recalling what Yan Dong had said earlier and instantly understanding that this tall woman was the Yu Dan he had spoken of.

Yu Dan strode over and stood before Shi Tian He, looking her over before smiling, “It has been many years since we last met, Junior Sister. You’ve lost weight, have you been mistreated during your years away?”

Shi Tian He’s eyes reddened and she shook her head, biting her lip, tears overflowing from her eyes.

“Now, now, don’t cry. Honoured Master has also been concerned for you all these years. It’s all good now that you’re back now,” as Yu Dan spoke, she gently wiped away Shi Tian He’s tears.

But her tears just kept falling and falling like a broken chain of pearls.

Chapter 2630, Sober Thoroughly

The sighs of the Senior Sisters of two different generations reuniting with their Junior Sisters after all this time was really touching.

The disciples of Ice Heart Valley were all quite emotional. Looking here and there, soon everyone’s eyes turned moist one by one, as if they were infected by the atmosphere. All of them sheathed their swords and quietly stood on their spot.

“Cough...” Yang Kai loosened his readied fist and lightly coughed, instantly attracting everyone’s attention.

“Right, Seventh Junior Sister, I came back together with Honoured Master,” startled, Ji Yao said to the petite figure with a look of joy on her face.

“Sister Zhang Sun, we meet again,” Yang Kai called out with a light smile.

The petite figure was none other than Bing Yun’s Seventh Disciple, Zhang Sun Ying, whom Yang Kai had met a couple years back.

Zhang Sun Ying looked at Yang Kai and cried out in surprise, “Senior Brother Yang, how come you’re here?”

She was very surprised, but that was understandable as she was reunited with Ji Yao after a very long time. Being totally absorbed in her joy, she had forgotten to pay attention to anything else and only now did she realize that her Third Senior Sister actually came together with Yang Kai.

She addressed Yang Kai as Senior Brother, not because Yang Kai’s cultivation was higher than hers. She was a First-Order Emperor, and furthermore, when she first met Yang Kai a few years ago, he was just a Third-Order Dao Source Realm.

She addressed him as such out of respect.

After all, Bing Yun was able to escape from the Solitary Void Sealed World and return to Ice Heart Valley mostly because of Yang Kai. After hearing about this, Bing Yun’s Disciples were all very grateful to Yang Kai and began addressing him as Senior Brother as a courtesy.

“Sister Zhang Sun, am I not welcome here?” Yang Kai asked with a slight grin.

Zhang Sun Yin immediately blushed and replied, “When did I say that!? Senior Brother Yang has done a great service to my Ice Heart Valley, so why would Senior Brother Yang be not welcomed? Honoured Master has already exhorted us to treat Senior Brother Yang as family.”

“Senior Bing Yun’s care is much appreciated,” Yang Kai gently nodded.

Ji Yao furrowed her brow deeply, staring at Yang Kai in confusion, puzzlement slowly creeping into her eyes.

In her mind, Yang Kai was her Honoured Master, Bing Yun, but now, when she heard Yang Kai speaking such words, she couldn’t help feeling confused and unable to understand what was happening.

Yang Kai, noticing her change, solemnly asked, “Is Senior Bing Yun free? I have to see her regarding something.”

Zhang Sun Yin hurriedly replied, “Honoured Master hasn’t entered retreat recently. If she learns that you are here and that Third Senior Sister has also returned, she will definitely be very happy... follow me!”

Saying so, she pulled Ji Yao’s arm, leading the way ahead.

Yang Kai, carrying Ming Hui in one hand, walked a few steps before turning around and beckoning, “Tian He, you come too, let’s go and meet your Honoured Master.”

Shi Tian He’s tender figure trembled as a restless look appeared on her face.

“Junior Sister, don’t be afraid. I will accompany you,” Yu Dan patted the back of Shi Tian He’s hand and stated in a gentle voice. Feeling this hand, Shi Tian He finally calmed down a little, before she and Yu Dan followed after Yang Kai.

Halfway there, Shi Tian He anxiously asked, “Senior Sister, is Honoured Master still angry with me after all these years?”

Yu Dan sincerely nodded, “Of course.”

Shi Tian He immediately turned pale, feeling her legs grow heavy as if they were filled with lead, making it impossible for her to move forward.

Yu Dan, on the other hand, mysteriously smiled and added, “Back then, you didn’t hesitate to disobey to go with that guy surnamed Dong, so of course Honoured Master will be angry; after all, she personally taught you for many years. Is she not allowed to be angry after you disobeyed her?”

Shi Tian He bitterly admitted, “Yes, this Junior Sister has disappointed Honoured Master.”

Yu Dan added, “But don’t worry, Honoured Master’s anger aside, she has still been thinking about you all these years.”

“Really!?” She Tian He was overjoyed.

Yu Dan replied in a low voice, “In the past hundred years, I was ordered to visit Serenity City every two years to inquire about your situation and check if you had been wronged in any way.”

Shi Tian He’s figure trembled and excitedly asked, “Did Honoured Master order you to do so?”

Yu Dan replied, smiling wryly, “Without Honoured Master’s order, who would dare to go? Honoured Master said that if you were wronged even once in the Dong Family, no matter how slight the offence was, she would destroy them completely. It might look as if Honoured Master hasn’t cared for you over these hundred years, but in fact, you have been on her mind all the while.”

Hearing this, Shi Tian He’s eyes turned red and she almost cried again. Only after persistent comforting from Yu Dan did she finally calm down.

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In the main hall of Ice Heart Valley, Yang Kai sat upright in a rigid fashion while Ji Yao and Shi Tian He stood behind him. As for Ming Hui, he was still unconscious and laid on the ground by Yang Kai’s feet. Yu Dan, who accompanied Shi Tian He, was secretly communicating with her Junior Sister via Divine Sense.

Zhang Sun Ying, after offering tea, stated, “Senior Brother Yang, please wait a moment. Honoured Master has already been notified and will be here soon.”

“She already is,” Yang Kai’s expression changed as he turned to the hall’s entrance.

He immediately noticed a flash, and the next moment, Bing Yun had appeared. Closely following behind her were Ice Heart Valley’s Emperor Realm Masters, ten of them in total.

First Disciple An Ruo Yun, Second Disciple Sun Yun Xiu, and the others were standing in single file.

Yang Kai quickly got up and greeted, cupping his fist, "Yang Kai greets Senior Bing Yun!"

Bing Yun replied, smiling, "You're here!"

Even though the two had not been in contact for a long time, because they both came from the Heng Luo Star Field, they felt much closer to each other than others. At this moment, Bing Yun was very happy to see Yang Kai.

"Greetings, Senior Brother Yang!" The disciples behind Bing Yun hurriedly greeted.

Yang Kai nodded before gazing at everyone, looking at Liu Xian Yun and Fan Xin before turning his gaze to Zi Yu. Now, Zi Yu was also an Emperor Realm cultivator. She had entered the Shattered Star Sea with Yang Kai, gained an opportunity, and broken through during that time.

As their gazes met, Zi Yu lightly nodded to Yang Kai, her eyes filled with gratitude.

In the Shattered Star Sea, her breakthrough was imminent but she had also attracted the covetous eyes of her enemies. The Ice Heart Valley disciples by her side had not been strong enough to protect her at the time, but her breakthrough to the Emperor Realm still went smoothly. Only after she finished her breakthrough did she learn from her fellow Sisters that Yang Kai had appeared at the critical moment and lured the enemy away, giving her a safe and stable environment to advance.

This favour alone was enough to make Zi Yu grateful, let alone the fact that Yang Kai and Ice Heart Valley had an intricate relationship. There was also the close ties he had with Ancestral Founder Bing Yun.

Liu Xian Yun was equally excited. She hadn't seen Yang Kai for several years, but after seeing him this time, she naturally had much to say to him, but she knew that now was not the time.

"I heard that Yao'er returned?" Bing Yun looked around as she asked, quickly noticing a dumbstruck Ji Yao standing there.

"Third Junior Sister!"

"Third Senior Sister!"

An Ruo Yun and the others also cried in excitement.

Ji Yao, on the other hand, stood there in a daze, her eyes filled with confusion. But staring at Bing Yun, the confusion in her eyes slowly became more and more obvious, as if dark clouds were blocking her vision.

"Third Junior Sister, why are you in a daze, why aren't you greeting Honoured Master!" An Ruo Yun didn't know what happened, so she just thought Ji Yao was overwhelmed with emotions and quickly reminded her.

Bing Yun, on the other hand, noticed that something was amiss and turned to Yang Kai to ask, "What's wrong with Yao'er?"

Yang Kai hurriedly informed her via Divine Sense Message about Ji Yao's current condition. He also didn't hide the fact that he had been pretending to be her.

Yang Kai's report broke Bing Yun's heart. Ji Yao had suffered for many years in the Ancient Wild Lands, so much so that she even lost her mind. If Yang Kai hadn't found her by chance, it was quite possible she would still be wandering the Ancient Lands aimlessly.

Bing Yun softly sighed before she called out with a face full of gentleness, "Yao'er, your Master is here, can't you come over?"

"Honoured Master..." Ji Yao tenderly shouted, hearing this. Her figure quivered and her pupils shook violently, the confusion in her eyes shattering at that moment before regaining clarity.

\*Pu...\*

Ji Yao opened her mouth and spurted a mouthful of black blood, causing her aura to immediately wane while her eyes regained a kind of lucid brightness.

An Ruo Yun and the others were shocked at the sight of this as they had no idea what was wrong with Ji Yao.

"Honoured Master!" Ji Yao's figure flickered as she suddenly rushed to Bing Yun, kneeled down and greeted in a trembling voice, "This unworthy Disciple has caused Honoured Master to be worried."

Bing Yun stretched her hand out and lightly stroked her head, "It's good that you are back, it's really good. Get up."

Ji Yao shook her head and kept crying, holding Bing Yun's thigh tightly as if she was never going to let go.

An Ruo Yun and the others also wiped the tears from the corners of their eyes.

Bing Yun helplessly stated, "You and I are Master and Disciple, we should be happy to be meeting again after so long, so don't cry, get up and talk."

She held Ji Yao and pulled her up gently, personally wiping her tears before handing her to An Ruo Yun. Afterwards, she turned to Yang Kai and continued, "We've shown you something embarrassing. Yao'er has been stubborn since childhood, so I ask you not to pay it any mind."

Yang Kai denied, shaking his head, "Yao'er, she... cough cough, Junior Sister Ji Yao just acts on her emotions."

He had gotten used to calling her Yao'er during their time together and almost addressed her wrongly.

At that prompt, Ji Yao turned to look at Yang Kai with a complicated expression. After seeing the real Bing Yun, she had sobered thoroughly. Whether she would remain this way or lose her mind later remained to be seen, but at least for now, she was safe and sound.

Because she had fully regained her faculties though, she also finally realized how bad her previous state was.

She had misidentified a man as her Honoured Master. If this hadn't happened to her personally, Ji Yao would have never believed it.

Yang Kai felt a little guilty and didn't dare meet her gaze, instead shifting his eyes about in an awkward fashion.

“Sit down and talk, don’t keep standing,” Bing Yun proposed in a good mood. Her Third Disciple, who had been missing for so long, had returned to the Sect. Yang Kai was also back. It was a joyous event, so a rare smile appeared on Bing Yun’s face.

The disciples were overjoyed after seeing this.

They hadn’t seen Bing Yun smile at all these past few years; but today, they finally saw the beautiful moon after the dark clouds had cleared up, lightening the worries in their hearts.

An Ruo Yun, receiving a Divine Sense Message from Bing Yun, didn’t dare to let Ji Yao remain too far away from her. Naturally, she made her sit by her so that she could take good care of her.

“Senior Brother Yang, did you hear about our Ice Heart Valley’s situation and come here on purpose?” After taking her seat, Sun Yun Xiu asked as she curiously looked at Yang Kai. If he wasn’t here because of this, then his timing was too coincidental.

Yang Kai replied, shaking his head, “It wasn’t intentional. I happened to run into Junior Sister Ji Yao in the Ancient Wild Lands by accident and was just planning to escort her back. Certain events happened while we were passing through Serenity City though, and only then did we come to know about the current situation of Ice Heart Valley.”