

Merchant 821

Chapter 821: Beast Head Forest

Wang Fuxiang lowered her head again after Ah Jing left and gently caressed the purple bamboo.

A single teardrop fell from her eye and splashed onto the leaf of the purple bamboo.

It was as though the bamboo leaf could not bear for the teardrop to fall as it gently held the drop up and allowed it to slide down the stem where the tear was finally hidden in the roots.

“If only I could tear myself away from this bad luck,” murmured Wang Fuxiang.

A look of inexplicable bitterness appeared on Wang Fuxiang’s face.

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At that moment, Lin Yuan and Liu Jie arrived at the Midnight Palace.

The Midnight Palace was different from the Radiant Moon Palace as the Midnight Palace was situated in the Royal Capital.

The Beast Head Forest surrounded the Midnight Palace, and all the beast heads were carved from stone.

The combination of the over 10,000 stone-carved beast heads with the night irises that covered the floor of the forest made the area surrounding the Midnight Palace look like a piece of night juxtapositioned against the daytime.

It was already after 6:00 p.m., and the sky was only beginning to darken, but as he walked into Beast Head Forest, Lin Yuan felt that he was walking through an illuminated path in the dead of night.

The stone-carved beast heads’ mouths had a glowing gem inside each of them.

The light from the glowing gems was different from sunlight, and the night irises could not absorb the light from the gems at all.

This was why the light from the gems could illuminate the path through the Beast Head Forest to the Midnight Palace.

As he walked along the path in Beast Head Forest, Lin Yuan realized that there were many people around him, their auras exuding elitism as they were dressed in spirit qi clothes.

There were normally no attendants in the Midnight Palace. Thus, the people with the lowest status that would appear at the Midnight Palace came from the veteran factions, while those of a higher status came from the top factions.

The people of the highest status were the true bigshots that could almost be called royalty.

“The grades of the stone-carved feys’ heads are becoming higher. These feys are already Diamond grade. If we walk forward more, we should be out of the Beast Head Forest,” said Liu Jie.

Liu Jie could not help but sneer. “Who designed Master’s Beast Head Forest? Why does it feel like we’re walking through a fey graveyard?”

Lin Yuan nodded instinctively.

But a moment later, he looked at Liu Jie in shock due to how Liu Jie looked when he was complaining and why Liu Jie was not complimenting his Master's residence instead.

After they walked out of the Beast Head Forest, Lin Yuan was met with another stunning sight.

The entire Midnight Palace was built from stone and exuded a stern and rough beauty.

The pillars and beams had various spirit beasts carved on them.

Lin Yuan peered at the carvings on the pillars and beams and noticed that there were no dragon species feys.

Did Chief Guard Ye not like dragon-species feys, or was there some special reason?

Since the Guard Ye Banquet started at midnight, the Arts Stage, Martial Stage, and Martial Arts Stage took place beforehand.

Those who came to attend the Guard Ye Banquet could choose not to participate or watch the competition.

Liu Jie was the main character of the Guard Ye Banquet, so it was slightly late for him to arrive at the Guard Ye Banquet at 6:00 p.m.

But it was just the right time for the veteran factions and top factions.

At that moment, the leaders and disciples of the veteran and top factions who came to attend the Guard Ye Banquet simultaneously held their breaths.

They noticed an elderly man with average features dressed in a black robe standing at the entrance of the Midnight Palace.

However, this elderly man was not average in the eyes of the veteran factions and top factions.

This elderly man was Lordess Night Leaning Moon's right-hand man, Lord Zuo Ming.

From Lord Zuo Ming's straight posture and how his hands were behind his back, he seemed to be waiting for someone.

The younger generation of the veteran factions and top factions did not think much about it, but the leaders immediately started to ponder.

Who was so important that Lord Zuo Ming would stand out here waiting for them?

Those who were considered royalty should have arrived at the Midnight Palace a few days ago.

This meant that it was highly possible that Lord Zuo Ming was waiting for someone from the younger generation.

Meanwhile, Sun Ningxiang had just stepped out of the Beast Head Forest. Although she felt unbelievably melancholic, she kept her expression calm and unbothered.

When Condense Fairy Orchard had received the invitation for the Guard Ye Banquet, Sun Ningxiang had anticipated that she would run into Connected Beast Park.

Besides Connected Beast Park, who intended to subsume Condense Fairy Orchard, there were other top factions who could also be after Condense Fairy Orchard.

Sun Ningxiang hated the feeling of being hunted, but she could not avoid the situation because there was no one else in the Sun family who could attend the Guard Ye Banquet.

However, there was a hint of hopefulness laced into the melancholy.

After her grandmother had received the Legend Muscle Growth Camellia from Sky City, the decaying of her muscles had slowed.

This significantly reduced the amount of stress on her grandmother.

Her grandmother usually used spirit qi to counter the decaying of her muscles.

Now that she had the Legend Muscle Growth Camellia to counter the decaying of her muscles, the addition of the spirit qi led to new muscles starting to grow.

Her grandmother used to only have a year to live, but the new muscle growth would allow her to live for two more years without any problems as long as she did not do anything that would lead to a soul injury.

Sun Ningxiang started to make silent plans.

Given their plethora of Creation Master resources, there's no way that Sky City will not have received an invitation to the Guard Ye Banquet.

Although Condense Fairy Orchard only had a trading relationship with Sky City, Sun Ningxiang was still incredibly grateful to Sky City and that strange mask-wearing young man.

Given Condense Fairy Orchard's perilous situation, Sky City was the only faction that not only did not take advantage of Condense Fairy Orchard but was even willing to help them.

While Sun Ningxiang was deep in thought, she caught sight of two figures walking ahead of her.

The sight of these two figures made Sun Ningxiang's eyes narrow.

Chapter 822: Zong Ze and Gu Lang

Sun Ningxiang watched as the two tall and well-proportioned men climbed the stone steps up to the Midnight Palace.

One of the men was dressed in purple clothes with bamboo embroidery.

The other man was dressed in a crimson half-armor that was full of scratches.

The man in purple clothes had bushy eyebrows and looked extremely handsome. There was a ghost of a smile that played on his lips.

The other man dressed in crimson half-armor had deep-set eyes and a grim face.

However, the mole on the tip of his nose made the solemn man look obedient and an easy target.

A smile appeared on Zuo Ming's face, and he welcomed the man in purple and the man in crimson half-armor as he said, "Lord Gu Lang, Lord Zong Ze, Lord Bamboo Monarch, and Lord Chef Supreme are still in a meeting. If you don't want to be bothered by the noise, I can lead you to the Night Words Pavilion to have some refreshments or to the training room next to the Night Rain Pavilion to wait for the competition to start."

When Gu Lang heard what Zuo Ming said, he bowed respectfully.

Zong Ze nodded at Zuo Ming and coolly greeted him.

Since his Master, the Bamboo Monarch, was still in a meeting and after he had peered around at the younger generation of the top factions, he thought to himself that he would be able to get a good look at the action from outside the palace.

He was about to say that he would prefer to wait for the competition to begin when he heard Zong Ze say, "Senior Zuo Ming, please lead the way. Gu Lang and I can make use of the training room to spar for a bit."

Gu Lang and Zong Ze were old friends, and he knew Zong Ze well.

Zong Ze had almost killed a Path Protector and was obsessive about fighting.

If he sparred with Zong Ze in the training room and Zong Ze got too into it, Gu Lang might not be able to use any of his secret weapons during the Martial Arts Stage.

He was about to reject Zong Ze when he felt Zong Ze's hand land on his shoulder and Zong Ze's eyes boring into his own with a wild gaze.

"Don't worry, Zong Ze. Master has given me some special training. He taught me how to control my emotions during battle. We'll limit our sparring so as to not affect our performance during the competition. Let's fight properly on the Martial Arts Stage," said Zong Ze.

Gu Lang shot a look of suspicion at Zong Ze.

Gu Lang felt that Zong Ze's assurance was unreliable when he saw the overwhelming wild look in Zong Ze's eyes.

But since Zong Ze had urged him repeatedly, Gu Lang could not say no.

He decided to forget about watching the action and went with Zong Ze to the training room to spar for a few rounds.

Zuo Ming led Zong Ze and Gu Lang through the Shadow Night Corridor that the other veteran factions and top factions were not allowed to access and brought them to the Night Words Pavilion.

Sun Ningxiang noticed that Zuo Ming had turned back to look around.

This made Sun Ningxiang raise her eyebrow in surprise.

Zuo Ming was the Chief Guard's right-hand man and did not hesitate in his actions.

Since he turned back after leading Gu Lang and Zong Ze to the Night Words Pavilion, it meant that they were not the people that he had been waiting for.

Although the people he was waiting for had yet to arrive, he could not ignore Gu Lang and Zong Ze's status and knew that he had to attend to them.

This meant that the people that Zuo Ming was actually waiting for had to be extremely influential.

The Chief Guard was holding the Guard Ye Banquet because of her disciple, and there were rumors that the Moon Empress had also accepted a disciple.

It was probable that Zuo Ming was actually waiting for his Young Lord and the Moon Empress' disciple.

Sun Ningxiang kept her gaze locked on Zuo Ming and realized that he had stopped sweeping the crowd once he spotted someone.

When Sun Ningxiang hurriedly followed his gaze, her eyes landed on a man wearing a standard Spirit Guards mask.

She saw the masked man shake his head lightly when he saw Zuo Ming looking at him.

Zuo Ming turned back and went back to leading the way for Zong Ze and Gu Lang.

Almost every person's attention was on Gu Lang and Zong Ze. They were the apples of Lord Chef Supreme and Lord Bamboo Monarch's eyes, and they were not seen publicly on a regular basis.

Many women from the veteran factions and top factions leered after Gu Lang and Zong Ze.

If not for their fear of offending such elite individuals, those women would have stampeded the two men.

However, Sun Ningxiang was not paying attention to the two men at all. When she had noticed Zuo Ming's actions, her gaze remained locked on Liu Jie and Lin Yuan.

The people who could signal to Zuo Ming with only a shake of their head could only be Chief Guard Ye or Chief Guard Ye's disciple.

Zuo Ming was loyal to Chief Guard Ye and represented her will. Not even Chef Supreme or the Bamboo Monarch could order Zuo Ye around.

Thus, after some thinking, Sun Ningxiang became certain of who the man wearing the standard Spirit Guards' mask was.

As for Lin Yuan, who was beside Liu Jie, Sun Ningxiang found his figure slightly familiar, and her gaze lingered on him.

She was sure that Lin Yuan was not one of the younger generation members from the top factions but could not be certain of who he was.

Since she could not ascertain who he was, Sun Ningxiang decided to disregard him and inhaled deeply as she started to climb the steps to the Midnight Palace.

She steeled herself for the spectacle that she was about to create.

With so many willpowers and laws applied to his body, Lin Yuan's senses were exceptionally sharp. Hence, he had noticed Sun Ningxiang's eyes on him.

He smiled when she saw her and turned to say to Liu Jie, "Big Brother Liu, why don't we stay outside the Midnight Palace before the Martial Arts Stage begins?"

Liu Jie nodded and issued a curt agreement.

He placed his hand on where the Creation Master crest usually was.

Due to the Guard Ye Banquet and a request from Lin Yuan, Liu Jie had removed the Creation Master crest.

From Liu Jie's understanding of Lin Yuan, the latter was not one who liked to gawk.. Hence, he had to have his reasons for wanting to stay outside the Midnight Palace.

Chapter 823: The Main Show Begins

This motive had to have something to do with Sky City's expansion, but Liu Jie was not familiar with the faction society.

He had not been analyzing Sky City's expansion like he used to. Instead, he had been spending all his time outside of training working on the white-clothed followers plan.

Since he would not be able to help Lin Yuan with anything later outside the palace, Liu Jie decided to perform his role as Lin Yuan's shield and sword to protect him during the Guard Ye Banquet.

Liu Jie and Lin Yuan followed Sun Ningxiang through the stone pillars to enter the area outside of the Midnight Palace.

Lin Yuan knew about Condense Fairy Orchard's dangerous situation, but he did not expect someone to jump Sun Ningxiang the moment she stepped foot into the area outside the Midnight Palace.

Every faction that participated in the Guard Ye Banquet wore clothes that had icons of their factions. It was rare to see someone like Lin Yuan whose clothes did not have the icons of any factions.

Lin Yuan recognized who the two men in front of the Sun Ningxiang were from the icons on their spirit qi clothes.

These two men had very similar appearances and had distinctive noses and eyebrows.

Lin Yuan could tell that they were either brothers or cousins from their appearances. But given the way they stood, it seemed that the two similar-looking young men had completely different status rankings.

Lin Yuan could not help but touch his chin.

The show is starting so quickly! The main character has also stepped onto the stage. That's quick.

The two men standing in front of Sun Ningxiang and the man that Sun Ningxiang had bumped into were wearing purple spirit qi clothes.

Lin Yuan had seen the purple spirit qi clothes before. It was Connected Beast Park's famous standard Hundred Beasts New Sprouts uniform.

The full collar of sprouts on the man's Hundred Beasts New Sprouts uniform indicated that the man was one of the main members of the Miao family's younger generation of direct descendants.

The young man next to the man wearing the Hundred Beasts New Sprouts uniform was wearing a standard Creation Master uniform.

The man's Creation Master long robes had a small 'Zheng' written on the collar. From the information about the Zheng family that Wen Yu had collected, it was clear that this young man was the Second Young Master of the Zheng family with whom Lin Yuan was currently feuding.

The area outside the Midnight Palace had different arches, and the various leaders of the veteran factions and top factions headed into the palace while the younger generation remained outside to mingle.

Thus, the young man wearing the Hundred Beasts New Sprouts uniform did not bother to filter his speech.

"Hehe, Sun Ningxiang. You've been avoiding me and the discussion about the collaboration between Connected Beast Park and Condense Fairy Orchard. Now that we're standing face to face, I don't think you can avoid me anymore."

He whistled softly and looked extremely cavalier.

Most of the younger generation that remained outside the Midnight Palace had come to make connections.

After all, there were not many chances for the younger generation of major factions to gather.

However, some of them came to join in the excitement.

When they saw a commotion occurring, many disciples of veteran factions rushed up.

It was rare to be able to see the direct descendants of top factions being made fun of.

Lin Yuan saw that one of the people who had rushed up to join the crowd was the Young Master of the Sea Bliss Clan, Qi Haitao.

Lin Yuan had thought to himself that the show's main character had appeared, but now, the supporting characters had also appeared.

Sun Ningxiang watched the throngs of disciples from veteran factions and some direct descendants of top factions who wanted to gawk at the commotion approaching her. She breathed in deeply and said, "Miao Zhuo, Condense Fairy Orchard has always conducted ourselves by our principles. If anyone sincerely wants to work with us, we definitely won't say no."

Miao Zhuo's face fell.

Although Sun Ningxiang had been indirect about it, her words clearly meant to say that Condense Fairy Orchard had been avoiding a discussion because Connected Beast Park was not sincere about wanting to work with Condense Fairy Orchard.

When it came to such matters, people usually kept their actual feelings to themselves instead of saying so directly.

By saying it directly, Sun Ningxiang had announced that Connected Beast Park was not sincere when it came to their collaborations.

With so many disciples from veteran factions and top factions around, Sun Ningxiang's words had shot a hole in Connected Beast Park's public reliability.

Just as Miao Zhuo was about to launch a rebuttal, Sun Ningxiang continued, "I, Sun Ningxiang, am the head of Condense Fairy Orchard. I'm the leader of an elite faction. You are just one of the more favored members of the Miao family's younger generation. Can you decide on the direction in which Connected Beast Park will progress from now on? Or can you decide how Connected Beast Park's Creation Master resources are allocated? If not, what right do you have to stand before me to discuss a collaboration? Your father should be the one to seek me out for negotiation personally."

Sun Ningxiang's words made Miao Zhuo's expression darken tremendously.

He glared fiercely at Sun Ningxiang and sneered. "As a faction, Condense Fairy Orchard is on its last legs. You can't even compare to veteran factions at this point. You—"

Sun Ningxiang sternly cut in before Miao Zhuo could finish speaking. She sharply swept her surroundings before exclaiming, "Did you just say that my Condense Fairy Orchard can't even compare to a veteran faction? With so many people from veteran factions here, you can ask any of them. See if any of them dare to say that their faction is stronger than Condense Fairy Orchard. Or why don't you ask if the Zheng family thinks of themselves as more powerful than the Sun family?"

Sun Ningxiang had turned her charisma to the maximum and was firmly standing toe to toe against Miao Zhuo.

But while she spoke, Sun Ningxiang's fist remained clenched as tightly as a vice as she willed herself to maintain the charisma she was exuding.

If she allowed her charisma to weaken, the top factions that were watching would think that she was incapable and Condense Fairy Orchard would be in even greater danger.

At that moment, Miao Zhuo felt that Sun Ningxiang had cornered him.

After all, Condense Fairy Orchard still had a thearch-class expert, which was why Connected Beast Park had not dared to come down strongly on Condense Fairy Orchard.

Condense Fairy Orchard would remain above veteran factions regardless of what happened to them with a thearch-class expert.

Miao Zhuo was not stupid enough to drag his cousin Zheng Kaiyuan down with him in such a situation.

Miao Zhuo's eyes suddenly lit up, and he pointed toward Lin Yuan.

Chapter 824: Drag Down

Lin Yuan was the only person standing around the commotion who did not have an obvious icon on his body. Miao Zhuo asked him, "That boy over there, which do you think is stronger? Connected Beast Park or Condense Fairy Orchard?"

Miao Zhuo's words made everyone's gaze focus on Lin Yuan.

Many people were shocked when they got a clear look at his face.

Lin Yuan and Liu Jie had walked behind Sun Ningxiang, and Miao Zhuo immediately targeted her when she stepped into the area outside the Midnight Palace.

Thus, no one had paid attention to Lin Yuan, who was behind her.

Lin Yuan's performance had been brilliant at the Allstar Match since he had defeated a member of Savage Snake Guild Club's main team without even summoning any feys.

He had become the hot topic of discussion on Star Web.

The disciples of veteran factions and top factions of similar age to Lin Yuan had recognized Lin Yuan. Many of them had even tried to find out information about him previously.

However, their investigations came up with nothing. It was as though Lin Yuan had materialized out of thin air.

This created even more curiosity surrounding him.

In this era where power equated to resources, even if a spirit qi professional was exceptionally talented, there were many feys available to form contracts with, and it was easy for them to comprehend Willpower Runes.

But without sufficient resources, a spirit qi professional would never be able to become strong. This meant that Lin Yuan had to be sitting on a mountain of resources.

This was proved by Lin Yuan's right to appear at the Guard Ye Banquet.

When he saw Miao Zhuo pointing at him, a look of amusement appeared on Lin Yuan's face.

Almost all the main characters had entered the stage, but he had not had the chance to go up yet.

Lin Yuan had been trying to come up with a way to enter the stage as well, but now, without him having to lift a finger, Miao Zhuo had offered him that opportunity.

Sun Ningxiang looked at Lin Yuan and the masked Liu Jie.

Strong tense energy radiated from Sun Ningxiang.

Since Lin Yuan had come with the man wearing the Spirit Guards' standard mask, it meant that they were friends.

No matter what Lin Yuan's identity was, Miao Zhuo had also dragged in the masked man by singling Lin Yuan out.

It was not strange that a commotion had broken out between the younger generation of disciples at the Guard Ye Banquet.

But if the main character of the Guard Ye Banquet was involved as well, it would be a huge mistake.

Sun Ningxiang's grandmother had gotten on the wrong side of Chief Guard Ye by killing three pinnacle Class 4 Creation Masters.

If Chief Guard Ye tried to assign blame for this ruckus, the Miao family's thearch-class experts could ask for forgiveness on Miao Zhuo's behalf, but her grandmother was still in no shape to make a public appearance. Otherwise, Condense Fairy Orchard's biggest secret would be exposed.

The Condense Fairy Orchard that she was fighting to keep afloat was about to be torn to pieces by the other factions.

Sun Ningxiang felt that her charisma was waning at that thought.

At that moment, the clear voice of a young man sounded out. "Naturally, there aren't any veteran factions that can compete with Condense Fairy Orchard. Otherwise, they would have already been promoted to elite factions. Veteran factions are not idiots, and they care about their reputation. They definitely would prefer not to be compared so casually."

This voice stunned Miao Zhuo, Sun Ningxiang, Zheng Kaiyuan, and the rest of the gawkers from the veteran factions and top factions.

They started looking at him strangely, and more people joined the crowd.

A discerning person would have noticed that Miao Zhuo had purposely chosen a person without any icons on their body.

This was so that he would not offend and start a feud with any veteran faction.

Moreover, when Miao Zhuo spoke, he turned Sun Ningxiang's words and changed the comparison from Condense Fairy Orchard and veteran factions to between Connected Beast Park and Condense Fairy Orchard.

At their prime, Condense Fairy Orchard had no need to be fearful of Connected Beast Park as both factions ranked amongst the top 20 of the 50 top factions.

However, Condense Fairy Orchard had used up almost all of their Creation Master resources, and they were close to dropping out from the ranks of top factions. It was now impossible for them to compete with Connected Beast Park.

Connected Beast Park's role had led to an increase in their Creation Master resources, and the general consensus was that Connected Beast Park had slightly more influence than other top factions.

But Miao Zhuo would never have expected that the person he picked not only did not respond to his line of questioning but even responded to the question that he had been trying to avoid.

Additionally, the person he had picked had even strangely brought up that veteran factions would prefer not to be casually compared.

Now, it seemed as though Miao Zhuo was disrespecting veteran factions and was about to lead to a feud with them.

Miao Zhuo's blood boiled.

Miao Zhuo would have grabbed Lin Yuan's collar and slapped him if they were not outside the Midnight Palace.

It was a simple question, how dare he be so disrespectful!?

Miao Zhuo had to be considerate of Sun Ningxiang, but for someone who was not even wearing any icons, Miao Zhuo did not plan on being cordial.

He looked at Lin Yuan and said in a low voice, "Since you're aware that veteran factions care about their reputation, you should be aware that Connected Beast Park cares about our reputation even more."

Miao Zhuo watched at the young man who looked in a certain direction and said in a voice that was neither rushed nor slow, "It seems that Connected Beast Park isn't doing a very good job of taking care of your reputation. Even the veteran factions that you spoke lightly of aren't showing you respect. Some of them have presented the violation of contracts to the Spirit Guards. As much as Connected Beast Park cares about your reputation, you'll probably still have to cough up a hefty sum."

Miao Zhuo followed Lin Yuan's gaze, and his eyes landed on Qi Haitao.

When he saw Qi Haitao, Miao Zhuo saw red.

Miao Zhuo's anger scared Qi Haitao.

The dispute between the Sea Bliss Clan and Connected Beast Park was an insult to Connected Beast Park.

The Sea Bliss Clan had spent a large sum to form a collaboration with the Five Thearch Soldiers.

The Five Thearch Soldiers had bought several islands with Sea Bliss Clan's support, and they were in charge of ensuring the safety of the Sea Bliss Clan members and their business on the island.

Chapter 825: Have Some Fun at the Combat Ground

Connected Beast Park could not lay a hand on the Sea Bliss Clan with the Five Thearch Soldiers around.

Hence, the Sea Bliss Clan was still able to receive an invitation to appear at the Guard Ye Banquet as one of the veteran factions.

Miao Zhuo looked at Qi Haitao and said coldly, "Instead of holing up in your islands, is the Sea Bliss Clan here at the Guard Ye Banquet to try to strike up some collaborations for Creation Master resources?"

Although Miao Zhuo's expression was hard, his tone was level, and he also retracted some of his malicious aura while he spoke.

But everyone present could sense his menacing intention from his level tone and knew that the commotion had turned into a fight from the moment the young man mentioned Qi Haitao.

When he saw Miao Zhuo's reaction, a satisfied gleam appeared in Lin Yuan's eye.

Now, after being incited by Lin Yuan, Qi Haitao had no choice but to perform on stage.

Lin Yuan did not do this to force the Sea Bliss Clan to enter the fight to exert pressure on the Miao family because the Sea Bliss Clan was incapable of doing so.

He did this to trigger the fight and to cause the Sea Bliss Clan to feel more pressure from Connected Beast Park.

The stronger the pressure that the Sea Bliss Clan felt, the more pressed they would be to work with Sky City and the more urged they would be to inject resources into the nurturing of the Angelfish of Bliss.

This would enable Lin Yuan's action of buying up all the Aurora pollen in the market to leave a bigger impact.

A spark of courage flickered to life in Sun Ningxiang while she listened to the young man speak.

This led to her gaining control of her waning charisma.

She had felt that Lin Yuan seemed familiar when she saw him outside the Midnight Palace. Later, she realized that he was the young man she had seen at the Allstar Match.

However, doubt crept up in Sun Ningxiang.

She had seen the Allstar Match, but it was not enough for her to gain a sense of familiarity from him.

She had definitely met this young man by the name of Lin Yuan before.

When she heard what Lin Yuan had said, Sun Ningxiang suddenly felt that Lin Yuan's voice was extremely similar to that of the young man from Sky City.

Their physiques were also very similar.

While Sun Ningxiang studied Lin Yuan's chin, she started to form a mental image.

She tried to imagine that strange mask on Lin Yuan's face and compared her memory of the young man from Sky City with this new image of a mask-wearing Lin Yuan.

Sun Ningxiang's eyes lit up because both were a perfect copy of each other.

Although doppelgangers existed, it was absurd for two people to have the same appearance and the same voice.

Sky City had clashed with Connected Beast Park because of Condense Fairy Orchard, and Connected Beast Park had tried to make a move on Sky City several times already.

If this young man was really a member of Sky City, it made sense why he would be targeting Connected Beast Park.

Sun Ningxiang was an expert at analyzing speech. The first time she was at Sky City and was negotiating a deal, she noticed animosity between the mask-wearing youth and the Sea Bliss Clan.

It would explain why Lin Yuan was pulling Qi Haitao into the fray now.

One point of contention could be a coincidence, but if every point of contention and evidence pointed in the same direction, that direction was highly likely to be accurate.

Sun Ningxiang instinctively took a step toward Lin Yuan and calmed herself to observe and decide her next move.

Qi Haitao knew that he was in trouble now that Miao Zhuo had called him out.

Since the Sea Bliss Clan had taken the contract to the Spirit Guards to request compensation from Connected Beast Park, it was inevitable that they were burning the bridge between them and Connected Beast Park.

Given that there was no way out and it would be useless to pretend to be meek because it would only result in humiliation, Qi Haitao steeled himself and looked Miao Zhuo in the eye as he said, "The Sea Bliss Clan has always conducted business by the book. It was Connected Beast Park that violated the contract first. All we want is some compensation. As for Creation Master resources, we have no need for them. After partnering with Sky City, we're filled to the brim with Creation Master resources. But you were right about collaborations. After increasing our stock of Angelfish of Bliss, we'll start holding auctions. If any faction wants to work with us and establish trade deals, they can approach me directly."

Qi Haitao spoke loudly and was basically advertising for the Sea Bliss Clan in an attempt to pull in a partnership.

Connected Beast Park was pressuring the Sea Bliss Clan, and many factions that they had worked with in the past had pulled away from them after being warned by Connected Beast Park.

They had all but cut off all communication with the Sea Bliss Clan.

Qi Haitao would have been very conscious of this serious loss in connections in the past.

But even though there were no factions who were currently on friendly terms with the Sea Bliss Clan, as long as the Sea Bliss Clan could maintain their collaboration with Sky City, their expansion could proceed as normal.

After all, the Sea Bliss Clan had dominated the market on Angelfish of Bliss.

Although spiritual-type feys were rare, there were many of them in the Radiance Federation.

If one had spiritual-type feys, the fish coats of Angelfish of Bliss would be required.

Thus, now that they had settled their Creation Master resource issues, the Sea Bliss Clan did not need to be afraid of Connected Beast Park's pressure of their loss in connections.

Naturally, Qi Haitao's words added fuel to the fire of Miao Zhuo's rage.

Miao Zhuo's gaze snapped to Lin Yuan, and he looked Lin Yuan and Qi Haitao over before saying, "There's still some time before the Martial Stage begins. How about the three of us have some fun at the combat ground there according to the rules of the Martial Stage?"

The gawkers knew that Miao Zhuo could no longer hold himself back and was making a move.

The Martial Stage's rules stated that as long as the opponent was not killed, any attacks could be launched until the other party admitted defeat.

When the Martial Stage officially began, there would definitely be some experts who would try to control themselves and not cause their opponent serious injuries while still gaining the upper hand for themselves.

If they agreed to Miao Zhuo's proposition, he would definitely fight as savagely as he could.

Chapter 826: Lin Yuan is my Brother

The people who were looking around did hope that the fight that Miao Zhuo proposed would take place.

The scuffles between Connected Beast Park and the Sea Bliss Clan were old news, and the crowd was barely interested in them.

However, they were extremely curious to find out what Lin Yuan's true powers were.

Since Miao Zhuo was one of the favored main disciples, he was definitely more powerful than Meng Xu.

Given that Miao Zhuo was a B-rank spirit qi professional, he should have already used Starlight Intelligent Dark Clouds to roll his feys' grades.

This meant that Miao Zhuo's strongest fey had reached Diamond/Fantasy.

Lin Yuan would have to summon the fey that he had kept hidden at the Allstar Match in a fight with Miao Zhuo.

At that moment, Zheng Kaiyuan reached out to tug at Miao Zhuo and whispered, "My mother said that you've been by Grandfather's side for the last few months, increasing your Creation Master powers. She said you're a stone's throw away from becoming a Class 4 Creation Master. You might not be aware, but this young man was the one who injured one of the main members from our cousin's guild club."

Miao Zhuo frowned slightly.

He had shut himself off for a few months and had rushed to the Royal Capital directly after without checking Star Web.

He liked to read through the posts and had heard of Lin Yuan.

However, he had not watched the Allstar Match and had not seen how Lin Yuan looked. Otherwise, he would not have singled out Lin Yuan.

Suddenly, a figure stepped forward and wrapped Lin Yuan in a bear hug.

Gao Feng looked at Lin Yuan and said, "I sent you a few messages, but you didn't reply. It turns out you've started some trouble here."

Gao Feng naturally took his place by Lin Yuan's side and frowned at Miao Zhuo as he said, "Miao Zhuo, Lin Yuan is my brother. If you want to come after him, I'll consider it a personal insult."

It was clear from Gao Feng's actions that he was extremely close to Lin Yuan. Otherwise, he would not have immediately inserted himself between Lin Yuan and Miao Zhuo and stood by Lin Yuan's side.

Gao Feng's actions warmed Lin Yuan's heart.

When Lin Yuan interacted with others, he was sincere with anyone that he was certain was his friend or family.

Gao Feng's actions proved that he had been genuine when he called Lin Yuan his brother.

Gao Feng truly regarded Lin Yuan as his brother in his heart.

Otherwise, Gao Feng would not have stood by Lin Yuan against a top faction that was ranked even higher than the Gao family.

Gao Feng did not know that Lin Yuan was the Moon Empress' disciple.

The top and veteran factions were all shocked by Gao Feng's sudden appearance.

They could not help but think, *It's never been heard of that there was any dispute between the Gao family and the Miao family!*

However, it was clear from Gao Feng's familiarity with Lin Yuan that the latter had to be of high status.

The younger generation of the top 50 factions that were present more or less knew each other. Yet, none of them had heard of Lin Yuan.

Miao Zhuo's brow furrowed even tighter after Gao Feng's sudden appearance. He wondered whether Gao Feng had stood up for Lin Yuan because of Condense Fairy Orchard.

But now that he had clashed against two top factions, a veteran faction and the unknown Lin Yuan, Miao Zhuo could not back out.

At that moment, two voices sounded out from near Lin Yuan.

Miao Zhuo was extremely familiar with one of the voices, and it was one that disgusted him to no end.

Long Tao and Li Xuan walked up to Lin Yuan and greeted him in a friendly manner.

Apparently, they were good friends with Lin Yuan.

Numerous gawking veteran factions' disciples let out gasps of shock.

They felt that it was already rare that someone like Lin Yuan was friends with someone like Gao Feng, who was the disciple of a top faction. But it was even more astonishing that Lin Yuan was friends with Long Tao and Li Xuan as well.

From Gao Feng's reaction, it was clear that he was not close to Long Tao and Li Xuan. This meant that Lin Yuan had not been introduced to Long Tao and Li Xuan through Gao Feng.

Li Xuan aside, although Dark Clouds Bird Shrine had expanded quickly, they still had no thearch-class experts and were considered a lower-middle top faction.

However, Long Tao was different because he was the sole direct descendant of Coiling Dragon's Valley and held the title of Young Leader.

Just like Gao Feng, Long Tao's words could be considered to represent the wishes of his faction.

Not only was Long Tao the Young Leader of Coiling Dragon's Valley, but he was also Sequence #3 of the Radiance Hundred Sequence.

Long Tao always had a sharp tongue, and many disciples of top factions had been disgusted by him before.

He did not care about them.

Yet, he was now naturally placing his hand on Lin Yuan's shoulder, and everyone present was utterly bowled over in shock.

Moreover, Li Xuan was looking at Lin Yuan with obvious gratitude.

This added a thicker shroud of mystery around Lin Yuan.

Since Long Tao and Li Xuan had approached him, Lin Yuan knew that unless Miao Zhuo was stupid, this commotion would be coming to an end.

Lin Yuan let out a breath. Although he had used Connected Beast Park to pressure the Sea Bliss Clan, Lin Yuan's plan would have lost some of its interest without this commotion.

After greeting Lin Yuan, Li Xuan looked at Miao Zhuo and said coldly, "If you come after Lin Yuan, you'll have to deal with me too."

Although Li Xuan spoke simply, he had an extremely imposing manner.

Next, Long Tao took over and said, "I heard that Master Miao Qi invited you specially. If she finds out that you're causing trouble here and angering people who you can't afford to anger, will she regret bringing you and replace you with Miao Jue or Miao He instead? Frankly, they are much stronger than you."

When he heard what Long Tao and Li Xuan said, Miao Zhuo's face turned pale, and he scoffed while silently comforting himself, *Long Tao is such a big mouth!*

He forced his anger down and pointed at Qi Haitao as he said, "Qi Haitao, we'll settle things after the Guard Ye Banquet."

Next, Miao Zhuo pointed at Lin Yuan and was about to address him when a shadowy figure that seemed to be wrapped in a soul shot toward Miao Zhuo's finger that was jutting toward Lin Yuan.

When the shadowy figure made contact with the finger, Miao Zhuo's fingers started to tangle around his hand.

Chapter 827: Liu Jie's Powers Increased

With his hand and fingers tangled together, a crisp crack whipped through the air, followed by blood-curdling sounds of grinding.

The insufferably arrogant Miao Zhuo let out an ear-splitting howl of pain.

With the fingers wrapped together, any force exerted on them would lead to excruciating pain.

Miao Zhuo's fingers were forcefully pushed against his palm and formed a helix.

From the way Miao Zhuo's hand looked, people with sharp eyes would have known that the bones had to be broken.

It was impossible for the bones to bend to such a severe curve.

When Miao Zhuo let out his agonizing wail of pain, dreamy cloud-like orchid petals landed on Miao Zhuo's shoulder.

An elegant praying mantis with orchid-petal-shaped raptorial legs shrouded in strange shadows appeared on Miao Zhuo's neck.

The small and charming praying mantis looked to only be about seven or eight centimeters long, but it radiated powerful soul energy.

The praying mantis gently sucked on Miao Zhuo's neck, and it seemed as though something was pulled out of Miao Zhuo's body.

Miao Zhuo stopped wailing in pain as the new pain from his soul was so acute that he could only spasm silently.

A faint golden light lit up around Miao Zhuo's body, and the figure that was being pulled out of his body slowly returned back into him.

Before the small praying mantis started fighting against the golden light, the praying mantis' raptorial legs sliced across the golden light and cut off a piece of it.

After the praying mantis happily absorbed the piece of light it had cut off, it turned into an orchid petal and landed on Liu Jie's shoulder.

When the small praying mantis attacked Miao Zhuo, Lin Yuan used True Data to check on it.

[Fey Name]: Orchid Petal Knife Mantis (Dead Soul Demon Insect)

[Fey Species]: Demon insect-species/ flightless-insect species

[Fey Grade]: Diamond (10/10)

[Fey Type]: Soul

[Fey Quality]: Legend

Abilities:

[Soul Suck]: Suck the soul that is hiding in the target's mind out of its body.

[Parasitic Soul Dead Seed]: Leave a soul seed in the living creature's mind that will combine with the soul. When the target dies, the target's soul can be absorbed through the parasite, leaving the body empty to be possessed.

[Exploding Soul Dead Bullets]: Trigger a mutation in the target's body. When the target's empty body is possessed, it will explode, and the pieces will be spread out as seeds.

[Demon Soul Training]: Absorb the target's soul to increase the strength of its own soul. After completely possessing the target's body and gaining full control of it, the strength of the soul will determine the power of the target's body.

[Dead Soul Ferry]: A low soul noise will be produced that can be used to control the soul of the target. Strong soul tremors will destabilize the target's soul, making it easier to be absorbed.

[Soul Jade Attachment]: When the soul power explodes, the soul will turn into jade that, when shattered, will result in a soul attack that is stronger than the original strength of the soul. The shattered jade will turn into soul mist that will surround all the living creatures in an area, and a soul seed will be implanted in all the living creatures.

Exclusive Skill:

[Dead Soul Immortality]: When the body is killed, and there is no soul seed to utilize, the Dead Soul Demon Insect's soul will leave the body and float around in a designated space. After enough deaths occur in the designated space, the Dead Soul Demon Insect's soul will absorb the dead souls and come back to life.

Lin Yuan nodded slightly when he saw the Orchid Petal Knife Mantis or Dead Soul Demon Insect's True Data.

After Liu Jie's Insect Queen mutation, Lin Yuan had not had the chance to spar with Liu Jie.

But Lin Yuan had seen the Insect Queen's True Data and knew that it could use the spiritual poison from the Blade Queen Bee to control other insect-species feys.

Due to the Insect Queen's characteristics, Liu Jie had been unable to form contracts with other feys, and it caused him to lack variety during combat.

Now that the Insect Queen had gained the Blade Queen Bee's spiritual poison, Liu Jie had overcome this limitation.

The Insect Queen was now like a contractor that could use the Blade Queen Bee's spiritual poison to form contracts with insect-species feys.

However, the Insect Queen could not form contracts with insect-species feys that had greater spiritual power than it did. Otherwise, the Insect Queen would experience recoil and die.

As such, Liu Jie could instruct the Insect Queen to contract tens of insect-species feys without problems.

As a spiritual-type fairy-type source-type lifeform, the Insect Queen had a stronger spirit than regular feys and source-type lifeforms.

But compared to regular insect-species feys, insect-species carcinoma feys were undoubtedly a better choice for Liu Jie because of their messy spirits.

In spite of this Dead Soul Demon Insect's exceptionally strong soul, it still had weaker spiritual power than the Insect Queen's Flesh-Mincing Blade Insects.

If Liu Jie was not the Chief Spirit Guard's disciple, even if Lin Yuan had figured out that insect-species carcinoma feys were the best choice for the Insect Queen to contract, he would not have been able to find any.

Lin Yuan's only carcinoma fey, the Sea Burial Lotus Flower, had been obtained through a coincidence.

The Spirit Guards controlled carcinoma feys strictly.

Liu Jie had always been upfront about his growth with Lin Yuan and had never forgotten about his position as Lin Yuan's retainer knight.

Lin Yuan knew that Liu Jie already had eight extremely strong insect-species carcinoma feys under his control, and every kind had the potential to generate a disaster.

The Orchid Petal Knife Mantis was an insect-species carcinoma fey that the Insect Queen had taken control of.

The Orchid Petal Knife Mantis had used Soul Suck on Miao Zhuo, and the golden light should have been an item that Miao Zhuo's seniors had given him to protect his soul.

But after being attacked by the Diamond X/Legend Dead Soul Demon Insect, the item could not fully protect Miao Zhuo. Hence, Miao Zhuo's soul had still been injured.

Everything had taken place in the blink of an eye.. Everyone present, including Long Tao, Li Xuan, and Gao Feng, were dumbfounded by Liu Jie's sudden attack.

Chapter 828: There's Nothing I Can't Handle

No one expected that someone would dare to make a move right outside the Midnight Palace.

When Liu Jie made his move, he did not seem to care at all that Miao Zhuo had the support of Connected Beast Park or that they were currently at the Midnight Palace.

Although Long Tao and Li Xuan knew who Lin Yuan was, it was not appropriate for him to make a move right outside the Midnight Palace.

The Midnight Palace belonged to Chief Guard Ye, and it was essentially her home.

Even if Lin Yuan was the Moon Empress' disciple, it was extremely disrespectful for him to attack right outside Chief Guard Ye's home.

However, Lin Yuan had not been the one to make a move. Instead, the man wearing the standard Spirit Guard mask that was standing next to Lin Yuan had done it.

Neither Long Tao nor Li Xuan was dumb. They shared a look and made a guess who the man wearing the standing Spirit Guard mask was.

However, those who did not know who Lin Yuan was did not share their thoughts.

Qi Haitao, who had been embroiled in the middle of the fight, started to tremble and called Liu Jie an idiot to himself.

The issue had already passed, but Miao Zhuo had growled that they would settle their issue after the Guard Ye Banquet. This was a slap across Qi Haitao's face.

The experts from the Five Thearch Soldiers were stationed outside the Midnight Palace to protect him, so they would stop Miao Zhuo if he launched an attack against him.

After all, the Sea Bliss Clan had used a large number of resources to buy the Five Thearch Soldiers' protection.

Qi Haitao had already prepared himself to be hit, but he did not expect the new incident to develop in the blink of an eye.

He glared fiercely at Liu Jie and fought the urge to lunge at him and scream, "How dare you make a move right outside the Midnight Moon Palace? Know your place!"

Including Sun Ningxiang, everyone involved was doomed.

Normally, a person should have fainted after receiving a soul injury. But Miao Zhuo managed to stay conscious thanks to the item that protected his soul.

Miao Zhuo, whose face was as white as a sheet, croaked to the dazed Zheng Kaiyuan, "Help me up."

Zheng Kaiyuan regained his senses, pulled Miao Zhuo up from the ground, and whispered, "Let's go into the palace to find Master!"

Now that Miao Zhuo's soul was injured, Zheng Kaiyuan was a mess.

As the Zheng family's Second Young Master, Zheng Kaiyuan was used to being arrogant. However, the lowest-ranked people present were still from veteran factions.

Zheng Kaiyuan's haughtiness as the Second Young Master of the Zheng family had all but dissipated.

Miao Zhuo ignored Zheng Kaiyuan and glared ferociously at Liu Jie.

Even at this moment, he asked, "How dare you attack me!?"

When Miao Zhuo felt the bone-crushing pain of his soul injury, he was confused.

He already had to control and suppress himself because of where he was, so how could this person be so daring?

How could he have actually launched an attack?

Did he have a death wish?

Miao Zhuo had already been looking for a segway to extract himself from the situation, so how did he still end up getting attacked?

Liu Jie looked like a stoic bodyguard standing next to Lin Yuan.

Due to the voice-altering effects of the Spirit Guards' standard mask, Liu Jie's voice sounded rather strange.

However, this strange voice still carried significant determination and severity.

Liu Jie's words made everyone present inhale sharply. "You should not have pointed at his nose. Next time, you'll lose your life."

Miao Zhuo was slightly stunned by how ludicrous Liu Jie's response was.

If anyone else had said this to him at any other place, he would have gone after their life in retaliation.

But they were at the Midnight Palace!

The disciples of veteran and top factions were astonished by Liu Jie's response, and many cursed in amazement.

It seemed insane to them that Liu Jie did not care that they were at the Midnight Palace at all.

At that moment, two figures appeared behind Miao Zhuo, and one of them coldly snapped at Liu Jie. "How dare you act this way in the Midnight Palace? Although there are no spirit attendants here, Chief Guard Ye's right- and left-hand managers are still present."

The other figure checked Miao Zhuo's injury and was about to summon a fey to heal Miao Zhuo's hand when he remembered that he was at the Midnight Palace and stopped himself.

It was against regulations to summon feys at the Midnight Palace without permission, even if it was just a healing-type fey.

Miao Zhuo weakly nodded at the two figures, and Zheng Kaiyuan anxiously greeted them.

One of the figures nodded in response to Zheng Kaiyuan while the other completely ignored him.

Long Tao said to the man who had spoken, "Du Shuo, Fang He, it's not always good to stick your nose into others' business. Don't end up falling after sticking your head out too far."

Du Shuo was Furnace Stone Metal's main disciple.

Furnace Stone Metal was also one of the top ten factions amongst the top 50 factions, just like the Long family.

They had a large store of metal spiritual ingredients and always operated in a low-profile manner.

Fang He was from Four Beast Territory. Although Four Beast Territory could not compare to the Long family, they still had an enormous store of beast resources.

When it came to power, Four Beast Territory was much stronger than Dark Clouds Bird Shrine.

Long Tao had heard that Du Shuo was close with Fang He, and they were basically joined at the hip.

However, he did not know what relationship Du Shuo had with Miao Zhuo.

But from the way that Du Shuo and Fang He were standing behind Miao Zhuo, it seemed that Furnace Stone Metal and Four Beast Territory were about to start working with Connected Beast Park.

Long Tao felt that Du Shuo and Fang He were extremely unlucky.

If Lin Yuan announced his identity, Du Shuo and Fang He would be severely reprimanded by their seniors because they had helped Miao Zhuo.

But if Four Beast Territory and Furnace Stone Metal were working with Connected Beast Park, it was worth considering the repercussions of this commotion.

Du Shuo's face fell when he heard what Long Tao said, and he retorted contemptuously, "Long Tao, you better watch yourself."

Du Shuo proceeded to ignore Long Tao and said to Liu Jie in derision, "Impulsivity comes with a price. You better consider carefully if you'll be able to afford this price."

Liu Jie took a step forward and said to Du Shuo in a low voice, "With nasty guests, there's nothing I can't handle in my own house."

Chapter 829: Who Should be the One Paying Respect?

At first, Liu Jie's words did not trigger any reaction. But when everyone present read in between the lines of Liu Jie's words, they realized who this standard Spirit Guards' mask-wearing man that had just called the Midnight Palace his house was.

He could only be Night Leaning Moon's disciple.

No one else would dare to pretend to be Chief Guard Ye's disciple right in the Midnight Palace.

Li Xuan and Long Tao had already made a guess, but they still looked shocked and could not help but steal glances at Liu Jie.

Gao Feng had been about to seek out his father to ask Chief Guard Ye for forgiveness on behalf of Lin Yuan, but his jaw fell open now.

He did not expect the main character of the Guard Ye Banquet to be standing right next to him, yet he had been none the wiser.

Gao Feng also looked at Lin Yuan in disbelief. Not only had Lin Yuan traveled with the disciple of Chief Guard Ye's disciple, but Chief Guard Ye's disciple had even stood up for Lin Yuan.

Just who was Lin Yuan?

In spite of Gao Feng's bewildered state of mind, he realized that Lin Yuan was completely different from who he initially thought he was.

The people that were gawking at Liu Jie were looking at him differently now that they knew who he was.

None of the disciples of the veteran or top factions expected that someone they initially thought was too brave for his own good was actually a dragon in disguise.

Most of the people's attention was focused on Liu Jie as they tried to come up with a way to strike up a connection with him.

There were also some people that were still gawking in spite of their shock.

However, they were now gawking at Miao Zhuo, Du Shuo, and Fang He.

The injury that Chief Guard Ye's disciple had inflicted on Miao Zhuo could not even be brought up at this point.

Chief Guard Ye's disciple had called Miao Zhuo a nasty guest, and everyone was thinking about what this term would entail.

Usually, nasty guests were chased out.

If Miao Zhuo was kicked out of the Guard Ye Banquet, it might affect the Miao family's main representative, Master Miao Qi.

Du Shuo and Fang He, who had spoken up for Miao Zhuo, were as pale as ghosts now that they knew who Liu Jie was, and they took large steps to put distance between themselves and Miao Zhuo.

The relationship between Furnace Stone Metal and Four Beasts Territory was very similar to the one between Coiling Dragon's Valley and Dark Clouds Bird Shrine.

Furnace Stone Metal had been supporting Four Beasts Territory just like what Coiling Dragon's Valley had been doing for Dark Clouds Bird Shrine.

Du Shuo and Fang He also shared a similar relationship to that of Long Tao and Li Xuan. In fact, Du Shuo and Fang He were much closer because Fang He had grown up in Furnace Stone Metal.

Ever since they were children, Fang He had been playing with Du Shuo.

Du Shuo contracted feys that excelled at attacking while Fang He followed behind him to heal him when needed.

The two of them were even closer than real brothers.

Furnace Stone Metal had discovered a secret when they ventured into a subterranean dimensional rift and needed a large amount of Creation Master resources. Hence, they had approached Connected Beast Park with the intention of working together.

However, the transaction was so large that both parties had yet to come to an agreement.

During this time, when all the top factions were gathered in the Royal Capital, Du Shuo and Fang He had secretly met up with Miao Zhuo.

Miao Zhuo could not be described as their friend, but they had helped him so that Connected Beast Park would be more compromising during their business negotiations.

A bitter smile spread across Du Shuo's face. He had been the one to warn Liu Jie about having to pay the price, but now he was the one who would have to pay it. Not even karma worked this fast.

Now that they had been dragged into the mess, Du Shuo and Fang He's eyes were full of resentment for Miao Zhuo.

They felt that Miao Zhuo was a small fry, yet he had well and truly affronted Chief Guard Ye's disciple.

When he thought of his strict seniors back home, Du Shuo instinctively placed his hand on his backside.

He prayed that the two globes of flesh would not be beaten too badly by his father so that he would not have to trouble Fang He to heal him.

A fierce pressure swept across the area outside the Midnight Palace, and that felt like a floating flame in the frigid night.

With his soul injury, Miao Zhuo could not hold himself steady against the pressure even with Zheng Kaiyuan supporting him and collapsed on the ground.

The pressure stopped short in front of Liu Jie and Lin Yuan.

A man with average features walked out to the area outside the Midnight Palace, his face ashen.

Du Shuo cursed under his breath.

The Spirit Guards' right-hand manager had a much better temperament than the left-hand manager. The left-hand manager had always been in charge of managing the Spirit Guards' Sin Cleansing Pool and could be called the Demon King of the Spirit Guards.

If the left-hand manager came to settle the commotion, it would spell trouble for Du Shuo and the rest.

There was even a chance of his seniors inside the palace being affected.

The left-hand manager was merciless. It would be fine if only he was tossed out of the Midnight Palace, but it would be utterly humiliating if his seniors were chased out alongside him.

Although Du Shuo was the only son, he had a feeling that his father would beat him to death then have another son to take Du Shuo's place if they were tossed out of the Midnight Palace because of Du Shuo.

Miao Zhuo thought that he had fainted and died after being struck by the pressure.

However, the pressure had tightly grabbed hold of his soul and kept his consciousness awake under excruciating pain.

As a Creation Master, Miao Zhuo was immediately in despair. He knew that the left-hand manager had used law world power to quake his soul.

If it were his previous soul injury, he would be fine if his aunt immediately used spiritual ingredients to heal him.

But now that the law world power had shaken up his soul, his injured soul was chipped away.

This was irreversible damage.

Ashes appeared before Miao Zhuo's eyes, and he knew that he would never be able to become a Class 4 Creation Master.

The irreversible damage to his soul meant that he would never be able to use the power of his soul to concoct spirit fluids.

The pinnacle Class 3 Creation Master Miao Zhuo knew that his life was finished.

The left-hand manager walked up to Liu Jie and bowed to him.

The crowd found the left-hand manager's show of respect to be odd because he was not standing directly in front of Liu Jie but rather between Liu Jie and Lin Yuan.

It was confusing whether he was bowing to Liu Jie or Lin Yuan.

Chapter 830: Unforgivable!

Realization dawned on Long Tao and Li Xuan.

Sun Ningxiang, who had already guessed Liu Jie's identity, looked both shocked and confused.

While she contemplated her doubts, the other disciples of the veteran and top factions were also wondering what was going on.

Zuo Ming was an important person.

Even in their prime, Sun Ningxiang's grandfather still needed a month's notice before visiting Zuo Ming. Even then, the meeting was not guaranteed.

Important people always cared about their reputation.

Since the man wearing the standard Spirit Guards mask was Chief Guard Ye's disciple, it was only right that Zuo Ming bowed to him.

But if Zuo Ming only wanted to bow to Liu Jie, he could have stood directly in front of Liu Jie. He would definitely not have stood between Liu Jie and Lin Yuan like he was doing now.

Since Zuo Ming was facing Lin Yuan and Liu Jie, the others could only see Zuo Ming's back and not his face.

The people present had all lowered their heads because of Zuo Ming's arrival and his terrifying aura. None of them dared to gaze upon Zuo Ming's face.

But when Sun Ningxiang saw the way Zuo Ming was standing, she lifted her gaze to glance at Zuo Ming's expression.

She realized that he had nodded almost imperceptibly at Lin Yuan.

This meant that Zuo Ming had not stood in the wrong position and was genuinely bowing to Lin Yuan.

It proved that Zuo Ming held Lin Yuan in the same regard as he did the disciple of Chief Guard Ye.

From Lin Yuan's physique, his chin's curve, speech style, charisma, and voice, Sun Ningxiang had already ascertained that he was that strange mask-wearing young man from Sky City.

She knew that there was more to his identity than a mere member of Sky City.

Lin Yuan had to be of similar status to Liu Jie.

Sun Ningxiang thought back to Lin Yuan's bottomless well of Creation Master resources, and she suddenly recalled the rumor she had heard about the Moon Empress also accepting a disciple and that the disciple was likely to make an appearance at the Guard Ye Banquet.

All the doubts that Sun Ningxiang had about Sky City and Lin Yuan's identity cleared.

She had initially entertained the possibility that there could be a Class 5 Creation Master supporting Sky City. Otherwise, it was impossible for them to evolve fey qualities so quickly.

But now, she knew that she had been wrong. A new Class 5 Creation Master couldn't appear out of nowhere so easily.

If it was so easy for pinnacle Class 4 Creation Masters to break through to Class 5, there wouldn't only still only be three Class 5 Creation Masters in the Radiance Federation after so many years.

Although Sun Ningxiang could not be certain that she was right about Lin Yuan's identity, she felt that she was likely to be right.

Her shock aside, Sun Ningxiang felt her tightly wound heart start to relax.

Regardless of whether or not Lin Yuan was the Moon Empress' disciple, his position gave him the right to receive a nod of greeting from Zuo Ming.

Condense Fairy Orchard and Sky City were working closely. All she needed to do was to cling onto him, and Condense Fairy Orchard would quickly be able to replenish their lack of Creation Master resources.

However, it was not enough for her to just cling to Lin Yuan. She also needed to deepen the relationship between Condense Fairy Orchard and Sky City.

It was even fine if Condense Fairy Orchard relied on Sky City for its expansion.

It was only in such a situation that Lin Yuan would be willing to help Condense Fairy Orchard in the event of an overwhelmingly dangerous circumstance.

Over the years, as Sun Ningxiang continued to hold up Condense Fairy Orchard on her own, it had become harder with time.

With a lack of Creation Master resources and strong combat power, it would be impossible for a top faction to maintain its influence.

It was becoming harder for Condense Fairy Orchard to maintain their domination of some plant-type fey markets.

Otherwise, the Miao family would not have brazenly schemed against Condense Fairy Orchard and attempted to consume them under the pretense of collaboration.

When she saw Lin Yuan's resolute and calm expression, Sun Ningxiang felt that she could consider leaving the fate of Condense Fairy Orchard in his hands.

Before any further speculation took place, Zuo Ming said to Liu Jie apologetically, "Young Liege, I didn't expect there to be people here who dare to disregard the rules and offend you. They are supposed to have come to the Guard Ye Banquet to celebrate you, yet they disrespect you. Please advise me on how I should handle them."

Zuo Ming's gaze did not go anywhere near the ghostly pale Miao Zhuo, Zheng Kaiyuan, Du Shuo, Fang He, and Qi Haitao.

It was as though they were specks of dust on his shoe that were not worth paying a hint of attention to. Once Liu Jie issued his order, they would be ejected without hesitation.

Rage boiled within Zuo Ming.

Before

Liu Jie had used the Insect Queen to create a sea of insects that defended Cold Frost City for half an hour before becoming a member of the Radiance Hundred Sequence.

By the time the Spirit Guards arrived, Liu Jie had fainted and had been unaware of how many citizens and spirit qi professionals he had protected.

Although Zuo Ming had not been the one to lead the team to aid Cold Frost City, he had gained respect for Liu Jie because of this matter.

Not even the Guard Envoys would be able to stand up to an invincible enemy like Liu Jie had done.

When Zuo Ming had heard that Chief Guard Ye had accepted Liu Jie as her disciple, he had immediately acknowledged Liu Jie.

After spending time together, Zuo Ming had completely accepted Liu Jie as his junior.

He felt that he understood Liu Jie's character well and that Liu Jie was extremely amicable.

It was not easy to stir up Liu Jie's ire.

Before the Guard Ye Banquet began, Zuo Ming was in charge of the area outside the Midnight Palace, while the right-hand manager was in charge of the area inside the Midnight Palace.

He had just been called away to accompany Zong Ze and Gu Lang to the Night Words Pavilion, and someone had dared to anger Liu Jie in his absence.

It was unforgivable!

A fresh batch of Sin Cleansing Weeping Willows from the Sin Cleansing Pool had been nurtured but had yet to be bathed in blood.

Zuo Ming felt that this newly nurtured batch of Sin Cleansing Weeping Willows could teach these people who had broken the Midnight Palace's rules and insulted his Young Liege a lesson they would never forget.

Du Shuo yanked Fang He's hand and lowered his head. He felt that his impulsivity had burdened Fang He.

Otherwise, Fang He's peaceful nature would not have let him involve himself with Miao Zhuo's issues.

If the right-hand manager had been the one to come to settle the scuffle, Du Shuo might have dared to argue.

However, if he uttered one wrong word in front of Zuo Ming, it would only lead to worse consequences.