

## My Crown 81

### Chapter 81: Shrew

“Who are you?” Qiao Mu swung one leg over the other, and her eyes turned frostier as she stared at the woman.

These people were extremely interesting. They did not look like idiots, but why were they so unversed in social skills? It was true that there were so many boxes placed in front of her house that it elicited envy from people, but this act of stealing from under her nose, wasn't their manner too unsightly?

Robbers should not be so arrogant, right?

Moreover, who told them it was that easy to steal something that was now her possession? Earlier, so many extremely vicious and wicked people wanted to steal the Heart of Paradise from her, but no one ended up well. Yet this weak and feeble mother and daughter duo wanted to imitate them and steal from her? Shouldn't they get a bowl of water and take a look at themselves to see if they were fit to do so?

Madam née Li looked at Qiao Mu with embarrassment. She did not expect this child to really not recognize her. “You... you speak too harshly, child. Based on our position in the family hierarchy, I am your Second Aunt.”

As she said this, an awkward smile crawled on her face, and she pulled up the angry and whining Qiao Yingchun. She then coughed dryly before saying, “This is your Sister Yingchun. Didn't you meet her when you were young? Perhaps you were too young then, so you've forgotten. We are all relatives of your family! Where's your father and mother? Let them come out.”

So much satin, cloth, and jewelry, shouldn't they at least divide a portion for her daughter and her? They are all family and are also such close neighbors, it would be unjustified if they don't give them some, right? As Madam née Li pondered over this, she concealed her fury before putting on an artificial smile. She also gently squeezed her daughter's palm so that she would pay attention and hide her anger.

However, how could Qiao Yingchun repress her rage? She had never been this wronged in her life! Her unsightly posture on the ground after being kicked by Qiao Mu—she was unwilling to recall it.

How could she snuff out the fury in her heart after having so many onlooking villagers witness her disgraceful situation?

“Mother!” Qiao Yingchun tugged on her mother's elbow and furiously glared at Qiao Mu. “Why are you polite toward her? Just transport the goods away, why would you need to waste your words on her?”

Qiao Mu chuckled in amusement, her eyes sweeping toward the dumbstruck workers. “What are you still waiting for? Hurry and carry my boxes into the courtyard. Are you waiting for them to steal it in front of you?”

“Yes.” The leading worker waved his hand. “Move.”

The group of people swarmed forward as they carried box after box of superior-quality satin into Qiao Mu's home.

A poisonous glint shot out of Qiao Yingchun's eyes. With courage summoned from who knows where, she actually rushed toward a worker and seized a box, wrestling it back and forth with him. "Let go! Let go, you! Where are you carrying my clothes? Let go now!"

The worker was exceptionally embarrassed, his eyes drifting toward Qiao Mu and crying for help. "Little Miss."

"Why are you so polite towards bandits?" Qiao Mu smiled and flicked her hand. "Simply evict her with brute force."

"Okay." With Qiao Mu's approval, the workers did not hesitate any longer nor did they hold back. They simply rolled up their sleeves and forcefully jostled them back upon seeing the mother and daughter madly running forward to grab the boxes.

Both mother and daughter were normal people, so how could they win against these burly men? Madam née Li's head even slammed against a tree, and she started screeching when she touched the blood that dripped down from her forehead.

Qiao Yingchun also fell onto the ground in a rugged state. She clutched her leg and started loudly bawling, "Someone died! Someone died!"

Madam née Li also echoed while wailing like a ghost, "Qiao Family's Miss killed someone! She killed someone!"

## **Chapter 82: Sick with Envy**

"What are you waiting for? Continue. Ignore any racket from loiterers." Qiao Mu indifferently looked toward the workers before glancing derisively at the screaming and bawling mother and daughter duo sitting on the ground.

Seeing the onlooking villagers pointing and laughing at them, Madam née Li found it a bit mortifying and got up, pouncing toward Qiao Mu's residence like a starving wolf.

"Block her," Qiao Mu harshly shouted.

At her order, the two workers guarding in front of the door beefed up their arms and blocked Madam née Li's path.

Madam née Li, however, continued to push the two people's shoulders, scratching and kicking at the same time. "Qiao Zhongbang, Wei Ziqin, get out here! I want to call Elderly Lady Qiao here to be a judge! We are all relatives, so must we take things to such extremes?"

Wei Ziqin quickly ran out after hearing this. With such a disturbance outside her door, she could not pretend to be mute and deaf no matter how much she wanted to ignore it.

As she saw the insane Madam née Li, Wei Ziqin could not help but to anxiously wipe her hands on her clothes before looking up at her daughter.

Qiao Mu sent her a reassuring look and dryly said, "Mother, ignore them. Everything here was bought by me, your daughter, with my own money. I earned it by risking my life to be a guide in Hulan Mountain."

At the mention of Hulan Mountain, panic crept into Wei Ziqin's heart. The memory of how her daughter led the people from Heavenly Dao Sect up the mountain by herself while she waited at the base of the mountain, scared and on edge, would always make her heart constrict involuntarily. Therefore, she nodded and said, "Mother knows."

With the two workers blocking between them, Wei Ziqin told Madam née Li, "Second Sister-in-Law, our Qiaoqiao obtained all of the supplies in the boxes at the risk of her life. As parents, we can't just hold out our hand and ask our daughter for it."

In other words, you outsiders should not even contemplate getting it.

Madam née Li's eyes were red with anger and she kept shouting, "How could you say that? What kind of nonsense is that? Look at how your courtyard is nearly out of room for these boxes, why is it a problem to give a few boxes to my daughter and I? We are all relatives. Will you really do such a preposterous thing as pretending to be strangers with your family?"

"Second Sister-in-Law, these are all exchanged with Qiaoqiao's life. She has the power to allocate it," Wei Ziqin sternly said. "Second Sister-in-Law's family has always been well off and never lacked for food or clothes. I imagine you wouldn't stretch your hand that far to my daughter's belongings, right?"

Madam née Li had never been shy when it came to flaunting how well off her family was and how blissful her life was. They truly did not expect her to shamelessly rob someone so openly today. This caused many villagers to inwardly laugh at her upon seeing this.

Madam née Li's lips trembled as she watched box after box being carried away in front of her, and it made her heart feel like it was going to start dripping blood. It was true that she lived comfortably, but she had never been so extravagant and wasteful to the point of buying hundreds of boxes of clothes and cloth. As for that precious jewelry, it was completely beyond her reach. It was already quite good if she could add some silver jewelry to her collection every year.

Madam née Li was turning dizzy from how angry she was. As for Qiao Yingchun, she was intently staring at Qiao Mu's back silhouette while continuously screeching, "Jewelry box, my jewelry box!"

Qiao Mu did not pay any attention to the two of them and entered the courtyard with the rosewood box in her arms, a little girl blindly following her.

She was too lazy to waste her words on those two idiots! Although she did not like the pieces of jewelry that the rich crown prince sent her and had never in her life enjoyed hanging jewelry on her head like a decorative tree, but this did not mean she would allow her possessions to benefit someone else! Even more unlikely for her to allow those idiots to benefit!

### **Chapter 83: Unsuccessful Instigation**

Unable to gain anything from Qiao Mu, Madam née Li angrily pulled up her screaming daughter and charged toward Xu Jiao's residence with a spurt of energy.

She found it unbelievable that Xu Jiao, after learning about all the treasures in Qiao Mu's residence, would not be sick with envy and covet them. At that time, if Xu Jiao spearheaded the endeavor, then she and her daughter could follow her. They would certainly be able to snatch some treasures home with this method.

However, if that box of precious jewelry landed in Xu Jiao's hands, Madam née Li could not guarantee that she would be able to take a few home. The more she thought about it, the more painful she found it. Nevertheless, she was unable to tolerate her anger, so she headed straight for Xu Jiao's residence.

As soon as she entered the courtyard, she called, "Sister Xu Jiao!" Immediately, she was greeted by a bucket of dog blood!

Madam née Li instantly turned as dumb as a wooden chicken.

The delicate miss, Qiao Yingchun's, face was also splattered by a few drops of dog blood. As though she was infected by some corrosive liquid, Qiao Yingchun started shrieking like a ghost and clutched her face with one hand, furiously wiping it off with terror in her eyes.

Madam née Li was also jolted from shock. When she focused on the scene before her, she discovered an incense burner table placed in the courtyard, and there were three joss sticks as thick as a fist lit in broad daylight. A middle-aged Daoist priest was swinging his peach-wood sword in front of the table, hopping up and down as he recited with forceful conviction, "The Immortal Venerate and Heavenly Monarch commands the fiendish demons and spirits in all directions to immediately disperse! Roar... hah!"

Madam née Li: ...

What was going on? Xu Jiao was ensconced inside a quilt on such a hot day, hiding behind the incense burner table. When she looked over, her face was deathly pale, and there was not any focus visible in her eyes.

Another look revealed the dozens of yellow talismans pasted on her quilt, and even her hands and legs, as well as her forehead, were covered in talismans. She had an extremely weird appearance, almost as if she were possessed.

Seeing the bleak situation, Madam née Li promptly tugged on her daughter's hand and hastily escaped from the courtyard without even saying hello to Qiao Zhongheng. Her next stop was the neighboring residence of Elderly Lady Qiao.

How unlucky! Who knew whether the misfortune tainting Xu Jiao would contaminate her daughter and her. For their own safety, it was better to stay as far away from her as possible.

It was no wonder that Xu Jiao did not go to Qiao Mu's home to steal things! As it turned out, she was possessed, so she could not go out!

However, Elderly Lady Qiao was weird today as well. Xu Jiao's home was connected with the old woman's, so there was no way for her to not have heard any of the commotion, especially with Xu Jiao causing such a large disturbance.

Entrenched in dog blood, Madam née Li headed next door with her daughter in tow. After haggling with the doorkeeper for half a day, they were finally able to enter the residence. Madam née Li questioned the older female servant responsible for welcoming guests, and oh my! It turned out Elderly Lady Qiao had been sick since last night!

Realization dawned on Madam née Li. As she was saying, with Elderly Lady Qiao's embezzling habits and greedy personality, how could she not do anything after knowing? It turned out she was as unfortunate as Xu Jiao—one was possessed and the other one was ill.

Madam née Li and her daughter arrived at Elderly Lady Qiao's room with great familiarity. Without waiting for the maid to finish announcing her, she immediately started howling "Oh, my Elderly Lady!" as she rushed through the doors in a whirlwind fashion. Then, she knelt next to Elderly Lady Qiao's bed and started wailing, but there were hardly any teardrops that fell from her eyes. Her bark was certainly worse than her bite.

Elderly Lady Qiao immediately became light-headed from anger. *"I haven't freaking died yet, what are you bawling for!"*

Madam née Li's wails caused the already sick Elderly Lady Qiao to feel even worse, and the old woman irritably snapped, "Quiet. What in the world happened?"

Madam née Li told her the story of the boxes being carried into Qiao Mu's home while adding excessive embellishments to the story. As she spoke, she paid attention to Elderly Lady Qiao's expression but noticed that the old woman remained very calm, as though she did not care about those supplies at all.

Was the world coming to an end? Why was Elderly Lady Qiao acting so odd today? Shouldn't she immediately jump up and rush to Qiao Mu's home to loot the treasures!

How could Elderly Lady Qiao actually be calm, she was so choked with bitterness that she nearly fainted. However, Qiao Mu's family was divided yesterday night, so no matter how far her arm could stretch, she could not reach it toward her granddaughter's possessions.

After hearing Madam née Li's instigation, Elderly Lady Qiao repressed the fury boiling in her and frowned as she kindly advised the woman. Then, she sent Madam née Li home with an impatient expression so that she would wash away the dog blood she was soaked with. The stench of the dog blood had nearly caused her to vomit.

Seeing how Elderly Lady Qiao easily gave up on such a large amount of wealth, Madam née Li found it unbelievable.

As Madam née Li was escorted outside by an old female servant, she kept muttering about how strange everything was. Then, when she recalled how she had run all over the village today but did not manage to gain anything, she grew infuriated. Seeing the conspicuous openwork vase made from Qingtian stone standing next to the door of Elderly Lady Qiao's room, she snatched it into her arms, making the escorting servant flabbergasted.

With the vase in her arms, Madam née Li prattled, “Elderly Lady Qiao, then I will leave now. Get well soon,” before dragging her displeased daughter out of Elderly Lady Qiao’s court. When the old servant told Elderly Lady Qiao about this upon her return, Elderly Lady Qiao angrily smashed a cup on the ground on the spot.

That g\*dd\*mn biddy, she truly seized any opportunity without fail and was unwilling to spare even the flower vase by the door!

#### **Chapter 84: Pretend This Subordinate Still Has a Fee to Pay**

In contrast to Madam née Li’s running around, Qiao Mu was cheerfully ordering people to carry the items inside, arranging each box by category and piling them up in an orderly manner.

“You are done now.” Qiao Mu’s bright eyes swept over the hundreds of boxes before turning toward Ao Ye, waving her hand at him like she was flicking away a fly. “Go back.”

“Little Lord, this subordinate already reported to you that from today onward, this subordinate will follow Little Lord closely.”

Qiao Mu pettishly rolled her eyes when she heard this, wildly gesturing with her hand. “Why do you need you to follow me so closely? Not only a waste of food but also have to find a room for you to live in. As you can see, my tiny home can’t accommodate you!”

How bothersome! Moreover, having someone next to her at all times also required her to waste her breath talking. Look at the present situation! Originally, after making these people leave, she could have taken inventory of these goods by herself, but with them present, how could she take the Heart of Paradise out to open the mystic realm?

So infuriating... She did not want to talk at all! The child sharply glanced at Ao Ye before gesturing toward the door with her chin. In other words, hurry and leave!

Ao Ye’s lips twitched. He swiftly dug out a money pouch embroidered with gold threads out of his chest fold and offered it with both hands. “This is this subordinate’s room and board fee for the next three years. Don’t worry, Little Lord, this subordinate doesn’t need a room for lodging and can live anywhere from a tree to the underside of the eaves and even from the corridor to the courtyards! And a bowl of rice is enough to feed me!”

Qiao Mu openly confiscated the money pouch that was surrendered by Ao Ye and pulled it open. There were a lot of small gold ingots and small round and shiny gold beans, as well as a lot of colorful jewels. It would add up to at least 10,000 taels of silver, which is sufficient for 30 years of expenditure, let alone 3 years.

Qiao Mu glanced at Ao Ye and sized him up before nodding and waving her hand again.

Ao Ye immediately cupped his hands in understanding. “Don’t worry, Little Lord, this subordinate will be nearby. If Little Lord needs anything, simply call this subordinate.”

After saying that, he leaped onto the eaves of the house and disappeared from sight.

As Qiao Hu stood in the entrance of the courtyard with his path blocked by the boxes, his jaw nearly popped off from how shocked he was. His elder younger sister was too amazing, wasn't she! Demanding payment for room and board when she takes in a subordinate, this was simply too... excessive!

At this time, the little girl who had stayed next to Qiao Mu without speaking also ran forward and imitated Ao Ye's action as she dug out a bag of gold ingots and gold beans from her chest fold. She offered it to Qiao Mu with both hands. "Dear Little Lord, this maid is called Shaoyao<sup>1</sup>. This servant is adept at clothes washing, cooking, hair brushing, and makeup. This servant can sleep in the corridor or the courtyards or the woodshed or even a pile of grass, and a bowl of rice is also enough for me!"

Qiao Mu's lips twitched. She opened the money pouch and extracted two gold ingots to hand to the girl. "Go buy some vegetables."

The rich Crown Prince truly went through quite the trouble. He even prepared the room and board fee for the two of them, temporarily rendering Qiao Mu speechless.

When her subordinates were so considerate, how could she ignore it as their mistress! She could not find it in her to kick them out! With her hands behind her back, Qiao Mu ambled to stand in front of the boxes. Then, she turned back and called out to the empty courtyard, "Ao Ye, do you know how to drive a carriage?"

"Yes, Little Lord!" Ao Ye had tears streaming down his face... Little Lord was planning to make him be a carriage driver for the rest of his life, wasn't she!

"Brother Xiao Hu, help me stand guard outside the door and don't let anyone enter. I will store these all into my inner world." Qiaoqiao waved her hand toward Qiao Hu, who was standing at the entrance and unable to enter. Qiao Hu immediately responded in agreement and turned around to stand outside the residence, thoughtfully closing the door behind him.

## **Chapter 85: Uninvited Guest**

Qiao Mu cursorily looked through the boxes and discovered that the rich crown prince was actually very reliable with the tasks entrusted to him. There were 10 or so boxes of ready-to-wear clothes fit for all seasons and a full stock of shoes and hats, enough for her family to wear for quite a while.

Besides that, there were also 70-80 boxes of superior-quality cloth in all sorts of varieties—thick, thin, silk, and wool—and 10-20 boxes with threads of all colors. Even if Mother wanted to make her own clothes, she would not need to worry. These would indeed last them 20 years.

Heh, she had not said it seriously, but to her surprise, the crown prince truly handled everything properly. After sitting on one of the boxes, Qiao Mu used her mystic conscious to sweep her awareness over her surroundings before taking out the Heart of Paradise.

However, the wrestling that she did with the sapling before taking it out did not need to be mentioned. It was utterly exhausting!

If it were not for the sheer amount of boxes here, causing their subsequent surface area to be quite large, then she would have wished for nothing more than to use a storage talisman. It would save her from the hassle of having a tug-of-war with that odd sapling every time.

After snatching the Heart of Paradise, she intentionally swept her mystic conscious over the sapling and found that it had several branches listlessly drooping down, and it was even swaying pitifully. It was as though it was accusing her of being tyrannical and overbearing.

*Heh! This Heart of Paradise is mine, alright! Why is it so troublesome to take it out every time! It's hard on me too, okay!*

*How annoying!*

Qiao Mu infused a trace of mystic energy into the Heart of Paradise and the bead leapt up, emitting a strange light. A half-transparent valley then emerged in the air, and with a thought, the boxes by her feet swiftly entered the paradise. They ended up forming neat piles in the space in front of the peach forest.

When Qiao Mu attempted to withdraw one of the boxes, she managed to summon it with a small amount of mystic energy, which settled her worries. She swiftly moved all the remaining boxes into the paradise, separating the ready-made clothes from the cloth so that it would be easier to withdraw later.

Then, Qiao Mu tossed the 30 boxes of iron arrows, 10 crow-gold arrows, crow repeating crossbow, and normal repeating crossbows into the paradise. After she took out a few gold beans to keep in her money pouch, she threw the rest of the gold, as well as the box of jewelry, inside as well.

Qiao Mu surveyed the half-transparent valley in the air with narrowed eyes. The empty space in front of the peach forest was nearly completely stacked with boxes.

However, there were still a lot of empty spaces by the lake and near the back of the peach forest, so Qiao Mu was not worried about running out of space. Now, she was just waiting for Second Uncle to bring his supplies back, and she would be almost done preparing everything that she needed to prepare.

Qiao Mu's face was expressionless, but she was clearly happy inside. With a flick of her hand, she recollected the Heart of Paradise and swallowed it. Then, she suddenly felt a wave of cold air rushing in from the distance, and goosebumps started appearing on her skin for no reason. Her heart jolted, and she instantly grew tense.

"Granny, who are you? You? What are you doing? You can't trespass!" Brother Xiao Hu's anxious voice was heard from outside the door.

In the next second, the door to the courtyard was kicked open, and Brother Xiao Hu flew toward Qiao Mu, like a kite whose string had been snapped.

Although Qiao Mu was stunned, a chill crept into her eyes. With a slide, Qiao Mu caught the flying Qiao Hu; however, she could not resist the overpowering strength, so she fell a few steps back with Brother Xiao Hu in her arms.

A touch of her hand revealed that Brother Xiao Hu's chest was covered with sticky blood, and he had already fainted.



An extremely savage-looking geriatric face suddenly appeared in front of her house. The face contained one eye and half a nose, and half of the face appeared scorched. The upper half of the face above the mouth was completely melded together, giving its owner an extremely terrifying appearance.

### **Chapter 86: Kill Her!**

Shock jolted through Qiao Mu's heart, but she immediately turned around, swiftly dug out some ointment, and messily smeared it across Qiao Hu's chest. The hemostatic ointment was extremely effective, and the wound stopped bleeding as soon as she smeared it on, stabilizing Qiao Mu's heart.

Qiao Mu had just leaned Qiao Hu against a wall in the courtyard when the savage-looking face of a granny suddenly popped up in her line of sight. The granny's hand, which was dried up like a branch, reached for her neck as well.

Qiao Mu arched back to evade, causing a trace of confusion to flash through the granny's eyes. Her grabbing motion paused, and she sized up Qiao Mu, a chilly smile turning up on her face. "Little girl is actually a mystic cultivator. Although your cultivation isn't high, it is quite laudable for your age."

"Old Senior, may I ask why you suddenly trespassed into my home and injured my brother?" There was a thick layer of mystic energy on this granny. She reckoned her cultivation was similar to Ghost Saber, the one Crown Prince Lian had killed off with a flick of his finger, and she was likely a level eight mystic cultivator.

Although Qiao Mu was shocked on the inside, her appearance did not reveal anything.

This granny must have felt the Heart of Paradise and traced it here. Qiao Mu clenched her hand into a fist, inwardly bashing herself. She was still too careless.

"Child, where are your parents?"

"Father went out this morning and hasn't returned yet. Mother took the maid out to shop for groceries."

Suspicion darted through the granny's eyes. In truth, when she entered this residence, she had used her mystic conscious to scan her surroundings. Hence, she knew that this little girl was not lying, and there was no one else present in this little residence.

"Little girl, tell Granny the truth, was there anyone who passed by your house? Or did you notice any strange phenomenon?"

Qiao Mu honestly shook her head in denial.

The granny looked at her for a moment before suddenly reaching out to suck the unconscious Qiao Hu into her palm. She was very fast, and Qiao Mu could not stop her in time. Moreover, the difference between their cultivation was too great, so she could not stop her even if she wanted to.

"Hm?" The granny's thin, shriveled fingers scooped a bit of the ointment from Qiao Hu's chest and brought it to her nose for a sniff. Then, she sent a meaningful smile to Qiao Mu. "Little girl, how can an impoverished family afford such superior-grade ointment? I think you should confess truthfully. When I

neared your house in passing, I clearly smelled the scent that divulges at the opening of a mystic domain that has been formed from the refinement of a mystic realm.”

As expected, she came for the Heart of Paradise. Qiao Mu inwardly took a deep breath, and her hands pressed against her back tightly clenched into fists.

“If you don’t tell me the truth...”—the granny enigmatically smiled at her—“I will refine you lovely young children into puppet demons, preventing you two from being reincarnated for all of eternity.”

Qiao Mu’s clenched fists suddenly opened behind her, and a strength talisman and speed talisman darted into the distance at high speed.

At the same time, her icy voice, which made her sound like someone who had crawled out of hell, mechanically and flatly said without a ripple, “Kill her.”

The rapidly arriving Ao Ye never knew he could be so fast. He just felt something being flicked onto him and with a flash, a special power and speed rushed into his veins.

Without needing another order from Qiao Mu, Ao Ye’s One Meter of Grace flew in front of the granny, causing her to subconsciously stagger back in shock and relax her hold on Qiao Hu.

Qiao Mu caught Qiao Hu’s figure and lightly leapt to the side. When she looked back at the granny, it seemed like she was staring at a corpse.

That gaze caused even the granny, a person whose hands were covered in blood, to uncontrollably shiver and feel an icy feeling shooting up her spine.

### **Chapter 87: The Tragic Demonic Cultivator**

“Asking for death!” Resentful from being scared back by a little girl’s gaze, the granny stretched her shriveled fingers toward the edge of the sword without care.

She had expected that the seemingly unremarkable sword would certainly shatter into pieces under her grasp.

However, with a light clang, the granny’s hand was shaken off.

Before she could react, the sword in the youth’s hands divided itself into two. Under the stunned gaze of the old biddy, the sword in his left hand pierced her from the back.

“You!” The granny turned around in shock, and sharp thorns suddenly came out from the tips of her 10 shriveled fingers, aiming for the youth’s arm.

A blue shimmer gleamed from the tip of the 10 thorns, its high toxicity apparent at first glance—the type that would cause death with a single touch.

Qiao Mu was looking on from the side when her pupils constricted, and confusion arose in her eyes. The sharp thorns seemed to resemble poisonous thorny vines.

*Could it be?*

“So you are a demonic cultivator.” Contempt flashed through Ao Ye’s eyes. “Unfortunately, the level of your poisonous thorny vines appears to be a bit low.”

It was common knowledge that any mystic cultivator above level 10 could find a strong mystic beast and make a contract with it. At that time, their fighting strength would also raise quite a bit.

In truth, since a majority of the people in the world could not become mystic cultivators, then a portion of them would often switch careers and become body cultivators, also known as normal martial artists. Their strength naturally could not be compared to that of a mystic cultivator, but they still had a large advantage over normal people.

Furthermore, there was an even smaller portion of people who, in the pursuit of supreme power, ignored all costs and would switch over to become demonic cultivators. In the eyes of the people, being a demonic cultivator was definitely a frightening and dark career.

Compared to the brightness and openness of a mystic cultivator, demonic cultivators were typically labeled as evil and dark. These types of people extracted the power of evil beasts and plants and fused these powers into themselves for their use.

The most common result was that their physical body incorporated a portion of strength from those evil beasts and plants. Like the old biddy before them, parts of her fingers could mutate into poisonous thorny vines, illustrating that her fusion was considered successful.

Although demonic cultivators might be incredibly disdained by everyone right now, but after the zombie outbreak occurred, the survival advantage these people held would quickly make itself known.

In the later stages where people completed missions in exchange for supplies, quite a number of operation squads were formed. At that time, the status of a demonic cultivator in the team could be comparable to an apothecary’s, they were a necessary and vital member of the squad.

In any case, however rare this demonic cultivator was, her existence ceased to be necessary.

Qiao Mu could not be bothered to investigate the old biddy’s identity and ordered again, “Kill her.”

“Yes, Little Lord!”

“Roar!” Ao Ye suddenly released a giant sleek and pitch-black beast. With a leap, the beast gripped the old biddy’s arm in its mouth and chewed it a few times. Then, it spat out a pile of mushy meat on the ground.

It was a black panther the size of a small elephant whose glossy coat shimmered under the rays of the sun.

When Ao Ye released this giant beast, Qiao Mu’s eyes suddenly brightened. It was her first time in this life seeing a mystic beast this gigantic with such frightening battle strength.

It could rip off the arm of a level eight mystic cultivator with a single bite, causing her to lose her fighting ability. This black panther was truly brilliant.

The rich crown prince was truly lavish! An offhandedly sent subordinate could kill a level eight mystic cultivator in a second. Although Qiao Mu could not see through Ao Ye's level with her cultivation, she knew from the very beginning that Ao Ye had a higher cultivation than the old biddy.

### **Chapter 88: What Were Puppet Demons?**

From the very beginning, she knew that Ao'ye had higher cultivation than the old biddy.

Hence, the old granny would die without a doubt! It was not relying on force to bully others, it was merely self-defense. She did not plan to die, so it was better for the old granny to die.

The old granny never expected to perish in this little mountain village. Her single eye fiercely glared at the little girl walking toward her. "Little Girl, if you kill me, then you will never have peace again! The people from my sect absolutely won't spare you! Your whole family will pay for my life! Consider it carefully."

However, the girl merely sent her an uncanny and eerie smile.

"So much rubbish!" A black ferule landed on her palm, and she slapped it against the granny's face without pause, causing the granny's head to bleed profusely and shocking her.

Ao'ye: ...

Don't you know that Little Lord was killing someone next to a putrid gutter the first time we met her? Do you think a vicious little girl like her would tolerate your threats? Heh.

"Crush her life lantern, kill her," Qiao Mu coldly ordered.

It was only now that the granny finally comprehended that this child genuinely wanted to kill her.

"H-how did you know about the life lantern?" The old woman's lips trembled, and her entire being—from her body to her soul—was shivering.

Qiao Mu was uninterested in answering the granny. Instead, she stared at her with her pitch-black eyes before quietly asking, "What are puppet demons?"

The granny involuntarily shuddered, and even she had not realized that she was shaking like a quail in front of this six-or-seven-year-old girl.

"I-I don't know what y-you are s-saying."

"Little Lord, this person is likely an elder of the Ghost Sect. The Ghost Sect has an extremely guarded secret technique called the puppet technique. It can refine girls and boys into puppets and turn them into slaves that are stripped of their own thoughts and emotions, completely obedient to their master's orders. They are essentially lifeless marionettes."

Qiao Mu suddenly smiled at the granny after hearing this explanation. However, this smile only caused the granny to tremble even harder.

The granny did not know whether or not this was a smile, since there was no noticeable difference in the girl's face; moreover, the sparkling cold glint in the girl's eyes made it look like it had icicles inside. Her lips appeared to move a little, but her rigid face remained stoic, the unsynchronized smile sending goosebumps all over people.

"So you want to refine me into a puppet." Qiao Mu suddenly moved and sent the granny's chin shattering with a kick. She dashed up like she went mad and ruthlessly slapped the ferule against her as hard as she could. It was as though she wanted to spend her life's energy on this granny.

"Pieces of shit like you who steal someone's life at your whim don't need to exist in this world! Bastards like you who ignore other people's wishes and corral innocent people like cats and dogs and keep them as puppets and slaves should be the first to die!!! Die!" Qiao Mu's emotions suddenly erupted, and she ruthlessly swung the black ferule in her hand on the granny's face and body and head over and over again.

"You are the pet! You are the puppet slave! YOU are!!! You want to refine me into a puppet so you can corral me like a pet! Die! Die!!!" A brutality and harshness that did not suit the child's age leaked out of her eyes as a slap of the ferule ruthlessly smacked against the back of the granny's head, smashing her head into pieces like a watermelon.

Ao'ye immediately surged forward and seized the granny's life lantern, crushing it into pieces. He then turned his head and found the little girl tightly clutching the ferule with a whirlpool spinning in her eerie dark eyes, so dark that there was not a trace of light.

## **Chapter 89: Self-reproach**

Ao'ye's heart skipped a beat. Seeing the girl look like she was trapped in her demons, Ao'ye hastily bowed and called "Little Lord" a few times.

Qiao Mu's bone-chilling gaze landed on the old granny's badly mutilated body, but there was not any reflection in her chilly, pitch-black eyes.

"Little-little Master," Ao'ye raised his volume, his expression slightly shifting, as he tried to pull Qiao Mu out of her emotions.

Her hands instantly relaxed their tight grasp of the ferule, and her frosty face also eased slightly. She turned to the anxious-looking youth in black and nodded and said, "I'm fine. Take care of the body, don't leave behind any evidence."

"Yes." Ao'ye nodded and skillfully picked up the corpse, his left hand sprinkling some white powder on the ground.

The puddle of blood swiftly receded and disappeared, and the courtyard appeared to have recovered its typical tranquility.

However, Qiao Mu's heart could not be calmed.

She looked down at Brother Xiao Hu lying unconscious in the corner, and her fists subconsciously clenched by her sides.

She was aware that staunching the blood superficially was not too useful. The old granny's attack had severely injured Brother Xiao Hu's organs, and she was afraid no one could cure him in this tiny mountain village.

"Little Lord, this little brother's injuries are a bit serious, perhaps he won't survive..." Ao'ye said with the intent of comforting her since he knew that the girl must be having a hard time.

However, Qiao Mu nodded and interrupted him, "Go take care of it."

"Yes." Ao'ye walked forward with the old biddy in his hand.

Then, he heard the girl's fragmented voice, close to a mumble. "I caused... trouble for you. Next time... I... will be careful."

Ao'ye started and paused his steps for a few seconds. For some reason, he had mixed feelings. She was young, but the expression that she inadvertently revealed made her seem like she had experienced decades of plights in the world, gripping people's hearts with distress.

Ao'ye cupped his fist in salute and said, "This subordinate isn't afraid of trouble." Then, he picked up the corpse and leaped onto the roof with a swish, his figure disappearing after a few jumps.

Qiao Mu carried the unconscious Qiao Hu into the house and sat by his head for half a day, lost in thought. Her icy hand was grasping the boy's slightly rough hand.

"Xiao Hu." Qiao Mu's voice could not help but become choked, and her hand deathly gripped the boy's hand, sorrow infiltrating her mind.

Was this life? In her previous life, Xiao Hu was ripped to shreds by zombies. To avenge his son, Second Uncle joined an operation squad and accepted zombie-killing missions everywhere, and he ended up losing his life in a level five mission.

In this life, she originally intended to do whatever she could to change the lives of him and his father, but she did not expect...

It was her oversight. It was her fault. She should not have let Xiao Hu stay outside the door, nor should she have rashly taken out the Heart of Paradise. The crown prince had even outright reminded her earlier. It was her ignorance that harmed other people and herself. It was her. It was all her fault!

Qiao Mu sat with her head drooping down and her eyes closed, tightly clutching the boy's hands to press against her forehead. She continued using his hand to knock her forehead, not noticing at all the faint green light that emitted from where she held the boy's hand.

"Master, Master, don't torture yourself anymore. You used to be able to treat this boy's minor injury with a single gold needle."

Qiao Mu looked up in shock, glancing left and right. Besides Qiao Hu who laid on the bed and whose breathing was barely perceptible, she was the only one here. Who? Who was speaking?!

## **Chapter 90: You Are That Sapling?**

“Master, Master, it’s Qiuqiu <sup>1</sup> ! Qiuqiu! Woowoowoo...” The soft and adorable voice carried a pitifully tearful tone. “You really don’t remember Qiuqiu! Wahhhh!”

Qiao Mu hopped up, scanned her surroundings again, and ascertained that only Qiao Hu and she were here. Then that voice...?

“Master is awful.” The aggrieved voice popped up again, and this time, Qiao Mu discovered that the cutesy voice was not coming from the outside world. Instead, it seemed like it was coming directly from... her mind?

“What is trying to spook me! Come out!” Qiao Mu felt her nerves growing taut.

However, the soft and adorable voice suddenly disappeared. Qiao Mu shouted at the air twice, but the other party did not respond for a long time.

“Why aren’t you talking!” Qiao Mu was utterly lost.

“Woowoowoo...” Weak sobbing suddenly reverberated in her mind, mixed with a few sniffles in between.

Qiao Mu was at her wit’s end. She was unable to figure out the situation and was also unable to see the other person, so she could only probe, “You are Qiuqiu?”

“Ah!” Qiuqiu’s voice raised abruptly, brimming with unbelievable excitement. “Master, Master, you remember Qiuqiu! You remember Qiuqiu’s name! Master, you remember Qiuqiu! Ahhh, Master remembers Qiuqiu!!!”

*“Are you ill! Didn’t you tell me the name Qiuqiu yourself!”* Qiao Mu was truly speechless and had no desire to continue conversing with this moron.

Nevertheless, Qiao Mu still patiently asked, “What gold needle treatment were you talking about?”

“Master, you just need to open the Star Domain and take out the set of godly needles that Venerable Master gave you. You will certainly cure the lad on this bed in a moment!”

Qiao Mu laughed sarcastically.

Although she could understand each individual word that this moron was saying, but how come she could not comprehend the words once they were strung together? What the heck was a Star Domain? Since when did she have a Venerable Master? Also, what godly needles? Are you sure you weren’t joking?

“You have the wrong person,” Qiao Mu concluded with certainty and headed outside the room.

No matter what, she should at least try to have someone come and treat Xiao Hu. It was worth a try even if it was only a minuscule opportunity to live.

“Master, Master, how could Qiuqiu recognize the wrong person? You’re Qiuqiu’s Master! We have coexisted and co-survived for so long! I am Master’s only Qiuqiu!”

Qiao Mu had just stepped out of the door and could not help but frown. Having a blabbering and pestering voice endlessly resounding in her head going on and on about “Qiuqiu ah, Qiuqiu ah, Qiuqiu ah,” she really wanted to slap it to death!

“Master, how about taking a look inside? Qiuqiu is inside your dantian’s mystic domain! Qiuqiu isn’t lying to Master. Master, Master, Master...”

*Such a noisy child! Hold on!*

Qiao Mu paused, and her eyes immediately shot open. “You’re that sapling?”

F\*ck me, that sapling really gained its own intelligence! Otherwise, it would not fight over the Heart of Paradise with her. It could even freaking speak!

She hurriedly went to her dantian to check on the weird sapling and found its thin and weak branches waving at her madly like it was spasming. “Master, Master!”

“How can you speak?”

“Master, Qiuqiu had always been able to speak. It’s just that the majority of Master’s power was sealed previously, and since Qiuqiu and Master shared life and death, Qiuqiu was sealed as well. Qiuqiu had always been trying my best to absorb energy from the outside, only today did Qiuqiu...”

“Stop! So it was you! You’ve been secretly absorbing my mystic energy, haven’t you!” Qiao Mu adamantly demanded in a rampage. “I was wondering why my dantian was so strange. Initially, the mystic domain storing the mystic energy was about the size of an olive pit, right! But now you’ve wiped it out, haven’t you! My mystic meridians are so fragile and weak because of you! Because you keep stealing my mystic energy!”

When she first triggered her mystic meridians, her mystic domain was clearly extremely normal, but later on it turned so freaking strange...

*So infuriating...*