

Refining 1601

Chapter 1601 – Cloud Mist Valley

The fairy, Li Ruhua, continued to ride south. She had to go past the huge river in order to reach Millet Nation. The long road was bound to have its dangers. Especially now, when she had about seventy or eighty percent of her true appearance, the risk of something dangerous happening for her had increased more than a hundred times.

However, she was a fairy after all. Even if she was restricted and could not lash out recklessly to give a slap to all the disgusting men that were giving her looks from every direction, she found a way to keep herself safe. For example, on the way, she managed to find seven renowned masters.

According to the fairy, she wanted to take her time to think about who she would eventually pick as her master. Before she came to this decision, they could only follow her secretly. If they jumped out and disturbed her while she was traversing the lands, they would lose the opportunity for her to become their apprentice.

If it were someone else who dared to come up with such a ridiculous request to these seven renowned masters all at once, they would have been taught a lesson a long time ago. However, it was a different story when it came to the fairy. The seven masters were each friendlier than the other, and repeatedly nodded their heads and assured her that there was no problem at all.

After all, they were clear about this fairy's aptitude. As long as this brat embarked on a cultivator's path, she would be able to ascend very quickly and become like a goddess that rode the clouds! Who would want to let go of such an apprentice after encountering them? They would not let go of her even if they died!

In this way, as the fairy made her way south, these seven masters continued to stay by her side. From beginning to end, there were only seven of them. She did not need to even lift a finger, as anyone who harbored any bad intentions towards her was directly gotten rid of by these seven masters. There were also other people who drooled as they looked at her, but before they could try to take her in as an apprentice, they were surrounded by the seven masters who looked at them solemnly and with cupped hands. After a conversation, these people could only sigh and walk away looking defeated and sad.

However, there were others who did not mind as they declared that they would replace one of the seven masters. This was because the fairy had said before that she only wanted seven masters to follow her, no more, no less. She said that having seven masters, and adding her into this equation, she would be traveling the world while showing her might in all eight directions.

If there was anyone that was unhappy with this, they could go ahead and attack her. The people who were defeated could only cough out blood and leave miserably. However, renowned masters who had been "replaced" were of course unwilling to lose their connection with this fairy. They immediately turned around and went to find their elders, and those that did not belong to a sect went to find their old friends. Those that did not belong to a sect or have any old friends could only grit their teeth and sell any news they had of the fairy for money. If I could not get this apprentice, then I won't let any of you have an easy time getting her too!

Therefore, in Grandeur Nation, news spread quickly about this fairy, and big figures whose origins were unknown appeared one by one. Since they were highly reputable, they could not directly take action purely based on this piece of news, otherwise it would seem too cheap.

Then, after they hid themselves and managed to take a look at the fairy themselves, they could no longer suppress the agitation in their hearts. They immediately revealed their identities and found the group of masters that were hiding behind her.

Some laughed bitterly and left when they saw these highly reputable people, while others who still did not want to let go were beaten until they were in a miserable state and coughing blood. In short, after going back and forth, there were still only seven masters who followed her but they were now replaced by legendary names.

Only then did the situation finally stabilize, and she could finally guarantee her own safety whilst traveling across Grandeur and Millet Nation. Anybody with any reputation or status now knew that there was now a lady that was traveling south on a cow, who could not be provoked.

Rumor has it that at Grandeur Nation's south border, the son of the county governor of the Haiyan County had all four of his limbs ripped off and thrown outside his mansion. After this matter, the county governor gritted his teeth and had even lowered himself by personally going to apologize to the perpetrator, but in the end, he did not manage to meet the person he wanted to see. When he went back to his mansion, his face was terribly pale. He dragged his son, who was groaning in pain on the sickbed, outside and gave him another beating. It could clearly be seen that he was venting his anger on his son.

After this incident, the whole of Grandeur Nation fell into turmoil. Countless sects started to recall their wandering apprentices, or gave them a stern warning not to provoke the fairy otherwise they would be beaten to death on the spot. Even if they died, it would be in vain because the sect would not take revenge for them over this matter. If they did, their whole sect might even be wiped out and it would be a really tragic ending.

No matter what Dao they cultivated, there was no exception.

The fairy who was riding on the cow, Li Ruhua, was clear about all of this. The reason why the seven masters continued to stay hidden by her side and keep their original promise to protect her was because she occasionally swept her gaze over them. Her eyes were bright and clear, as if she could see through everything.

This made these seven strongest cultivators from Grandeur and Millet Nation sigh internally. No matter what kind of thoughts they harbored, they ended up hesitating and did not dare to break the rules. They only dared to stay silent and wait for the right opportunity to come.

All the way south, the small stream at the beginning had now become a large, gushing and roaring river. Yet, it could not submerge Li Ruhua's thoughts about the small boy that she met earlier on. Li Ruhua was frustrated and frowned deeply, not understanding why she would suddenly think about that boy who gave her the cow once again.

She raised her head and looked into the distance. The mist rose and formed clouds, causing the visibility to decline. However, Li Ruhua knew that she was getting closer. This caused her mood to improve

slightly. Even though she had not experienced any hardships during this journey, it was still really boring for her to get through. She just wanted to find him, kill him, and quickly get out of here.

Cultivators, especially very strong cultivators, who were restricted from using their cultivation would find it extremely suffocating. Whatever it was, she had no choice but to continue putting up with it.

On the riverbanks, there was a newly built route in Millet Nation. It was said that it was built for the convenience of the officials and wealthy families that stayed nearby, so that they could come down and enjoy the scenery at the river. Therefore, along the way, she saw many carriages who took this route, and most of them were expensive and luxurious.

The people in these carriages were slightly starstruck when they saw this calm fairy sitting on the back of a cow. When they recovered, they felt excited and inexplicably nervous in their hearts. These noble young men, who had all kinds of personalities – cold, gentle, bright, tender – were wearing different colored robes as they straightened their backs to show the best and most handsome side of themselves.

They did not wish for too much, but what if that fairy had truly taken a liking to one of them? That would be a wondrous twist of fate. Even though the scenery offered by the river here was not too bad, it did not justify why there was such a big crowd here today. It seemed that all the handsome, young and eligible men within a thousand miles were gathered here.

Li Ruhua understood everything that was happening around her, but she did not mind, nor was she annoyed. After all, she belonged in a different world from all these people. If they wanted to look at her, they could look all they wanted. Anyway, after she left, these 'people's' memory of her would become blurry. They would only remember vaguely meeting a very beautiful lady when they were young, but they would not be able to remember the specific details or what she truly looked like.

Suddenly, the fairy patted the cow and it obediently came to a stop. "May I ask what lies ahead in that mist?"

The question was directed towards a fourteen- or fifteen-year-old boy who was incomparably handsome and had a noble aura about him. Evidently, he was of noble descent. At this moment, his face was flushed and he lost his composure as he looked at the fairy. He took a deep breath and cupped his hands in greeting, "That's Cloud Mist Valley. It is where an Immortal Teacher lives in seclusion, normal people are unable to get too close to it..."

He was about to reveal his identity to her and offer to lead the way to Cloud Mist Valley, but he was interrupted before he could speak.

"Cloud Mist Valley. That name is not bad, the scenery too. I hope I didn't come to the wrong place," Li Ruhua smiled as she nodded, leaving behind a speechless young boy, who did not know what to say. Then, she patted the cow and started to make her way into the mist.

This young brat is about the same age as him, but his demeanor is about a hundred times worse. How assuming of this noble young man to come up to me of his own initiative. I did not even look at him, yet a toad like him wants to marry me. How bold!

The corners of her lips twitched. Li Ruhua did not know why she would think of this at this moment, and felt that it was rather baffling. Could it be because after all this, it was almost time for the mystery to be revealed whether he was truly the Barbarian King or not?

On the Grandeur stone and under the Millet tree, no one could hide their spiritual identities. If she did not cheat, of course she would not be able to tell. However, since she was already cheating, she only needed one eye to see through everyone.

In Millet Nation's Cloud Mist Valley, there lived a Cloud Mist Taoist who whole-heartedly concentrated on building a home here. When he saw the young girl riding on the cow, his eyes widened and became bright at the same time, unable to suppress the eagerness that he felt. At this moment, his eyes were like two suns that had emerged from behind a cloud that made the surrounding air warm.

Coughing lightly, Cloud Mist Taoist took a deep breath and tried to show his noble aura and elegant demeanor, "Lady, it is my great fortune to be fated to meet you. I have waited a long time for this day. Would you like to be an apprentice under my sect, and cultivate this supreme method and gain eternal life?"

Li Ruhua blinked and saw that Cloud Mist Taoist was feeling extremely nervous in his heart. She smiled faintly and said, "This apprentice greets her master."

Cloud Mist Taoist froze for a while, and happiness erupted from the depths of his heart as he started to laugh maniacally. However, his laughter abruptly stopped and his whole body was like a toad that was stuck in frozen ice. His mouth was still wide open in laughter, but there was endless fear in his eyes... In short, he looked extremely weird and strange.

Li Ruhua frowned before turning her head to look in a certain direction behind him that was covered in mist that was completely calm previously, but had suddenly surged violently.

Whir –

Whir –

Cloud Mist Taoist gasped for breath in large gulps. When he looked up again at the fairy, he could not help but show fear and uneasiness.

"You... You are..."

Li Ruhua smiled and said, "Master, is your memory that bad? I am the apprentice that you just took in, are you going to disown me now?"

Her smile was extremely sweet, giving people the feeling that she had accumulated all of the light and good in this world.

However, at this moment, Cloud Mist Taoist felt like he had been locked on by a terrifying monster in the shadows, and if he was not careful, he was going to lose his life.

This feeling made him want to cry. He wanted to ask... Was there something wrong with the script? Was he not supposed to be an old fairy that had managed to acquire a great talent, before cultivating her and thus making his name in history? Why did it suddenly become a horror story, as if he had fallen in quicksand and was going to be swallowed at any moment?!

The thoughts spun quickly in his head. Cloud Mist Taoist gritted his teeth and asked, "Yeah, my memory has failed me. You... What's your name?"

"Li Ruhua, 'Ruhua' to mean that I'm as beautiful as a flower. Master, quickly show the way. I want to see the other two apprentices that you took in just now."

Cloud Mist Taoist could feel himself blacking out and he almost fainted. He thought to himself, 'It is our first time meeting today, how did you know that I have two more apprentices? It's doomed. There must be a hidden plot going on and Cloud Mist Valley is in danger!'

While he lamented internally with endless fear and pain in his heart, he dared not to say anything when he looked at Li Ruhua. He did not have the courage to go against her.

Then, both of them turned around and walked towards Cloud Mist Valley. The old fairy bent his back and trod carefully, while the young fairy pranced around bubbly in a good mood.

Chapter 1602A – Brothers

Cloud Mist Taoist was considered a below-average cultivator in Millet Nation. It was only in this area that he had some sort of reputation. In his early years, he was rather mediocre but had lofty aspirations. Afterwards, he was taunted of his insignificance by the martial arts world. Discouraged, he came to Cloud Mist Valley and concentrated on making a home here. He also took in two apprentices so as not to break his inheritance.

The older apprentice was known as Ning Changgeng, and he was a son of one of the noble families in Millet Nation's Imperial Capital. Although his family was not very prominent, it was one that had enjoyed huge wealth for many generations. Every year, his family sent a large amount of gifts and money to Cloud Mist Valley. This was the reason why Cloud Mist Taoist could cultivate without caring about worldly matters.

The second apprentice was known as Stone Mouth. It was a name given to him by his parents, and it was rather apt. He was very quiet and rarely spoke, as if he had a mouth made of stone. He was from a poor family background. His parents and relatives were all dead, leaving him alone. If it were not for the fact that his cultivation was not bad, Cloud Mist Taoist would have chased him out a long time ago. What was the point in keeping a bastard who did not even greet his master?

However, unexpectedly, these two apprentices had a rather good relationship with each other. They stayed together and ate together. They encouraged each other to cultivate, and that was the only thing that made Cloud Mist Taoist feel reassured and gratified. It was also because of this that they had come together when he called them to come greet his new apprentice.

The older apprentice stood in front and saw Li Ruhua first, who was standing beside Cloud Mist Taoist. Her gaze was bright. Stone Mouth followed behind and his face turned slightly red. Thankfully, it was not very obvious. He bowed cautiously before retreating quietly to the side.

"Cough! Her name is Li Ruhua. From today onwards, she will be your junior. I hope that the three of you will support each other and take part in the cultivation of the Great Dao together." After he finished speaking, Cloud Mist Taoist quickly gave the excuse of letting the three of them get familiar with each other to leave.

Li Ruhua looked over at Cloud Mist Taoist's departing silhouette before she smiled and bowed, "Greetings Seniors." She blinked, looking to her left and right, her smile never faltering. However, in her heart, she could not help but breathe a sigh of relief.

This time, she had called Li Mu to open up the Grandeur and Millet Realm and it had taken him a lot of trouble to do so. In the end, she still returned disappointed. She found the mark that Li Mu had made in advance, but there was no trace of barbarian aura on the handsome Ning Changgeng. This meant that of course, he was not the Barbarian King.

In this chess game, it seemed that she had taken a wrong step and ended up wasting a favor that someone owed her. Li Mu was indeed very shrewd. It would be difficult for him to ever wind up owing her a favor in the future again.

As for Stone Mouth who stood beside Ning Changgeng, she only gave him a glance and that was it. On the surface, she tried not to make it too obvious that she did not care about him at all. After the three of them had a conversation together, however, it was obvious to Stone Mouth that junior sister was closer to his senior brother. He pursed his lips before cupping his hands and leaving. To begin with, he was someone with a cold personality. Since junior sister did not wish to get closer to him, he decided that he would take the initiative to stay away.

According to Li Ruhua's promise to the West Desolate King, if she could confirm that Marquis Chongwu was unrelated to the new Barbarian King, she would let this experience of being in the Grandeur and Millet Realm act as compensation to him. This was to prevent Marquis Chongwu from harboring any resentment once he left the realm. However, in reality, after entering the Grandeur and Millet Realm, Li Ruhua only had one thought in her heart – Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin must die.

Tearing up her alliance with the West Desolate King was indeed rather troublesome. However, accidents were bound to happen in the Grandeur and Millet Realm. As long as she could remove herself cleanly from these accidents and not leave anything behind that could be used against her, what could the West Desolate King do to her? This was not the Imperial Capital, and Li Mu was here as well. He would not stand by and do nothing and let her be killed by the West Desolate King's lightning powers.

As for why she wanted to kill Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin, the reason was rather simple. It was because when she was in the West Desolate's Imperial Capital, she looked at Marquis Chongwu from afar and started to feel an extreme fear in her heart. It was such a strong feeling that even swallowing her saliva hurt. Even if he was not the new Barbarian King, Li Ruhua still wanted him to die.

It was the first time she had ever felt like that in her life. Even when she was making a deal with the West Desolate King, she had already harbored such a thought of killing Marquis Chongwu. That West Desolate King must not have expected that there would be someone who was bold enough to be so agreeable to him on the surface but to oppose secretly.

Of course, it was already mentioned previously that the best outcome would be if she could completely get out of this situation unscathed by removing anything that could connect her to this matter. For this, she had already made the necessary preparations and found someone whom she could manipulate.

So, on the night when Cloud Mist Taoist had been dragged away by Li Ruhua to have a 'talk', he returned pale-faced. He could clearly sense Li Ruhua's movements, but he just turned over in his bed and blocked

his senses completely so that he was cut off from the outside world. A big disaster was imminent, so he did not have the energy or abilities to care about his two apprentices' lives. What mattered to him was that he lived.

Li Ruhua knocked on the door and Ning Changgeng was the one who answered. When he saw that it was junior sister, he was rather happy. However, without waiting for him to speak, Li Ruhua smiled and said, "Elder brother, I'm looking for second brother. Please let him know that I'm looking for him."

Ning Changgeng was frozen for a while. When he regained his composure, he turned around and shouted, "Stone Mouth, junior sister is here to see you." He smiled and did not lose his demeanor as he retreated into the house.

Stone Mouth came to the door. He was still silent and cautious as he paused for a while before he said, "Why are you looking for me?"

Li Ruhua smiled and replied, "It's not convenient to say it here. Second brother, let's take a walk in the valley."

Ning Changgeng, who was facing away from them and holding onto a bamboo scroll, froze slightly. Under the light of a candle, the expression in his eyes turned gloomy.

Stone Mouth hesitated for a moment before he nodded. He turned his head to let his elder brother know where he was going, and then he retrieved his coat and left with Li Ruhua.

In the room, Ning Changgeng put down the bamboo slip in his hand. He looked blank, but also wronged, as if he did not expect that something like this would happen. However, deep in his heart, he did not have any other thoughts. He merely felt down and lifeless.

Stone Mouth, who had left his house, was quiet, and so was Li Ruhua. They walked in silence, neither of them speaking a word until Li Ruhua finally stopped in her tracks.

Stone Mouth tilted his head upwards to look at her and said, "I know you don't really care about me, so junior sister, if you have something to say, just get to the point."

Li Ruhua smiled and nodded, "I came to this place to fulfill a promise. I'm here to tell you one thing, for example...who you really are."

Stone Mouth looked alarmed. "Junior sister, what do you mean?"

Li Ruhua raised her hand, "Do not move."

Then, Stone Mouth realized that he really could no longer move. Her tender and slightly cold fingers tapped gently on the spot between his brows. However, to him, it felt like a longsword pierced through his forehead. The pain was so excruciating that his head was being split apart.

He opened his mouth to scream, but before he could make a sound, Li Ruhua used her hand to cover his mouth. She smiled and blinked at him, "You will only wake up after you suffer. I know you're feeling very uncomfortable now, but trust me, when you've woken up, you'll thank me for this."

After half an hour of experiencing this intense pain, his robes were drenched with sweat. Like a drowning man who was rescued from the water, he laid on the ground and gasped for breath. However,

the look in his eyes had changed. One moment he looked blank and dazed, and the next moment he looked awake and alert.

Li Ruhua took two steps back and said softly, "It must feel bad to be forced to wake up from a dream. Go back and sleep a little more. When you open your eyes tomorrow, everything will be fine."

Stone Mouth got up and stumbled away.

Chapter 1602B – Brothers

The second day, he was awoken by his elder brother, Ning Changgeng. His face was pale, as if he had fallen sick.

"Junior brother, what happened to you? Don't scare me!"

Stone Mouth squinted, as if he was surrounded by darkness for a long time and had not seen light. He subconsciously raised his hand to cover his vision. After a few breaths, he shook his head, "Senior brother, I'm fine."

Ning Changgeng let out a breath of relief, "You scared me to death! Something seemed wrong when you came back last night. Wasn't it junior sister who called you outside...nothing happened, right?"

Stone Mouth frowned and a trace of pain appeared on his face, but he quickly shook his head and said, "I'm fine, I just didn't sleep very well. Senior brother, can I trouble you to help me take a day of leave from our master. My body isn't feeling too well today, so I will stay in the room to rest."

Ning Changgeng nodded his head, "Okay. Just focus on resting, I will help you take leave."

Seeing Stone Mouth close his eyes and falling asleep right away, Ning Changgeng looked slightly hesitant. He could not help but feel that there was something wrong with his junior brother. However, after thinking about it seriously for a while and not being able to come up with anything, he could only tell himself that he was overthinking this.

When he left the house, what he did not expect was for his master to have left a note saying that he brought the new junior sister to go and seize an opportunity, and that he wanted two of them to stay in the valley to cultivate and not slack off because no one was monitoring them.

Patting the bamboo scroll in his hand, Ning Changgeng raised his hand and scratched his head. He could recognize that this was indeed his master's handwriting, but his tone...it was equally strange as the one his junior brother had this morning. Furthermore, junior sister had just arrived yesterday, so being taken away by his master just today felt a little rushed.

After thinking about it, Ning Changgeng had no new insights. He could only be patient and go and cultivate alone. His aptitude for cultivation was not bad and he had always been hardworking. He never needed his master to watch over him in order for him not to slack off, which was why he found the tone in his master's message strange.

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Cloud Mist Taoist's face was pale. He trembled non-stop and felt like he was going to faint at any time out of fright. If it were anyone else who had to be stared at by these seven masters, they would also be like that. There was no way that they would react better than he did.

He only recognized one person out of these seven masters, whom he had the fate to meet when he was younger. To be more accurate, he was thick-skinned and insisted on joining in on a big banquet. At that banquet, he sat somewhere in the corner, and from afar, he saw this top cultivator from Millet Nation.

Since the other six people were able to sit on the same level as this person, they were definitely equally as powerful as he was. Cloud Mist Taoist wanted to cry. He did not know what he had done to meet with such a catastrophe.

As of now, there was one thought that kept rolling around in his mind – 'I'm doomed, I'm doomed, this time, I'm really doomed.' It seemed that as long as these people only moved their fingers or glanced at him a few more times, he would truly be frightened to death. His face was as pale as a sheet, as if there was not a drop of blood in his body.

"Alright, masters, this person in front of you is my master that I've acknowledged. Even though it has only been a day, he is still my master, so I have to treat him with the utmost respect, and nothing must happen to him," Li Ruhua spoke with a smile on her face. She looked at Cloud Mist Taoist, who breathed a sigh of relief and had a grateful look on his face. However, her next sentence almost made him pee his pants, "Masters, I would like to invite all of you to extract his soul and refine it into a puppet that will not spread nonsense. Please cut any karma that may exist between us. It shouldn't be too difficult, right?"

One of them was an old woman with a stern and gloomy face. She laughed after she heard Li Ruhua's words and said, "This definitely will not be difficult. My Ghost Valley has always been the best at refining souls. However, little brat, if I help you to do this, will you promise to follow me to Ghost Valley to cultivate?"

"Hmph! Old hag, don't cross the line. Even though Ghost Valley is good at refining souls, if you wish to take away our apprentice over such a small matter, you're probably dreaming. Little brat, as long as you become my apprentice, I can help you complete this task and I will use my sect's treasures to wipe away your aura and karma so that no one will be able to detect it on him."

The remaining five masters scoffed one by one. The rough idea was that no one was willing to give up their pursuit of this apprentice. After all, fairies had a high aptitude for cultivation, and if they were properly nourished, it would open up many opportunities for them.

Li Ruhua did not stop them from bickering. She continued smiling while she waited for them to slowly quiet down. Then, she pointed a finger and said, "Ghost Grandma, I'll choose you then." After she finished speaking, she stuck her tongue out at the rest. "I'm really sorry, I have to ensure that this matter does not lead back to me, so I have to pick the best for the job. All of you admitted that she was the best too. That aside, I would like to invite the other masters to keep this a secret for me. Do not tell other people about what happened in Cloud Mist Valley."

Ghost Grandma laughed loudly, causing the wrinkles on her face to crease, “Little brat, you have a good eye. Then, from now on, you are to receive our Ghost Valley’s inheritance. I’ll also take it as me taking you in as an apprentice. In the future, you can just refer to me as senior sister.”

When she finished speaking, she looked at the other masters with a dark expression, “Everyone, you heard her. It was a decision she made herself; I’m sure none of you will break your promises right? It has been many years since our Ghost Valley has opened the doors to our sect.”

The faces of the other masters changed and they looked afraid, but at the same time, they were unwilling to let go of this fairy who just now was still their potential apprentice. While they were hesitating, Li Ruhua laughed heartily and said, “You’ve heard my senior sister. Aren’t all of you going to leave? If not, don’t blame me for not even acknowledging the past few weeks where I called you guys my masters.”

For some reason, when the other masters heard this, they suddenly felt heavy and horrified in their hearts. They looked at her for a while before taking a deep breath and started to leave without saying a word. In a blink of an eye, all of them disappeared. Whether or not they had really left, or were just temporarily hiding in the dark using whatever methods, no one knew.

However, to Li Ruhua, all of this were not important, because these people would forget about her soon. Thinking about it, and ensuring that there were no big loopholes, she giggled and said, “Senior sister, then I’ll trouble you to help me complete the task I told you about just now.”

Ghost Grandma was full of smiles as she nodded repeatedly. She raised her hand and grabbed Cloud Mist Taoist’s head. He started to scream as blood flowed out from all seven orifices and his eyes widened in endless pain.

A moment later, a ball of black mist rose to the sky. Ghost Grandma smiled at Li Ruhua, “Junior sister, let’s return to Ghost Valley now!”

Li Ruhua nodded her head before energetically replying, “Okay!”

Chapter 1603 – The Qin Family From Niu Village

Two months later, a young female immortal walked out of the hidden mountain door of Ghost Valley. She frowned as she turned back to look. The light from the fire shot to the heavens and numerous figures were struggling in it. They very soon lost energy and turned into ash.

“Don’t blame me. You all asked for it. The evils we bring on ourselves are the hardest. This is very true.” Li Ruhua smiled. Her expression was calm. Though she could not take action herself, after entering this realm, Li Mu had given her some restrictions, and within the restrictions, she made the rules.

The people from Ghost Valley all wanted to break rules and would naturally suffer the backlash. Today, the Heaven Fire descended and burned every living thing. These people would not die for nothing, they would be sacrificed by Li Ruhua to make a bargain with the greater rules that governed this Grandeur and Millet Realm.

For example, erasing all traces of her in this world. Of course, this process would slowly take place over the next ten years. But it would be able to do it in a way that no one would notice.

Even if they were extremely strong cultivators, they would still be limited and would not be able to sense her presence. Although the Grandeur and Millet Nations could be seen as a part of the world, they were not the same.

Li Ruhua withdrew her gaze and walked outwards. She thought as she walked. So much time has passed. Was it about time? All she needed to do now was to patiently wait for the response. Once she was sure that Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin had been killed, she would leave right away.

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Cloud Mist Valley.

Two months had passed, yet there was no news about his master nor his junior sister. This made Ning Changgeng worried. But what worried him even more was that his junior brother seemed to have changed. Though he was still silent, his junior brother's gaze on his back made his hair stand.

He felt as if there were many things hidden behind his junior brother's gaze. Ning Changgeng had tried to ask but he was always met with rejection and silence. Later on, Ning Changgeng found out that his junior brother had written many things on his own carved bamboo scrolls. It was not that he wanted to peek but his junior brother placed things carelessly and one had landed on his desk.

Occasionally glancing at it, Ning Changgeng found out that what his junior brother carved on the bamboo scroll was actually about a person's life. It was similar to a biography, and after looking at a few chapters, he found it interesting and brought it up to his junior brother.

"Senior brother, if you want to read, you can just take it." Stone Mouth said calmly.

Ning Changgeng felt that something was off but he did not know why he was so attracted to the biography that was written on the bamboo scroll. After hesitating, he eventually still nodded. He said that he would take a look, as if to help his junior brother point out any mistakes.

The story was very long and spoke about a nation called the West Desolate. On one fine day, someone named Ning Qin arrived...Ning Changgeng was completely absorbed in it. He would occasionally look up after reading for a long time and he would appear confused.

Every time that happened, Stone Mouth would quietly look at Ning Changgeng. Under the tree, by the window, by the lake, through the mist...he read in every place possible.

The bamboo scrolls piled up. Ning Changgeng was addicted to it. He read until one night when the sky was completely dark and there was not a single star in sight. He placed down the last scroll, which told of how when Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin led troops back to the border, he had gotten an opportunity and his soul entered a mystic realm and began a new life.

"Senior brother, you have finished reading it," Stone Mouth said calmly.

Across from him, Ning Changgeng seemed to be in a trance. He paused for a while before nodding, his gaze fluctuated between being in a daze and being alert, "Junior brother, I feel like we know the person in this story. It feels like I am him and he is me."

Stone Mouth was silent for a while before he spoke, "Senior brother, you are right. You are Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin from the story. When he returned to the border, the opportunity he got was the

descent of the Grandeur stone and the Millet tree...that's right, it refers to Grandeur Nation and Millet Nation. Where we are now."

Ning Changgeng's eyes widened in shock and disbelief. Very soon, there was a pained look on his face and he could not help but hold his head and mutter to himself, "I am Ning Qin...I am Marquis Chongwu...no, I am Ning Changgeng. I am the Millet Nation's Ning Family's grandson...but who is Ning Qin? Why does it sound so familiar...who am I...who am I..."

The pain worsened and Ning Changgeng started to pant heavily.

Stone Mouth suddenly said, "Senior brother, being woken from a dream is an extremely uncomfortable thing. But please believe me, what you are experiencing now is already much better than what I experienced." He reached out and patted Ning Changgeng's shoulder, "Go to sleep. Once you sleep, everything will be over."

Ning Changgeng struggled to keep his eyes open. His eyes were filled with anxiety and fear. However, he was not able to control his body and could only nod off and fall into sleep. He remained frowning and his body repeatedly tensed and relaxed. It was obvious that he could not relax even in his sleep.

After waiting for a while, Stone Mouth took out a sword and looked at Ning Changgeng who was sleeping. He placed the sword on his neck, "Senior brother, farewell." He slashed and blood spurted out. He had used a lot of strength and the sword was very sharp. Ning Changgeng's head was separated from his body.

Looking at the decapitated body in front of him, Stone Mouth frowned. He never thought that it would be so easy to accomplish. Checking that Ning Chenggeng had truly died, Stone Mouth turned the sword and pierced it into his own chest. His face paled instantly but there was relief all over his face. He eventually stopped breathing and died.

Stone Mouth (the pinyin of Stone Mouth, 石口 is shikou) was shikou (十口 is another term that has the same pinyin). If you flip it around, it's the word 'ye' (叶). He was Ye Gui. He was someone who had been expelled from the Ye Family a long time ago and was wandering the world by himself. It was many many years ago, when he found out that he was from the Barbarian Clan. Ye Gui died then and all that lived on was an empty shell.

In Millet Nation and Grandeur Mountain, there was a saying related to the foundation of Great Dao. The truth was false and what was false was the truth...this world looked the same as the outside world but it was just a mystic realm created by two treasures. In this mystic realm, if one regained their conscience and they were killed, they would really die. This was how 'what was false became the truth'.

So when Ye Gui committed suicide, he really killed himself. The shell that he left in the outside world was now dead. So Marquis Chongwu, who was in a groggy, half-awakened state was actually 'awakened'. Hence, when Stone Mouth killed him, he really died too.

.....

A hundred miles away from Ghost Valley, there was a deep mountain forest. Li Ruhua sat on a delicate branch and floated as if she weighed nothing. Her eyes lit up as she smiled brilliantly. She looked as if spring had arrived and the world was shining beautifully.

“Dead, he died just like that.” She closed her eyes and focused on sensing. After she confirmed that Marquis Chongwu’s aura had completely vanished, she opened her eyes and waved her fists, “Great, just great. This is awesome.”

She stood on the branch and as a gust of wind blew, she swayed in the air. Li Ruhua paced on the branch for a while before hopping off delicately. Her arms spread outwards like a delicate fairy. In the next moment, she landed on the ground with a ‘bam’.

She would not fall. Although she could not use her cultivation, her foundation was still present. Li Ruhua opened her eyes and looked around. She looked at her feet and frowned. She said impatiently, “Li Mu, stop playing. Hurry and let me out.”

There was no response.

Li Ruhua frowned harder as she sneered, “I am warning you, don’t go overboard or I will really get angry!”

As she finished speaking, she retrieved something and crushed it.

Pak!

The air twisted. But in the next moment, an invisible hand seemed to reach out and pull hard at something. The twisted space returned to normal and Li Ruhua was left on the ground in a disheveled manner. She did not get up but her eyes were icy. She looked around.

She did not know what had gone wrong, but something must have happened.

Li Mu was someone who knew his boundaries. Even if he was joking, he would not go overboard. This meant that this had nothing to do with Li Mu. But he was the master of the Grandeur stone and Millet tree. Other than him, who else dared to interfere in this world? Moreover, where did Li Mu go?

“Little brat, if you promise something, you should keep to it. You have not accomplished it and can’t leave yet.” The voice was calm and could be heard from all around. She could not identify where the sound was coming from.

Li Ruhua was expressionless, “Stop playing tricks! Are you sure you want to be enemies with the Central Desolate Li Family?”

“Wah! The Central Desolate Li Family. I am so scared. But these are all things for the future. You should worry about yourself first.”

There was a pause before the voice spoke again, “Don’t worry, I promised someone that I would not kill you. I will let you go once you complete what you promised. Don’t even think about eating the grilled fish; I am hungry and will take whatever.”

Li Ruhua’s pupils shrunk. Li Mu was in trouble!

She was about to release her aura and try her best to escape. But right at this moment, a heavy fatigue rolled over her like a wave. It was very strong and destroyed her ability to resist. She fell into a deep sleep.

The air twisted and a page from the bamboo scroll appeared above Li Ruhua. There was a cold chuckle, "This is going easy on you!"

The bamboo scroll grew bigger and like a mat, it pulled Li Ruhua into the air. She disappeared.

.....

On the Grandeur stone, below the Millet tree, Li Mu chuckled bitterly as his face paled, "Your Excellency, doing this will kill me."

The tablet above his head jumped as if it was hitting his head, "You can choose whether to die in my hands now or later on."

Li Mu smiled even more bitterly. He never had any doubt that the being hidden behind the tablet was now feeling murderous.

If he dared to resist or rebel, he would really die.

The being's mood seemed to have worsened drastically. It felt as if the whole world was going to collapse.

But you were the one who created this, so why are you getting so angry? Li Mu could not understand.

Pak –

The tablet jumped once more, "If you don't understand then don't think about it. I am really hungry now, is the grilled fish done? If it is still not done, I will consider eating you."

Li Mu sucked in a cold breath of air and rapidly nodded, "It is almost done. Almost done."

Every man for himself. Although we had a pretty good relationship, Li Ruhua, you were the one who played tricks first and caused me to end up like this. So this is the trouble you created; don't blame me for not being loyal.

Turning to tend to the fire, Li Mu focused on grilling the fish. He did not forget to stop his sensing of the Grandeur and Millet Realm.

If he continued to see what was going on, he may really be killed by Li Ruhua in her anger.

The tablet fell on his head and there was a fog around it. At times it behaved urgently, and at times it was peaceful. There was an immense pressure from it.

Stupid woman, I really wish I could just eat you!

.....

Upstream of a blue-green river in Grandeur Nation, there was a regular village at the foot of the mountains. Because more than half of the people in the village had the surname 'Niu', after several rounds of arguments, the village was named 'Niu Village'. Those that had different surnames in the village were extremely unhappy with this name. However, fists were more effective than words. After they got a few beatings, they could only curse in their hearts.

Simply put, those in the village that did not have the surname Niu lived very miserably. But it was not to the point that they stopped wanting to live there. Especially the Qin Family in the west of the village. The man of the family self-studied and became the village doctor. Although he was not officially recognized, anyone with any illness in the surrounding ten kilometers was able to see him and be cured by him.

The people there ate whole grains and had all sorts of illnesses. No one dared to say that they lived without problems. Eventually, the Qin Family's position in the village grew. On the east side of the village, the Niu Family had many descendants and even the young men of the house were respectful towards the three members of the Qin Family.

Three years ago, the little fool from the Qin Family got cheated out of a big cow. He had been laughed at by several brats from the Niu Family. After Elder Niu found out, all of the little brats had been beaten until they cried. There was someone smart enough to rush over to tell the man from the Qin Family. He quickly came over to stop the angered elder. According to the elder, if it had not been for Mister Qin, they would have been dead. The little brats were unfilial and ungrateful!

After that happened, the Qin Family's position in the village rose even more. However, towards the young lad from the Qin Family, they all appeared polite on the surface but could not help but secretly shake their heads. The lad seemed alright but was actually a stubborn fool.

After he got cheated out of the cow, not only did he not admit it, he was adamant in saying that it had been a gift to his future bride and he was waiting for her to come back and marry him.

Because of this, over the years, several matchmakers had tried but were turned away. After they were rejected by the Qin Family, they would add more stories to his reputation, causing the young lad's image to become extremely pathetic in the village. Eventually, no family wanted to offer their daughters to marry him. They were afraid that if their daughter were to marry the young lad, she would be embarrassed for life.

Chapter 1604 – In a Blink of an Eye, a Lifetime has Passed

Years ago, the young lad had been so absorbed in observing a fairy that he fell from a cow's back into the water. Now, three years had passed and he was already eighteen years old. He was tall, tanned and muscular. He was a handsome-looking lad.

If not for his looks, there would not have been so many matchmakers approaching him. Of course, the wealth of the Qin Family was also another reason.

Ever since he lost that cow, the young lad never dared to bring cows or oxes out again. He learned to differentiate medicinal herbs from his father. According to what he said, since the lady accepted his gift, it meant that she agreed to marry him. Since he needs to raise his family in the future, he couldn't just play around. He had to learn a skill in order to take care of his wife.

It was because of this that the lad did not get beaten by his parents. They took it as a price for their son's maturity.

Today, the young lad returned from the mountains with a basket full of medicinal herbs on his back. He had been lucky this time and was able to find a wild ginseng. From the smell of it, it seemed to be an old

ginseng as well. Of course, the young lad knew not to show it off and he hid it in the middle of all the other herbs to prevent others from smelling it.

Picking herbs from the mountain and selling them for money was one of the main sources of income for people living in the mountains. Although they were simple folks, they still had to be wary.

This was what his mother said and the young lad agreed with her. It was not until he left the mountains and returned to the familiar main road that he finally relaxed and smiled. He would be able to sell this ginseng for a lot of money.

He started walking faster, but when he entered the village, the young lad felt that something was wrong. The village elders that usually gathered at the entrance to gossip were nowhere to be seen.

And it wasn't only that. On his entire journey through the village, he did not see anyone, and this caused the young lad to frown. He hoped that nothing was wrong.

The Niu Village at the bottom of the mountains was not large. Very soon, he crossed half of the village. He heard a noise. It was like a huge gathering of people.

Passing a huge tree, the young lad's heart jumped as he ran. The entire village seemed to be gathered outside his house.

"He's back!"

Someone shouted and the air became silent. Numerous gazes turned to land on him. It was the first time that the young lad realized that gazes could feel so hot and his entire body heated up.

This was especially so from the young people in the village. They were now looking at him with eyes filled with envy and hatred.

It seems like nothing bad had happened. The young lad subconsciously walked slower and coughed, "Dear uncles and all, may I know...what is going on?"

The Niu elder from the east village, who also had the loudest voice, knocked his tobacco pipe, his face filled with delight. He came over and patted the young lad's shoulder, "You brat, you are really good. I knew that you were a truthful kid and would not lie! Hehe, I never thought. I really never thought that I would be able to see someone so beautiful before I died. No, she is much better looking than pictures. She is as beautiful as the fairy described by the storyteller in the county that I visited thirty years ago!"

His loud voice resembled cymbals. Normally, he liked to argue with fellow elders. Now, they were all nodding in agreement. They seemed to highly approve of what he was saying. Although this Niu elder took the chance to boast about his trip to the county thirty years ago, there was nothing wrong about what he said.

The young lad must have saved up eight lifetimes of good fortune. He was actually able to exchange a cow for a wife.

Thinking about all the rumors in the village, the elders could not wait to go home and slap their own grandchildren and scold them for being useless!

When the lady passed by their village back then, why didn't they meet her? What a good daughter-in-law she would have made. Now, she would marry into the Qin Family. The whole bunch of people from the Niu Family would be ashamed!

The young lad scratched his head, "Elder Niu, what is going on? I am confused."

Elder Niu laughed out loud, "Don't ask. When you reach home, you will find out. How lucky. So lucky!"

The crowd parted and the young lad walked to the door of his house. He could immediately see the cow tied up outside the door. His eyes lit up. He rushed in and saw his parents smiling widely in the living room.

Across them sat an immortal-looking old man. He looked extremely capable and had a white beard. He was touching his beard as he smiled.

The young lad's eyes shifted and fell on the woman behind the old man. Three years had passed and she had grown into a slim and beautiful young lady. However, he was able to recognise her immediately. She was the fairy who asked for his cow.

He was blushing slightly as he stepped forward, "You...you are finally back..." He played with his hands, not knowing what to say.

Mother Qin reached out and pulled him over. She was smiling, "Elder Immortal, this is my child. He is called Qin Yu. Is this the right one?"

Father Qin nodded, "Marriage is an important thing. You have to be sure. It will not be good if we make a mistake."

They had been together for decades and knew very well what each other thought. They were extremely satisfied with the lady in front of them. But a fairy that seemed to have fallen from the heavens made them somewhat uneasy, and they would rather be cautious.

The Elder Immortal laughed as he looked at Qin Yu from head to toe, "Don't worry. I have checked. My disciple has indeed been betrothed to the young Qin lad."

He turned back to look at the blushing and silent Li Ruhua. His heart squeezed slightly before relaxing, "Dear disciple, I brought you from afar to Niu Village in order to fulfil the betrothal. Since you accepted the cow as a gift, you will be married to the young man. Do you agree?"

The struggle deep in Li Ruhua's eyes slowly faded as she blushed even more. She lowered her head and bowed, "I will follow your arrangement."

The Elder Immortal laughed happily, "Great! Then I will give you to the young Qin man!" He stood up, "Parents, before I came to Niu Village, I already checked their compatibility. In three days, it will be an auspicious day to get married. If you both are okay with it, let's set that date for the marriage. What do you think?"

"Okay!"

Qin Yu shouted.

There was a series of laughter from outside the house. But amidst the laughter, there was jealousy as well.

Father Qin and Mother Qin nodded in agreement. They asked them to stay for lunch. After that, he left with Li Ruhua. He said to go to Cool Mountain in three days. They would get married in the Cool Pavilion halfway up the mountain.

In a blink of an eye, three days had passed. Father Qin invited a group of performers from the country to play songs and celebrate on the journey to the Cool Mountain. Everyone who knew about the marriage invited themselves even if they were not officially invited. This included people not from the village. There were many onlookers and the entire place was extremely lively.

Very soon, they reached the Cool Pavilion. Normally, the Cool Pavilion keeper could not be bothered about people even when they came to the pavilion to pay respects. But today, he was dressed in new attire and was smiling widely. He was extremely warm and enthusiastic towards the people from Niu Village. The villagers who had been feeling uneasy immediately relaxed and there was admiration on their faces.

It seemed like the rumor about the Elder Immortal and the fairy being true immortals was true. If not, the pavilion keeper would not have behaved like this. Perhaps the village head did not have much experience, but he was smart.

The Elder Immortal sat cross-legged as Qin Yu and his bride bowed to him. He was smiling, "Congratulations, may you be blessed with love for a hundred years."

Greeting the bride, the performers played and sang as they returned to the Niu Village. The Elder Immortal rejected the invitation to head back with them for the celebratory banquet. He said that it was his custom that people from the bride's family did not enter the house. But he would remain in the Cool Pavilion for the time being to temporarily practice his cultivation, and there would be opportunities in the future.

When everyone left, the Elder Immortal waved his hand and sent the respectful pavilion keeper away. He then stood up and went to the back hall. Coughing lightly, the Elder Immortal bowed respectfully, "I have married Li Ruhua to Qin Yu. May I know if you have further instructions?"

A few moments later, a voice could be heard from the air, "Noted."

It was just a single word and then there was silence. The person from Cloud Mist Dao then waited for a while before getting up slowly. He could not help but wipe cold sweat off his forehead. He sensed that this being was not in a good mood.

Although there was no obvious signs and she did not pick on him, he could sense it. This made him feel jitters and cold chills as if a huge disaster was looming! Hesitating, he did not dare to speak and interrupt anymore. He bowed and left.

.....

The Qin Family organized a huge banquet. Whether they were invited or not, as long as the guests gave a red money packet, they would be able to enter and enjoy the feast.

The young men from the village who had been jealous were reprimanded by the elders in their family. They were determined to get Qin Yu drunk such that he would not be able to enjoy his nuptial.

Luckily, Father Qin was prepared and he gave Qin Yu a pill to take to prevent him from getting drunk. After the few young men drank and made a fuss, the elders felt like they were making an embarrassment out of themselves and started beating them. They immediately apologized on the young men's behalf and got people to drag them home.

They were not going to have easy lives after this.

After that, the pressure on Qin Yu significantly subsided. However, when all the guests left, he was already red from all the drinking and there was a heavy scent of alcohol around him.

The villagers decided to skip creating trouble in their bedroom. It was not that they did not want to do it, but after seeing the attitude of the pavilion keeper, they did not dare. They did not dare to use local customs and behaviors with a fairy from an immortal family. Things could go wrong and no one wanted to create trouble.

Qin Yu was staggering as he said good night to his parents and headed to his room. He nearly fell over as he entered the room. His head almost smacked the floor and a bamboo scroll appeared out of nowhere. He was slightly confused as he subconsciously picked it up. He was not in the mood to read it and merely put it away before walking into the room.

At this moment, he heard an indignant sigh and everything in front of him turned dark. Finally when there was light in front of him, he realized that he was now sitting in a room in the Cool Pavilion. In front of him was the Elder Immortal. He was smiling as he looked to the side. Li Ruhua sat there with her hair now in a bun.

He was slightly confused but did not know where had gone wrong. His memory was foggy and he could vaguely remember that today was the day that he should be accompanying his wife back to pay respects to her family.

"Good good. The both of you should put in more effort to have a child soon. Don't take this marriage for granted."

The scene in front of him dimmed before becoming bright once more. Qin Yu realized he was now sitting in a new house and was reading a bamboo scroll in his hand. There was a young child grabbing onto his leg and calling him father.

Li Ruhua now looked plump and round like a jade, but was still very beautiful. She walked over and pulled the child, "Little one, don't disrupt your father from reading. I will play with you."

Qin Yu reach out, wanting to say something, but his vision darkened again. When it lit back up, he found that he was checking someone's pulse. There was a pregnant lady in front of him who could not stop coughing. She asked him anxiously, "Physician Qin, is there something wrong with me?"

"Madam, don't worry. You have just caught a cold. It is no big deal." A calm voice could be heard from the side and a young man walked over. He looked respectful as he greeted, "Father, I read the medical history and checked her pulse. You were worried and wanted to take a look. Is your conclusion the same as mine?"

Qin Yu nodded, "Yes, it is a cold..." Before he could say anything more, his vision grew dark again. When he opened his eyes, he was standing next to a tomb with a bamboo scroll in his hand. There was a male and a female kneeling next to him.

"Father, Mother is now resting in peace. You have to think openly. I will be filial to you and make sure you do not suffer!"

His son's wife nodded as well, "Yes, you have not slept for three days. Head back with us to rest."

It was only then that Qin Yu felt exhaustion roll over him like a wave. His vision grew dark and he fainted. When he opened his eyes, he had returned home. His son and his daughter-in-law were tending to him. They started to cry when they saw that he had awoken.

"Father, you must take care of yourself. If anything happens to you, what will we do?"

Qin Yu was staring at the top of his head. He felt sorrow but he was confused. What happened in my life?

There were many vague memories. It felt like he had gone through them but it also felt like his imagination. Even the appearance of the lady who had been with him throughout his life was starting to become blurry.

Am I getting confused?

For the next ten years, Qin Yu stayed in the old house alone. His son and daughter-in-law were filial and had a boy and girl of their own. They were both very good looking, as if they were children from a painting. They stayed by him all day and constantly called out for him, saying, "Grandfather, carry me!"

Several other elders in the village who were about the same age as him were all jealous and always took the chance to comment on his good luck. He managed to exchange a cow to marry a fairy and that was how he got such a handsome son who had such beautiful children. They were filled with envy and hatred.

Qin Yu leaned against the tree and laughed. He felt proud and satisfied. However, his memory of his wife was now very vague. Perhaps, she was really beautiful.

Thereafter, Qin Yu lowered his head to continue reading the bamboo scroll. He had read it for many years but could never understand what it meant.

Instinct told him that the bamboo scroll was very important and he could not lose it. He had to always keep it by his side until the day he closed his eyes.

Chapter 1605 – Half Luck

Above the Grandeur stone and beneath the Millet tree.

Li Ruhua's face was pale as she bit her lip. Her body was swaying.

She was staring at the small tablet across from her and she could not hide the resentment she felt.

There was a cold laughter from the tablet, "Don't look at me as if you suffered a lot. I feel like you actually gained a lot. Just play along."

Li Ruhua bit her lips and her breathing grew heavier. However, she was not so crazy as to ask for death.

“Your honor, now that you have achieved your goal, can I go?”

Her voice was hoarse and she was trembling. She seemed to be on the brink of collapsing.

The mist around the tablet pulsed, “Sure. But before you go, I would like to remind you not to forget who you are now.”

Pfft –

Li Ruhua spat out blood. She looked intensely at the tablet before turning to leave.

Woosh –

Her figure flashed and disappeared.

There was another cold chuckle from the tablet. It did not care about the look Li Ruhua gave at all. It was just a marriage and she merely used half of her luck. Compared to what happened in the past, this was very kind.

“Hmph! She is gone. Come back!”

The air shifted and Li Mu appeared. He had a bitter smile on his face and he looked impatient. He scratched his head and looked listless.

“Don’t pretend to be pitiful. You know that it will not work. Don’t you think you are very lucky to still be alive?”

Li Mu bowed, “You are right.”

The tablet jumped up and smacked his head, “Remember what you are supposed to do. Don’t disappoint me...I will be going. I will see you next time.”

Woosh –

The tablet disappeared.

Li Mu continued to remain in the polite bow for a while. He then slowly let out a breath and stood up. He looked calm and the bitterness and impatience he had earlier was gone. He was frowning slightly and seemed to be in deep thought.

.....

In Grandeur Nation, in Niu Village by Cool Mountain, Qin Yu was now a hundred-year-old man and he finally closed his eyes. Without sickness and pain, he went to bed after dinner and passed away in his dreams.

Three days after his death, his grandchildren’s cries filled the air as young men from the village lifted his coffin. They headed to the Qin Family’s burial ground.

At the same time, in the Cool Pavilion halfway up Cool Mountain, there was a soft sigh. The pavilion’s door opened and a white-haired Cloud Mist Daoist walked out. Behind him, there was the pavilion

keeper, who looked even older and weaker. He behaved extremely respectfully and led several priests from the Cool Pavilion.

“The Qin Family’s master has passed on. Go ahead with the rituals to help Master Qin enter reincarnation.”

“Yes.”

Cloud Mist Daoist flew into the air and those from Cool Pavilion followed along to the Qin Family burial ground. Because of them, there were numerous surprised looks. The children and grandchildren of the Qin Family had seen the Immortal Elder’s picture before. They hurried to greet him.

“Please rise. There is no need to be so courteous. I have a lot of fate with your family.” He did not say anything more. The truth was that Cloud Mist Daoist also did not know the truth. However, there was one thing he was clear about. Though the Qin Family looked normal, they were not. Although Master Qin had died, he was not willing to risk offending him in any way.

With the support of Cloud Mist Daoist, the ritual was successfully completed. They lowered the coffin and completed the burial. Qin Yu’s filial children and grandchildren were kneeling as they cried. Paper money was burned and the ashes were blown away in the wind, spreading all over.

The priests from Cool Pavilion had been sent back. As Cloud Mist Daoist stood in front of the tomb and stared at the two graves, there was an unfathomable look in his eyes. There was confusion as well as curiosity. However, he knew that there were things that were better left unknown.

Curiosity killed the cat.

“Hmph! I guess you are smart. If not, so what if you could live for several more years? You would have died today anyway.” A sneer could be heard in his mind.

Cloud Mist Daoist was stunned as he quickly bowed. His lips moved but he did not know what to say. There was fear in his heart. But for him to finally hear this voice again after so many years, he was slightly excited.

“After today, you can remain on Cool Mountain to cultivate and protect the Qin Family’s descendants. You don’t have to interfere in everything; you can judge for yourself.”

As soon as the voice spoke, a cultivation method appeared in his mind. Cloud Mist Daoist merely glanced at it before his face turned red in excitement. He kowtowed respectfully to the grave.

The descendants from the Qin Family were shocked. Before they could ask anything, Cloud Mist Daoist cut them off, “Master Qin was an honorable and important man. There is no need to know the details, but I will protect the Qin Family forever.”

.....

The Demon Sect. In the secret underground chamber of the Night Demon Sect Master.

Qin Yu was sitting cross-legged. His eyelids twitched as he slowly opened them.

There was a moment of surprise before his eyes turned calm again. He looked around.

“You are awake?”

Rourou appeared with a solemn expression. She was not in a good mood.

Qin Yu relaxed slightly as he lifted his hand to massage his forehead. “What is going on? Did I...go into the Grandeur and Millet land? But why don’t I remember anything. Moreover...”

He stood up and looked down at himself. Other than feeling slightly weary, it did not feel any different to waking up from a long sleep.

Qin Yu looked at Rourou for an explanation.

Rourou sneered, “What? I was only responsible for sending you in. Are you expecting me to ensure that you gained something from it?” Her expression grew more downcast as she seemed to become moodier, “Qin Yu. This is your own problem!”

Qin Yu was confused. It was as if she had eaten a fiery medicine. Instinct told him that it was best not to trigger her, otherwise, he would really shudder.

So Qin Yu took a step back and nodded, “Okay, it is my problem. It has nothing to do with you.”

Rourou was on the brink of venting her anger on him and was ready to make him suffer. But after hearing this, she felt as if she had been choked. She blushed and snorted before turning to leave.

Qin Yu was relieved as he followed her.

Stepping out of the secret chamber, Rourou did not stop as she headed out. As soon as she opened the door, she saw Night Demon Sect Master, who was standing outside.

“My Lady.”

Night Demon Sect Master bowed. He noticed the solemn mood that Rourou had and his eyes immediately grew icy. His gaze landed on Qin Yu.

If he, a peak Ruler, wanted to attack Qin Yu, Qin Yu may not be scared. However, Qin Yu was speechless at his icy gaze for no reason. Even if it was my fault, you have to tell me what I did wrong right?

Women. No matter how good their cultivations were or how long they had lived, they were unreadable. They were strange moody creatures.

He could not offend them. He could not!

“Hmph!”

Rourou grunted and Night Demon Sect Master’s expression changed. He withdrew his gaze and took a deep breath before bowing to Qin Yu, “Lord, I did not mean to offend you. I hope that you will not take offense.”

“Hmph!”

Rourou snorted once more.

Cold sweat appeared on Night Demon Sect Master's forehead. He did not know whether to straighten up or not.

Delight shone in Qin Yu's eyes as he thought that at least Night Demon Sect Master understood how he felt. Thankfully, Rourou was not really angry. After snorting, her expression softened slightly. Qin Yu was frowning slightly. She was too difficult to handle.

Rourou glanced at him. Though she did not say anything, her intention was clear – do you want to die? Qin Yu pretended not to see.

Night Demon Sect Master coughed lightly before speaking respectfully, "Lady, Lord. Now that, you are both here, would you like to stay for one or two more days to talk with the members?"

Rourou was expressionless as she remained silent.

Qin Yu thought about it before waving his hand, "We understand your good intentions but we are currently on orders from the West Desolate King. We have to reach the border camp on time and cannot delay."

Night Demon Sect Master nodded in understanding, "In that case, I will send you both off."

Rourou looked at him and snorted. She grabbed Qin Yu and took a step, disappearing in a flash.

Wiping cold sweat off his brows, Night Demon Sect Master stood up with a bitter smile on his face. Ever since the lady awoke, she seemed to have turned into a different person. The way she looked at him made him shiver, even though he was a peak Ruler.

It was horrifying!

But now, he finally felt like he knew what the lady liked...when he saw her sneer earlier, he could sense that her mood had improved.

Night Demon Sect Master stood up straight and shook his head. He wondered how Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin, a mere initial Ruler, could be worthy of the lady?

He also did not know why the lady placed so much importance on him.

Taking a deep breath, he suppressed these thoughts that he should not have. Night Demon Sect Master turned back into the residence and headed to the secret chamber.

Reaching a corner, he bowed and the air twisted. A tablet appeared. However, there was now less haze and the remnant soul seemed to have fallen into a deep sleep and was unable to respond.

Night Demon Sect Master looked worried as he stared at the tablet. He then stopped his summoning and allowed the tablet to disappear.

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Grandeur Nation.

Qin burial ground.

Li Mu's silhouette appeared in mid-air. He stood in between the two graves and looked at them in concentration. However, it was like viewing flowers in a fog and it did not seem real.

It was obvious that there was an issue and the other party did not make any moves to hide it. It was left for him to see. He could not deny that he was curious. He just needed to wave his hand and he would be able to open the coffin, wiping away the fog.

But after contemplating, Li Mu could only sigh. He did not do it and he turned to leave.

After a few moments, Cloud Mist Daoist rushed over to the Qin burial ground. But no matter how he looked and searched, he could not find anything amiss. However, he had clearly sensed something through the formation he activated over the area...could he have been mistaken?

At this moment, Li Mu was already in Niu Village. He was floating in the air above a house in the west side of the village. He lowered his head and looked at the Qin Family's descendants. They were all regular people and there was nothing special about them. At most, they had better luck and would receive some blessings in the future.

"Such an expensive endeavor just to take half of Li Ruhua's luck? I feel like there is more to it." Li Mu rubbed his chin. He then left Grandeur Nation.

Though only half, he was now considered the master of the Grandeur stone and Millet tree and could easily transform into the rules of the heavens and earth. Moving around was as simple as a thought. Preventing others from sensing him was even easier.

The reason why Cloud Mist Daoist was able to sense the strange aura was because Li Mu intentionally allowed him to detect it. Cloud Mist Daoist would be alerted because of it but would end up disappointed and not having found anything.

Returning to where he came from, Li Mu opened his eyes and muttered to himself, "I have never had a lack of patience. I will wait and see. One day, I will find out everything."

There was the sound of someone knocking on the door.

Li Ruhua stood outside. Her face was cold but her eyes looked conflicted.

Li Mu sighed, "Come in and have some tea?"

Li Ruhua was expressionless, "Do you think I am in the mood to drink tea?"

The both of them were asking questions. Li Mu thought about it and decided that she had suffered more. He gave in to her.

"It is fine if you don't want to drink, I will compensate you."

Li Ruhua bit her lip, "You..."

Li Mu raised his hand and swore, "I swear that before you entered Niu Village, my relationship with Grandeur and Millet had been completely cut off. So I don't know what happened."

He spoke extremely earnestly and sincerely, but it was all fake. As the 'rules' of this place, even if he was not present, he could turn back time to find out anything.

Li Ruhua looked at him intently, "There is no need for compensation, but I need you to promise that no one other than us shall ever know about this."

"Okay." Li Mu nodded seriously.

Li Ruhua turned to leave.

Behind her, Li Mu spoke, "Are you still looking for the Barbarian King? My suggestion is that you to return to the Central Desolate as soon as possible."

Li Ruhua did not turn back, "I know what to do."

She walked further and disappeared.

Li Mu closed the door and went to sit by the table. He picked up a cup of tea. There was a faint smile on his face, "What a stubborn brat. But like what that being said, losing half your luck...can be considered having it easy."

There were some things that could not be seen from the surface. Coincidentally, he was the best person to see things beyond the surface in this world.

Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin. Interesting. Very interesting.

Even the Barbarian King, who was extremely rare, would appear at this time. What else was impossible?

Being able to rise to the occasion meant that there would be a change in this world. To Li Mu, this was an opportunity...

Thirteenth Floor. The White Jade Capital above Ninehaven. He wanted to see the light and wind even above that.

.....

Rourou's Divine Way was always admirable. For example, after she pulled Qin Yu and took a step forwards, when he regained his vision, they had returned to the airship flying to the border camp.

From the start to the end, no one noticed anything. Even the four Old Four Claws from the Imperial Palace. Rourou was extremely skillful.

"Bye!"

With a single word, Rourou disappeared. Although her mood was better, she could not help but get angry when she saw Qin Yu. She felt like she was very good at understanding others but Qin Yu was an ignorant lump. No matter how she tried to settle this, she would definitely suffer a big loss!

Chapter 1606 – The Assassination Outside the Marshal Tent

Qin Yu sat down and poured himself a cup of tea. He slowly took a few sips until he saw the bottom of the cup. He then poured himself another cup. He repeated this a few times until he was full from drinking tea. However, he still could not remember what happened in the Grandeur and Millet Realm.

He had some memories, but they were very vague. It was like the reflection of a mountain over a muddy river filled with swimming fishes. No matter how he opened his eyes, everything remained blurry. But

even so, the scenery was there and just because Qin Yu could not see it clearly did not mean that it was an illusion.

“Stone Pagoda!” He growled. There was no response. It seemed like that Stone Pagoda, who had been living in darkness and finally saw the light, had fallen asleep once more. Or rather, he had no choice but to sleep to prevent himself from falling into a dangerous situation.

Qin Yu was slightly angry. However, he calmed down after thinking carefully. Clinging to someone for support had gains and losses. He had to consider it carefully.

At least for now, he could bear with it...hmm, this may sound pretentious, but if it were someone else, they would take a hundred steps back and think that was bearable.

He temporarily stopped trying to find out what happened in the Grandeur and Millet Realm. But this did not mean that Qin Yu was giving up. Taking a step back would open a new world and he was just waiting for the right time. There was no need to risk doing something that would make both him and others unhappy.

Taking a deep breath, he pushed this matter aside. He closed his eyes and started to examine his body.

He had gone through this with foggy memories and did not know what happened. There were also no significant changes to his body. However, he felt as if there was a change, but it was just subtle.

He sighed as he ended up not finding out anything and eventually gave up.

Since Rourou was not willing to let him know the details, she would be able to prevent him from finding anything out. Forget it, thinking about it was a waste of energy; he would drop the matter completely.

He was going to cultivate.

.....

West Desolate Imperial Palace.

The king was looking at a jade slip in his hands. He pressed it slightly and it turned to dust. He had a cold expression and the coldness in his eyes was extremely chilly. However, it was not directed at Qin Yu.

Marquis Chongqu Ning Qin had nothing to do with the Barbarian King – he was sure of this, and that was enough.

But that one from the Li Family was not ordinary. She acted extremely brazenly as a third generation disciple and must have forgotten her current status. No matter how glorious she was before, she was now just a brat who had yet to reach the King realm.

She made a deal with the king of a nation and dared to betray him and secretly try to kill him. Did she really think she could hide it from him?

The Li Family from the Central Desolate was a good backing and they had some status and confidence even when facing a nation. But that referred to the entire Li Family and not just a single person.

Li Ruhua was far from worthy!

If she was smart, she would return straight to the Central Desolate. He would then remember this for now and get back at her in the future.

But since she is not going to leave, then don't leave.

.....

Lightning flashed in the cage and numerous thunder sounds could be heard. It was not a huge area but the energy formed a lightning pool.

Li Quanji was inside it and all the hair on his body had turned to ashes. He was wailing as his face twisted. The electricity from the lightning entered his body through his nose and mouth, almost destroying all life!

If not for his strange current state where he was a lot stronger than how weak he looked, he would have died a long time ago.

Since Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin was fine, then he would be punished. It was simple logic.

The continuous lightning strikes represented His Majesty's anger. The reason why the king did not personally appear was because this crazy Third Prince was a waste of his time.

After a long time, the lightning stopped. Li Quanji was twitching crazily as he fell to the ground. He was panting heavily like a fish that had been thrown onto the shore. His eyes were red but there was no fear in them. He only looked confused.

"It should not be, it should not be..." Li Quanji muttered to himself. His eyes grew redder and redder like two blood red seas that stretched deep.

.....

West Desolate, Long Island.

The name symbolized how long it was. It stretched out over seven thousand and nine hundred miles. The narrowest point was only three to four miles wide and one would be able to see the blue waves on the other side of the island when standing on one side.

This island was amongst the thousand islands in the West Desolate realm. It sat within a large lake that was about one hundred thousand miles wide. The other islands sat like stars in a galaxy, hence it was called Thousand Island River.

"Thousand Island River, tsk tsk. Those that would bring up this name are either trying to show off that they are very young or they are so old and have vast experiences." Lord Min went for a cruise over the lake. He sighed occasionally as he enjoyed the scenery.

There were some regrets of having given things up as well as the complicated feelings of revisiting the place. There was also a sense of pride as he spoke about it.

Other than pride, Min Changjing had lived a stable life for a very long time and had seen many things come and go. He was someone who had a lot of experience.

Back then, those Heaven Lifting people that bared their teeth at him and wanted to fight, had all been defeated and had vanished from this world. An entire Dao cultivation was gone.

A wave of homesickness rolled over Lord Min. He could not help but feel the ease that came from his hometown. Looking over at his grumpy and downcast-looking son, he could not help but feel annoyed by the fact that his son was not meeting expectations.

It was just a rotten fox, was there a need to be so hung up on it? He was causing the Min Family to lose face!

However, he ultimately was still able to understand the sorrow that came from first experiences. It was something that his son needed to go through. The anger passed and he did not say anything.

This showed his maturity. Otherwise, so what about his longevity and his coexistence with the world? It would be a joke!

.....

Seeing that they were nearing the border camp, yet the general and the lady had not returned, Hundred Saint maintained a composed face. It seemed like he was in control of everything but he was actually panicking internally.

A general of the nation who was leading troops to support the border camp suddenly left midway. It was against the law. Moreover, not returning after so long was making the crime worse. Now, he was just hiding the truth and no one dared to find trouble. But once they reached the border camp, he would not be able to hide it.

Some things were like the smuggling that was going on between the capital and the Western Barbarians. They could do it but not say it. Now that the Later Ye Family was watching the general closely, like a thorn in their flesh, if they found anything against him, it would be hard even for His Majesty to cover it. After all, there were rules in the army that needed to be abided by. If they were too biased, how would they hold others to account?

Marshal Wu was just ignoring the general for now. But if there was a storm, he would play along. It was only because the marshal had just been taught a lesson by His Majesty and needed to preserve his reputation. It was not that he truly made peace with the general.

But Marshal Wu would be more than happy to see the general suffer and he would even fan the fire. If he still did not do anything, he would be seen as a buddha that could not even protect himself despite being the marshal of the border army!

Hundred Saint got more and more anxious as he thought about it and his head started to hurt even more. He could only hide in his room and pretend that all was well. He did not want to face the prying questions of the other generals and soldiers.

But time would not lie and he would eventually not be able to hide. Even if he intentionally delayed by asking the airships to fly slower, there was a set time that they had to reach the border army by.

When they were there, they were there. Hundred Saint gritted his teeth and held his tongue as he walked out. Whether it was a blessing or a curse, he had to deal with it!

Seeing Marquis Chongwu's advisor, who was normally well-respected, look so miserable with boils all over his mouth, the various generals from the gathered ships felt their hearts fall. Ever since Qinghe, these people had Marquis Chongwu's mark on their bodies. If something happened to the general, they would all be impacted.

Those generals that were more informed and knew that there was conflict between Marquis Chongwu and the Later Ye Family turned pale. They could not help but feel resentful at this marquis that they barely knew.

If he simply brought the lady back to her hometown, that would have been fine. After all, they were in their honeymoon period and it was perfectly normal to head back to the wife's clan to brag.

But to cause several days of delay for this and still not return even by the time the army reached the border camp was going overboard. Bluntly speaking, he was being arrogant upon riding on His Majesty's favor. He was not treating the army and its rules with respect. Though he was named Marquis Chongwu, he would not have a good future with this kind of attitude and he was not worth the generals' devotion.

Facing everyone's gazes, Hundred Saint took a deep breath. Before he could speak, he felt an intense pain and his face twitched.

At this moment, he heard footsteps behind him and a calm voice could be heard, "Since we are all here, let's wait a while. When the marshal sends someone over, we will head to camp."

Hundred Saint took a deep breath and tried his best to control his expression. He turned and greeted respectfully, "Greetings Marquis!"

He felt like he was about to cry. You came just in time. If it was any later, it would not have been good! But Marquis, can we not do this kind of overstimulated game in the future? My heart cannot take it!

On the airship deck, the various generals kneeled down on one knee, "Greetings Marquis!"

Qin Yu waved his hand and smiled, "I left midway for a while and was busy cultivating after I returned. I did not have time to meet with all of you. But it is fine. We will get the chance when we are in camp."

His gaze swept across everyone and he maintained a neutral smile. However, when he spoke, he caused everyone to break out in cold sweat.

"I have just assumed this position and cannot match all your years of experience. I only request for all of you to follow military orders with strict compliance. If you can do this, I promise you wealth. If you can't do it, then please step out early so that we can part and I won't have to treat you heartlessly in the future."

"We do not dare. We will abide by orders."

Those that stood up immediately went back to a kneel.

Qin Yu smiled and nodded, "Please rise. With this, I can be at ease." He turned to look at the dishevelled-looking Hundred Saint, with boils all over his mouth. "Make a note. In the future if I forget, remind me who was here today."

Hundred Saint acknowledged his order as he straightened his back. He felt relieved! All these rude and coarse people that were disrespectful to me. Now you know who is boss!

He stood up and looked out. He stared intently at every face on the airship deck. All these generals had worked and fought for years in order to get to their current position. They felt regret slowly come over them.

But their expressions remained neutral, not exposing anything. This made Qin Yu approve. They were generals of the West Desolate army and naturally would stand out if there was an opportunity. They were not entirely useless.

Very soon, the representative from the West Border Army rushed over, "I have come on the orders of Marshal Wu. Greetings generals. Welcome back to the border army!"

Qin Yu nodded, "Did Marshal Wu have any instructions for the placement of the camp?"

The messenger was sweating as he spoke even more respectfully, "Marshal Wu said that you are leading the army and we shall proceed according to what you want. The Marshal Tent will not interfere."

The corners of Hundred Saint's mouth pulled up in a sneer. The difference in attitude now compared to in the past, when they had arrived with one hundred thousand troops, was vast. After all, before the general could even do anything with the one hundred thousand troops previously, the Marshal Tent had assigned them all away.

Qin Yu greeted, "Thank you to the marshal, I will not refuse." He looked at the various generals, "I am stationed at the mine; you all can proceed ahead. I will request all the resources needed to set up camp from Marshal Wu."

"Yes Marquis!"

Qin Yu stood up, "Let's go. I will follow you back to the camp to greet Marshal Wu."

When the army reached the camp, from both logical and emotional perspectives, he needed to greet the marshal to not be disrespectful. But in front of the other generals from the West Border, he sent away four hundred thousand troops and only brought those close to him to greet Marshal Wu. This demonstrated his immense might and desire to get something from the Marshal Tent.

After all, when he said, "I will request all the resources needed to set up camp from Marshal Wu," it had spread through the army!

Third-class Marquis Chongwu had a position equivalent to a great general. This time, when Qin Yu returned to the border army camp, there was a significant difference in treatment because of his status.

As he made his way, various generals all stepped aside and bowed to him.

Nothing stopped him until he reached the Marshal Tent.

The guard outside the Marshal Tent immediately walked up to greet him. Without Qin Yu saying anything, he told them that the marshal was already waiting for them.

As he spoke, he bent his body forwards and gestured in the direction of the tent. Qin Yu stepped forwards. However, he suddenly frowned as he looked surprised. At this moment, a guard who was looking down and holding open the flap to the Marshal Tent threw out a punch. It was like a dam overflowing and energy surged out!

He was definitely a Ruler, and was most likely a peak Ruler. His murderous aura was immense!

Until he took action, Qin Yu did not sense any strange aura. Either he had a secret cultivation skill to hide his aura or he held a treasure that could prevent others from detecting it.

But that was not what was important now.

Qin Yu took a deep breath as he stomped on the floor. The air around him twisted and numerous cracks appeared.

Bam –

A loud explosion could be heard. The guard who had attempted the assassination flew out into the air, blood spurting from his nose, mouth, eyes, and ears.

Chapter 1607 – Investigation

Back in Marquis Chongwu Mansion in the capital, when Qin Yu broke through, he had initially wanted to hide his identity. At the critical moment, with his 'entry level' cultivation, he killed his opponent. It was surprising and expected for the other parties to look shocked.

Now that he returned to the West Border Army camp, when someone tried to assassinate him, he suddenly changed his mind. Since he wanted the Marshal Tent to be accountable, the more important he was, the better. His cultivation level was a huge factor in this.

There were shouts in the air as several figures appeared. They all reached out to suppress the assassin, who was dripping with blood. The assassin did not try again. It was obvious that the assassin knew he had only one chance in attempting an assassination outside the Marshal Tent.

So he had given his all in that one punch, putting in as much murderous energy as possible. He never thought that Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin was hiding his actual cultivation. Though he appeared to only be an entry level Ruler, he was actually as strong as a peak Ruler. The attacker was definitely disappointed about not succeeding in his assassination. But at least his death would not be a waste; there would be a storm today.

The assassin groaned as more blood spurted out. An intense and horrifying energy exploded from him and he exploded.

"Hmph!" Wu Tongtian stepped out and appeared beside the person. He spread out his fingers and pressed forwards. 'Dong', there was a loud sound and golden rays could be seen swallowing the assassin like a huge mouth.

Boom boom boom –

A low suppressed roar could be heard seemingly from far away. Lightning flashed in the sky and the golden rays twisted. Wu Tongtian frowned slightly as his face paled. In a moment, his expression returned to normal. He flipped his hand and the golden rays disappeared.

The few people that appeared outside the Marshal Tent bowed to Wu Tongtian from afar before turning to leave. Their duty was to keep the Marshal Tent safe. Now that the assassin had been killed, the investigation, appeasing, and suppressing the issue had nothing to do with them.

A few figures appeared at the entrance of the Marshal Tent, which was now damaged. Although Wu Tongtian had suppressed the assassin and prevented him from exploding and destroying everything around him, Qin Yu had never thought of protecting Marshal Wu's 'image'.

This was completely reasonable and no one would criticize him. After all, he was a marquis. For him to have been involved in an assassination attempt was already a joke. Hence, there was no need to protect anyone's reputation.

Ye Sangdu's face fell and he frowned.

Jiang Chengzi exchanged glances with Qin Yu. Seeing that he was fine, Jiang Chengzi relaxed and felt relieved.

Zhao Chong's behavior was the most distinct. If not for the current situation, he would have rushed up to Qin Yu to greet and check on him. But even though he remained still, there were numerous emotions running through his eyes. It made others feel that he was extremely devoted to Marquis Chongwu.

The other generals all looked down with serious expressions but did not let what they were feeling show in order to avoid trouble. Outside the damaged tent entrance, there was silence.

But amidst this silence, all the gazes on Qin Yu looked surprised.

Marquis Chongwu was actually this powerful. His cultivation level had increased so fast that he seemed like a different person.

After all, when he left the West Border Army for the capital, he had only been a Saint. Though he had some moves, he was vastly different from now. When he took the hit from the assassin, the vibrations resulting from it were sufficient to prove his current strength.

This caused everyone to subconsciously think back on some news from the capital earlier – when Marquis Chongwu broke through, he got the nation's luck and Incense Feedback. It continued for a long time and he absorbed a record high amount of incense power.

It was obvious that Marquis Chongwu's sudden surge in power was related to this.

Wu Tongtian spoke first to break the silence. He looked at Qin Yu and said seriously, "Marquis Chongwu, I promise to investigate this thoroughly. I will find out the truth and give you an explanation." No matter how indignant he was now, this was what he had to say.

The assassination had occurred right outside his tent and the assassin had disguised himself amongst his guards. He was able to invite Qin Yu into the tent, and this was enough to prove that he was known amongst the other guards...when everything was added together, it was clear that Wu Tongtian would

be implicated. As the saying went, when there is a mud stain on your pants, even if it is not shit, it is taken as shit.

But no one who witnessed the assassination today believed that this was Wu Tongtian's doing. If Marshal Wu wanted to kill someone, he would not have needed to use such a dumb method that would implicate him regardless of whether the assassin succeeded or failed.

Of course, this remained as thoughts. Other than the confidantes of Marshal Wu, no one else dared to express their opinions. It was not easy to determine the truth now. After all, they had all experienced 'the trick in injuring oneself to gain the enemy's confidence' and 'not noticing things closest to them'.

Observe more and speak less. Since this had nothing to do with them, they would remain as spectators and not get dragged into the turbulence.

Though this was what they intended, there had just been an assassination attempt on a marquis. No matter who was the mastermind, they had demonstrated that they were bold and crazy. This caused the various generals to feel a chill in their hearts.

Power strife in the army was common both openly and in the dark. However, it was the first time someone had done things in such an overboard and rulebreaking fashion. It might be an exaggeration to say that they were all in danger, but they would definitely be more cautious moving forwards.

Qin Yu allowed his aura to dissipate and he put his hands together to greet Wu Tongtian, "I will definitely trust you Marshal. Please investigate thoroughly." He paused for a while before smiling, "I will be waiting for the results."

The atmosphere grew tense once more. Marquis Chongwu had already shown off, and through this, he once again expressed his stubborn attitude. But he 'had the right'. He had been attacked today, and even if he was rude, no one could say anything. Of course, they all wanted to watch the show from the sidelines.

In the army, positions were like radishes. Every hole consisted of one radish. Only with chaos would there be a vacant hole. After all, water flowed down. It was instinctive to head upwards.

Wu Tongtian frowned before becoming calm again, "Okay." Everyone returned to their tents and the marshal issued an order. In an instant, there was a flurry of horses and troops moving around. Everyone related to the assassin were all to be captured and questioned.

The first information they got was regarding the background of the assassin from military records. The assassin was called Gao You. He had been in the army for over a hundred years. He had always been courageous and had numerous achievements. He had been promoted to become a guard for the Marshal Tent after he was deemed suitable.

Gao You had been a guard for the Marshal Tent for over ten years. He had always been diligent and never made any mistakes. Three years ago, there was a huge battle with the Barbarian Clan. He had been guarding the army's flag and refused to give in. He suffered over thirty wounds in that battle and was rewarded afterwards.

Of course, now that it was revealed that Gao You was the assassin, the reward back then was an eyesore. A Ruler was actually willing to hide in the army for over a hundred years, deceiving everyone. It was hard to believe.

Gao You's background was extremely clean and orderly. But it was obvious that the real Gao You was most likely already dead. Disguising as another person was very easy for a Ruler.

They would continue investigating this until they found the unlucky soul who was going to bear the brunt of the anger from the marshal. However, this would not be the main direction for the investigation. They started to look at the people closed to him. However, from his background, it was stated clearly that his relatives had all died in a huge war between the Barbarian Clan and the Desolate Area. That was why he joined the army.

Though he had a few friends, they hardly knew anything about him. Of course, the investigators would not just accept it when they said they did not know anything or started to cry out of indignance. They had their own procedures to follow.

Seeing how the people in the Marshal Tent did not object to the results of the questioning, it was obvious that their procedure was reliable. How bloody it was, was not the focus of the people from the Marshal Tent.

The investigation reached a dead end. No matter which direction they looked at it, they were unable to find a gap, his motive, or who instructed him.

In the Marshal Tent, Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin sat in front of Ye Sangdu. He was drinking his tea calmly, seemingly unbothered by it. Everyone could not help but sigh internally.

After so many years in the West Border Army, he was the first person who could behave so stubbornly in front of the marshal. Since Marquis Chongwu was not giving in, Marshal Wu remained silent for a while before instructing them to dig further.

Thankfully, this deadlock did not last too long and things took a turn. The investigators had found a key point – Gao You liked to drink!

Others had mentioned that he enjoyed drinking by himself when he was not on duty.

To a cultivator, as long as they had self-control, drinking was not a huge flaw.

But as a soldier who had been promoted to guard the Marshal Tent and looked to have a bright future, it was not very appropriate for him to indulge in drinking.

However, Gao You could have been unambitious and did not intend to climb high in the army. Or perhaps, his addiction to alcohol was too great and he was not willing to give up...etc etc.

There could be many reasons, but since there was a suspicious point, the investigators had to dig deeper. Any small lead could be the one that revealed the entire picture.

Gao You enjoyed drinking Crow Iron's wine the most. The wine was as spicy as its name suggests. It was produced about a thousand miles away from the border army camp in a small city called Iron Thorn.

The investigators headed to Iron Thorn to find the brewery that produced Crow Iron's wine. They surrounded the area, and very soon, a woman who sold the wine came to the attention of the investigators.

The reason was simple. The woman looked beautiful and her fair skin was eye-catching. In this small city by the border, she was considered a top beauty.

At the start, their questioning was not very successful. The woman was crying as she wiped her tears. She stuck to saying that she had indeed had a few affairs with the soldier named Gao You. However, she was a widow and was lonely after her husband passed away. Moreover, the soldier looked muscular and was hard for her to resist.

This was not illegal. There was no rule in the West Desolate that said a widow could not occasionally steal a bite and have love affairs.

If the raw ingredients were not good, the taste would be hard to improve even with oil and salt.

Chapter 1608 – Too Late

Army investigators were different from normal investigators. They managed to find a way to pick out the woman's pain point. Women could be stubborn, but once they were caught, their emotions would get the better of them. She came clean and in a fit of anger she recounted everything that happened between them, even their escapades.

The two investigators sitting across from her and listening to her talk maintained stoic faces and did not interrupt her. It was only when her throat hurt from talking that she finally stopped.

According to what she said, she had received a huge sum of money and was tasked with seducing the soldier called Gao You. As they interacted, they started having affairs.

After summarizing and organizing what they had found, the two investigators turned to leave. "Tsk tsk, this woman is really interesting. I like it." After they walked out of the room, one of them said slowly. Although his expression was still cold, there was heat in his eyes.

The other investigator frowned slightly and reminded him, "This woman is now an important point in our investigation. Don't do anything to her."

"Don't worry. I am not so stupid as to self-destruct. Even if I like her, I will wait until everything is over."

The other person thought about it and nodded without saying anything more.

They had done many similar things. As long as they were careful, they would be fine. As the next step, they tried to catch the person who gave the woman money. However, the man named Wang Kai seemed to have realized something was amiss and had already escaped without a trace.

The investigators closed the Wang Family's house and checked it carefully. They found another lead from a servant girl and eventually managed to locate Wang Kai, who was hiding in another place in Iron Thorn City.

Wang Kai said that he was just trying to carry out the business passed down to him and serve the high-ranking officers from the army. So after coincidentally finding out that Gao You was a guard of the Marshal Tent, he bribed the woman. They would both benefit from it.

The investigators tortured him until he could not bear the pain. Wang Kai was utterly destroyed as he gritted his teeth and asked them not to use torture. He asked them to tell him what they wanted him to say and he would just say it.

At this point, they could not torture him anymore or there would be trouble.

The investigation reached another dead end.

Another lead then came from the servant girl. Perhaps she thought that after betraying her master, she had no future. She was worried that he would take revenge on her and she gave an important clue – Wang Kai had a younger sister from a different mother. She had visited them a few years back. She dressed impressively and even had armored guards.

She used the words ‘armored guards’, this was precise yet unremarkable. As the investigators took a glance at this somewhat beautiful girl, their eyes flashed as they knew that she must have gone to bed with Wang Kai. Instinct told them that there was something amiss. The investigators merely noted this down and did not push further.

Since they were on orders to investigate the assassination attempt against Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin, it was better not to dwell on side issues.

After all, although the investigators were part of the Imperial Army and were not governed by the border army, since they were stationed at the border army, they had to be adaptable in order to not get in trouble.

They reported back to the Marshal Tent and were instructed to continue investigating Wang Kai’s half-sister. After a painstaking investigation, they soon found that she was a concubine of the assistant general of Tiger Roar Troop.

Ever since Ye Sangdu joined the West Border Army, Tiger Roar Troop had always been made up of his relatives. He had put in a lot of effort to manage them and all the people in the troop were the general’s trusted aides. Everyone knew that Assistant General Xu Zhou was a confidante of the Later Ye Family.

The Marshal Tent fell silent.

Ye Sangdu paled as he gritted his teeth and complained, “This has nothing to do with me. Marshal, please investigate properly!” He looked shocked and angry and did not seem to be pretending. But it was always difficult to determine who was pretending.

Qin Yu lowered his head and continued sipping his tea. His eyes flickered. Amongst all the people present, Ye Sangdu was indeed the one who most likely wanted Qin Yu dead. But somehow, instinct told Qin Yu that Ye Sangdu was not pretending.

Then who was the assassin?

Wu Tongtian was expressionless, "Great General, there is no need to get angry. The investigators have just found some leads. Maybe it is just a coincidence. If we let them continue investigating, the truth will come out and it will be your explanation."

'Putong', Ye Sangdu felt his heart fall as he looked up at Wu Tongtian, who was looking calm. A hint of coldness could be seen on his face.

Receiving the marshal's order, the investigators went to Tiger Roar Troop. Assistant General Xu Zhou waved his own guards away as he maintained a composed expression, "I can go with you, but this situation has nothing to do with me."

The investigators bowed, "General Xu, don't worry. We will investigate carefully and not casually make any conclusions. But for now, please come with us."

Xu Zhou nodded in an amicable manner, "Okay." He turned to instruct his trusted aide to maintain the order amongst the troops and prevent any chaos.

In the Marshal Tent, Ye Sangdu stood up and left. According to him, he was under suspicion and it was not appropriate for him to stay in the tent. He would return to his own tent to await the results.

Wu Tongtian did not stop him.

Watching Ye Sangdu leave, there was a change in the eyes of everyone in the tent.

Suppressing his emotions, Ye Sangdu maintained his composure as he left the Marshal Tent. He could sense the gazes on him.

He grew angrier but pretended not to notice and he hurried back to his tent.

He had to quickly investigate to see if Xu Zhou was involved.

The feeling Wu Tongtian gave him today was extremely unsettling, if there really was something...the consequences would be severe!

In the great general's tent, his confidante was waiting anxiously for his return. Upon seeing Ye Sangdu, he was delighted and rushed to greet him, "Great General, what do we do now? Xu Zhou has been exposed; there is going to be trouble!"

Ye Sangdu was pale as he stared at him.

His confidante felt his heart shrink as he saw the great general's expression. His voice trembled, "Great General, did you not know about it?"

Ye Sangdu felt like strangling him. He gritted his teeth and growled, "What is going on!"

The confidante paled and felt dizzy as he saw the great general glare at him. He knew that if he fainted now, he would never wake ever again.

He slapped himself to prevent himself from fainting, "Great General, fourteen years ago it was Second Mister who personally came to find me. He arranged for Gao You to be a chess piece on the frontline. As this was very important, very few people knew about it. After I did it, I reported back to you and you

responded with an okay. If not, I would not have dared to make decisions by myself for such a big event.”

Ye Sangdu’s mind flashed, and very soon, he found the memory that he had forgotten fourteen years ago. To great cultivators like himself, there was nothing that they truly forgot. He closed his eyes as his face turned sour, “Back then, I was confused and thought that you were referring to something else. Men, call Second Mister. I have to ask him why.”

He had been made a fool and underestimated by his own subordinate. This was a conspiracy against himself. It was mainly because Ye Sangdu trusted Second Mister. After he left the capital and came to the border army, Second Mister played a huge role in helping him do things without making mistakes.

As he thought of this, Ye Sangdu felt fear and apprehension. There was a chill in his heart that caused his entire body to feel cold!

A guard rushed off after receiving his order. Very soon, he returned and brought with him an ice cold corpse.

“Great General, when I reached Second Mister he had already committed suicide. This is his suicide note that he left for you.”

Ye Sangdu looked at the calm and familiar face in front of him. He recalled how the both of them had just been talking a few days ago about how to deal with Marquis Chongwu Ning Qin.

Back then, there had been nothing strange about Second Mister. Their conversation had been pleasant, with numerous ideas. He even mentioned waiting a while and not making any moves for the time being because of the pressure from the Imperial Clan.

At that time, Ye Sangdu would never have imagined that the Second Mister he respected so much would have set him up fourteen years ago.

Picking up the suicide note, he tore it open. His face paled as he looked at it. He seemed to have written it in a panic. He admitted to making a big mistake and was too scared to face the consequences from the army and chose to commit suicide. He was apologetic to Ye Sangdu.

Gripping the paper tightly in his fingers, it turned to dust. However, Ye Sangdu knew that when Second Mister chose to commit suicide out of fear, whether he left this note or not was not important.

But even so, Second Mister chose to write this before committing suicide...Ye Sangdu’s fingers trembled. He suddenly looked up, “Go and meet with Xu Zhou, tell him to settle this...” He froze. He thought of Second Mister’s brilliance. Yet, Second Mister was also just a chesspiece who could be discarded. Would the person playing the game of chess give him a chance?

“It is too late...too late...” He muttered to himself sadly.

Ye Sangdu was right. Xu Zhou, who had been dragged to the investigation, didn’t last long before he was detained.

He struggled to resist and shouted angrily, “How dare you! I am the assistant general of Tiger Roar Troop. How dare you use force against me? I will see this matter through to the end; don’t think of getting away with this!”

The investigators who had detained him looked at this general who was spouting harsh words in anger with pity. Their looks caused Xu Zhou to frown and he paled very quickly. He started trembling and sweating in fear.

One of the investigators said softly, "General Xu, you should know that unless we had proper proof, we would not have dared to take action against you." He shook his head and sighed softly, "The most evil thing in the world is a woman's heart. In your next life, you had better judge clearly."

Hearing this, it was as if Xu Zhou's spine broke as he fell to the ground in a heap, losing all energy.

Wang Kai's sister was kneeling in the corner of a prison as she kowtowed and cried, "Mother, mother, I finally sought revenge for you...no one from the Wang Family will be able to escape. Rest in peace..."

Chapter 1609 – Brothers In Arms

The atmosphere in the Marshal Tent was heavy. Although people started to feel uneasy as Ye Sangdu was about to leave, they still could not believe it until all the evidence had been gathered together...at the same time, there was an icy cold feeling deep within their hearts.

This was not because of the possibility that Ye Sangdu dared to order an assassin to kill Marquis Chongwu, Ning Qin, in front of everyone. Instead, it was because all of the events that happened today felt like they went too smoothly.

While investigators of the military were the best at their job, they could not help having their hearts jump in fright at how successful they were with this investigation.

After all, it was not a pleasant thing for an assassin to be used as the knife in the hands of another, especially if the other person was Ye Sangdu.

However, they could only suppress all of these thoughts in their hearts. The evidence linked up cohesively – the instigator of the attack was evil remnants from the previous dynasties who directed him to assassinate Marquis Chongwu in front of everyone. Regardless of the success of this, if they did not handle the matter well, there would be chaos in the military. It would not be possible for them to evade danger then.

This was a truly severe crime!

Wu Tongtian sighed deeply and slowly said, "This matter is grave. Until the capital judges it, please do not speak about it and reveal anything to others." He paused slightly before continuing, "I will personally suppress this matter as well and will invite the great general to the Marshal Tent to wait for the messenger's arrival."

This sentence was the nail in the coffin, and before the people in the Marshal Tent could witness a lively play, Great General Ye Sangdu was finished! With the position of great general now empty, their hearts clenched as they observed the solemn expression on Marshal Wu's face.

In the West Border Army camp, the only person who could push Ye Sangdu to a corner with a single blow and not give him any chance to struggle were Wu Tongtian and the subordinate Marquis Chongwu who remained silent.

Because of the issue of time, everyone excluded Marquis Chongwu from this list from the start. As such, it could only be Wu Tongtian who slammed the descendant of the Later Ye Family and the second most powerful great general in the West Border Army against the floor.

But why?

Marshal Wu had maintained a close relationship with the Later Ye Family for all these years. Although it seemed like the Later Ye Family was being tossed around in the wind now, their roots for power grew deep into the ground, and Marshal Wu was thoroughly cutting all ties with them now. Even if he was the grand marshal of the West Border Army, this was such a risky action to take.

Furthermore, the West Desolate King was not in favor of Wu Tongtian. This was a publicly known fact in the West Border Army. Now that His Majesty has stabilized things in the capital and obtained the permission to extend his rule for another hundred years, Wu Tongtian should be strengthening his relationships with the Later Ye Family to ensure that he would be able to survive this harsh, cold winter. He should not be backstabbing them to try and change His Majesty's opinion.

After all, a hundred years may seem like a very long time for ordinary men. However, for elite cultivators at the peak of cultivation realms, it was nothing but a single snap of the fingers. At most, it took four or five snaps; the future was still coming!

No one could understand what was going on and they felt that Wu Tongtian's actions were a mistake. They believed that he was foolish for doing it, but this did not resolve their shock. Ye Sangdu had finished speaking. If it were them, who would be in a better state if they were suddenly targeted by Wu Tongtian?

"Marquis Chongwu, things have progressed to this state, are you satisfied?" Wu Tongtian slowly spoke. His eyes looked tired and it seemed as though the events of the past few days had taken a toll on him.

Qin Yu placed his cup down and cupped his hands, "Grand Marshal has investigated the incident down to the finest detail in a fair manner. I am very satisfied." He stood up and continued, "Grand Marshal, you may take full control going forward. 400,000 men are still in the mine without a place to call home; I shall not stay for long and will take my leave now."

Wu Tongtian nodded, "Setting up camp is a strenuous task. Once you have settled things there, gather the numbers and report it back to me."

Qin Yu smiled, "Thank you Grand Marshal." He turned and walked out of the Marshal Tent. It seemed as though today was a splendid day. However, if he carefully thought about it, he was supposed to be in power but he had to report back to the Marshal Tent. Although the outcome was good, it felt like he was the knife in another person's hand.

He was slightly dissatisfied and also afraid, but the overwhelming feeling that he had was satisfaction. After all, from whichever angle, taking down Ye Sangdu was a good thing for Qin Yu. Wu Tongtian must have thought of this too, and that was why he was willing to cooperate with Qin Yu.

This also explained the reason for his last words.

"Marquis Chongwu, please wait!" A shout came from behind him. Zhao Chong hurried to chase after Qin Yu. He smiled brightly and said, "Brother, how can you leave if I have not congratulated you on your

promotion to marquis? I've got a pot of new tea in my tent, Marquis, you ought to come and try it. Please do not turn me down in front of so many people. I will be very embarrassed."

It seemed that Zhao Chong had really been taken aback by the events in the Marshal Tent today. Although Qin Yu was not bothered about Zhao Chong's reputation, he thought about it and nodded eventually. "Alright, most things in the Marshal Tent are good, but the tea isn't on the same level. I will head to your tent for a drink first before leaving."

Zhao Chong beamed in elation. He extended an arm out and said, "Marquis, please!"

He truly brought forward a humble and respectful attitude.

The two of them talked along the way but Qin Yu mostly just acknowledged Zhao Chong's comments and did not say much. On the other hand, General Zhao Chong was incredible and he burst into laughter frequently. He even pushed his luck by patting Qin Yu on his shoulder. He acted familiar with Qin Yu for others in the camp to see.

Once they reached the tent, Zhao Chong busied himself and personally brewed the tea for Qin Yu. He served a cup to Qin Yu and said, "I am only trying to ensure my own safety. I previously leeches onto you; I hope you don't mind."

Qin Yu smiled. He started to feel like Zhao Chong was an interesting man. He lowered his head and admitted his faults directly without any sloppiness. After some thought, Qin Yu sipped his tea, "General Zhao, you should tell me what you want to say. I can only drink one cup of tea."

A few moments later, Zhao Chong was all smiles as he sent Qin Yu off. He stood outside the entrance of his tent and waved until Qin Yu disappeared into the distance. Only then did he turn and return into the tent.

Big Head Wang and the others were waiting not far from the tent. They hurried to greet Qin Yu when he returned.

Qin Yu glanced at them and smiled, "Let's go back to the mine."

As he sat on the comfortable seat of the horse carriage, Qin Yu sighed deeply and a thoughtful look crossed his eyes. Just now, Zhao Chong got to the point and expressed that he was willing to follow Qin Yu. He only requested that Qin Yu be acceptive of him and be his support in the future.

Although Qin Yu admired Zhao Chong's straightforwardness, he was a general who was ranked highly in the border army. This display felt rushed and rash, and it was not an exaggeration to say that he stepped over his boundaries.

However, after leaving the tent, Qin Yu had a much clearer thought and he realized the reason why Zhao Chong rushed out of the Marshal Tent and shamelessly invited him for tea.

Zhao Chong had guessed that Wu Tongtian was working for the king!

No one was a fool. Wu Tongtian had a stable position commanding a million troops in the West Border Army. He was obviously an intelligent person and he did not just rely on his cultivation rank to get his position.

As such, the move of backstabbing his friend in order to gain the acknowledgement of His Majesty was not foolish. There was a deeper motive in it.

If Wu Tongtian was always working for the king, his actions were only logical.

Rulers could not conform to both sides without either getting angry. This was an act that was in play for many years. Because both sides were equally good at acting, many people were fooled.

Now, the king had displayed his stance and he was going to take down the Later Ye Family. It was only natural that Wu Tongtian acted as the vanguard to take them down.

As such, Zhao Chong's urgent desire to wish for Qin Yu's support was because he was also the king's man.

In other words, after Ye Sangdu fell, the West Border Army camp would have Wu Tongtian in the first seat and Marquis Chongwu in the second. They were brothers in arms working for the same man. If they wanted to make any moves in the future and send someone to jail, a simple sentence to give the order would suffice.

In the horse carriage, Qin Yu sighed and he raised an arm to rub his forehead. He agreed that Zhao Chong's thinking was a possibility. The West Desolate King had not trusted Qin Yu from the start, and this was something that he could confirm. As such, it was possible that he hid Wu Tongtian's real motive from Qin Yu while Wu Tongtian served as someone who would monitor Qin Yu!

Qin Yu successfully passed the test in Grandeur Nation and Millet Nation. Although his memories weren't clear, he could confirm that. Otherwise, he would not have safely arrived at the border army camp now.

As such, if Wu Tongtian was really instructed by the West Desolate King to do this, he would wait until the dust settled to give Qin Yu an answer.

Shaking his head, Qin Yu case aside these thoughts. The matter of who Wu Tongtian was working for was not important to him. After all, Qin Yu's current identity was fake too. The unexplained fear and wariness the West Desolate King had towards Qin Yu may one day take form and push Qin Yu to a corner.

It was pointless to ponder over it. He would rather spend his efforts cultivating. If the time came when he had to run, he needed to make sure that he had the capabilities to run.

As such, Qin Yu closed his eyes and cultivated after he gathered his thoughts.

Outside the horse carriage, the guards sensed that the marquis' aura had changed. They could not help being in admiration as they thought about the position and cultivation the marquis had. Even with his status, he focused himself on cultivating and did not waste any time.

Compared to the marquis, they were lowly peasants who served in the army. Time frittered away for them and they felt like they had been slapped in the face.

Big Head Wang sighed deeply and tilted his head to scan the people around him. His gaze stopped on his nephew, Wang San, and his voice deepened, "When we return to the mine, I will personally supervise

your cultivation once we settle things! Otherwise, even if the marquis looks highly upon us and asks us to continue to be his personal guards, all of us should be ashamed of ourselves!”

A bitter look crossed the group’s face. They thought of the two assassination attempts the marquis faced in the capital and then the Marshal Tent. They were useless on both occasions and they held empty positions. Their faces turned red from embarrassment and they nodded.

Gritting their teeth, they made the resolution to work hard in their cultivation. Even if they couldn’t help the marquis singlehandedly, they needed to be like the two Old Four Claws of the palace. When the enemy came, they ought to help the marquis fend them off!

Chapter 1610 – Going Underground

In the mine.

After making arrangements for the four hundred thousand troops under him, Qin Yu sighed a long breath. Being a leader was a very tiring thing.

Thankfully, his dream was not to become a great general and he was fine with just completing his tasks...also, he had to employ talents to their fullest.

Hundred Saint was good. As the nephew of Lord Chengtian who had the bloodline of a side branch of the Imperial Clan running through his veins, he was thoughtfully raised from a young age. As a talent of the nation, it would be a waste not to use him.

Qin Yu called him over and gave him some instructions. Then, he threw an object at Hundred Saint. Before Hundred Saint could protest or struggle, Qin Yu waved his hand to dismiss him.

Once outside, Hundred Saint rubbed his face in exasperation. He was directly handed the authority to govern trivial matters of close to sixty thousand troops in the mine? He looked down at the mission statement given to him by Marquis Chongwu and he started to cry.

A temporary military counselor...Marquis, are you sure there is such a weird position in the West Border Army? It was alright if he wanted to slack off, but he ought to have put some effort into it! As he thought about his numerous responsibilities, Hundred Saint’s hair stood on its ends.

With Hundred Saint’s matters settled, Qin Yu was in a good mood. He was slightly hesitant about whether he should continue to seclude himself in cultivation or head down to the underground mine.

After some thinking, Qin Yu shook his head. He could not avoid it in the end and if he had to let her know eventually, he should do it sooner rather than later. Otherwise, it would be insincere of him.

Qin Yu stood up and walked towards the backyard of his residence. When the news of his promotion to a marquis reached the mine, the troops did a redesign and renovation of the residence. Now, it was several times more grand than it was in the past.

For instance, bright crystals that looked like suns were imbued onto the stone wall. They were huge, and light that reflected off them illuminated the surroundings, making the residence seem like a legendary abode of immortals.

Of course, the lowly troops of the border army would not have been able to find such treasures. However, luck had been on their side. Zhou Dafu beamed with joy as he led personal guards to head to the border army from the capital. After learning that the troops in the mine were going to renovate the marquis' residence for him, he voluntarily took the lead on the task. It was no secret that the marquis participated in the smuggling with the Barbarian Clan, and hence, the border army troops naturally accepted Zhou Dafu's aid.

Once they confirmed his identity, they welcomed him happily. Then, they realized that leaving things to the professionals was right.

Enjoying a luxurious life was something that Zhou Dafu was an expert at!

Back then, when Zhou Dafu went to visit Qin Yu, he was very respectful when he handed over a storage ring that contained the loot Qin Yu deserved from the smuggling.

Of course, he gave Qin Yu thirty percent more than what was normal. The expenses for the renovation of the mansion also came out of Zhou Dafu's pocket. Right now, Zhou Dafu wanted to suck up to Qin Yu as much as he could and tie himself to Qin Yu's leg.

Originally he was afraid that the higher ups in the capital would kill their own dog in rage. Yet, he did not expect that their attitude would be completely different and they would forget everything that happened in the past.

With that, he no longer needed to tread on thin ice and be anxious all the time. Zhou Dafu was elated, and this naturally turned into respect for Qin Yu.

When such power was placed in front of him, he would be a fool not to latch onto it as fast as possible. Otherwise, he should consider if his head was kicked by a donkey.

The intelligent Zhou Dafu would not make the foolish move.

However, the residence was too big and the bad part about it was that walking from end to end took a lot of time. After all, it was not appropriate to use Divine Ways to teleport in his own house.

This journey had delayed Qin Yu's cultivation, and after calculating it, he realized that he wasted a lot of precious time. His mood did not lighten when he saw the mansion and his impression of Zhou Dafu even worsened. This situation felt similar to how Zhou Dafu sucked up to him in the past.

In all honesty, Zhou Dafu could swear to the heavens that he put in more effort to build this residence than he did in building one for his parents. If he knew that Qin Yu still looked upon him badly after this, he would cry about the unfairness.

Rourou chose the biggest and most gorgeous-looking manor in the back half of the residence. There was a giant crystal above the manor that reflected brilliant light down on the rest of the residence. It truly made the residence more glorified and luxurious.

Qin Yu walked in briskly and a group of servants bowed to him. His eyes swept past one of the servants in a white robe and he waved his hand, "All of you, leave."

The servants bowed again to him before they left. White Iris was the last to leave and her eyes met Qin Yu's for a brief moment.

Rourou sipped her tea and she ate pastries that were served on a plate to her. When the servants left, she tilted her head towards Qin Yu and asked, "What is it? My rest only lasted for two days, can you give me a break!"

Qin Yu rubbed his nose awkwardly, not blaming Rourou for her foul attitude. Like she said, most of the time he was here, it was not good news and he would always end up troubling her.

He coughed lightly and said, "This time, I am here because I want to bring you somewhere...of course, I might need your opinion too."

Rourou glanced at Qin Yu. From her eyes, it was obvious that she had seen through him. She finished the pastries and stepped forward.

Qin Yu thought to himself, 'I expected this,' and nodded.

Rourou liked her lips.

When Qin Yu saw this action, he felt weirdly panicky and he suddenly regretted the decision he made...did he walk into the lion's den?

"Hmph!" Rourou scoffed and gritted her teeth, "Walk into the lion's den? I didn't expect that you are an intellectual. Using this phrase to describe you now is quite appropriate."

Qin Yu quickly suppressed his thoughts, "Not at all. Those thoughts flashed past my mind. You know that some things cannot really be controlled. What is our relationship? I am fully confident in you and I don't doubt anything!"

Rourou scoffed coldly and continued to sip her tea, "Forget it. I will pass on this in case you become more cautious in the future and grow suspicious of me."

Qin Yu stood up and pulled her back as she turned away to leave. "Don't go. I admit my faults. I am really heartless, my lady Rourou does not scheme against peasants!"

Rourou's eyebrows lifted and she lowered her head to look at the hand that grabbed hers. She scoffed coldly again but there was undeniable warmth in her eyes.

Half urged and half willingly, she was pulled out of the residence by Qin Yu. They chose a random path and did not alert anyone as they entered it.

The two of them continued in the pitch black darkness with multiple mining paths. It felt like they were walking through a maze.

Thankfully, Qin Yu was led by a feeling and he did not hesitate as he chose the path to take.

Finally, they reached the Misty Ghost Grotto.

Qin Yu let go of her hand, turned around, and smiled, "We are here."

Rourou made a sound of acknowledgement and tried to maintain silence to conceal her emotions.

Qin Yu looked at her and found this action strange. Before he could ponder over it, Rourou smirked, "Why are you stunned? You are wasting time!"

His heart jumped. This was Rourou's thought now. Qin Yu stretched an arm forward and beckoned her, "Miss Rourou, please follow me."

He stepped inside, but the moment Rourou entered, great fear started to form in his heart.

In the next instant, the space time rules in the grotto became a storm. Like the violent sea in a typhoon, there was utter chaos!