

Refining the Mountains and Rivers

Chapter 21 – Cut To Kill

Zhu Hai's gaze suddenly turned blazing hot. "But, I never imagined that the net I cast out would bring me such a harvest." His eyes were filled with obsession as they fell onto Ning Ling's body, "But you won't die tonight, because I will make you my woman and have you carry my child. Then, I will kill you."

Ning Ling's expression was icy cold. An unprecedented level of disgust and killing intent started to surge from her. "Zhu Hai, you joined together with women, breeding with them and then killing your wives when they were heavy with your child and using their blood essence filled with hatred and resentment to cultivate. You even turned their souls into malevolent ghosts. You have committed the most horrific crimes and will die without a grave!"

Zhu Hai nodded. "I acknowledge that what you said is right, but I will not die; the ones to die are them." The golden pendant in his hand began to ring louder and faster, and the screams of the ghosts became even more ear-shattering. A cold yin chill rushed out in all directions.

The ring-like magic tool in the air began to shake and creak!

"Senior-apprentice Brother Xu Wei, what do we do? I don't want to die here!" Lin Lin cried out in panic.

Xu Wei clenched his teeth and desperately revolved his magic power to the limits. He looked towards Ning Ling. As a direct disciple of Huang Danguai, he was vaguely aware of some of Ning Ling's secrets.

Now, if there was a chance for them to live, it would all depend on her.

Ning Ling suddenly stepped forwards, out of the range of the golden light. The ghosts hidden in the fog immediately howled and threw themselves at her.

Beneath the illumination of the golden light, the ghosts were revealed. They were hideous women with scattered hair. A gaping crack tore through each of their abdomens and little black hands and feet constantly reached out, clawing at the air. These actions seemed to tear the wounds even more, causing the ghosts to feel even more pain and anger.

The souls that were turned into malevolent ghosts had a desire to destroy all life. Without waiting, they rushed forwards, emitting mournful cries as black smoke rushed out all around them.

But at this time, Ning Ling pointed her finger and a dazzling golden light came roaring out. Her eyes immediately dimmed; it was clear that this attack had caused her extreme losses.

Zhu Hai's complexion changed. He flicked his sleeves and shot out a mass of black gas. But, this golden light easily pierced through the black gas like an air bubble and sank into his chest!

With a deep roar, Zhu Hai twisted his body. The golden light that should have blown apart his chest and belly had been transferred to his right arm using some unknown method.

Bang –

His right arm was blasted to pieces and the round bowl he held tumbled somewhere into the fog. The malevolent ghosts that hovered around the injured Ning Ling suddenly tossed themselves onto the round bowl with abandon. But, brilliant writings began shining on the bowl, and the light seemed to pierce through the bodies of the ghosts, causing them to retreat in pain and horror.

Zhu Hai was deathly pale but he actually smiled. “Was that your final trump card? Since you weren't able to kill me then accept your fate!”

But in the next moment, his smile froze on his face.

A stumbling figure rushed through the cold fog. Because the female ghosts were pushed back by the golden light, they weren't able to stop him from breaking in.

“Senior-apprentice Sister Ning, save me!” Qin Yu cried out with a panicked look on his face. He ran forwards as he screamed, coincidentally stepping on the round bowl.

Crack –

A loud shattering sound joined Qin Yu's distressed cries in the air.

Zhu Hai's face instantly filled with vivid fear, "No!"

He crazily shook the golden pendant but in the end he couldn't stop the thick fog from submerging his body. The ghosts stared at him from all directions and from the wounds on their bellies, fist-sized heads drilled out, giggling and calling, "Father...Father..."

"Ahhh!"

With a miserable scream, cries rang out from the fog followed by the terrifying sound of heavy chewing; it could be imagined just what sort of scene was happening within.

Ning Ling looked at Qin Yu, her face stunned, "Let's go!"

No one hesitated; they fled from the Zhu Mansion as fast as possible. It was only when they left the mansion that was filled with darkness that they managed to relax. Then, their eyes fell on Qin Yu.

Although they couldn't help but sigh over this lucky bastard, they had to admit that the reason they survived was his luck. This caused several people to have complex looks in their gazes. In particular Xu Wei. He had always felt an inexplicable anger towards Qin Yu that he had never been able to vent.

"Where's Lu Feng?" He suddenly asked, breaking the silence. He didn't like the look in everyone's eyes as they stared at Qin Yu.

Qin Yu appeared panicked for a moment. "I was being chased just now so I had no choice but to hide Senior-apprentice Brother Lu Feng on the roof of a house."

Xu Wei narrowed his eyes. "You abandoned your fellow disciple to escape alone? Qin Yu, you're quite bold!"

Lin Lin, Zhang Ze and Fang Ping, were all startled. Their gazes as they looked at Qin Yu filled with contempt once more. Even though this lucky bastard had rescued them, it was still atrocious to abandon a fellow sect disciple.

Ning Ling frowned. "Forget that for now. Go and retrieve Lu Feng first."

Qin Yu nodded. He turned and flew up into the dark of night. Soon, he brought back Lu Feng with a happy expression.

Xu Wei swept his eyes over the two, surprised. "What happened to the poison?"

Qin Yu revealed a proud look. "I killed a Zhu Family cultivator and never expected that he would have an antidote on him. After Senior-apprentice Brother Lu Feng took it, he was fine."

This left everyone speechless.

Qin Yu had casually killed a Zhu Family member and found the antidote. As for the rest of them, they broke into the Zhu Mansion and nearly died...

Qin Yu this boy, his luck was enough to leave one gasping with jealousy!

Ning Ling's eyes deepened. Could all of these occurrences really be coincidences? Qin Yu's figure was once again covered with a faint fog in her eyes, an inexplicable mystery.

As the sun rose, the residents of Western Pass City discovered to their horror that there was not a single person left in the entire Zhu Family. There were only some bloodstains on the ground in a courtyard to the southeast. Following the bloodstains, they came to an old well. After digging it up they found the skeletons of 17 women, each with little skeletons within them. And, what was most terrifying was that these women and their babies all had blood dripping from their jaws, as if they had just torn up flesh and blood.

The residents scattered in panic. Soon, a fire lit up and the mighty 200 year old Zhu Mansion was burned to the ground.

At this time, the group of seven from the Eastern Mountain Sect began their journey back. Compared to the exuberant mood when they first came, they were all left in a deep silence on the way back.

Qin Yu had already read a file pertaining to what was occurring within the Zhu Mansion and it had caused his heart to chill. In order to increase his cultivation, Zhu Hai had harmed his wives and children to refine their spirits. Could this be what Cang Mangzi had talked about in his writings, the blood and cruelty that surrounded the road to cultivation?

Moreover, when Zhu Hai had plotted to lure the disciples of the Eastern Mountain Sect in, he had killed everyone in the Zhu Family besides himself

and a pair of children, and had used their blood as food for the malevolent ghosts. Just what sort of ruthlessness was this?

If the road to immortal cultivation required him to turn into such a person, resorting to any means necessary to accomplish his goals and making him abandon all traces of humanity, then he might as well forget about this immortal cultivation!

Qin Yu had just entered the grand temple of cultivation after reaching the Foundation Establishment realm. He made an oath to himself that he would never turn into such a person.

Ning Ling looked around. When her eyes swept past Qin Yu from time to time, her eyebrows would tighten. It was unknown just what sorts of thoughts she was having.

Suddenly, Qin Yu let out a light breath as if he wanted to breathe out all the depression and confusion in his heart. As he looked up, his eyes sparkled once more. After this incident in the Zhu Mansion his mind had become stronger and more determined, as if his entire temperament had quietly changed.

He accidentally met Ning Ling's gaze. Before Qin Yu could respond she had already turned back, a faint blush on her beautiful ears.

Ning Ling did her best to remain calm, but her heart was racing. Strange ripples spread through her mind, causing her to feel flustered.

The group continued in silence. On the second day, when they could see the entrance to the Eastern Mountain Sect, they were finally able to relax.

Lu Feng, who had barely managed to come back from the jaws of death, learned of everything that occurred that night. Even though he had been told that Qin Yu had 'abandoned' him, he still felt nothing but gratefulness, because without him he would have already died.

"Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu, if you ever have anything you need in the future, feel free to tell me. I will not object." This Lu Feng had an honesty and sincerity that warmed the heart. Qin Yu smiled and nodded his head, happy for having saved him.

As they were about to near the mountain sect entrance, they suddenly heard a cry for help ahead.

Mountain spirits and water monsters were as their names described them. They were creatures living upon the mountain that inadvertently drew in enough heaven and earth spiritual energy that they developed their own spirituality and became monsters.

What was fleeing through the forests in a panic was a daughter of the mountains. She carried a wood cutting hatchet in her hands, chopping left and right at the branches and roots that surrounded her. What chased after her from behind was an ancient wood spirit. The wood spirit looked like a pile of old wood and constantly roared as it raced forwards.

At this time, a look of surprise crossed the woman's eyes. She cried out again and again, "Immortal beings save me! Immortal beings save me!" As she lifted her head, one could clearly see that what was hidden beneath her coarse woven clothes was a figure that moved the heart and soul. In particular, as she ran forwards one could see her skirt and shirt flap open, revealing a seductive light.

Xu Wei shouted out, "Spirit monster, you dare to harm mortals? It's time for you to stop!"

His fingers moved as he pinched out a law formula and flicked his sleeves. With a muffled thumping sound, a deep wound appeared on the body of the ancient wood spirit. The wood spirit roared out in pain, but at this time the woman stumbled over and was swept up by several branches, then pulled away screaming.

The ancient wood spirit turned around, wanting to flee.

Xu Wei angrily howled, "Stop it!"

Shua –

Shua –

With Xu Wei at the lead, five figures surrounded the ancient wood spirit.

Ning Ling was faintly surprised. As she looked around she saw Qin Yu frowning, without any intention of moving at all.

But at this time, a fight had already erupted between Xu Wei's group and the ancient wood spirit.

The ancient wood spirit roared and hissed. The earth tumbled and cracked open. Countless roots rose up and began to spread outwards. What was even scarier was that all the large trees within 500 meters started to rise up, their roots weaving together into large feet as they stomped towards the battlefield.

Xu Wei was enraged. He never imagined that a mere ancient wood spirit would be so powerful. He grit his teeth and threw out a black ball. With a loud bang, the black ball fell upon the ancient wood spirit and exploded into a conflagration of flames. The group cheered, their morale rising, but as they were about to rush forwards to finish the job, the ancient wood spirit's body turned green and the flames were rapidly extinguished.

After being wounded, the ancient wood spirit became even crazier. More and more roots rose up from the ground, seeming like an endless tide that rushed towards them! The large trees moved faster and faster, their steps shaking the earth as they prepared to surround the entire group. Xu Wei and the others were all in danger!

"Senior-apprentice Sister Ning!" Xu Wei was too panicked to care for face as he shouted out for help.

Ning Ling began to move forwards, but at this time she heard Qin Yu shout out, "Be careful!" Yet as she glanced at him she saw that his head was lowered as if he hadn't said anything at all.

With a light nod, Ning Ling lifted her hands and a veil flew out from her sleeves. As it flew in the wind it grew by dozens of feet, surrounding the countless roots and tightening upon them so that they began to break apart. Xu Wei and the others breathed a sigh of relief and started to cheer out loud. As they occasionally looked at Qin Yu, contempt filled their eyes. Even if he had a little bit of luck he was still nothing but a coward. How come he hadn't joined in to help them!?

When Ning Ling joined the battle she also had her magic veil to help resolve the crisis on the battlefield. Xu Wei and the others pressed their advantage and for a time they held the upper hand. The ancient wood spirit was covered with countless wounds and before long it would be slain. But at this time, the ancient wood spirit cried out loud and violently threw the woman in its grasp.

Ning Ling's thoughts stirred. She sent out her magic veil to wrap around the woman. But when she did, a loud ripping sound rang out. With a stuffy cough, Ning Ling's face paled and she quickly drew back the veil into her sleeves; it had been broken!

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“Roar!”

The ancient wood spirit howled into the air. A burst of deep green light covered its body and the innumerable roots that rose up into the sky also turned vivid green. The roots wove together, immediately forming a giant cage that locked Ning Ling and the others within.

The woman rose up from the ground, covering her mouth as she chuckled. “What a wonderful treasure. It would be sad if it were destroyed.” A short black knife was in her hands, and this knife seemed as if it could even swallow light.

“Ahh!” With a loud cry, Qin Yu turned and ran away.

The woman's smile widened. “I never imagined that you orthodox disciples would actually have someone like that in your ranks. Don't worry, this big sister will be fair and won't let him go either.”

With a tap of her feet, the woman faded away into a gray afterimage, leaving nothing behind but her echoing chuckles. “Woody, keep an eye on them, make sure not a single one escapes.”

And just like that, Qin Yu and the woman vanished in just a few breaths of time.

Xu Wei cursed out loud, sputtering endless vicious words about Qin Yu's escape.

Lin Lin, Zhang Ze, and the others also revealed looks of deep loathing.

Ning Ling remained silent. As she lowered her head, no one could see her face and no one could see that what flashed across her eyes was a bit of relief, gratitude, and worry.