

Refining the Mountains and Rivers

Chapter 23 – Travelling Together

Huang Dangui's complexion turned strange. He pulled the Sect Master aside and left. As they departed the courtyard, he turned and frowned as he said, "Sect Master, there is something odd about Ning Ling's attitude."

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master was startled. He slowly nodded, "Indeed, it is as martial uncle says. She seems to care too much for Qin Yu."

They were both experienced old men that could instantly make out the meaning behind their words. A bit of worry appeared on their faces but soon they let out long sighs of relief.

Huang Dangui clicked his tongue and sighed. "I didn't expect this boy to have a little bit of skill. Unfortunately, he didn't walk the orthodox path."

The Sect Master didn't reveal any expression. "I will order the disciples to deal with this."

Search for Qin Yu?

Search for Qin Yu for what? So that his flirtation with Ning Ling could take another step forwards?

If something like that were to happen, the Sect Master didn't doubt that he would be torn to shreds by an enraged Ning Family.

In such a disaster, it would be best if he died.

But as he was feeling relieved, a disciple rushed forwards with a happy expression. He loudly shouted, "Sect Master, Grand Martial Uncle, Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu has returned!"

At this moment, the Eastern Mountain Sect Master and Huang Dangui both felt as if their hearts had twisted. They wished they could sew this bright-eyed boy's mouth shut, but they actually had to maintain stiff smiles on their faces.

The courtyard doors behind them were fiercely pushed open. Ning Ling stepped out, surprised, "Senior-apprentice Brother Tao, he really returned?"

With a beautiful blushed face that couldn't hide her joy, as if the sun was shining down and flowers were blooming before her, Tao Jie had never seen Ning Ling so happy before. He was stunned for a moment before he nodded and said, "It's true..."

Without waiting for him to finish speaking, Ning Ling rose up on her white cloud and flew towards the sect entrance, leaving behind the two bitter old men. Now that Ning Ling was aware of Qin Yu's return they wouldn't even have a chance to do anything in secret. Tao Jie, you really chose the right place to blabber your mouth!

"What are you looking at? Fuck off!" Huang Dangui stamped his feet and cursed.

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master forced a smile. "Martial uncle, the plans of heaven will always be above the plans of men."

Beneath the archway at the sect entrance, the cheers for Qin Yu's return were short-lived. Soon, the disciples of the Eastern Mountain Sect began sending him looks of disdain. He had escaped in a dire moment and had abandoned his fellow disciples. Not just that, but he had done this more than once! These sorts of actions were truly worthy of contempt.

Qin Yu didn't mind playing the role either. He revealed a guilty and shamed expression as he lowered his head and 'forced' a smile.

At this time, Ning Ling leapt off her white cloud and appeared in front of him. The sounds of respectful bows immediately rose up around her, "Greetings, Senior-apprentice Sister Ning."

Everyone's eyes fell on her, all of them bright and shining. They all wanted to know how the beautiful and fairy-like Senior-apprentice Sister Ning would scold Qin Yu.

But even though they held their eyes wide open until it began to sting, Senior-apprentice Sister Ning still didn't do anything. Instead, she bit her lips and looked at Qin Yu... with a little bit of gentleness in her gaze.

Gentleness?

The Eastern Mountain Sect disciples all felt their hearts shake. They howled in sorrow. How could this happen? Senior-apprentice sister, it's fine if you didn't

punish him, but how could you look at him like that? You never even glanced at us!

Qin Yu thought that if looks could kill, he would have already been torn to shreds. Even if his mindset and willpower were good, he still couldn't help but feel his scalp tingle. He awkwardly coughed, "Senior-apprentice Sister Ning?"

Ning Ling seemed to regain her composure. She nodded, "It's good that you're back."

She turned and left. She feared that if she stayed any longer, her face would turn as red as crimson cloth because her heartbeat was becoming increasingly frantic.

Qin Yu wryly smiled. He quickly said, "Thank you, senior-apprentice sister!"

His overjoyed appearance left the crowd frowning.

"What a lucky fellow, even Senior-apprentice Sister Ning is merciful towards him. If he fell into my hands I would have made sure he paid a steep price for his actions!" A youth indignantly spouted.

"Even if Senior-apprentice Sister Ning tolerates him, this fellow's reputation is completely ruined. No one will approach him in the future."

"Who knows what will happen. He might be abandoned in the future."

Several female cultivators stood together, coldly saying, "Let's leave. The more I look at such a person, the worse I feel." They turned and left, the arrogant napes of their snow white necks like swans that stared in disgust at a toad.

"Let's leave, let's leave."

Soon the sect entrance was devoid of people, leaving only Qin Yu alone. He looked up at the direction Ning Ling had left in, a little bit of warmth in his heart. News of his return had just spread out but Ning Ling had hurried here to greet him. Although she had only said a few words, he could sense tumultuous changes in her mood.

Soon, Qin Yu's complexion returned to normal. Ning Ling was a proud daughter of heaven, and not everyone had the qualifications to chase after her.

For instance, him.

Of all the worries in the world, most were imaginary troubles brought about by oneself. Qin Yu was smart enough to not have thoughts on things beyond his reach.

He was well aware of how much he was worth.

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Several days later, the rampaging actions of the Eastern Mountain Sect began to gradually die down. There were some harvests, especially in the gratitude of those people that lived on the mountains; they constantly thanked these immortal cultivators for helping them.

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master didn't summon Qin Yu to ask him how he escaped the grasp of the demonic cultivator. Or, perhaps it was because seeing Qin Yu made him feel depressed within. Instead, he sent out Tao Jie to question him. They could be considered brief acquaintances that had met each other in the underground space, so it wasn't too strange for them.

Tao Jie asked Qin Yu a few questions and soon left after not finding any flaws in the wild story he conjured up. As Qin Yu saw Tao Jie seemingly trying to avoid him, he felt comforted instead. It seemed that he wouldn't be disturbed by others at least. Finally, he could peacefully be a handsome man...cough, what he meant was peacefully cultivate!

The day before he left the Eastern Mountain Sect, Qin Yu entered the Pill Disposal Department and brought out the chicken overlord. He kept his pledge and walked around the periphery of the sect, visiting all the chicken flocks.

Because of the recent sweep by the sect, the chickens lost their natural predators and they began to rapidly multiply. But, today was doomed to be a day of suffering for all of chickenkind.

A human cultivator came walking their way without any honor or dignity at all. He carried an arrogant bastard with him as he fiercely attacked their chicken flocks and carried away all the most beautiful girls.

When Qin Yu left, the chicken overlord's eyes were filled with tears. He flapped his wings as 100 beautiful little hens followed behind him. No one knew why the chicken overlord cried. Perhaps it was because he couldn't bear to leave Qin Yu, or perhaps he was overly excited about his wonderful 'chicken's life' that was about to begin.

Without a doubt, after several more years passed, the entire mountain range would be filled with the descendants of the chicken overlord. As Qin Yu thought of his, his lips curled upwards and his mood became much better. Without any thoughts of returning to the Eastern Mountain Sect in the future, he left.

In any case, there was no one in the Eastern Mountain Sect that would notice him anyways.

After his Foundation Establishment trial, he could be said to have officially stepped onto the road of cultivation. There was a period of leave afterwards where he was supposed to visit his mortal family and finish his arrangements so that he could sever his karma with the world. Only then could he devote his heart and mind to his cultivation.

Qin Yu didn't have a family, but there were still people he cared about. As he reminisced about the past, his mood began to rise in anticipation.

Aunty Gu, you never imagined I would become one of those immortals that you spoke of right? Well, now it is time for me to repay you.

Qin Yu suddenly froze, stunned, as he saw a person appear in front of him.

Ning Ling opened her mouth and spoke in a soft voice, "I heard that Junior-apprentice Brother Qin is planning to return home. I just happen to be travelling that way, so let's go." She turned as she finished speaking. The mountain winds danced along her skirt and sent her hair fluttering in the wind. Qin Yu found that his thoughts were left in chaos.

After a long period of silence, Qin Yu couldn't help but point behind him, "Senior-apprentice Sister Ning, my family is over in that direction!"

Ning Ling froze, a hint of a blush creeping up her face.

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From the Eastern Mountain Sect's highest peak, two old men watched in silence as a young man and woman left. Their faces were filled with dark uncertainty.

"Sect Master, is this really fine?"

"It's not. But there's nothing we can do about it."

Huang Dangui's face filled with deep regret, as if he were watching a peerless treasure becoming tarnished.

This girl possessed top-notch martial talent, character, and looks, so what did she possibly see in that piece of rotten wood?

The Eastern Mountain Sect Master also seemed to have the same thoughts. He sighed, "Leave it. The 10 year care period has ended, so our agreement has ended. Let them be!"

"What if there is an accident?"

The Sect Master hesitated. "This is something only we know about. No one else should have discovered it. Just let her live the last moments of her free life."

It was unknown what he was thinking, but Huang Dangui finally nodded.

Experience told him that traveling together with a beautiful woman could be boring and dull, but it could also be gorgeous and colorful.

Qin Yu maintained vigilance at Ning Ling's appearance. But, he also couldn't help but feel happy over her presence.

"Junior-apprentice brother, what flower is this?"

"Junior-apprentice brother, what herb is this?"

"Junior-apprentice brother, what river is this?"

“Junior-apprentice brother, what fish are in this river?”

Seeing the fully earnest Ning Ling, Qin Yu forced a smile. He cupped his hands across his chest, “Senior-apprentice sister, if you have anything you really want to ask, please ask away.”

Ning Ling stuck out her tongue. Her delicate expression caused Qin Yu’s heart to skip a beat. As if satisfied with his tiny reaction, the corners of her lips rose up in a smile.

“Junior-apprentice Brother Qin Yu, how did you discover something wrong that day?”

Qin Yu thought about it. “In fact, it’s extremely simple. Senior-apprentice sister, do you really think a mountain spirit that just developed its own spirituality would start harming mortals so close to the sect?”

Ning Ling frowned, “That’s it?”

Qin Yu nodded. He certainly couldn’t speak of his experiences with that witch You Qi.

Ning Ling deeply pondered for a moment. Then, she let out a long sigh. “Junior-apprentice brother is truly smart. We were near the sect entrance so we subconsciously lowered our guard and it was then that someone managed to take advantage of us. I didn’t think that this in itself would be our greatest flaw.”

Qin Yu quickly said, “Senior-apprentice sister, there is no need to praise me.”

Ning Ling blinked, “Junior-apprentice brother still isn’t willing to be honest with me?”

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Qin Yu was stunned.

“The Qin Yu I met in East Stream Town was calm, composed, and confident. But, I don’t see that man anywhere now.” Ning Ling’s eyes brightened. “Moreover, could all the coincidences at the Zhu Mansion really just have been lucky accidents?”

She stopped Qin Yu from explaining. “Also, there was the time we were attacked. Although I didn’t know who did it, I know that with your cultivation it would have been impossible for you to escape. So, when you returned to the sect and said that you managed to scare the demonic cultivator away, I knew that was a lie.”

Qin Yu frowned. “I’m not sure what Senior-apprentice Sister Ning is trying to say?”

Ning Ling shook her head. She earnestly said, “I have no evil intentions towards you, otherwise these things would have already been made known to the Eastern Mountain Sect. I just have no idea why you want to hide yourself like this.” She hesitated for a moment. “And, I also don’t like seeing others misunderstand you.”

Qin Yu’s heart trembled. He suddenly had the impulse of wanting to reveal the truth, but he quickly pushed it down. “Senior-apprentice Sister Ning, you really think too much about these things.”

Ning Ling looked at him and laughed, “Then just consider me someone that thinks too much. Come, let’s hurry.” She turned around, a bit more appreciation in her eyes.

In this world there were many people who would forget themselves when there was a beauty before them. She was confident in her appearance and had intentionally expressed her concern, and yet Qin Yu could still maintain his wariness. This degree of composure surpassed many others.

In any case, she didn’t want him to admit anything regardless. To follow him for a bit and tell him that she already knew who he was, that was enough for her.

It was just that she didn’t have much time left, so there would always be some regrets.