

Refining the Mountains and Rivers

Chapter 24 – Aunty Gu

Ning Ling no longer pressed her question. Qin Yu felt a little relieved, but he was also confused. However, there was one thing he was sure about and that was that Ning Ling didn't hold any malice towards him. He simply filed this in the back of his mind and continued along the way.

For the next few days, Ning Ling was much quieter. She looked around at the passing scenery and occasionally a stone or a large tree would cause her eyes to shift and a faint vacant daze to appear across her face.

Qin Yu didn't ask her anything. He only slowed his step so that she could enjoy more of the beautiful scenery.

Ning Ling was indeed a clever woman. She soon noticed this and asked, "Junior-apprentice Brother Qin, aren't you in a hurry to return home?"

Qin Yu smiled. He lightly replied, "I have no family."

Ning Ling was startled.

"I'm an orphan. I was adopted and raised by others, and this time I'm returning to repay them."

"I'm sorry."

Qin Yu waved his hand. "I'm used to it."

Ning Ling nodded. She didn't know why, but although she didn't speak much, her attitude towards Qin Yu became a bit more intimate.

Two days later, the deliberately slowed journey finally reached its end. A little town of fewer than 10,000 people appeared before the two.

The Wang Family.

Looking at the familiar residences in front of him, Qin Yu stood still for a long time. He whispered, "I'm back."

Ning Ling looked forwards for several moments. “Wealthy but unrighteous. It doesn’t seem right at all.”

Qin Yu’s eyes turned cold. “Maybe, but it doesn’t include the Wang Family.”

In the past, if it weren’t for Aunt Gu risking her life to protect him, he would have been abandoned.

“I don’t want to see anyone from the Wang Family. Let’s make our way in silently.”

Ning Ling was startled. She nodded.

The two of them circled around to a remote area and flew into the Wang Family. With their Foundation Establishment cultivator abilities, they wouldn’t be discovered even if it were a clear and sunny day.

They avoided pedestrians along the way. As Qin Yu thought about those people he was about to see, he couldn’t help but say, “Aunt Gu is a very kind, very good person. Although she has no bloodline relation to me, I still consider her my mother in my heart. It’s already been eight years; I wonder how she is doing.”

Seeing Ning Ling look at him, he was a bit embarrassed. “Senior-apprentice Sister Ning must find this funny. I’m just a little nervous.”

As Qin Yu revealed his true feelings, Ning Ling saw another side of him. Without any camouflage, this was his real self. Her heart warmed a little. “I don’t. Such a Junior-apprentice Brother Qin is the real you.”

Qin Yu smiled, calming down. “At least I can repay gratefulness. The road of cultivation is dangerous and I don’t know if I’ll ever come back. I have to make arrangements for Aunt Gu otherwise I won’t be able to cultivate in peace.” He lifted his hand and pointed, “We’re here!”

As he rounded a corner, a familiar courtyard appeared in front of him. Compared to the past, it was only a little bit more broken down.

But suddenly the smile on Qin Yu’s face froze and he fell silent.

White lanterns hung in front of the door, gently swaying in the wind. Faint weeping cries sounded out from the courtyard, gripping down on Qin Yu’s

heart like an invisible hand and making it hard for him to breathe. A wave of oppression washed over Qin Yu, causing his eyes to widen to make sure that what he saw wasn't an illusion.

Ning Ling softly said, "Perhaps this is not what you think it is."

Qin Yu sucked in a breath. "You're right. Aunt Gu is the kindest person I know and if others need help she is always willing to lend a hand. Perhaps she let someone use this place. No one can hide from this sort of inauspicious event and only someone as kind as Aunt Gu would agree to let others use this place."

He turned his head, "Right?"

Ning Ling's eyes turned a little sad. She nodded.

Qin Yu squeezed out a smile. He pushed open the doors and entered.

In the crude and humble hall, there was only a single figure lying on the ground and crying. The thin and small coffin couldn't hide what was within, and Qin Yu could clearly see the white-haired woman within that had her eyes closed in peace. Tears began to form in his eyes.

Aunt Gu...

In the endless rainy night when he had been hidden beneath the eaves of a house, she had been the woman who brought him back.

She was the woman who had been beaten black and blue but still desperately pleaded to keep him.

During the cold of winter when he couldn't sleep, she was the woman who had sat at his bedside, holding onto his feet until the dawn.

She was the woman who would always smile at him during holidays, when he had eaten his fill and looked up to her with bright eyes.

Died.

She had died.

Qin Yu felt as if most of his body had drawn empty. If it was said that his heart was filled with gratitude, Aunt Gu would occupy 80% of that gratitude!

But now she had died like this without giving him a chance to see her again. She wasn't even able to enjoy everything that he would give back to her. Qin Yu began to regret delaying his journey here, otherwise he might have been able to see Aunt Gu while she was still alive.

His complexion turned increasingly white without the least bit of red. It was like he was suffering from a grave illness and was on the verge of death.

Ning Ling quickly held onto his arm to support him. She could feel the deep sadness that was rolling off his body, but she was unable to do anything to help him. Her eyes began to turn red.

It was at this moment that the crying figure saw the light dim around her. She looked up and saw the tear-streaked Qin Yu and sorrowful Ning Ling. She was subconsciously stunned, and after crying a little more, she asked, "You...who are you..."

Qin Yu slowly moved over to this girl. "You are Little Ling'er..." In just a short period of time, it was like he hadn't drunk water for years. His voice was as hoarse as sand and iron.

Gu Ling timidly nodded. "I am." She looked at him for several moments and rubbed her eyes. "You...you are Big Brother Yu!"

Qin Yu nodded.

Gu Ling crawled up and fell into his arms. She cried, "Mother died," and with that, she suddenly fainted.

Qin Yu held tightly onto her. Her thin and emaciated body made him feel even more depressed and he spat out a mouthful of blood.

Ning Ling was shocked, "Qin Yu!"

Qin Yu shook his head. "I'm fine. Senior-apprentice Sister Ning, I'll have to bother you to look after her."

Carefully passing Gu Ling'er to Ning Ling, Qin Yu walked to the narrow coffin and fell to his knees. "Aunty Gu, I came back too late, I'm sorry...I'm so sorry..."

Men did not easily cry, but that was only when they weren't sad. At this time, Qin Yu wept and howled, looking no different from a little child.

Looking at his back, Ning Ling couldn't help but shed a tear.

After a long time, Ning Ling set down Gu Ling'er and walked to Qin Yu's side. "Qin Yu, don't blame yourself. I have carefully looked over this and Aunty Gu died because her lifespan came to an end. There is nothing you could have done either, so this wasn't your fault, understand?"

Qin Yu didn't turn his back. "Her lifespan came to an end? She was only 40 some years old this year, how could her lifespan possibly have come to an end? Yes, it must be the Wang Family. Aunty Gu was humiliated and tormented here for so many years that the despair must have worn away at her life."

He rose up, his back straight. Blood vessels began to rise up in his bloodshot eyes. "Aunty Gu, I will bury the entire Wang Family along with you!"

"Qin Yu!" Ning Ling grabbed onto him, "Slaughtering mortals is a major taboo of all cultivators. Do not be impulsive, this will kill you!"

Qin Yu shook his head, "Senior-apprentice Sister Ning, without Aunty Gu I would have already died. Even if it costs me my life, I will seek justice for her."

Bang –

The courtyard doors were kicked open. Wang Guidai brought in several servants as he gloomily shouted, "What are you all doing, pull her out and bury her! How unlucky!"

As his gaze fell onto Qin Yu and Ning Ling, he frowned, "Who are you?"

Gu Ling'er was shocked awake. "Don't touch my mother!" She threw herself in front of the thin coffin, "My mother is waiting for his reply! She is waiting for his words!"

Wang Gui scoffed, "A lowly maid. All she did was give birth to a bastard child because the old master was drunk, and now she dares to make such ridiculous demands like entering the Wang Family's ancestral hall?"

Bang –

Wang Gui was sent flying backwards. He crashed into a wall of the courtyard, eyes wide with panic as he vomited a mouthful of blood.

"Qin Yu!" Ning Ling used strength to hold him back. "Don't be impulsive! If you destroy the Wang Family you will destroy yourself! Even if not for yourself, think about Ling'er. If you die, what will she do?"

Qin Yu stiffened.

Gu Ling'er finally responded. She threw herself into his arms and said, "Big Brother Yu, don't kill anyone. Mother wouldn't want to see you like this." Tears began to fall down her cheeks again. "And Mother has always loved that man. Even when she died she still hoped for him to acknowledge her. She wanted to be buried in the Wang Family and enter the ancestral hall."

Qin Yu looked at the woman in the coffin. He murmured, "Aunty Gu, is this your wish? Very well, I will help you complete it!" He turned, his eyes shining with a cold brilliance. The several servants felt their legs turn soft. "Tell Wang Changge that he must personally welcome Aunty Gu into the main hall of the Wang Family. I want her buried properly and splendidly!"

The several servants grabbed Wang Gui and scurried out like a pack of scared dogs. Without hesitation, they rushed towards the hall that the old master used to entertain guests.

Wang Changge was noble and dignified, with a grand air about him. He lay down his teacup and shouted, "How insolent. Can't you see that there is an honored guest here? Why do you rush in without manners!"

Wang Gui fell to his knees. "Old master, I have something to report to you!" As he saw the old man with long whiskers sitting in the seat of honor, he stopped talking.

The old man remained calm. He faintly said, "If so then I will excuse myself first."

Wang Changge quickly stopped him. "Uncle, there is no need to leave. These are just some servants with bad eyesight. I must ask you to be open-minded about them rushing in here so improperly." He turned and angrily shouted, "Uncle is not an outsider. If you have something to say then quickly say it!"

Wang Gui's eyes brightened, immediately overjoyed. "Old master, I was following madam's orders to take care of Gu Shi's coffin in the rear courtyard, but I never thought that there would be a man and woman that would come out of nowhere and send me flying away with a kick. I must ask old master to decide this matter!"

Wang Changge's eyes turned gloomy. "Gu Shi, she...died?" But in the blink of an eye, he calmed down again. He lightly said, "It is a solemn event when someone dies. You must have been overly domineering and was taught a lesson by these people as a result. Go find some people and drive them out."

Wang Gui revealed a look of horror. "That boy only waved his hand to send me flying away and spitting blood. He must know sorcery." He shrank his neck and glanced at the long-whiskered old man.

Wang Changge's face darkened. "From what you said he is just a young man with a bit of strength, what kind of sorcery are you talking about? Hurry up and drive them out, stop delaying!"

"Wait!" A bead curtain lifted open and a vitriolic woman walked out. "Wang Gui, let me ask you, did you clearly see this young man's appearance?"

Wang Changge frowned. "Madame, why are you asking this? Could they be...that mother and daughter's friends?"

"Friends?" The woman sneered. "In these past years I haven't known them to have any friends. Old master must not forget, after that cheap slut adopted a child in the past, she ended up giving him away anyways. Who knows if he died or not?"

Wang Gui rose up, startled. He gnashed his teeth, "Now that madam mentions it, I think that young man looks a bit familiar. It must be that bastard Qin Yu!"

The madam turned and bowed, submissively saying, "Big brother, when you cut the grass you must tear out the roots, otherwise there will be no end to the trouble in the future. Your little sister will have to ask you for help this time."

Wang Changge opened his mouth, but before he could say anything he was interrupted by the madam's cold sneer. "What, did you still want to protect them!? If it weren't for you in the past then I would have already drowned that cheap whore and her daughter as well as that little bastard! How else could they have lived until today? You left behind a disaster and now I can't remove it? Are you planning to wait until they take revenge on us later?"

The long-whiskered old man stood up. "Little sister, don't be so anxious. I will handle this matter myself. I want to see just who dares to act so recklessly in your home!"

The old man's hair began to move without wind as his aura rushed out in all directions. He was a Foundation Establishment cultivator!

The woman's eyes brightened. "Big brother, let's go together!"

Bringing people behind them, they went straight to the servant quarters.

Soon, a little courtyard appeared in front of them. Two servants were watching over the area and quickly greeted them.

The woman sneered, "They haven't run away?"

"Reporting to madam, they haven't come out yet."

"Good! Then let's take advantage of this time to eliminate all these future disasters." The woman turned and bowed, "Big brother, I'll have to trouble you."