

Chapter 1

Note: Lot of footnotes in this chapter. Sorry ahead of time, but this chapter sets up things to come. There should be a lot less footnotes in the future once things are established.

<> is a YY stallion novel.¹

Getting to the point, “Proud Immortal Demon Way” is an incomparably long, golden finger against the heavens², harem greater than three digits, and with characters and scenes and a protagonist that even girls would like sort of cool cultivation novel.

It’s the year’s best stallion novel, bar none!

This book’s male protagonist, Luo Binghe, doesn’t walk the path of the lofty or the path of the waste³ but still manages to take thousands of readers in the literary network by storm, influencing countless YY novels thereafter.

He walks a pitch-black path.

But before he was painted black, he walked a bitter path.

Afterwards, the deep reader Shen Yuan was immersed in contents documenting infinite slaughter, making the summary before the end of the book seem very brief.

Luo Binghe was born and immediately abandoned by his parents, wrapped in white cloth, and put in a wood basin set into the water.

After nine cold days, it was only because the fishermen in the river picked him up that he didn't freeze to death in his early childhood. Because he floated among the ice floes and it was the season of ice and many waters, he was given his current name.⁴

He wandered the streets in his youth, starving, never wearing enough to be warm, having a gray childhood. A washerwoman working for a large family pitied the child and with no children at her knees, adopted him and treated him as her real son. The mother and son lived in bitter poverty, suffering the bullying of the wealthy.

Under such unhealthy growing conditions since childhood, Luo Binghe's character after being blackened only grows more twisted, full of grievances, with thousands of knives set to kill in his heart. What a good root buried here for a twisted character, Shen Yuan thought with a small laugh at his mouth.

Just for a lukewarm bowl of porridge, he endured the beating of a noble son only to still be a step late, unable to rush home to let his mother eat a mouthful before she died.

In a coincidental opportunity, Luo Binghe was selected by the number one cultivation sect in the world at the time, apprenticing under ‘Xiu Ya Sword’ Shen Qingqiu.⁵

He thought he was finally on the right track, but unexpectedly Shen Qingqiu is fair on the outside, foul on the inside; the absolute worst sort of character. He is jealous of Luo Binghe’s unparalleled talent, his heart always under siege to outperform his own disciples in cultivation, always taunting and bringing along others in ridiculing him. He only cultivated for a few years but it was already a heart-aching endeavor full of blood and tears.

It was difficult for Luo Binghe to reach sixteen years of age, finally encountering the cultivation world’s grand ceremonial Immortal Assembly Conference⁶ held every three years. In this Immortal Assembly Conference, Luo Binghe was schemed against by Shen Qingqiu and fell into the cracks between the Demon Realm and the Human Realm – an endless abyss.

As everyone knows, this is the true beginning of the story!

Not only did Luo Binghe survive, he also found his unique sword skill, ‘Xin Mo.’⁷ And he learned about his own life.

As it turns out, Luo Binghe is born from the loving union of the Demon Realm’s Sheng Jun and the Human Realm woman Qing Xin, both the blood of ancient demons and human blood flowing in his veins. His father was suppressed under great mountains, never to emerge again; his mother was a

true disciple of a Righteous sect and after they found out about her affair, she was expelled, her cultivation dispersed, humiliated, displaced, and marked for killing. But she died only after giving birth to Luo Binghe from postpartum hemorrhage, hunger, and cold.

She used her last burst of strength to give birth to him on the boat, eager to have a slim chance of survival.

Luo Binghe, using the Xin Mo Sword, opened the seal on the demon blood in his body. In the dark abyss, he cultivated painstakingly and achieved amazing results before heading back to Cang Qiong Mountain sect.

Starting from here, Luo Binghe proceeds to walk unhesitatingly on the blackened road.

His old enemies all die tragically under his hands, tortured. Luo Binghe uses his increasingly good camouflage and mental acuity to play a double game, step by step betraying trusts, seizing power, rising to the top. He set off a monstrous, bloody storm and waves in the world; a reign of terror.

As the plot develops, Luo Binghe blackens more and more. He returns to the Demon Realm, taking on Shen Jun's seat as the Emperor, and still not satisfied, starts a bloodbath against the immortals in the Human Realm. Anyone who voices an opposition is exterminated to the root!

In the end, the generation ushered in by Immortal Demon Luo Binghe sees the unification of the Three Realms⁸; a harem with numbers beyond

counting and numerous descendants!

“A stupid pen writes stupid words!”

This is Shen Yuan before he died, the last words he could curse.

Who would know that as a polite youth who used his money to purchase a V real and original copy,⁹ he persisted in finishing this kind of stallion novel before dying? This sort of appalling rotten text, can't he curse as he wants?

<> Author: Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky [Xiang Tian Da Feiji].

Just looking at this ID, there's an evil aura surrounding it.¹⁰ Like a little grade-schooler's pen; lightning should strike him.

Even Shen Yuan is embarrassed at the author's messy, dog-shit and unreasonably complex framework and plot.

Have you seen anyone cultivate by riding a horse or a cart all day? Have you seen anyone cultivate when even their ass needs to eat and sleep? Have you seen an author whose comprehension and reason are enough to confuse cultivation?

Everyone in front of the protagonist, all have their intelligence taken away by his bastard aura.

Maybe it's because Luo Binghe's shifu,¹¹ that Shen Qingqiu, was a fighter jet among the worst, an unprecedented scum amongst scum!

The reason for his existence is to be killed, and not only killed. If you look to the end?

Don't misunderstand, Shen Yuan is not against him. This reason is also the most ball-aching for him:

The foreshadowing is numerous, plot holes everywhere, mystery after mystery, layer upon layer of confusing fog. In the end – not even one can be solved!

It's enough to cause a mouthful of blood!

Then all those victims, who is the perpetrator? All those brilliant ladies who were taken into the harem, what was their end? Such a big pile of important names used and thrown away for what, why at the end did they not come out?!

Airplane Towards The Sky brother, Airplane brother, stop and let's have a discussion. Fill! Plot holes! Okay!

Shen Yuan feels angry enough to come back from the dead.

In the endless darkness, a mechanical noise sounded by his ear.

【Activation Code : 「Stupid pen, stupid words」 . Automatically triggering system.】

“Who is this?” The tone of voice is similar to Google Translate. Shen Yuan looked around. It was like he was floating in an imaginary space, his hand outstretched without meeting any obstruction.

The voice came from nowhere: 【Welcome to the system. During the opening of the 「you can you up」 system currently in its development phase, we wish to provide you with the best experience. It is our sincere hope that during the process, you will achieve what you have stated: to transform a piece of stupid writing in accordance to your wishes into a high-end, expansive, and classic work. We wish you happiness. 】

Inside the clouds, there is the sound of a man’s voice by his ear asking lightly: “.....Junior apprentice-brother? Junior apprentice-brother, can you hear me?”

Shen Yuan suddenly came to, alert, and opened his eyelids with effort. In front of his eyes are thousands of flowers and leaves tumbling, rushing and dipping away in the air before everything became clear.

He is lying on a bed.

Looking up, there is a full spread of white. From the four corners at the top of the bed hang exquisite scented sachets.

Looking down, he wears white clothes in the ancient fashion, reclining on the pillow with a paper fan in hand.

Looking to the left, a handsome man with hair in the xuan duan¹² style sits at the side of the bed who turns to him, concerned;

Shen Yuan closes his eyes, reaching his hand out for the paper fan and opening it. He fans himself, breaking out into a rain of cold sweat.

The man's eyes flashed, asking in a warm voice: "Junior apprentice-brother is finally awake! Is there any discomfort in your body?"

Shen Yuan said: ".....Nothing wrong."

The information load is a bit big. Shen Yuan breathed deeply and tried to rise. That strange man seeing his actions reached out his hand and slowly lifted him up, letting him rest against the headboard.

Shen Yuan has always been a cautious person. Before he understands the situation, he can only act as though he'd just woken up and is in a sleepy trance, asking: "I..... where is this?"

The man was surprised, then said: "Did you really sleep so long you became confused? This is your Qing Jing Peak.¹³"

Shen Yuan's heart received a shock, but he continued to act as though he was dizzy: "I..... why would I unknowingly sleep so long?"

The man let out a sigh, said: "I haven't even asked you yet. How can you suddenly get a fever out of nowhere? I know the Immortal Assembly Conference is drawing near so you're teaching your disciples and eager for success. But with our Tian Gong's¹⁴ history and fame, even if we don't forward a disciple for the conference, no one would dare question us. There's no need for you to concern yourself with that sort of false acclaim."

The more Shen Yuan listens, the more he feels that something's wrong. Why do these words sound so familiar?

No, why does this setup sound so familiar?

Continuing, that man earnestly and sincerely said some words that finally made him remember.

“Junior apprentice-brother Qingqiu, are you listening to this senior apprentice-brother’s words?”

At this time, a ‘ding’ made its presence and the mechanical Google Translate-sounding voice that he heard in the dream began.

【System activation successful! Binding your role: Luo Binghe’s master, Cang Qiong Mountain sect, Qing Jing Peak, Qing Jing Peak Lord, ‘Shen Qingqiu.’ Weapons, Xiu Ya Sword. Points: 100】 15

‘What do you mean rely on you to play? How come it’s like it’s speaking directly in my brain? What’s up with this ‘Proud Immortal Demon Way’ plot?’

Shen Yuan didn’t speak out loud of course, but that voice quickly made a response.

【You initiated the execution of the system. You are associated with and bound to the account ‘Shen Qingqiu.’】

【As the plot progresses, a number of opportunities to gain points will be opened,16 please make sure your points are not lower than 0. Otherwise the system will automatically initiate punishment.】

Stop. Enough. Shen Yuan knows now.

He has transmigrated.

He transmigrated into a novel he had just finished reading, a stallion novel he'd disliked and despaired of. And bringing along some freaking system with him too. Shen Qingqiu quickly accepted this reality.

He is the protagonist's never-doing-good-deeds, scum villain Master Shen Qingqiu. This..... eh, the situation is a bit complicated.

This man to the side, this is Cang Qiong Mountain sect's Immortal and main head, Shen Qingqiu's senior apprentice-brother, 'Xuan Su Sword' Yue Qingyuan17. Fuck.

Shen Yuan when confronted with Yue Qingyuan let out a 'fuck' because there's a grave reason – in the original work, Yue Qingyuan was personally killed by his good junior apprentice-brother Shen Qingqiu!

Facing the victim who is being so warm in front of this murderer, the pressure is very great.

But looking at the situation now, the story hasn't progressed to that step yet. Yue Qingyuan is still perfectly well, which indicates that Shen Qingqiu hasn't been saddled with the label of a hypocrite and hasn't been ruined yet.

Yue Qingyuan is a very good person and has nothing to be afraid of. Shen Yuan likes reading and therefore actually quite likes this role. While at ease and unworried, a line of words floated up from the sea of his mind.

Don't die too miserably.

Tens of thousands of arrows shot through empty bones! [.....In a murky black room, a metal rope hangs from the ceiling beam. From the metal rope hangs a ring. The ring is bound around a man's waist. If that can still be considered as 'human.' This 'human' is unkempt like a madman. The most frightening thing is that his four limbs have all been cut off. What is left of his shoulders and legs are only round balls of flesh. Once touched, he will let out a loud 'Ah ah' sound. His tongue has also been cut off, so he cannot say complete words.]

↑ <> A paragraph selection, Shen Qingqiu Ending.

Shen Yuan, no wait, Shen Qingqiu bowed his forehead.

He doesn't have the privilege of lamenting the deaths of others, the person who died most tragically is him!

Don't make a big mistake!

Need to strangle any possibility of mistakes before they occur ✓

From now on need to hug the male protagonist's thighs¹⁸ ✓

Need to be gentle, earnest, and warm in his instruction and provide him with both a teacher and friends; need to greet him warmly ✓

Just when he came up with this plan, a noisy string of alarms sounded in the sea of Shen Qingqiu's mind. It was just like a band of one hundred police cars shrilling loudly, shocking him and making him clutch painfully at his head.

Yue Qingyuan was immediately worried and said: "Junior apprentice-brother, your head still hurts?"

Shen Qingqiu grit his teeth and didn't answer. The system sharply warned:

【Warning. Your plan is very dangerous. It is a violation, please do not attempt. Otherwise, the system will automatically initiate punishment. 】

‘Violation where?’

【You are now at the beginning stage, OOC function freeze activated. You need to complete the beginning stage before functions can be unfrozen. If you conduct any actions against the original ‘Shen Qingqiu’ role before functions are unfrozen, a certain amount of points will be deducted. 】

As someone who is at least half a scholar, in the past Shen Qingqiu would look at some of his classmates’ homework; you know how it is. Of course he knows what OOC means.

Out of character is the full text for the abbreviation, literally meaning that the role isn’t done well and isn’t in accordance with the original character.

‘.....That is to say, before getting that whatever function unfrozen, my behavior can’t exceed what ‘Shen Qingqiu’ would do?’

【Correct. 】

It can let him transmigrate into Shen Qingqiu’s shell, but it still cares about something small like OOC?

Shen Qingqiu asks: ‘You said earlier, something something..... the points can’t be less than 0, if less than 0 what will happen?’

【You will be automatically transported to your original world. 】

Original world? But in his original world, Shen Yuan's fleshly body is already dead.

That is to say, if those whatever points are deducted to nothing what awaits him is: Death.

Then if he doesn't have anything to do with the male protagonist, he should be fine right?

He lifted his head, gazing around him. He did not see Luo Binghe's person anywhere in the line of disciples before him. He lazily and carelessly said: "Where is Luo Binghe?"

Yue Qingyuan paused, looking at him with a strange light in his eyes.

Shen Qingqiu's appearance reveals nothing, but is secretly puzzled. Can this be the wrong time, that the male protagonist hasn't yet been accepted into Cang Qiong sect from below?

Yue Qingyuan said: "Junior apprentice-brother, don't be upset."

From Shen Qingqiu's heart rises an ominous feeling.

Yue Qingyuan sighed: "I know you don't like him. But that child has persevered enough and hasn't done much wrong, there's no need for you to punish him again."

Shen Qingqiu listened to him speak, wetted his dry lips and said: ".....Say it straight, where is he?"

Yue Qingyuan was silent for a moment, said: "After you strung him up and hit him, don't you always shut him in the woodshed?"

Shen Qingqiu's face was black.

—End Chapter 1—

1YY stallion novel: Refers to a novel genre I think. Probably refers to harem novels, since harem protags are like stallions or stud horses getting it on with many brood mares (i.e. girls).

2golden finger against the heavens: I get the feeling this is talking about the metaphorical "fuck you" that protags in cultivation novels give towards all

the obstacles in their way no matter how impossible the odds. The so-called ‘golden finger’ is therefore the middle finger. LOL

3path of the lofty, path of the waste: Common cultivation novel backgrounds for protagonists are those who begin strong (i.e. young noble master) or begin weak (i.e. cultivation trash who overcomes their difficulties).

4Luo Binghe (洛冰河): Bing he (冰河) means ‘glacier.’

5‘Xiu Ya Sword’ Shen Qingqiu (「修雅劍」 沈清秋): ‘Xiu Ya Sword’ is a title. It means something like ‘Elegant Cultivating Sword.’ Shen Qingqiu is the name of the scum villain that Shen Yuan transmigrates into. Qing qiu means ‘clear autumn.’

6Immortal Assembly Conference: More literal translation would be something like Immortal/Fairy Alliance Important Meeting (pinyin: xian meng da hui).

7Xin Mo: Translates to ‘Heart Demon.’ I’ll refer to his technique as ‘Xin Mo Sword’ in the future.

8Three Realms: Demon, Human, and... Immortal/Heavenly? I’m a bit rusty on this lol.

9V real and original copy: MC is complaining about spending money to buy a copyrighted original version of the text vs. someone's pirated version that he could have gotten for free. V = Very. His main complaint is that the novel sucks and is not worth the money or effort lol.

10An evil aura surrounding it: The author's penname is probably also a dirty euphemism for... upright penis. And Luen was kind enough to point out that the author's penname altogether can mean 'masturbating towards the sky.' Hence Shen Yuan's disgust. LOL

11Shifu: You should know this from Kung Fu Panda. Shifu = master.

12xuan duan style (玄端): A kind of hairdo I think. Don't ask me what it looks like lol, just assume it's like most ancient Chinese hairstyles for men, the kind that's swept up into a bun thingy on top of their heads.

13Qing Jing Peak: Literally 'Clear Calm' Peak. This is the peak that Shen Qingqiu is Peak Lord over in the sect.

14Tian Gong (天宮): Sky Temple. This is part of the Cang Qiong Mountain (蒼穹山) Sect, loosely 'Blue Sky Mountain' Sect.

15Points (原始B格): I have no idea how to translate this. I'm using 'Points' for now and I'll change it once I get some clue about how to translate it better.

16More on the system points: How to explain this... My understanding is that as the story progresses, our main character will get points depending on certain things he does. Say he gets 50 Cool points and 10 Philosophy points. His total points would be what he had before the action that netted him points plus what he just got ($50 + 10 = 60$). So long as his total points are not less than 0, he's good.

17'Xuan Su Sword' Yue Qingyuan(「玄肅劍」岳清源): Um... his title means 'Profound Solemn Sword.' I think.

18hug thighs: A figure of speech meaning to hold with all your might onto a strong and powerful figure. If you were an employee you'd want to hug your boss' thighs. ?

Translator's notes:

That horrific Shen Qingqiu Ending is a very good description of the someone looks like after getting subjected to the 'human stick' method of torture. The person tortured gets all their limbs removed, leaving only the head and body intact.

The system's words are a little hard to translate. For now, just know that there's a kind of 'tutorial' mode that our main character needs to go through before all functions are unfrozen/unlocked. Right now he's in the middle of tutorial mode (AKA 'beginning stage'). At the end of the beginning stage

will be a ‘test’ that he needs to complete. Once he finishes the test, functions will be unlocked and he’ll move onto the next stage.

Random slang I learned...

Wo cao (卧槽): Literally means ‘lying down’ but is another homonym for ‘fuck.’

Prev Chapter [Next Chapter](#)
Report chapter Comments

Chapter 2

Note: Our male lead Luo Binghe shows up in this chapter! Still a lot of footnotes but less than in Chapter 1.

Shen Yuan has never been able to understand why this extreme scum villain, Shen Qingqiu, has this kind of do-or-die attitude. For what?

The original Shen Qingqiu's family was well-off and he could at least be considered a small wealthy second generation offspring. He has two older brothers who will inherit the family business in the future and a younger sister that he loves. Their feelings are very good.

He already knew that even if he didn't amount to much in life, he wouldn't lack a mouthful of rice.¹ But perhaps it's because his growing environment was so easy and lacking in competition that as long as the competitors number more than ten, getting ranked within the first ten is considered a good result to him.

Thus, he has never shared a common language with those who wanted to dominate the world.

This original Shen Qingqiu has some skill and qualifications. He also pretends to have more than he has. No shortage of reputation, no need to worry about money as a member of the world's number one sect; why does he have to keep picking a fight with the grassroots protagonist, his brain

working all day to calculate how to insult the protagonist and incite others to join in?

Even if Luo Binghe is a heaven-sent genius and incredibly powerful, to compare himself to..... there's no need to be jealous to this degree, right?

Still, you can't blame this scum villain for being so crummy. In the novel, this kind of crummy scum villain is like carp in the river, proliferating everywhere. He is only one of many.

What is there to do? This novel's biggest BOSS is the protagonist himself. How can a firefly's light shine like the sun and the moon?

He won respect in the cultivation world because of his 'Xiu Ya Sword,' so his natural talent can't be considered too bad.

For now, Shen Qingqiu looks left and right, pleased even though his complexion is like the color of porridge in the bronze mirror.

This person's appearance is neat with two black eyebrows and thin lips, born to look like a scholar. Plus his trim and long legs, he can be considered a good-looking man. Though his actual age doesn't bear thinking of², this is a cultivation novel; Shen Qingqiu cultivated his inner strength and so he has perfectly maintained the looks of a youth. When he is reading books to fill his mind, the quality of his looks multiplies.³

Though there's no way to compare to Luo Binghe.

Once he thought of Luo Binghe, Shen Qingqiu's brain felt extreme pain.

He wants to take a look right now at the Luo Binghe who's currently shut up in the woodshed, but before he can take a step, another alarm sounded in his mind.

【Warning! OOC warning! 'Shen Qingqiu' would not take the initiative to see Luo Binghe. 】

Shen Qingqiu angrily said: 'Fine. Then I'll send someone to bring him over, this much should be okay.'

He thought for a moment, then called out: "Ming Fan!"

From outside the door a boy of around sixteen years of age darted in, tall and thin, and said: "This disciple is here. What is shifu's command?"

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help taking another look at him. He can be counted as decent-looking, just has a bit of a wretched appearance.⁴ In his heart he laments: Turns out he's a piece of cannon fodder.⁵

This is the original Shen Qingqiu's top disciple, Luo Binghe's senior apprentice-brother Ming Fan.

This is the legendary lowest level of cannon fodder!

Needless to say about shutting Luo Binghe out of the dorms overnight or deliberately giving him the wrong entry passwords, these kinds of things he all has a hand in. Whenever Shen Qingqiu feels a deep grudge and wants to torture Luo Binghe, the most trustworthy and eager assistant is Ming Fan.

Knowing this person's final ending, Shen Qingqiu looks at this child and feels quite a bit of empathy with him since they're in the same boat: "Go bring Binghe here."

Ming Fan's heart thought: Why is shifu calling him Luo Binghe, he always calls him 'that small beast,' 'bastard,' 'mixed blood,' 'sprout,'⁶ and uses these names quite often. How come he's suddenly calling him so intimately?

But naturally he doesn't dare to question his shifu's commands, so he promptly jogs to the woodshed and kicks the door, yelling: "Come out! Shizun⁷ is calling you!"

Shen Qingqiu paces in the room, fully examining the system in his mind.

The system diligently answers him.

【Points are the grading method used. The higher your points are, the better the work is. 】

Then, how would I raise points?

【1. Change the weak plot and fix the errors of the scum villain and other supporting characters; 2. Avoid mines; 3. Ensure the protagonist's coolness; 4. Unravel secret scenarios. 】

Shen Qingqiu analyzed everything deeply, one by one.

That is to say: He not only has to whip the ass of the rotten piece of work that is the original Shen Qingqiu into shape, but also make sure the other characters don't make a mess either;

He doesn't even know if he can keep his own precious little life, but he still must ensure that the coolness points for the protagonist and his girls aren't lacking;

Not only are the plot holes made by the author unfilled, he must personally shovel and top off those holes himself.

Hehe.

As Airplane Towards The Sky said, this novel “Proud Immortal Demon Way” has a very clear goal. Every word that is written is for one purpose, and that is coolness.

Perhaps it’s after the male protagonist was blackened that he started playing innocent, pretending to be the pig to eat the tiger,⁸ guarding against machinations of bitches, and becoming cool enough to overturn the heavens. That’s why the work became popular, increasingly long to the point the book was longer than its binding.

So Shen Qingqiu thinks, but his task to clean up the plot makes the pressure on him very great. Mines are buried all over, he cannot be certain that he’ll be able to avoid every single one!

Shen Qingqiu: ‘What kind of plot is considered not bad?’

【There is no standard, it depends upon the subjective feelings of the reader. 】

‘This poor piece of writing still has a reader.’ Shen Qingqiu snorted, completely forgetting that he himself was someone who’d spent V real

money on the novel and finished reading while pinching the bridge of his nose, that he was that kind of ‘faithful’ reader.....

Pausing, Shen Qingqiu then asked: ‘Then how many points needed to be collected for the beginning stage to start?’

System: 【It will be dictated by the specific circumstances. When the requirements have been met, you will automatically be notified. 】

Going through the problem and its analysis is truly applying balm.⁹

Shen Qingqiu sneered. Hearing the door, he stepped back and saw a boy walk through.

Despite being uneasy, he still managed to stand straight and say: “Shizun.”

Shen Qingqiu formed three-quarters of a smile before he stiffened.

Going to die! Towards this person who will meet and harm an eighty-something years old woman holding a girl-child, as the person who so greatly damaged the male protagonist’s face like this, he’s totally going to die!

But, though he's gone through such abuse, that damaged face of the protagonist proves that he is still worthy of being called the protagonist!

Luo Binghe's pair of eyes are bright like morning stars. A good, fresh and tender little handsome embryo;

That firm and humble look, showing his noble and unyielding character;

That straight and tall stature, that would rather break than bend!

Suddenly met with this sight, Shen Qingqiu's heart broke up the words he was going to say, scrambled all his rhetoric and caused countless words to fall over each other in his mind, so much that he almost blurted them all out!

Thankfully, Shen Qingqiu was at the precipice but his mind cried out at the sheer drop. This protagonist is too excellent, he almost could not hold it in!

He watched Luo Binghe slowly limp through the door, struggling to kneel. The corner of Sheng Qingqiu's mouth twitched. Inside, he thought that this old lady can't afford to accept your bow¹⁰. If you bow to me today, some day in the future my kneecaps are going to be finished off by you! So he immediately stopped him and said: "No need."

He withdrew his hand and brought out a small bottle: “This is medicine.” He ended his words with a sarcastic tone: “Don’t let others see and think that my Qing Jing Peak abuses disciples.”

Shen Qingqiu enters his role very quickly. He had great guts to attempt the action of giving the medicine to him, but made sure he chose to use a nasty attitude in line with the original Shen Qingqiu’s hypocritical character.

As expected, the system didn’t let out an OOC notification. Shen Qingqiu let out a breath in relief.

Luo Binghe thought that shizun had called him over to follow up with more ‘teaching.’ He didn’t think it was to give him medicine. Surprised for a moment, he then held up his hands in a gesture of respect, sincerely grateful: “Thank you for the medicine, shizun.”

Luo Binghe’s was filled with childishness, his smile full of sincerity, just like the warm sun breaking over the horizon.

Shen Qingqiu stared for a moment, then turned his face away.

This male protagonist before being blackened is truly the model of a good boy, brilliant like the sun. He’s the kind of person who if you give him one point he’ll guarantee to return you ten points. It wouldn’t be wrong to say he’s a small sheep.

Luo Binghe happily said: “This disciple will redouble his efforts in the future, won’t let shizun be disappointed.”

Eh, but, if you redouble your efforts then your original shizun will be the one truly disappointed.....

If Shen Qingqiu hadn’t read “Proud Immortal Demon Way” and seen this scene, his heart would ache for Luo Binghe and he’d shed sympathetic tears.

However, he has read the novel from beginning to end and was privy to all of Luo Binghe’s mental activities after his blackening. On the surface his face is that of a modest gentleman but deep inside he is thinking about how to pull off his skin and bones to expose reality.

【Luo Binghe smiled a little and said: ‘What shame this disciple suffered in the past, he will return to you now eight times greater. For hurting my hand, I will grind your four limbs into dust. 】

↑ <> Selected paragraph, the 2nd.

Afterwards, he really cut Shen Qingqiu into a human stick.¹¹

Say he wants to do something to you, he'll do it. Cannot plead for life, cannot plead for death. This kind of character is like the domineering and cool king he became in later years. The essence of it can be summed up in a few words: "Hehe, you stupid sucker."

That's why even though Luo Binghe's current situation is sympathetic, Shen Qingqiu can only think more about his own future fate.

To sum it up, no matter how sad Luo Binghe is right now, he is also the one in the future whose foot is stepping on his head and laughing ferociously.

Shen Qingqiu sat in the sandalwood chair, choosing to speak in a careless tone: "Binghe, how is your progress in cultivation?"

Hearing "Binghe" coming out of his mouth gives even him goosebumps. Luo Binghe's back also noticeably shook, but he still showed a shy smile: "This disciple is stupid, and..... missed the point."

Shen Qingqiu hates him; heaven knows he wants to take a loudspeaker and roar next to Luo Binghe's ear: You false-hearted person, it's already pretty good if you don't go crazy.¹² Being able to do the basics is already not bad! Are you messing with me, kid! Let this teacher point you in the right direction!

That demonic alert sounded again. Shen Qingqiu inwardly shouted to the system: 'I'm just thinking, can't I do even that?! Of course I know this is a violation!'

He casually said: “Today I punished you because I was anxious. Time flies. Come to think of it, you’ve been apprenticed under me for quite some time. How old are you this year?”

Luo Binghe obediently said: “This disciple is fourteen.”

Oh. Fourteen.

Shen Qingqiu’s ‘help.’

That is to say, all this time that Shen Qingqiu has been mentoring Luo Binghe, he has already experienced the punished to kneel at the gate incident, Qing Jing disciples brawl incident, being ‘contrary’ to shizun incident, breaking the device and sentenced to hard work incident..... and so on, on this kind of glorious track. [bye-bye manual]

—End Chapter 2—

1Mouthful of rice: Meaning he won’t starve.

2Actual age: All immortals will look the same age as when they reached immortality, barring taking pills or some other factor. Shen Qingqiu

cultivated into an Immortal fairly early so he looks like a young man. His actual age... is probably quite a bit older than what he looks like.

3Quality of his looks multiplies: Basically, Shen Qingqiu is one of those people who looks extra cool doing scholarly things compared to whatever he normally does.

4Wretched appearance (尖嘴猴腮): Literally saying he's got a mouth that sticks out and a chin like an ape's, but the meaning is the one I used.

5Canon fodder: If you're familiar with the kind of 'protagonist dominates the world' genre in wuxia/xuanhuan/xianxia novels then you know what this means. You'll also know what this means if you read novels based on otome games. 'Canon fodder' characters are collateral damage and often used as stepping stones for the protagonist to level up or proceed along their way.

6Small beast, bastard, mixed blood, sprout (「那小畜生」、「孽障」、「混小子」、「豎子」): All insulting names. The direct translations are a bit awkward to translate to English so I'm using what MTL's given. It's close enough. In Chinese calling someone by name, especially their 'first name' (which would be Binghe in our ML's case) is something only those close to you would do. In the case of a normal master-disciple relationship, it wouldn't be unusual to use a first name so casually.

7Shizun (師尊): Used the same way as shifu and also means 'master' or 'teacher.' I think it's more formal though, more like 'respected master.' Luo

Binghe will use this a lot so remember this!

8Pretending to be the pig to eat the tiger: Pretend to be weak to win over a stronger person.

9Balm: Original words are wan jin you (萬金油) which refer to a traditional Chinese balm called Tiger Balm. It's used for a variety of ailments.

10This old lady...: Shen Qingqiu is making fun of himself. In those old palace historical dramas full of schemes, old ladies with high status are terrifying and generally have scores of people bowing down/kowtowing to them.

11Human stick: Just a reminder that this is a form of torture. The person's four limbs are removed, leaving only the head and torso.

12Go crazy: The actual Chinese words used (pinyin: zhou huo ru mo) tends to apply to people 'going crazy' by cultivating incorrectly. It's probably referring to the unusual Demon cultivation path that Luo Binghe is going follow in the future.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 3

Note: Thanks for the reviews and encouragement everyone! You've inspired me to pump out another chapter ahead of schedule. (づゝ)o:・° ✧*:・° ✧*

Shen Qingqiu is an easily satisfied person.

Since he has already transmigrated into “Proud Immortal Demon Way” and in his original world had □□ or died and flipped his braid,¹ he might as well muddle along and live here.

He's come to this cultivation world into a body with fairly good cultivation and sword skills, someone who's even in a well-known Righteous sect. If he wants to be in the limelight, he can be in the limelight. If he wants to shrink back he can do as he likes at Cang Qiong Mountain sect's Qing Jing Peak without anyone asking. There's nothing bad with this kind of situation.

The only difficulty is finding a sister.²

This YY stallion novel, as soon as a sister arrives, she becomes the male lead's. Everyone knows this.

However, Shen Qingqiu doesn't have any high requirements. He'll be content to just while away his time here and wait to die. At any rate, it's not

much different from his previous life.³

But so long as Luo Binghe is present, he can't even speak of being in the limelight. As long as he remained in this piece of messy, dog-shit writing's original path, even if he retired to some idyllic place; after Luo Binghe rises to power he has the ability to pluck him out of hiding and slice him into a human stick.

He can forgive being transmigrated into a stallion novel, but why not as the protagonist?!

He can forgive being transmigrated as cannon fodder, but why must it be as the person who abused the protagonist and for the transmigration to happen after all the abuse has occurred?!

'It's not like I don't want to hug this main character's thighs, but who let this fucking man be so black. The revenge that needs to be taken is some thousands of deeds!'

Shen Qingqiu cursed the creator of this pitch-black protagonist Luo Binghe, *Airplane Towards The Sky*: If you're going to write a stallion novel, then you should write a good one and not spin off some damned unconventional thing!

In short, he can only try to communicate more with the system and figure out how to increase his points, advance through stages, and unfreeze the OOC function.

If the situation doesn't look good, it's still not too late for him to find another way out.

For the first step, he intends to explore and familiarize himself with the surroundings.

The Tian Gong Twelve Peaks⁴ are like twelve imposing swords that have sprung up between heaven and earth pointing straight towards the sky, piercing through the clouds.

Shen Qingqiu occupies Qing Jing Peak, which is not the tallest among them but is certainly the most quiet, green, and comfortably shaded; perfect for scholars. Additionally, most all of Shen Qingqiu's disciples must learn some *qin qi shu hua*⁵ and the like. Often sounds will drift by like someone reading out loud or playing the *qin*; truly a wonderful place for youths to indulge in the liberal arts. It perfectly matches the original Shen Qingqiu's characteristics and is a good start for earning points.

Some disciples passed by Shen Qingqiu and respectfully greeted him while he attempted to grasp the original Shen Qingqiu's mannerisms; his face cold, a slight nod, moving actively but withdrawing his inner self. Like this, he managed to pass even though inside, his head ached at how he was going to reconcile the character in the novel with the person alive right now.

But these matters still aren't the most urgent for Shen Qingqiu to solve right now. If he wants to save himself, he first needs to get the original's martial

arts and sword techniques.

If he hasn't remembered wrong, before Luo Binghe was blackened, Cang Qiong Mountain sect encountered some big events: some attempted demon realm invasion, Immortal Assembly Conference, all these require him to fight in person. If he only wears the appearance without any real ability, he's doomed! Don't even speak about proceeding in the plot, the protagonist won't even have to act for some nobody *yao* or *guai*⁶ to play him to death!

Shen Qingqiu entered deep into the forest without anyone's notice. He made sure no one was around before he slowly drew the sword at his side with his right hand, his left hand on the scabbard.

This Xiu Ya Sword is Shen Qingqiu's proof of fame as both a technique and the sword at his side. The sword light flashed snow-white and clear without being too bright; definitely very high-quality goods. Originally it was written that if your own aura⁷ was poured into the weapon, it would emit a glowing light.

Shen Qingqiu wanted to figure out how to insert his aura into the sword when the sword in his hand immediately emitted a shimmering white light.

It seems like the original's martial abilities and techniques are automatically inherited. He can use his skills without needing to think too much. The sword light was emitted without much direction from him.

Shen Qingqiu wanted to see how strong he was so he carelessly slashed in front of him.

Who knew this careless slash is enough to scare people; the sword light shone dazzlingly and swept out in front of him, forcing him to close his eyes. When he opened them again, the ground looked as though it had been ravaged by lightning, a deep ditch lying before him.

‘Fuck.....!!!’

Shen Qingqiu was expressionless, but his heart is about to burst inside.

It’s even more aggressive than he imagined! Worthy of a Peak Lord! With this martial ability and technique, plus some diligent practice, even if he must face off against Luo Binghe in the future he’ll have a chance to flee!

Right. To be able to flee is enough to make Shen Qingqiu laugh for three days straight. His needs truly aren’t high, he’ll be happy just to keep his life.....

He wants to practice more so he can advance his plans sooner. But then he heard someone stepping on and breaking branches underfoot.

Truthfully that sound is very far away, but his five senses are too keen. It’s not difficult at all for him to figure out where. Shen Qingqiu looked at the

deep ditch in the ground and slid his sword back into the scabbard, retreating into the deep green of the forest unseen.

The sound of footsteps drew closer before Shen Qingqiu could hear that it was not only one person. Sure enough, after a moment there appeared Luo Binghe's soft bright face and a fresh delicate girl's voice in the clearing.

“Ah Luo, Ah Luo,⁸ look, there's a very large ditch here in the ground!”

Hearing this method of addressing him, Shen Qingqiu who hid in the darkness almost stumbled.

The system helpfully explained: 【New character: Shen Qingqiu's youngest female disciple, Ning Yingying】

‘Shut up, don't need you to introduce. Those who call Luo Binghe like that won't be just the one, this old man knows.’ Shen Qingqiu's face was expressionless.

Following behind Luo Binghe was a pretty young girl who seemed to be a little younger than him, her braided hair bound with orange ribbons, innocent and lovely. Every standard cultivation novel must have an adorable little apprentice-sister.

And this little apprentice-sister gave Shen Qingqiu some complex feelings.

This is because he had designs on Ning Yingying. No wait, it should be that the original Shen Qingqiu had designs on Ning Yingying.

Shen Qingqiu is a hypocrite. Since outwardly he seems fair and it appears to be a pure and selfless love, inside he must be shameless, dirty, and despicable. He is a teacher, but had dirty thoughts towards his lively and well-behaved disciples. Several times he tried to lay hands on them and almost succeeded at that.

To dare lay hands on the male protagonist's woman, you can imagine the result yourself!

When Shen Qingqiu was reading the novel, he felt it was a bit strange. Why didn't Luo Binghe castrate him. He even went to the reader comments section and joined the group in writing 'Please castrate! If you don't castrate you'll anger the readers!' these kinds of comments.

If at that time they had succeeded..... hehe.

He would cut off the hand that had written such things at the time!

Luo Binghe looked at it but wasn't interested, only smiled warmly. Ning Yingying wanted to keep his attention on her but had no words to say:

“Which apprentice-brother do you think it was who cut this sword scar during practice?”

Luo Binghe held an axe and began to cut down a tree, said: “Impossible. Among the cultivators on Qing Jing Peak, there’s only *shizun* who’s capable.”

Shen Qingqiu mentally coughed twice: Young boy, you sure know your stuff.

Ning Yingying sat on a slanted slab of limestone, resting her head against a hand: “Oh. Then that crevice was created from being struck by lightning.”

Luo Binghe didn’t pay attention to her anymore, focusing all his attention on his hands and continued to honestly cut down trees.

These tree trunks aren’t weak and thin. The axe is half-rusted. Luo Binghe is only fourteen years old so cutting down the trees is extremely tiring. It’s not long before his forehead is covered in sweat. Ning Yingying was bored again and entreated him, spoiled: “Ah Luo, Ah Luo, come play with me!”

Even with a face full of sweat, Luo Binghe doesn’t rub it off and continues to chop trees. He said: “It won’t do. Apprentice-brother instructed me. After taking care of today’s firewood I still have to jump in the water.⁹ If I finish chopping wood faster, I’ll have time to cultivate some more.”

Ning Yingying said: “The apprentice-brothers are sure bad! It’s always you doing this and that. The way I see it, they’re purposefully bullying you. Humph, I’ll go back and tell *shizun* about this; guaranteed to let them not dare to bully you again.”

Shen Qingqiu’s was frightened and his face changed color. No, no, no, you had better never tell me! What should I do! Which side should I teach a lesson to in the end like this!

At this time, though Luo Binghe’s age is small, he has tasted all kinds of bitterness in life. Still, he has managed to preserve a heart as pure as a white lotus. Towards Ning Yingying, he earnestly said: “Please do not. I don’t want *shizun* to be troubled over these small things. The apprentice-brothers don’t mean to be malicious and just see that my age is small. They’re just giving me more opportunities to practice hard.”

Shen Qingqiu is truly about to have his heart moved by this child: You say, how good it would be to have a child so sensible!

In the middle of Ning Yingying’s chatter, Luo Binghe finished cutting enough firewood for his task. After putting things in order, he also sat down on the limestone slab, cross-legged, and began to cultivate.

Shen Qingqiu let out a long sigh in his heart.

Truthfully, the protagonist’s lack of cultivation in the earliest, bitterest scenes of the novel is partly for this reason. It’s obvious that Ming Fan gave

him a false technique to practice with when he joined in the beginning. The more he seeks to cultivate, the more dog-shit difference there is between him and the others. It's only because Luo Binghe is such a heavenly talent and has the support of the demonic blood hidden within his body that he managed to feel out and grasp his own cultivation practicing method..... way too unscientific!

Even as he sighed, he heard the chaotic sound of many footsteps.

Shen Qingqiu immediately knows it's nothing good and something bad will happen.

Ming Fan brought some low-level disciples with him. At the sight of Ning Yingying, he immediately went up to take her hand: "Little apprentice-sister! Little apprentice-sister, I've been looking for you, you know. How come you never want to drop by our place? The back of the mountains is so large, what'll you do when night falls and poisonous snakes emerge? This older apprentice-brother has some fun stuff for you to see."

He naturally saw the mutely cultivating Luo Binghe treating him as though he was air. Luo Binghe is quite mannerly and opened his eyes to greet him as an apprentice-brother.

Ning Yingying laughed: "I'm not afraid of any poisonous snakes. Besides, there's Ah Luo here to stay with me, right?"

Ming Fan slanted his eyes towards Luo Binghe and let out a humph.

—End Chapter 3—

¹Flipped his braid: A funny saying meaning that someone is dead. Probably comes from around Qing Dynasty times – the hairstyle for men was a long braid down the back and if your braid ‘flips,’ you’re dead. The little emotes are supposed to be two whited eyeballs I think. ?

²Sister: He means it’s hard to pick up girls. LOL

³Previous life: Bit of a subtle hint that our main character probably had a terminal illness or something that would have taken his life in time.

⁴Tian Gong Twelve Peaks (天宮十二峰): Roughly, ‘Sky Temple Twelve Peaks.’ Tian Gong is the name of the mountain range where Cang Qiong sect is and an alternate name for the sect. The mountain range is made up of twelve peaks, each with a Peak Lord. Shen Qingqiu’s Qing Jing Peak is one of the twelve.

⁵*Qin qi shu hua*: I left this in the original pinyin for effect. These are the four fundamental classic accomplishments for a Chinese scholar to have – ability to play qin (a stringed traditional Chinese instrument), to play qi (or chess; you might be more familiar with Japanese name ‘go’), to write calligraphy and compose poetry (shu includes both of these), and the ability to paint (hua).

⁶Yao and guai: In ancient Chinese culture, the species existing in the world can be divided into *shen*, *mo*, *xian*, *yao*, *ren*, and *yin* (or Heaven, Demon, Fairy, Spirit, Human, and Yin if you want really want a translation). Mo, yao, and yin are generally considered ‘evil’ or ‘guai’ (literally strange/weird) and therefore unorthodox. Our MC is worried about getting done in by the opposing unorthodox side because he himself belongs to an orthodox (AKA Righteous) sect.

⁷Aura: The term used in pinyin is ‘*ling qi*.’

⁸Ah Luo: Nickname used for Luo Binghe. Another cutesy way to address a person (only with people familiar with you, mind) is to add “Ah” in front. So for instance using Shen Qingqiu’s name, it would be “Ah Shen” if using his last name.

⁹Jump in the water: I assume Luo Binghe’s saying he still needs to take a bath after chopping up firewood. Instead of boiling water to the perfect toasty temperature, he’s going to jump straight into freezing mountain water instead. What a hardcore guy, but I guess his method saves time.

Chapter 4

*TN: Thank you for the encouragement, everyone! *hugs* Just to be on the safe side, I'm going to warn that there's one line in this chapter that **might** make our MC seem misogynistic. But he's really not, it's more that he's complaining about template harem female leads from his position as an all-knowing reader of the novel.*

Shen Qingqiu is very clear about what's going on in Ming Fan's head. He must have heard Ning Yingying calling Luo Binghe so affectionately and thought that this hateful apprentice-brother had become too dazzling. The original work's cannon fodder held an inexplicable hatred towards the protagonist that was only fueled by Shen Qingqiu, forever unchanged.

Ning Yingying is still only a little girl with a little girl's heart, so she slanted her head and asked: "What's the fun thing that big apprentice-brother has? Quick, take it out and let me see."

Ming Fan's face suddenly became all smiles and he untied a pure green jade pendant from his belt, dangling it in front of him: "Apprentice-sister, this time I went to my relatives to maintain relations. They gave me a lot of useful and interesting things. I thought this was particularly beautiful; I'm giving it to you!"

Ning Yingying took it, holding it up against the gap between the leafy canopy to shine against the sunlight. Ming Fan warmly asked: "How is it? Do you like it or not?"

Peeping, Shen Qingqiu suddenly remembered. This scene!

Not good, he shouldn't have come here. It's dangerous!

You can't blame him for not remembering clearly. If a damned stupid writer wrote stupid words for four years to create a novel that seemed to span two hundred years, who can remember what happened at the very beginning? It took him twenty days to finish reading, he'd entirely forgotten that scene of pure abuse!

Sure enough, Ning Yingying completely can't tell its quality, casually looking at it before throwing the jade pendant back. Ming Fan's smile stiffened on his face. Ning Yingying wrinkled her nose and said: "What thing, this color is ugly to death and not as good as the one Ah Luo has."

This time, it's not only that the color of Ming Fan's face is bad. Luo Binghe's determination to appear to be not here completely disappears, his body jolting once and opening his eyes.

Ming Fan let out a few words between his gritted teeth: ".....Apprentice-brother has a jade pendant?"

Luo Binghe hesitated and hadn't answered yet when Ning Yingying hastily answered before him: "Of course he has one. He always wears it around his neck. It's his treasure, he doesn't even let me look at it."

As calm as Luo Binghe is, his color also changed and he clutched unconsciously at the jade Guanyin¹ hidden beneath his clothes.

The intelligence of the female leads in this novel made Shen Qingqiu drunk² with disbelief.

Ning Yingying's words completely do not give any thought to the consequences of saying them, only focusing on the fact that Luo Binghe wears a jade Guanyin pendant that never leaves his body.

Towards the things their sweethearts have, all girls will want to get into their own hands. Only Luo Binghe stubbornly refuses to give his. She only raised the issue because she was unhappy.

Of course he's not willing to give it to you!!! That's Luo Binghe's deceased washerwoman mother's present to him, a present that she spent the greater part of her life savings on just to procure for him! This was the tiniest bit of warmth during Luo Binghe's darkest time; even when he was entirely washed black later, he could still think back to this warmth and become a little more human. How can he carelessly give it to people!

Ming Fan feels jealousy boiling up from his gut. In the end, it's still Ning Yingying's words that cause his anger to rise to the peak and gain the upper hand. He strode forward a step, snapped: "Apprentice-brother Luo is sure generous, even little apprentice-sister Ning Yingying can't take a look at

that jade pendant of yours. If this goes on, you won't even give a hand to your own fellow disciples when we're facing against a strong enemy!"

Dangerous! These two sentences and this scene are dangerous!

Ning Yingying also didn't think it would become like this, hurriedly calling: "It's fine if he doesn't want to. Apprentice-brother, don't bully him!"

How can Luo Binghe fight against Ming Fan? With a leg hooked below and a push, blocked by the disciples that Ming Fan brought, that beautiful jade Guanyin around his neck soon came into Ming Fan's hands. He raised it up for a look, suddenly bursting into laughter with a 'haha.'

Ning Yingying asked curiously: "You..... why are you laughing?"

Ming Fan threw that beautiful jade Guanyin into Ning Yingying's hands and delightedly said: "I thought it was some kind of precious treasure for him to protect it so fiercely. Apprentice-sister, guess what? It's Northwest goods³, hahahaha....."

Ning Yingying said confusedly: "Northwest goods? Fake?"

Luo Binghe fists slowly clenched, a deep current surging in the depths of his eyes. He enunciated each word: "Give it back."

Shen Qingqiu's fingers also flexed unconsciously a couple times.

He naturally knows that jade Guanyin is fake goods, and that it is Luo Binghe's greatest point of anger.

That year the washerwoman lived a frugal life. Because she had little experience, she was easily tricked and bought fake goods for a high price. Heartbroken, her body quickly deteriorating afterward: this is a pain that will never dissolved in Luo Binghe's life. This is the only point that Luo Binghe cannot tolerate!

As a bystander, Shen Qingqiu truly wanted to make a move and beat up Ming Fan, returning the jade pendant to Luo Binghe.

Also, maybe if he did so, Ming Fan won't completely offend Luo Binghe and in later days will be able to keep his small life.

Ming Fan took back the jade pendant from Ning Yingying's hands, twirling it disgustedly: "If you just want it back then I'll give it. Don't know from what kind of street vendor⁴ this kind of cheap thing was bought; if it's given to apprentice-sister, I'm afraid it'll dirty her hands." So he said, but clearly his hands didn't carry through with the action.

Luo Binghe's face was taut. Suddenly he raised his fists, hitting the disciples restraining him.

When enraged, his fists and feet didn't have any techniques or tricks. It all came from the waves of anger in his heart. At first he managed to scare those disciples, but then they found his weak points. Ming Fan easily walked closer and taunted: "What are you enduring for? For daring to use your fists and feet against this elder apprentice-brother, teach him what it means to respect your elders!" They all regained their courage and renewed their assault against Luo Binghe.

Ning Yingying was stunned, then yelled: "Elder apprentice-brother! How can you do this! Quickly, tell them to stop, or..... or I'll never pay attention to you anymore!"

Ming Fan panicked: "Apprentice-sister, don't be angry, I'll tell them to not to beat that guy is all....." He hadn't finished his words before Luo Binghe threw off those grasping hands and feet and leaped forward, punching Ming Fan right in the nose.

"*Aiyo*⁵!" he cried loudly. Two bright red rivers of blood ran from Ming Fan's nostrils.

Ning Yingying's face was full of tears about to overflow but at this sight, she couldn't restrain laughing and let out a *puchi*⁶.

Shen Qingqiu:.....Little sister, do you like Luo Binghe or do you want to kill him!

Originally Ming Fan was able to let go of Luo Binghe but now that he was disgraced in front of his crush, there's no way for him to just forget about this!

Looking at the two people fighting in front of him, twisted into a ball, no matter how talented Luo Binghe is he's still too young. Additionally, he hasn't cultivated correctly so there's an obvious difference in the force of their blows. Even so, Luo Binghe's teeth were clenched and he didn't let out a sound. Shen Qingqiu wanted to act. The system let out a burst of skull-rattling alarms: 【Serious OOC! Serious OOC! Serious OOC! Important things must be said three times! Under these conditions, 'Shen Qingqiu' will choose to remain a bystander! 】

Shen Qingqiu doesn't know what the consequences of going against the system are so he can't take this risk. Anxious, he suddenly has an idea, a kind of compromise.

Cang Qiong Mountain sect has a kind of spell named 'Plucked Leaves Flying Flowers'⁷ that isn't very impressive and only looks good. The original writing notes that Luo Binghe easily captured the heart of N numbers of women using this spell. Shen Qingqiu who has been filling himself with all kinds of cheats these days⁸ also knew about this little spell.

He readily plucked a leaf and inserted a bit of spiritual power⁹. The first time, he used too much and the leaf couldn't withstand the power and split apart. The second try succeeded and he held it gently between his fingers,

breathing out, then throwing it. The leaf flew like a knife in Ming Fan's direction!

Hearing Ming Fan's long scream, Shen Qingqiu shook his hand out and wiped a drop of sweat from his forehead.

No wonder they said that if a master makes his move, even a flower can hurt people. He shouldn't have killed Ming Fan with that shot, right.....

Luo Binghe suffered many fists and kicks before suddenly feeling Ming Fan pushing him away. Raising his head, blood ran down his forehead into his eyes. But strangely, Ming Fan held out his hand and there was also fresh blood there.

Ming Fan couldn't help but anxiously accuse: "How dare you use a knife to harm me?!"

Ning Yingying earlier saw them fighting so furiously that she didn't dare draw near, but now she inserted herself between them: "No, no, Ah Luo didn't use a knife. He didn't give you that injury!"

Luo Binghe also didn't know what was going on, his lips pressed tight. He wiped away the blood on his forehead. Fresh blood emerges from Ming Fan's back, a cut that looks like a sword had made it. He faced the other disciples and asked: "Did you see clearly earlier? Did he hold a knife?"

The disciples all looked at each other. Some shook their heads, some nodded. Everyone was confused.

Ming Fan this spoiled young nobleman had never endured this kind of physical pain. Seeing fresh blood all over his body, his heart trembled. Puzzled, everyone saw that there was no weapon on the ground or on Luo Binghe's body. It shouldn't have been missing.

Shen Qingqiu held his breath. In front of him there was a suddenly a mass of red as the system wrote in crimson.

【Violation: OOC. -10 Points. Points remaining after deduction: 90 Points.
】

Shen Qingqiu was suddenly able to breathe. He originally thought that he'd lose around 50 points for his actions or perhaps all of them. Only taking away 10 points, that's a lot better than he'd thought. A little deduction now isn't much, there will be opportunities to gain it back later. But he hadn't finished breathing out for long when Ming Fan pointed at Luo Binghe and yelled: "Beat him for me!"

Shen Qingqiu almost vomited a mouthful of this old man's blood.

Numerous disciples listened to his command and piled forward. Shen Qingqiu unconsciously pulled out a bunch of leaves and sent them whizzing into the air.

Out of his hands and he immediately felt regret.

What am I doing? Luo Binghe is that excellent male protagonist, it's not like he hasn't been ganged up on before. Can he even be killed?!

Does he need you to fucking worry about him?!

Earlier he could muddle his way through but it's great now, no one can avoid noticing that something's wrong!

All the disciples stopped, not daring to surround Luo Binghe. Surprised and uncertain, they huddled around Ming Fan: "Eldest apprentice-brother! What's going on?" "Eldest apprentice-brother, I seem to have been cut by a knife!"

Ming Fan's face turned green and white, taking a long moment before he threw out these words: "Go!" and everyone retreated with bare asses but great vim and vigor. They came like the wind but also left like the wind. Left behind, Ning Yingying dazedly stood up and said: "Ah Luo, were you the one who beat them into running away earlier?"

Gloomily, Luo Binghe shook his head. He was barely able to stand upright but with a tense expression, he bent his head and waist to look for something on the ground. Even though his pants were all over mud, he continued to search diligently.

Shen Qingqiu knows what he's looking for. It's naturally the jade pendant that had been lost in the melee and confusion.

As the bystander, he saw clearly. At the beginning of the fight, Ming Fan extended his arm and threw out that pendant. The pendant's red string hooked onto a tall tree above their heads. It's not something he can mention. Plus, after throwing out that bunch of leaves earlier, he heard the system's alarms again: 【Violation: OOC. -10×6 Points. Points remaining after deduction: 30 Points. 】

Instantly down by a lot!

A leaf's feelings count as 10 points? Don't make the math so crude!

Ning Yingying didn't dare to speak either. After all, she was the cause of such a big incident. If it weren't for her big mouth, Luo Binghe wouldn't have lost that jade pendant and gotten beaten up. She also helped Luo Binghe search.

But they searched until the sky was getting dark and still there were no results.

Luo Binghe stood still and looked at the messy ground. A great tract of dirt had been turned over by them but they still hadn't found it.

Ning Yingying saw his distraction and was a little frightened. She pulled at his hand: “Ah Luo, if we can’t find it then it can’t be found. I’m sorry, I’ll pay you back later, okay?”

Luo Binghe didn’t pay attention to her and slowly pulled his hand back. With his head hanging low, he walked towards the path out of the forest. Ning Yingying quickly followed.

Shen Qingqiu really admired himself. These two children searched for an entire evening but he also watched for an entire evening..... other than idly looking to have his balls ache, is there any other explanation?

Only after he was completely sure they had left did he emerge from the darkness. Raising his head, he looked above. As his foot tapped the ground and sent him flying up, he experienced what was called ‘lithe as a swallow’ and the jade pendant hanging above was easily picked up by him.

Shen Qingqiu wanted to give it directly to Luo Binghe, but he has this pissy system that’ll definitely consider it an erroneous act. He doesn’t have extra points to splurge.

Thinking it over, Shen Qingqiu guesses that he can keep it for now.

It may be that later this jade pendant will have its use. For instance, in a critical moment it might be used to trade for his life? Shen Qingqiu

seriously pondered this possibility.

But the system's three-dimensional text popped up in front of his eyes.

【Congratulations! You have received a key prop: False Jade Guanyin x 1. For changing the scene, 'Shen Qingqiu' will receive +100 Points for Intelligence. Current points: 130 Points. Please continue your efforts! 】

The points that were just deducted aren't only back, but have even increased!

Plus this jade Guanyin definitely has a high effect on Luo Binghe, definitely a high-grade prop and suitable for saving his life!

Really an unexpected surprise!

Shen Qingqiu's entire body is sore. He squatted down in the shade to hide for an entire evening without a bit of illumination, but now even the system's ugly Google Translate-sounding voice is sweet to hear!

Outside the forest and already exiting the back of the mountain, Luo Binghe slowly opened his fist.

In the middle of his palm lie some green leaves. The edges of the leaves are sharp and stained with blood.

—End Chapter 4—

¹Guanyin: A popular motif for jade pendants is the Bodhisattva Guanyin (or Goddess of Mercy). It's kind of like hanging a cross around your neck for protection and/or luck among Christians.

²made... drunk: A funny saying that expresses how utterly unimpressed you are. So if someone touches a hot stove and complains about the heat, the bystander can be said to be 'drunk' at how stupid that person is. Not-so-serious-but-maybe warning: Please do not touch a hot stove with your bare hands. unless you're Superman

³Northwest goods (pinyin: *xi bei huo*): Don't ask me lol. Apparently this place is infamous for producing knock-offs or something. What they're getting at is that the pendant is not made of real jade.

⁴Street vendor: Actual words in Chinese specify that Ming Fan is talking about the kind of vendors who can't even set up a booth. AKA the ones who lay out a rug on which to place their goods and hawk the wares right there on the ground.

⁵Aiyo: In this instance, a cry of pain.

⁶*Puchi*: Snorted laughter SFX.

⁷ ‘Plucked Leaves Flying Flowers’ (pinyin: *zai ye fei hua*): A literal translation. Didn’t think anything would be lost in context if I left this translated vs in original pinyin.

⁸All kinds of cheats these days: Not very clear, but meaning is that our MC has been researching and studying ahead with foreknowledge of what is to come. Good thing he’s the Peak Lord of the literary Qing Jing Peak, eh?

⁹Spiritual power: Pinyin is *ling li*.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 5

TN: I realize that some of what's happened might be a little difficult to understand (esp. the details about the system), so I've made a Chapter 1-5 summary available . Hopefully it'll clear things up if anyone's confused. Or you can just ask me. ?

Made a page for Chinese fanart I found for this novel . Also, there's a lot of sarcasm in this chapter courtesy of Shen Qingqiu. LOL

Ever since Shen Qingqiu woke up from that high fever that emerged out of nowhere, Yue Qingyuan has come by to visit him several times during these days of 'recuperation.' Touted as the world's number one cultivation sect's main faction head, the things he must take care of are complex and many. Yet he still has the time to take this younger apprentice-brother's matters to heart. Shen Qingqiu almost felt moved.

Perhaps the original would still be able to betray this kind of person without regret or mercy, showing just how much of a scumbag he is.

Yue Qingyuan carried a snowy white porcelain tea set inside Shen Qingqiu's bamboo house, his eyes brimming with concern: "How is younger apprentice-brother's body after recuperating these days?"

Shen Qingqiu lightly waved his fan, integrating well into this atmosphere of brotherly affection: "Qingqiu has never had any problems. I've made older

apprentice brother worry again.”

Yue Qingyuan: “That means apprentice-brother is ready to go down the mountain. Is there anything you need?”

The hand that was holding the fan wavered: “Down the mountain?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Did apprentice-brother’s illness this time make you forget? Didn’t you tell me at that time that you would deal with the problem at Shuang Hu City, using it as an opportunity for your disciples to gain experience?”

So it’s a problem passed down by the original goods.

Shen Qingqiu truly wanted to find an excuse to avoid this problem. He still hasn’t completely familiarized himself with his spiritual power and techniques; how can he bring his disciples to gain experience like this!

But he hadn’t even thickened his skin enough to say that his body wasn’t well enough to go when an alert sounded next to his ear. The system coldly announced:

【Beginning stage checkpoint mission¹ assigned. Destination: Shuang Hu City. Mission: Finish disciples’ experience opportunity. Please clic.k to

accept. 】

So this is the mission required to transition from the beginning stage to the next! It seems that he has no choice but to go. Shen Qingqiu wanted to ask how he was supposed to accept when he was immediately confronted with the mission profile and two selections at the bottom. On the left is ‘Accept’ and on the right side ‘Decline.’

He paused over the ‘Accept’ option for a while. It gradually turned green and a ‘ding’ sounded. The system announced: 【Mission successfully accepted. Please read the file carefully for mission details and make appropriate preparations. We wish you success. 】

Shen Qingqiu turned back towards Yue Qingyuan and said: “I remember, naturally. It’s just that these days I’ve been lazy and almost forgotten about this matter. I’ll depart soon.”

Yue Qingyuan nodded: “If it is inconvenient for you, please don’t be courteous. Getting your disciples to gain experience isn’t something that needs to be hurried. Actually, you don’t even need to supervise them yourself.”

Shen Qingqiu smiled but in his heart complained: ‘Older apprentice-brother, you..... don’t you know you’re exactly like that mission-giving NPC?’

It's been mentioned by the original Shen Qingqiu in the novel that he passed all his matters to Ming Fan to carry out, no matter how big or small. As long as it's not related to the protagonist, this child's efficiency and intelligence are high. On the second day, Shen Qingqiu was already able to set out.

Before leaving Qing Jing Peak, Shen Qingqiu inspected his image again. He was dressed in white robes with a blue²waistband and belt, a sword hanging at the left side of his waist while his right hand held a fan. He is exactly the picture of refined and tasteful elegance.

Absolutely not OOC, perfect!

The white stone steps leading down to the mountain gate are hundreds of steps long. At the foot of the stairs are a horse-drawn carriage prepared for Shen Qingqiu and many riding horses for his disciples.

Shen Qingqiu: 'System, are you teasing me? If it's for a cultivation setting, why aren't we using flying swords to move out?'

The system coldly replied: 【Even if it is in a world with a setting like Harry Potter, not every wizard would go outside riding a broom. Too high-profile. 】

Shen Qingqiu: 'You seem to know a lot about this? In the past, were you assigned to Harry Potter's world?'

The system responded with a big line of 【...】 .

Ever since the system was in service for so many years, Shen Qingqiu is the first person to pull off this kind of bullshit.

However, after thinking it over, the system's right. This time they're going down the mountain for experience. These disciples are mostly young and inexperienced. They haven't found their own 'sword' yet³. From the very beginning under Cang Qiong Mountain sect's guidance, the disciples must cultivate to a certain stage before they can enter the central area of the Twelve Peaks to pick a 'sword' suitable for them.

It's said that a person chooses the sword but in reality, it's the sword who chooses the person. If a person completely doesn't have any sort of talent but persists in stubbornly taking a top-grade Heaven and Earth Spiritual Power Condensation sort of technique⁴, not only is it like a beautiful woman getting hitched with someone ugly, it's also tantamount to a beautiful flower being inserted into cow dung⁵. Think about it. Even if the desire's there, the sword might not agree.

Luo Binghe's golden finger⁶ started coming into play when he found his own unique sword 'Xin Mo.'

Shen Qingqiu entered the horse carriage. The carriage's exterior is generous without being ornate. Inside it is spacious enough to lounge comfortably with a fragrant little incense burner lazily wisping smoke. After sitting for a

moment, he felt there was something wrong. He lifted the window curtain with his fan and looked outside.

No wonder he felt there was something familiar about this carriage. The little figure darting back and forth getting called by others to do things, who'd also cleaned this carriage; it was the handyman Luo Binghe!

Luo Binghe finally placed the last item on the carriage – a white jade chest that Shen Qingqiu always brought every time he went out. When he raised his head and met Shen Qingqiu's complex gaze, he was surprised but still respectfully greeted: "*Shizun.*"

The injuries he'd received from the previous Shen Qingqiu's 'lesson' had just about healed, the bruises on his face gone. Though he's young and his worldview hasn't opened up, it doesn't detract from his capable and noble appearance. With a straight back and that air of action, it's as though he hasn't been beaten and suppressed on Qing Jing Peak for years.

Though he's doing rough work, his attitude is meticulous and that seriousness of his makes it difficult for anyone not to like him.

Perhaps Shen Qingqiu has some good feelings towards the protagonist because he originally held an interest in him. He is decisive when killing and differentiates clearly between those he should show gratitude or resentment towards, which Shen Qingqiu likes.

Shen Qingqiu looked at him for a while, then said “Mm.” He drew back his fan, letting the curtains fall down again. It has to be said, the protagonist is truly the protagonist. Though this kid had fallen from grace so tragically without any kind of prospects or background, he also had a big bunch of Woman 1, Woman 2, Woman 3, Woman 4, and so on hugging him front and back. This principle is that the person who looks best is the one who stands last!

Of course, this also explains why his fellow brother disciples don’t find him pleasing to the eye and want to smite him into a pig’s head.

He turned his thoughts over in his head once, then again: Not right. If the total number of disciples leaving the mountain including Luo Binghe number ten, then why did he only see nine horses? There’s still one horse missing.

Well, even his toes know who must have done it.

Sure enough, there’s a snicker. Ming Fan’s delighted voice penetrated the carriage from a long distance: “There’s truly a shortage of horses. We can only impose on you this time, apprentice-brother. Since your basic foundation is lacking, it’s also a good opportunity for you to practice.”

It’s complete bullshit that there’s not enough horses. As the number one cultivation sect in the world these years, Cang Qiong Mountain sect is practically overflowing with wealth. Can they lack even a single horse?

Ming Fan is truly well-versed in being a piece of cannon fodder. After a moment, he also said: “What? What kind of expression is that? You’re unsatisfied?”

Luo Binghe evenly replied with two words: “Don’t dare.”

Only, a young girl’s laughter rang out like bells. Ning Yingying said, “Big apprentice-brother, what are you talking about?”

Really, you always arrive at just the right time, young girl!

Shen Qingqiu knew that Ning Yingying’s presence acts as the worst sort of evil catalyst between Ming Fan and Luo Binghe’s interactions. As long as she appears, Luo Binghe will always have a hard time.

Shen Qingqiu ventured to lift his window curtain up a little. True enough, he saw Ning Yingying excitedly wave her hand: “Ah Luo, are there not enough horses? Come and ride with me!”

.....Really bringing a lot of hatred onto Luo Binghe.

Even Shen Qingqiu can imagine the sight of Ming Fan’s jaw dropping to the ground. This protagonist getting the beauty is a common scene and very cool, only it will easily increase the pressure put upon him by the malicious

and envious. If Luo Binghe accepts Ning Yingying's offer, he shouldn't even think of being left in peace by the others.

Sitting in the horse-carriage, Shen Qingqiu said from within: "Don't be noisy, men and women shouldn't be in contact with each other⁷. There should be a limit to the affection between you and your apprentice brother. Ming Fan, why have you tarried so long? Why haven't we set out already?"

Ming Fan was overjoyed and in his heart thought that *Shizun* truly had the same thoughts as him! He immediately pushed for everyone to start out. This small farce set aside, Shen Qingqiu retreated into his own thoughts. He opened the door of the carriage a little to check that they were moving out.

The expedition this time is not only the first 'going down the mountain' scene but also significant because this a chance for Shen Qingqiu to see if he can undo the OOC freeze. He must treat this opportunity seriously.

The contents of the mission file concern a small city dozens of miles away from Cang Qiong sect. A series of murders emerged recently. Nine people in succession have already been killed.

Every deceased person has a similarity: each one had their all their skin perfectly removed. From head to toe, the expertise of the killer was so high that it seemed like the body had never grown skin to begin with. Therefore, the murderer is called "The Skinner."

The officials have no way to deal with someone who successively killed nine people. All the common people are panicking and there are even some rumors that it's the work of a ghost – how else would this killer be untraceable?!

A few big families held a meeting before finally deciding to invite Immortal cultivators from Cang Qiong Mountain sect for help.

He's already read and reread this information countless times. However, no matter how often he rereads it there's not a single bit of help.

What kind of thing is this Skinner?! He hasn't even heard of it before! Is this some kind of added scene or an original part of the plot?! Isn't it dangerous?! Doesn't it require a high level of strength?! Can he even face this thing?! It's totally different from what they agreed on!

When he was asking himself these questions, the system said: 【What difference is there? Previously you were a novel critic. You should know that the novel is a kind of artistic creation and an artistic creation will have its slight differences. And you have already become a part of this world. Naturally, you must personally experience the scenes of the plot and complete the originally omitted scenes to finish the story. 】

Shen Qingqiu was helpless. He knew it was unavoidable. He could only practice with increased effort to get accustomed to his Xiu Ya Sword technique as soon as possible before they descended the mountain, familiarize himself with all kinds of skills to prevent being himself from

being played around with and killed by whatever obscure ghost or spirit he might encounter.

The compartments in the horse-carriage have all kinds of things. Wordless, Shen Qingqiu was even able to find five or six tea sets. He could still be counted as a rich little second-generation kid⁸ in his past life, but even then there wasn't this kind of attention to detail and sheer wealth.

Luo Binghe is still outside. He has never let up his vigilance a single bit, always on the watch for movement. Outside the horse carriage a trace of laughter seemed to travel through the air from time to time. Shen Qingqiu glanced outside.

Luo Binghe walked alone at the end of the procession, sometimes breaking into a run. Horses circle him, purposely made to kick up a wave of dirt and make him dusty.

This is only a novel. Everyone is a fictional character made and acting out a plot created by imagination; everything can be blamed on that stupid author for making the protagonist suffer, suffer, suffer, suffer, suffer, and freaking suffer your sister!

But once this scene is played out in real time in front of him like this, if you don't want him to be unmoved it's too unrealistic.

Ning Yingying tried to discourage the others to no avail. Anxious, she directed her horse closer to the carriage and called: "*Shizun!* Look at older

apprentice-brother and the rest!”

Shen Qingqiu’s heart was moved but it didn’t show on his face. Without much expression, he said: “What about them?”

Her voice carried a deep sense of grievance when she said: “They’re bullying people like this but you aren’t telling them off. If this goes on..... *Shizun*, what are you teaching disciples for!”

This can be considered lodging a public complaint. But Ming Fan and the others don’t feel pressured because the past Shen Qingqiu habitually allowed their behavior. The more they bullied Luo Binghe, the more *Shizun* would be happy; where is the conflict?

Ming Fan is the happiest. That day behind the mountain must have been the result of a crooked spell or skill that Luo Binghe somehow learned. Today *Shizun* is here so Luo Binghe is doomed.

Shen Qingqiu let out an “Oh,” and said one sentence: “Luo Binghe, you come over.”

Luo Binghe’s face was dull and he seemed accustomed to this treatment. He said a single “Yes,” and approached.

Everyone had a sense of schadenfreude and thought that Luo Binghe was going to be beaten and disciplined again. But they didn't think that today they would be frightened into self-destruction on three fronts.

Because Shen Qingqiu pulled open the door curtains, Luo Binghe proudly raised his head and looked inside the carriage. He didn't speak but his gesture spoke for itself.

Ning Yingying happily said: "Ah Luo, quickly get on the carriage, *Shizun* is letting you ride with him!"

Lightning striking from clear skies!

If it wasn't because they had been with *Shizun* so many years, Ming Fan and the others would have suspected that Shen Qingqiu was possessed by a demon!

Luo Binghe was also completely stunned. But he reacted quickly and didn't hesitate long. He replied: "Many thanks, *Shizun*." He leaped onto the carriage, honestly and self-consciously huddling in a corner, his hands and feet tucked in as though afraid of dirtying the carriage chamber.

System: 【Warning.....】

Shen Qingqiu: 'Warning what? I wasn't OOC.'

System: 【It is impossible for ‘Shen Qingqiu’ to commit this act of solving Luo Binghe’s difficulties. Judgment: OOC Level 100%. 】

Shen Qingqiu said: ‘If it was only for solving Luo Binghe’s problems, then of course it’s impossible. But right now, my motive is to not disappoint Ning Yingying’s expectations of me as her *Shizun*. Imagine, how could I be cold-hearted and let my dear little disciple be disappointed?’

System: 【..... 】

Shen Qingqiu: ‘Therefore my actions are completely in line with the logic of ‘Shen Qingqiu’s’ character. You can’t deduct points.’

Through this exchange, he has already figured out some loopholes.

The system follows rules, but they aren’t dead rules. Since the rules are alive, then it’s in the realm of bargaining. As expected, the system hadn’t thought of coping strategies. Shen Qingqiu felt so cool that he couldn’t help letting out a laugh.

Originally he had been sitting quietly in the carriage and meditating, seeming to have fallen into a trance. But suddenly hearing a laugh, Luo Binghe couldn’t resist looking over.

Honestly speaking, it would be false to say Luo Binghe wasn't surprised. Although he respects Shen Qingqiu, *Shizun* doesn't care for him, doesn't even appear to care for him. This he knows.

Shen Qingqiu probably called him onto the carriage earlier because he has something worse planned. Luo Binghe prepared himself inside but didn't think that Shen Qingqiu would forget about him and start meditating.

Luo Binghe thought that he'd never been this close before. He carefully looked over Shen Qingqiu.

On the surface, Shen Qingqiu's appearance is nothing to talk about. Maybe he's not a first-class, number one handsome man, but he's undeniably good-looking and good to look at.⁹ His face half in light and shadow seemed to be worn by soft-flowing water, easily pleasing to behold. If he took up his famous sword in one hand, he would be picture of cultivated elegance.

Shen Qingqiu opened his eyes and saw Luo Binghe observing him. The male protagonist at that moment saw his 'eyes like stars, a wide smile, a greeting filled with laughter¹⁰.' It was light and warm.

Having been caught in the act, Luo Binghe truly didn't know how to best proceed. But then Shen Qingqiu smiled.

This smile is purely unconscious. It was as though Luo Binghe had been pricked by that smile, immediately withdrawing his eyes and unable to figure out what that feeling was.

Very soon, Shen Qingqiu wasn't able to smile anymore.

The system announced: 【Violation: OOC. -5 Points. Current total: 165 Points. 】

Shen Qingqiu: ‘.....Just smiling once causes a point deduction?’

The system said righteously: 【OOC is OOC. 】

—End Chapter 5—

¹Beginning stage checkpoint mission: There are multiple stages (or story arcs) in the plot, each with an important checkpoint mission. Our MC has to complete these checkpoint missions to proceed in the plot. Right now our MC is at the Beginning stage (kind of like a tutorial/prologue) and needs to pass this checkpoint mission before really entering the main plotline/story.

²Blue (青): Pinyin is *qing*. This is a very confusing color word that can mean blue or green. I'll probably switch between blue and green as I go,

though I'll admit that I have a preference for the MC in blue due to a piece of fanart I saw.

³ 'Sword': To add to the explanation after this footnote in the translation, this world's cultivation seems to work like this: after cultivating to a certain level, the cultivator then needs to embark on a kind of self-reflection to find the 'sword' or technique suited for them. They go into seclusion to form it. Just substitute the word 'sword' for 'dao' and this part is like any other cultivation novel out there. LOL

⁴ Heaven and Earth Spiritual Power Condensation...technique (天地之靈氣凝結): Um, kinda translated this because it's way too confusing in the original Chinese. But you can kinda guess this is an impressive thing that a noob cultivator shouldn't touch.

⁵ Beautiful flower being inserted into cow dung: Kept this phrase close to the original Chinese because it's funny. It means something great or beautiful being wasted by getting attached to something useless and disgusting. The hilarious part is that this saying is usually used regarding a beautiful woman or man being married to someone who's completely unworthy. It's like Shen Qingqiu is repeating his previous description all over again. Over-emphasis much? ?

⁶ Golden finger: Someone who is lucky AF. The complete opposite of someone who is unlucky or a 'black hand' when it comes to loot. Someone who hits the one-in-a-googleplex lottery jackpot. You get the idea.

⁷Men and women shouldn't be in contact with each other (男女授受不親): A saying that means the boundaries between men and woman shouldn't be crossed for the sake of propriety. Rather traditional but a common attitude. LOL I get the feeling that Shen Qingqiu's turning into an overprotective papa.

⁸Second generation kid: An uncomplimentary way of referring to the second generation of a nouveau riche family. I.e. some wealthy and irresponsible noble brat.

⁹Good to look at: This sounds so much nicer in the original Chinese. This phrase means that Shen Qingqiu is one of those people you won't get tired of looking at.

¹⁰ 'Eyes like stars, a wide smile, a greeting filled with laughter' (目如兩點寒星，露齒莞爾，言笑晏晏): THIS FREAKING LINE SLAUGHTERED MY ATTEMPTS AT TRANSLATION. I'm pretty sure it's from some ancient Chinese poem but I think I got the gist of the meaning. I think.

Chapter 6

TN: In case you missed the news, Luen's going to be our editor! Welcome and thank you! *throws confetti and candy*

We find out more about the Skinner in this chapter. Plot ball's going to start rolling, rolling, rolling~ :3

Having learned his lesson, Shen Qingqiu was more careful afterwards. His expression was a frown the rest of the way because he wished for a peaceful and uneventful trip. Finally, they arrived at Shuang Hu City.

This city isn't large but can be considered quite bustling. After entering, they visit the city's richest man, the same Old Master Chen who led the others in pleading for help from Cang Qiong Mountain sect. Old Master Chen's two beloved little concubines had both died tragically under the Skinner's hands. With Shen Qingqiu's arrival, he is filled with hope.

He touched the white jade hands of the third beautiful concubine. With mournful sighs and groans, his old man's tears dripped down.

"You cultivators must make the decision for us! I don't dare let Butterfly¹ leave my side for fear that if she loses her way by even a single step, she will be killed by that unnatural creature² the very same day."

Such an important mission NPC, yet he's making Shen Qingqiu's face twitch.

He does not at all like looking at an old man in his sixties and a teenage girl fondling each other in front of him!

The good part is that Shen Qingqiu is a lofty expert. After briefly meeting them, he can coldly turn around and leave. Only Ming Fan is left behind greeting Old Master Chen. Lofty people have special privileges; toward experts, the regular people beside them cannot say anything. The more lofty they are, the colder they are, even as the people around them watch with admiring eyes.

Ning Yingying knocked on the door and entered. Sweetly, she said: "Shizun, Ying-er³ is going to go out for a turn in the market. Shizun, do you want to come with me?"

Shen Qingqiu's back faced her. Putting on a perfectly intellectual appearance, he lightly said: "If Ying-er wants to go out for a turn, find some apprentice-brothers to accompany you. I still have some things to do before we face the Skinner."

Who she'll bring with her, can Shen Qingqiu not know?

Shen Qingqiu felt bitter to death. Doesn't he want to go out and play too? Before this he was cooped up in Qing Jing Peak's bamboo house compound and daily pretending to be that highly-educated Shizun. When he could

finally go down the mountain for once, he had to meet with the system's beginning stage checkpoint for 'Shen Qingqiu' and hole up in his room without meeting anyone. He didn't even want to pretend to cultivate, just laid on his bed and pretended to be dead for a while. Then he truly started to think about how to deal with this Skinner.

According to the information gathered from the nine victims, the Skinner picks young and beautiful girls. So those in Shuang Hu City with beautiful daughters, wives, and concubines all close their doors when night falls. But even this fails to stop the Skinner from coming and going.

After sunset, Ming Fan entered his room to report what he learned.

Finally, there was someone to talk with him. Shen Qingqiu's half a day's worth of loneliness finally dissolved: "Did you visit the coroner?"

Ming Fan said: "Yes. This disciple interrogated the coroner and carefully inspected the bodies." Here, he stopped speaking. His expression was solemn as he offered something over.

Shen Qingqiu didn't receive it in his hands. Examining closely, there were two stacks of yellow paper written on by cinnabar. The surface of the papers had already become a rotten black color.

He nodded and said: "You used these papers to test the evil energy⁴ of the deceased?"

Ming Fan said: “Shizun is insightful. These yellow papers were used by this disciple in two places. The first place was in the dirt at the grave of a woman who had already been buried. The second place is at the coroner’s among the deceased who hadn’t been buried yet.”

If even the grave dirt had been saturated with evil energy like this, they can confirm that the Skinner’s identity is that of a demon. Finally, he knows what he’s up against.

Shen Qingqiu hmphe coldly: “They dare to intrude upon Cang Qiong sect’s hundreds of li⁵ span of territory, cruelly harming and killing the common people. These puny demons hit our door⁶ so they can’t blame me for sending my disciples up to punish them in Heaven’s place.”

Believe him, he really doesn’t want to speak these dramatic actor’s lines. But if he doesn’t say them, there’ll be OOC!

Ming Fan looked at him with a face full of admiration: “Shizun is wise! If Shizun acts, the monster will definitely be brought in for the common people’s justice!”

“.....” Looks like this master-disciple relationship was built in the ‘you dictate, I worship’ model. Cooperation is a very happy thing.

To tell the truth, Shen Qingqiu is quite satisfied. Speaking from Shen Qingqiu's point of view, this disciple Ming Fan isn't bad. Though he's a rich family's young master and used to being arrogant, he dares not reveal a bit of that arrogance in front of his shifu. Instead, he's reverent and respectful.

Men will never think of the lives of those who worship them. Ming Fan's ability to carry out tasks is exact, figuring out major stops along the road and arranging things in a timely manner; all of it was taken care of by him. If he hadn't met the protagonist and found him displeasing to look at, experiencing a sharp drop in intelligence, he wouldn't be a small evil school tyrant. He would be a good little seedling!

And facing this cannon fodder who was thrown by Luo Binghe into a pit filled with tens of thousands of ants and bitten to death alive, Shen Qingqiu shared the common feeling of being in the same boat.....

“Descending the mountain this time is for the sake of gaining experience. This teacher will not be able to help you. Ming Fan, as the head disciple, you will need to vigilantly prepare so the demon won't harm your fellow disciples.”

“Yes! This disciple has already laid out strategies. If the demon.....”

Ming Fan hadn't finished speaking when a person burst through the door and interrupted.

Luo Binghe's face was pale as he cried: "Shizun!"

Shen Qingqiu's heart thumped though his expression was still cold and calm: "What matter is there to shout so loudly, or be in such a panic?"

Luo Binghe said: "Apprentice-sister Ning Yingying and this disciple went outside during the day to go to the city's market. I urged her to come back but she refused. Don't know how, after turning around she disappeared. This disciple searched the entire street but couldn't find her, and so came back to ask for Shizun's help."

To be missing at this critical moment, it's not a joke. Ming Fan listened and somehow restrained himself from leaping up: "Luo Binghe! You....."

Shen Qingqiu waved his sleeve, exploding the teacup sitting on the writing desk. Not only did he avoid OOC, he also temporarily stalled Ming Fan's impending death.

Putting on an angry appearance, he said: "Since things have already happened, more words are of no use. Luo Binghe, come with me. Ming Fan, you bring along some fellow apprentice-brothers to ask the Chen family for their assistance to go search for your apprentice-sister."

After assenting, Ming Fan hurriedly rushed out. Luo Binghe's head hung low, not saying a single word.

Shen Qingqiu knows this isn't his fault because Ning Yingying was always this kind of almost-dying female character. In the original work, at least fifty chapters are dedicated to Ning Yingying getting lost or sticking out her neck⁷. Sometimes, Shen Qingqiu quite admires Luo Binghe for tolerating and accepting such a troublesome woman into his harem. He also admires how he hasn't been gnawed to death; most people can't endure. It can only be said that the protagonist's powerful halo extends to his cock⁸.

Luo Binghe originally thought Shen Qingqiu kept him back to yell at and beat him, so he lowered his head and said: "This matter is all this disciple's fault. If Shizun wants to punish, this disciple will have no regrets and only wants to peacefully find apprentice-sister Ning Yingying."

Shen Qingqiu looked at his pitifully obedient appearance and wanted to rub his head, but had to restrain himself because of the system. He coldly said: "Come over here. Bring me to where you last were before the disappearance."

Luo Binghe and Ning Yingying were near the bustling market when she was lost.

Shen Qingqiu stood there and closed his eyes, feeling for traces of evil energy. He walked and followed that almost breaking strand of evil energy to the end. When he opened his eyes again, Shen Qingqiu found he was standing at the entrance of a rouge shop⁹.

Shen Qingqiu: "....."

Could it be that the murderer be someone from the rouge shop?

But after entering the rouge shop, the thread of evil energy broke and completely dissipated.

“Could it be that the murder isn’t hidden in the rouge shop but had only come here before? Entering the rouge shop..... could the murderer be a woman?” Shen Qingqiu murmured.

This sort of mission getting assigned to him, without being able to reference any scene in the original work; his brain cells seriously aren’t strong enough!

Just when Shen Qingqiu was bitterly thinking back to the detective novels he read or deductive reasoning games he played in the past, the system urgently reminded him: 【Upon encountering difficulties, would you like to pay 100 Points and activate Easy Mode? 】

Shen Qingqiu: ‘Fuck, if there’s an Easy Mode why didn’t you say so earlier! Activate activate activate!’

His gaze focused on the ‘Yes’ option for three seconds. It turned green and disappeared. Then something caused goosebumps to rise all along his back.

Strong, what strong evil energy!

It's as though someone is afraid the target can't be found!

Easy Mode truly isn't bullying me!

Shen Qingqiu isn't ashamed at all at using Easy Mode, elatedly and slowly proceeding towards the evil energy. After five hundred steps, the path deviated sharply from the city area and he arrived at an abandoned and deserted house.

It's really here! Look at that pale lantern, look at that poor and dilapidated front gate! It's totally a haunted house, you can't deny it!

Shen Qingqiu adjusted his expression, focusing on the silently following Luo Binghe: "Return to the Chen estate. Contact Ming Fan and tell him to bring all the sutras and apprentice-brothers to come here together."

Luo Binghe was about to open his mouth and reply when suddenly, his pupils shrank. Shen Qingqiu saw him staring straight behind him. He knows it can't be good, but it's too late. A gust of yin wind blew and the front gates slammed open.

"Shizun, Shizun, quickly wake up!"

Shen Qingqiu woke up.

After waking, he saw Luo Binghe's anxious expression. He was tied to the opposite side. Before, he seemed to have been staring at the sleeping Shen Qingqiu.

Seeing Shen Qingqiu wake up, Luo Binghe let out a breath in relief and his eyes brightened. He called him Shizun again.

Ning Yingying was tied together with him and with a crying face, also called: "Shizun."

Shen Qingqiu felt a bit dizzy and didn't know if whatever freaking thing the demon sprayed had any bad side effects.

His mood is very bad.

This Easy Mode is very simple and brutal! It delivered him straight to the mini-BOSS's mouth!

The worst thing is, Qing Jing Peak's lord is a mini-BOSS in front of his disciples but was knocked down! And just when he awoke, the system harshly said: **【OOC: -50 Points. 】**

Earlier he'd opened Easy Mode and paid 100 Points. In the blink of an eye, another 50 Points have gone. How can his heart not hurt. Originally, the original Shen Qingqiu's strength is in dealing with demons. It was like killing chickens with a master's hand. But the shameful thing is that in this instance, the master's hand didn't manage to kill the chicken!

Very quickly, he found something that made his mood even worse.

He felt there was something wrong with his body. It was a bit cold and there was slight pain. Lowering his head, a 'fuck' almost blurted out from his mouth.

He! Had! Been! Stripped! Bare!

—End Chapter 6—

1Butterfly (name): Pretty sure that this is kind of a coarse, slutty name in Chinese when written this way. You'd expect a prostitute to be named this rather than a high-ranking or wealthy man's concubine. LOL

2Unnatural creature: Pinyin is yaomoguiguai. It's a term referring to a wide variety of evil, unnatural supernatural beings including malicious ghosts and the like.

3Ying-er: Cute version of Ning Yingying's name. The '-er' suffix again lol. Normally it denotes cuteness, affection, and familiarity.

4Evil energy (魔氣): Pinyin is mo qi.

5hundreds of li: Li is an old measure of distance. How long a li is has changed a lot over time, but the modern li is around 0.5 km or about 1/3 of a mile.

6Hit our door: Literally hitting the door. The meaning is similar to the 'kicking a steel plate' phrase you see a lot in Chinese action novels. Imagine a stupid burglar walking up to a door and prying it open. Then he finds out he just broke the front door of a mafia boss. Now just put Shen Qingqiu (or Cang Qiong sect) in the place of the mafia boss. ?

7Sticking out her neck: Revealing a weak spot and asking for death lol. Shen Qingqiu is observing that Ning Yingying was created as the stereotypical damsel in distress who always needs rescuing. ?

8Protagonist's powerful halo extends to his cock: Okay, this line contained some slang I think. I kept getting a nonsense line about the protagonist's halo frying the skies but I tried another MTL and got 'cock'... Considering the preceding line about his harem, I'll assume that they mean the protagonist has amazing stamina to keep up with all the women in his harem.

9Rouge shop: In ancient China, a rouge shop is the equivalent of a make-up shop. Rouge = blush in terms of modern make-up.

Chinese Profanity 101, continued:

So... Kao (靠) can also mean 'fuck.' LOL

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 7

TN: From now on, you'll experience a peculiarity unique to novels. Sometimes you'll see an "I" perspective thought smushed together with a more third-person POV. Luen and I decided to italicize the 1st/2nd person POV bits for clarity.

Also, don't forget to click 'next' and read Chapter 8! No need for cliffies, mwahahahaha~

Even though it was only his top half that was stripped bare, it was already horrifying enough.

Whether good or bad, Shen Qingqiu was still an important master! This upper body revealing two red fruits¹, wearing only pants and a pair of white boots, having his limbs tied tightly together and lying fallen on the ground – an image! Like! This! It's like a tender-skinned pretty boy in a bedroom rape scene; no wonder the system deducted so many points!

Shen Qingqiu's face flushed red and white. He wanted to use his sword to dig a hole in the ground and bury himself, but he didn't know where his sword had flown to.

No wonder Luo Binghe looked a little embarrassed earlier. He must have been thinking that he'd seen Shen Qingqiu in such an awkward position that

he had had enough revenge and that he wouldn't need to beat him up as severely in the future.

Ning Yingying weepily said: "Shizun, you've finally woken up. Yingying is very scared....."

Scared? If you're scared then don't run around like this, little sister2! Shen Qingqiu was helpless.

At this time, a burst of weird laughter came from behind him.

A black silhouette jumped out from the darkness.

"Cang Qiong Mountain sect's great and lofty expert is nothing great after all. It seems like the world's number one big sect, Cang Qiong Mountain sect, is only to this standard and the Demon Realm's rise is just around the corner." Another burst of loud laughter sounded.

The other person's face and head were all covered in black veils, the voice coarse and unpleasant just like an opium addict's.

Shen Qingqiu squinted, "The Skinner?"

“Hehe, the famous Xiu Ya Sword has fallen into my hands, I’m so happy! Shen Qingqiu, Shen Qingqiu, even if you break open your head you won’t be able to guess who I am!”

Shen Qingqiu said: “What’s so hard to guess?”

The Skinner: “.....”

Shen Qingqiu: “You are Butterfly.”

The Skinner: “.....” She drew aside the black veils and said irritably: “Impossible! How could you guess!”

Shen Qingqiu was speechless.

Could he say, do you think I’m blind? Can’t tell by the body shape? The first thing men take note of is the body, looking at a person’s prospects comes after. The waist is small, so it must be a woman. And this sort of nouveau riche decoration can’t be seen just anywhere; did you think I didn’t know that I’ve already been shipped back to the Chen estate? Though the women in the Chen estate are many, I’ve happened to meet just a few and only know Butterfly’s name. If you want me to guess, of course I can only guess ‘Butterfly.’ I don’t even know the names of the others, how can I guess? Who knew I guessed right on the first try? Who knew you were so temperamental and couldn’t even deny it, directly drawing aside those mysterious veils!

Could he say that? Could he?!

If he spoke aloud about the deductive reasoning and thought process detailed above, he'd surely be judged OOC. So, he couldn't breathe a word and could only hide his pain in his heart and secretly curse 'fuck' endlessly.

Butterfly – or rather the Skinner, quickly readjusted herself and put on the face of Old Master Chen's beloved concubine again. Her expression was incomparably tender and proud as she smiled: "Not bad, it's really me! Shen Qingqiu, even if you broke your head thinking you wouldn't have thought it would be a soft and weak woman like me, right?"

Shen Qingqiu straightened his body and shifted into a more comfortable position.

Every BOSS traditionally had a confession time. He couldn't avoid giving this face.³

Butterfly didn't need his encouragement and continued herself: "The Skinner is untraceable not because I have exceedingly high ability, but because every time after I killed someone I switched to a new skin. Wearing the skins of those women and imitating their behavior, I passed unnoticed in the confusion to search for the next target."

Shen Qingqiu was a bit doubtful: "Wrong."

Butterfly's face was frighteningly gloomy: "Where is it wrong?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "Even if you switched skins after killing someone every time – for example, after killing Butterfly – donning her skin, you become 'Butterfly' but there's still her skinned body left over. Won't someone find it strange for there to be two Butterflies?"

He thought for a bit, then suddenly realized.

This world didn't have DNA analysis. After pulling off the skin, only the bloody mess of flesh would be left over. It would be very difficult to figure out who it was.

Butterfly said: "Seems like you've realized. Not bad. I use the next woman's body to substitute the previous woman's body. For instance, regarding killing Butterfly this time: I wore Xiang-er's skin and everyone still believed that Xiang-er was still alive. After I killed Butterfly, Butterfly's body was disguised by me to look like Xiang-er's body. So it was 'Xiang-er's' body that was found by the others."⁴

Luo Binghe was listening silently this entire time, a glint of anger simmering in his eyes. His juvenile sense of justice was stirred up by this perverse demon's poisonous actions. Ning Yingying completely couldn't understand what was being said but didn't dare interrupt.

Shen Qingqiu sincerely respected these villains; they truly had professional skills. Not only did they have to expose their psychological activities, they also needed to explain in detail their plans and actions. To be frank, their standards.....were even more stringent than that of the teachers who make the college entrance examination⁵!

Shen Qingqiu said: “Every set period you must change into a new skin; is it for the pleasure of it or for another reason?”

Butterfly coldly laughed and said: “Do you think I’ll tell you?”

You’ve already told me a lot, all right, big sister (or is it big brother)? You won’t be missing anything by telling me!

Butterfly looked towards the bound Ning Yingying and Luo Binghe, walking towards them. Luo Binghe was still as calm and composed as before, but Ning Yingying loudly cried: “Demon! Don’t come over here! Shizun, save me!”

Butterfly laughed mischievously: “Your shizun is bound with my ‘Binding Immortal Cable’ and the spiritual power in his body can’t circulate. It’ll be difficult for him to preserve his own life, how can he come save you?”

No wonder Shen Qingqiu’s earlier effort to feel for his spiritual power only resulted in a weak pulse.

Butterfly entered into a soliloquizing mode: “How hateful; if my demonic cultivation hadn’t suffered damage, I wouldn’t need to keep switching skins. This little girl’s skin is tender like water and she also has a lot of fellow disciples. I can probably use her for quite a while. After your skin is sucked dry by me, it’ll be your shifu’s turn. To be able to use the Xiu Ya Sword will count as a second life for me.”

Luo Binghe: “.....”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

What did you say earlier? ‘Do you think I’ll tell you,’ right?

Not only have you told me right now, you seem to have said something out of the question and even revealed your future plans!

The intelligence of the villains in this world was beyond saving. Shen Qingqiu’s heart suddenly felt very tired. He just wanted to add some points, why was it such a bumpy and difficult task!

Shen Qingqiu spoke with the system: ‘Dearly beloved, if I make a mistake during the mission and die, will I have the opportunity to try again?’

System: 【An undying golden body is the protagonist’s privilege. 】

Damn it. That means my life is completely without a guarantee of preservation. If things aren't done well, I'll die first.

Villains always gave 'excellent quality' answers. Shen Qingqiu wanted to delay for time and threw out a question to Butterfly: "Don't you always only target young and beautiful girls?"

"I never said I only choose to target young and beautiful women. If their skin is smooth and exquisite, I'll always target them. It's only that most men don't have skin as good as a woman's and an older person's skin is never as good as a young person's." As expected, Butterfly's words surged forth without her awareness. Suddenly, her two eyes flashed green and an envious expression appeared on her face. She stretched her crimson-painted hands and rubbed them over Shen Qingqiu's upper body: "However, an immortal cultivator is truly different. Even though you're a man, you have such smooth and delicate skin. It's..... been a long time since I've used a man's skin....."

Shen Qingqiu broke out into goosebumps after having been felt up by her hands but still had to put on an icy and unassailable appearance. He was disgusted on one hand, sympathetic on the other.

This demon was a bit pitiful. It seemed it used to be male, but for the sake of furthering its cultivation had to keep using women's skins. After all this time, he was afraid its psychological state had become abnormal.....

Nevertheless, he was staring at a bewitchingly charming woman's smiling face. Getting touched here and there like this, Shen Qingqiu's face revealed some embarrassment and he unconsciously shrank back slightly.

In Luo Binghe's eyes, this appearance was not his usual one and made a huge impact.

In the past, he'd seen much of the Shen Qingqiu who was high and unreachable, cold and biting sarcasm. This time, he was met with a Shen Qingqiu who had an uncontrollable flush spreading, an attitude of retreat in his gaze, and two □□ on his upper body.⁶ The unbreakable Binding Immortal Cable left red marks and his jet-black hair scattered down, as though to cover him but failing. Luo Binghe's heart was full of an indescribable sense of entanglement.

If you asked Shen Qingqiu to find a metaphor for this kind of feeling: it would be like a man watching a movie only to find out the protagonist was the person who kept calling on him to answer in class, who beat him up and punished him to the third degree if he couldn't answer correctly. It is that very same English teacher. A remarkably subtle mood!

Shen Qingqiu suddenly smiled.

Butterfly guardedly said: "What are you smiling for?"

Shen Qingqiu said very slowly and leisurely: "I'm laughing at you for keeping the glittering casket and giving up the pearls."⁷ There are three

people here, yet you still don't seem to have noticed the best choice for your next skin."

Luo Binghe heard his words and his face changed.

He didn't think he would be inexplicably dunked in cold water!

Shen Qingqiu wasn't speaking irresponsibly. What kind of person is Luo Binghe? His real identity was that of a descendant of the ancient demons, an up-and-coming figure in the Demon Realm in the future, with the highest pedigree blood. If most demons got his body, don't even speak about repairing damage from cultivating incorrectly; they might even end up taking over the world!

Butterfly looked up and down at Luo Binghe. His appearance was calm, but at heart he was at a loss for what to do. Even if he broke his head wondering why, he wouldn't know why the focus had shifted to him.

Butterfly said: "Even if you want to trick me, you should have used a more believable lie. Even though this little guy's skin hangs on his bones better and is more tender, how can it compare with that of a cultivator who has a consolidated jin dan?8"

Shen Qingqiu tilted his head and laughed: "With your eyesight, no wonder your cultivation has never had the proper environment. Haven't you considered what sort of person that I, Shen Qingqiu, am? If this child is only good on the surface, then why would I want to accept him as one of

my disciples? If I only wanted a disciple who looked good on the surface, there are enough people wanting to enter Cang Qiong Mountain sect every year that they almost reach the skies. You think there aren't enough for me to choose from? What mysterious process is used to choose from them naturally can't be revealed to outsiders."

Butterfly was immediately moved. Very good, this villain's intelligence is quite low; she put on a very convincing appearance of having considered this already.

Shen Qingqiu struck while the iron was hot: "If you're skeptical, it's easy to check. I'll tell you something that'll prove my words are right. Go over and hit him on the crown of his head and you'll see that I haven't deceived you."

Luo Binghe's face went deathly white.

No matter how mature, he was still only a child. Even if it was an adult facing death, there were very few people who would be able to maintain an unchanging expression. Not to mention, he was only fourteen years old.

Shen Qingqiu tried not to look at him, in his heart repeatedly apologizing and thinking that he'd definitely turn the tables around in the future and rescue him!

Ning Yingying was scared to death: "Shi..... Shizun, you..... you aren't saying this for real, right?"

Shen Qingqiu's heart was stretched tight like a string and he couldn't bother to care for her. He could only face Butterfly and smile slightly, saying: "Whether or not it's true, you'll know once you try. It's only striking a little child's head; even if I'm deceiving you, you wouldn't be at a loss right? Or is it that you're worried what I said is true, so you're afraid to hit and see?"

Even if someone unrelated were to look at this situation, they would think that this was pushing Luo Binghe on the road to death.

Luo Binghe couldn't believe it; inside he asked, could Shen Qingqiu's hatred for him have reached this degree?

He couldn't help rising with all his strength, the ropes bound around him drawing taut. Behind him, Ning Yingying felt pain but didn't dare say anything.

Shen Qingqiu's words and tone were very persuasive. Butterfly thought for a while and agreed with his judgment. She'd already killed so many, how could she be afraid of making a single strike!

She snorted: "I really have to see what kind of thing you are." Speaking up to this point, she advanced towards Luo Binghe and sent a palm striking down!

—End Chapter 7—

1Red fruits: Referring to his nipples lol.

2Little sister: Just a reminder that in Chinese, you can call people ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ without any blood relations. It’s just a measure of closeness. In Shen Qingqiu’s case, it’s also a slang-ish sort of way to express his annoyance with her.

3Every BOSS traditionally had a confession time...: Referring to the long monologues that villains go into about their plans. Shen Qingqiu is saying that he should at least respect them enough to let them monologue uninterrupted. LOLLOLOL

4Xiang-er (name): You can assume this is the name of the previous victim.

5College entrance examination: In China, this is even more serious than the SATs taken by students in the US. All education from preschool to high school is geared towards scoring well on this test and the test covers ALL SUBJECTS studied within that time span. The college entrance exam is nation-wide and can only be taken once. That means no retakes. Cheating is a big no-no and means an eternal black mark. If one of the teachers who create the exam make a mistake, it’s also a huge no-no (but less than cheating).

6Two □□ on his upper body: Referring to his nipples again. ?

7Keeping the glittering casket and giving up the pearls (買櫝還珠): A saying meaning someone has bad judgment.

8Cultivator with a consolidated jin dan (金丹中期的修為): Had trouble translating this. It's another cultivation-specific term. I assume they're talking about the final step in cultivation to become an Immortal. Shen Qingqiu has cultivated enough to make that final step into becoming an Immortal (and therefore has eternal youth, a better body, etc. than your average cultivator).

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 8

TN: More sarcasm this chapter. LOL. Also, changed a term. That false 'cultivation technique' Ming Fan gave to Luo Binghe will now be called 'cultivation manual.' I think it's a more accurate translation. And the 'Immortal Assembly Conference' will now be 'Immortal Alliance Conference' instead.

This chapter may need to be edited later. ^^

An opportunity only lasts for a moment! Shen Qingqiu's pupils contracted!

Just when that palm was striking down, an unexpected happening like the doings of gods and ghosts occurred: a ceiling beam broke.....

If Shen Qingqiu was still only a reader of "Proud Immortal Demon Way," after reading to here, he would throw down his cell phone and curse up a torrent of abuse like dog's blood.

The system already stated that the eternal, iron-clad rule is that the protagonist will not die. That is to say, if anything threatens the protagonist's life, a death flag will be triggered!

Shen Qingqiu purposefully instigated Butterfly to attack Luo Binghe just to utilize this iron-clad rule and borrow a knife to kill someone. Though doing things this way wasn't very upright, Luo Binghe won't be in any danger at all. Even if something happens, Shen Qingqiu will take responsibility and fix things himself. Currently he's dropping Luo Binghe into a hole, but if he takes the long view, there are still opportunities in the future to regain good favor.

But.

Airplane Towards The Sky, what are you treating the intelligence of your readers as! How can a perfectly magnificent new mansion suddenly experience a broken ceiling beam!

Even if it's to let the protagonist escape with his life, this turn of events is too stiff and unnatural! Bad writing!

That almost entirely new ceiling beam was unbiased and just happened to smash onto Butterfly, almost laying her flat on the ground, unable to get up. It also just happened to bring down the pillar that Luo Binghe and Ning Yingying were tied to.

Ning Yingying had already been scared dizzy earlier. Luo Binghe struggled and the bindings miraculously loosened. On the other hand, Shen Qingqiu was still bound by the Binding Immortal Cable, watching Luo Binghe stand near the fallen Butterfly in silence.....

Just like this..... things are concluded?

Even as he thought this, Butterfly flipped the ceiling beam and sprang up.

She furiously said: “Shen Qingqiu! Cang Qiong Mountain sect’s people are truly base and shameless, full of schemes! What kind of twisted method did you use to harm me from behind?”

Shen Qingqiu was very innocent. This wasn’t his business, truly. The person who suffered the most was probably Luo Binghe.

Butterfly unforgivingly said: “So you were purposefully tricking me, trying to divert my attention and sneak-attack. How else would a perfectly good ceiling beam like this fall down, and right on top of me too?”

You’ve also noticed the unreasonable execution of events; doesn’t this mean your intelligence can still be saved? Shen Qingqiu’s heart was a little hopeful.

Butterfly laughed coldly: “You think something like this is enough to stop me? Dream on. Unless it’s cut with an immortal treasure sword, Binding Immortal Cable won’t break. Normal means won’t open it.”

.....Just praised you and you said something stupid again. Please don’t talk about how to release your enemy! Also, are you afraid I’ll miss seeing

where you put the Xiu Ya sword? You even took special care to pull back your cloak and show where it's sticking out from your waist, patting it!

Shen Qingqiu couldn't stand it anymore. He took some time to talk with the system: 'That stupid.....I have to ask, do all the villains walk this kind of path?'

The system said: 【To ensure that you will smoothly pass this beginning checkpoint mission after activating Easy Mode, the villain's intelligence level has been set below average. 】

Shen Qingqiu strongly approved: 'Hah, thanks. I want to say that your Easy Mode's design is really too easy to use. Good product, good product.'

Butterfly gritted her teeth and said: "This time no matter what you say, I won't listen anymore! Accept your death, Shen Qingqiu!"

Shen Qingqiu shouted: "Last word!"

Under the might of Easy Mode, Butterfly stopped to listen: "What else did you want to say?"

Shen Qingqiu thought for a moment, then asked: "How's the taste of sleeping with an old man in his sixties?"

“.....” While Butterfly’s face twisted, her entire body trembling, Luo Binghe suddenly advanced from behind!

He divested Butterfly of the Xiu Ya sword hanging at her waist, drawing the sword and illuminating the room with snow-white light. A silver shadow passed and the Binding Immortal Cable on Shen Qingqiu was broken.

Really can only blame this mini-BOSS’s intelligence under Easy Mode for being below average; Luo Binghe was standing right behind her. She’s sure to die.

Butterfly exclaimed: “This is impossible – ”

Enough! I don’t want to listen! I don’t want to listen to the BOSS’s final words before dying! Shen Qingqiu pulled at his spiritual power, summoning it in his right hand and struck out his palm, hitting Butterfly’s chest. She flew out like a broken-stringed kite.

This is Shen Qingqiu’s first time making a move to ‘kill.’ But he didn’t hesitate at all. Because firstly, this is a novel; secondly, this was a demon that had killed countless people; thirdly, if he didn’t make a move then he would have been the one to die.

Shen Qingqiu looked at the ‘Butterfly’s’ twisted limbs, a horrible sight as blood flowed from all seven apertures, overly beaten. He used the three

reasons listed above to clear his mind and brainwash himself.

Luo Binghe's childish face was mostly white.

Shen Qingqiu calmed himself and slowly stood up, gaining composure and posed as he turned to Luo Binghe: "Your first time seeing this 'demon extermination defense,1' are you scared stiff?"

Pausing, he continued: "If you want to 'defend,' you must 'exterminate.'"

Luo Binghe gritted his teeth and blurted out: "Earlier....."

Shen Qingqiu said: "You want to ask what I planned to do if the ceiling beam hadn't suddenly fallen down earlier?"

Shen Qingqiu has no choice but to suffer in silence. He really wanted to tell Luo Binghe to rest his heart, he definitely won't die. The ceiling beam will definitely fall down. But can he?!

He can only pretend to be lofty and mysterious: "This can be counted as blaming this master?"

Luo Binghe shook his head and sincerely said: “No. If I can give up my life for Shizun, it would be an honor for this disciple.”

.....Shen Qingqiu was shocked at how much he was like a pure white lotus!2

Shen Qingqiu thought for a while, choosing a more beautiful phrasing.

“Then this master will also tell you. Even if something happened, nothing will happen to you.”

This was a big truth. Even if Shen Qingqiu died hundreds upon hundreds of times, the golden-bodied protagonist Luo Binghe would still be able to live perfectly well!

His expression calm and certain, unperturbed without the slightest false appearance. His voice was sonorous as he said: “This fact is definitely not false.”

Luo Binghe listened to his words. It was as though he’d been lit up with new vitality. The slightly drooping sunflower from earlier gained a new lease on life. With both hands, he raised the sword and respectfully offered it up to Shen Qingqiu: “Shizun. Your sword!”

Shen Qingqiu took it over.

This child's heart right now was truly honest. Though earlier he was dropped so far in a pit that his spirit had flown right out, another turn of events and he was fully revived with his blood pumping. If you are always like this, then how good that would be!

Afterwards, he listened to the system's notices – just like a succession of cannon fire – and felt cool enough to overturn the skies.

【Ning Yingying's good feelings towards you have increased. Protagonist's coolness level: +50 Points.】

【Gained high-level equipment 'Binding Immortal Cable.' Villain's strength: +50 Points.】

【Completion of beginning checkpoint mission: +200 Points. OOC function is unfrozen. From now on, you have full control of the 'Shen Qingqiu' account. Congratulations! Please continue your efforts. 】

Shen Qingqiu was almost in love with this kind of feeling; it was just like gambling with high stakes.

From now on, he can formally embark on the great and glorious career of hugging the male protagonist's thighs!

The first task for him after returning to Cang Qiong Mountain sect was to go to the sect's main headquarters at Qiong Ding Peak³ and report to Yue Qingyuan.

On the way, Shen Qingqiu once again felt that this older apprentice-brother and sect head's existence was exactly like that of a mission-giving NPC. However, this kind of feeling faded without a trace right after he entered the gates.

He hadn't even stepped into the lobby when Yue Qingyuan immediately swept over with his Qiong Ding Peak disciples. They had both just met when his right hand immediately took Shen Qingqiu's pulse.⁴ Shen Qingqiu was surprised, but then saw Yue Qingyuan hadn't made any other moves and his expression was entirely focused. Immersed in low-level spiritual power, he knew that he was only inspecting his internal state and spiritual flow and calmed down.

After seeing that the circulation of his spiritual power was correct and uninjured, Yue Qingyuan let out a breath and smiled. He walked into the main lobby with Shen Qingqiu and asked: "How was their strength?"

He was just like the eternal big brother back home in behavior and tone, which let Shen Qingqiu's heart feel warm. Even the word he had to speak next didn't feel quite so painful: "Unsatisfactory."

The disciples hadn't even seen a shadow of that demon 'Skinner' and everything had been resolved by Shen Qingqiu. From the viewpoint of

letting the disciples gain experience, it truly was unsatisfactory and not up to expectations.

Yue Qingyuan said: “It doesn’t need to be rushed.”

Shen Qingqiu nodded and suddenly changed the subject: “Brother sect head, I want to enter seclusion in Qiong Ding Peak’s spirit caves⁵ behind the mountain.”

Qiong Ding Peak was considered the first among the Twelve Peaks and naturally has the greatest accumulation of energies from heaven and earth. And the spirit caves at Qiong Ding Peak are the best place to cultivate, requiring less effort. Therefore, only the more senior sect members or exceptionally talented young disciples can apply to enter the caves for cultivation. Their application to enter can only succeed if they have the sect head’s permission.

If Shen Qingqiu wanted to enter seclusion and cultivate in the spirit caves, of course Yue Qingyuan would accept. He asked: “This is to prepare for the Immortal Alliance Conference?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Just so.”

Truthfully, it was not only because he needed real strength to get by during the Immortal Alliance Conference scenario. There are other, more complex reasons.

The recent incident with the Skinner had let him become acquainted with the importance of cultivating well. In this world, it was only after attaining strength that he could have the right to think of future events.

Also, he really had no words for Yue Qingyuan's behavior towards him. Even if he wanted to reverse the original ending of Shen Qingqiu directly killing Yue Qingyuan, Shen Qingqiu still had to carefully consider his life afterwards.

In the future, he must use a more proactive approach to control the plot.

Before seclusion, Shen Qingqiu called Luo Binghe over and gave him the correct entry-level cultivation manual.

Luo Binghe received the cultivation manual but still asked: "Shizun, why do you have to give this disciple an entirely different cultivation manual?"

Shen Qingqiu calmly said a bunch of nonsense: "Your constitution is somewhat different. You can't cultivate with the regular cultivation manual."

He didn't want to reveal so quickly the truth of Ming Fan giving Luo Binghe a false cultivation manual, even though it would come out sooner or later. He could still delay it a bit.

Towards the image of Shen Qingqiu's back, Luo Binghe held the cultivation manual. His heart was greatly shaken.

This was a cultivation manual that Shizun specially gave to him!

Shen Qingqiu completely didn't know that Luo Binghe had such a huge misunderstanding.....

—End Chapter 8—

1Demon extermination defense (除魔衛道): Pretty much just translated the characters literally.

2Pure white lotus: A person referred to as a 'white lotus' is said to be pure and innocent, just like a lotus. This is the traditional meaning of the term and the one used in this novel (not to be confused with the slang version meaning someone's a two-faced broad with good acting skills).

3Qiong Ding Peak (穹頂峰): Meaning is 'dome peak.'

4[taking]... pulse: This is a cultivation/traditional Chinese medicine thing. If you're good enough, you can gauge someone's health by taking their pulse.

5...spirit caves (掌門師兄，我要入穹頂峰後山靈犀洞閉關): This sentence gave me fits. Not sure if I translated it right. Shen Qingqiu implies that he wants to enter a spirit cave to cultivate and improve his spiritual power. Spirit cave = 靈犀洞.

Extra note:

The shi (師) character in shifu, shizun, and the like are all the same. It means teacher/master. Shen Qingqiu often refers to himself as 'this teacher/master' using the shi character. Ex. 'wei shi' = 'I master/teacher.'

Also, isn't Luo Binghe the cutest? He just got noticed by senpai and his heart went doki-doki.

is stabbed

Chapter 9

TN: A LOT OF CULTIVATION TERMS AND SLANGGGG. *headdesks*
But oh well, this chapter will be edited in detail in the future. XD

In case you missed it, Luen and I finished fine-combing so it's 120% more accurate now. One of the major things changed was 'B Points' (which is some netizen value for douchebag points LOL). We highly advise re-reading any fine-combed chapters we release in case something was missed first time around in translations.

Enjoy!

Chapter 9

The spirit caves were labyrinthine and deep, hundreds of turning paths and thousands of steps turning backwards without wind or moonlight, though there was a faraway and almost unnoticeable feeling of coolness. Large and small limestone rocks emerged from the landscape, revealing many beds of natural rock. At the center, there was even a pool of clear reflective water that seemed to reveal another world.

This was only one among many caves, but Shen Qingqiu was very satisfied and didn't plan to look for another spot.

Shen Qingqiu wanted to achieve a new understanding in his techniques. He sat on the stone bed and began to cultivate.

However, perhaps Old Man Heavens didn't want him to cultivate honestly and well. He hadn't meditated for long when he heard a strange noise.

It was the sound of someone wheezing painfully.

Not only did it sound strange to his keen ears, his body's spiritual power seemed to also experience a strange and almost violent burst of energy fluctuations.

Fine. Shen Qingqiu knew something had happened. In these spiritual caves, naturally there must be other people who gained entry to cultivate in seclusion aside from him. Not only are there are other people here cultivating as well..... it seems someone has cultivated into madness. This was a critical moment.

I! Only! Want! To! Cultivate! In! Seclusion! And! Increase! Martial! Power! Can't he do this? Can't! He!

Shen Qingqiu opened his eyes suddenly and decided to investigate. He followed the noise and the fluctuations in spiritual power. Walking in that direction along seven turns and eight bends, the disruption grew larger and larger.

Finally, he entered another spiritual cave. Once he entered, he saw a white-clothed back facing him, a sword fallen on the ground.

The interior of the cave was filled with traces of spiritual power-filled sword slashes and fresh blood as though from a murder scene involving a sword. Even the white-clothed person's body had bloody marks on it.

Looks like this cultivation madness is quite tragic!

Shen Qingqiu pondered whether if lending the other person some of his own high level spiritual power would be helpful or more likely to harm him to death. At that moment, he glimpsed the sword fallen on the ground.

The sword was currently slim in shape, probably because its owner's spiritual power was running rampant. Its whole body emitted a harsh silver light, a strange dark incantation and engravings inscribed along the blade.

Seeing this sword, Shen Qingqiu knew at once what sword this was and whose it was.

Your mother's egg!1

If he sought a good death, he shouldn't be meeting this person!

If earlier he still thought of helping out, right now he has the thought to run for his life. But it was already too late. That white-clothed person suddenly turned around; he'd already found him out!

Shen Qingqiu was in no mood to applaud this 'handsome man!' This handsome man's two eyes were blood red, his forehead bulging with blue veins, intent on making him kneel!

He flapped his sleeves and ran for it. That man hit a palm onto the stone wall, stone shards flying everywhere; the long, fallen sword on the ground flew up and just happened to block Shen Qingqiu's route of retreat through the limestone entrance. The white-clothed man who'd lost all reason advanced like a gunshot.

Shen Qingqiu saw it was too late to run and toughened his scalp for the upcoming fight. He gathered spiritual power in his right hand, staking everything on that one hit and slapped his palm onto his opponent's chest.

If this person was really like what was said about him in rumors, he had a vitality comparable to that of the protagonist and this hit certainly wouldn't be of any damn use. Not only would it not be of any damn use, perhaps Shen Qingqiu would even be knocked flying three zhang² out while coughing up blood.

However, it turned out to have an effect after all. The one who was knocked flying three chi³ out while coughing up blood wasn't Shen Qingqiu, but his opponent!

At that instant, Shen Qingqiu raised his right hand and looked at the white-clothed person he'd personally knocked down by the palm strike. He deeply felt: how can this brother be such a dick!

Actually, though someone who had cultivated into madness was very frightening, they were also very fragile. If your luck was good, chances were that your single strike would be the one to break their last standing straw of support.

Shen Qingqiu's expression was tangled as he watched him painfully move into a half-kneeling position on the ground. He tried to forcefully stand up but could only fall onto his knees again. Finally, Shen Qingqiu could only sigh and walk over, putting his hand on his back.

"I'll make this clear." Shen Qingqiu didn't care if he was listening or not, saying it for himself: "I'm not familiar with this move; if I really make you dead, I still tried my best so you shouldn't blame me."

It was unknown how much time had passed. Shen Qingqiu felt the spiritual power inside the man return to a calm and natural state. Only then could he lay down his worries and retract his hand.

The white-clothed man's head drooped down, not quite conscious yet.

To tell the truth, Shen Qingqiu had already guessed this man's identity, but the system's alert confirmed it for him.

【Congratulations! The system's notice: Changed the scene 'Liu Qingge's death,' the death and hatred values for the villain 'Shen Qingqiu' have decreased, B Points: +200! 】

Sure enough. This was his fellow sect brother, also yet another victim who wrongly died under the original Shen Qingqiu's hands.

Cang Qiong Mountain sect, Twelve Peaks' Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord, Liu Qingge. 4

Liu Qingge was a very NB5 character.

Each one of Cang Qiong's Twelve Peaks had their own merits and distinctive features. For instance, Qiong Ding Peak led everyone and oversaw general affairs; Shen Qingqiu's Qing Jing Peak was the favorite of intellectual and literary youths; Wan Jian Peak since ancient times had produced famous swordmasters; what Ku Xing Peak⁶ did was obvious by its name, even if you whipped Shen Qingqiu he wouldn't want to go there.....

Among the Twelve Peaks, Xian Shu Peak⁷ is an incredibly coveted existence.

Because this Peak only accepts female disciples. Also, there were very high standards for accepted disciples, the beautiful women like clouds. WS8 readers in an endless stream wrote YY reviews and let a hundred flowers bloom freely, expressing all kinds of styles. Among them were “The Overbearing Xian Shu Fell In Love With Me,” “My Days While Possessing Xian Shu Peak”; these kinds of works were considered masterpieces of lasciviousness. Their popularity could even compare to that of the original work.

But the Peak the youths loved the most, revered most, and would like to enter most: it would definitely be the Bai Zhan Peak commanded by Liu Qingge!

This was Cang Qiong Mountain sect’s very war division, also the one with the greatest fighting strength.

The history of Bai Zhan Peak is filled innumerable outstanding figures, victorious in hundreds of battles, full of undefeated myths, positively hot-blooded and bold!

Therefore, Shen Yuan was quite fascinated by this character. Men always admired the strong. Even though the original work didn’t describe his appearance, Shen Qingqiu’s image of Liu Qingge was that of a sharp man’s face. A god of war!

Shen Qingqiu lowered his head and looked at that face like a beautiful woman’s, feeling the image he held in his mind shatter.

The invincible Bai Zhan Peak's Lord, why did he have to grow this kind of elegant young prince's face?

But thinking it over, Liu Qingge was the big brother of one of the female leads, the peerless beauty Liu Mingyan. The quality of the male protagonist's wives was as strong as steel; the strength of genetics was also very great, very scientific!

Ever-victorious, his character rampantly arrogant, plus a good appearance; no wonder the author wrote him into an early death.

Aside from the protagonist, who dared be so arrogant? You'd die in minutes! Damn, he didn't think deeply about this earlier. Would rescuing this person affect Luo Binghe's coolness?

This flashy character doesn't show up much. Other than being used to display a warlike prowess enough to make people piss their pants, he has one other important reason for existing: to set off the scumbag Shen Qingqiu.

Liu Qingge and Shen Qingqiu are brothers in the same sect but have discord between them.

This was also why Shen Qingqiu wanted to run away earlier. They never got along well to begin with. Adding cultivation madness to the equation: either he chased Shen Qingqiu and killed him or like the original Shen Qingqiu, Shen Qingqiu was the one to kill him.

Though it's unknown what deep hatred was between them, the fact that the original Shen Qingqiu was Liu Qingge's murderer was a hard truth. Once this event was exposed, it was also the (number one) reason pushing towards Shen Qingqiu's loss of standing and reputation. The original Shen Qingqiu said "in his cultivation I saw a divergent path, that was the only reason I could steel my heart and kill my apprentice-brother." Thinking on it now, he probably made his move here.....

Shen Qingqiu killed the female lead's only relative. Of course Luo Binghe would take revenge for his wife.

Come to speak of it, the hatred towards the character Shen Qingqiu was really not of an average intensity!

Shen Qingqiu was still worrying about his future when Liu Qingge finished vomiting blood and finally turned around.

Liu Qingge opened his eyes and immediately saw Shen Qingqiu sitting nearby, looking busy. Tilting his head, no matter how he looked Shen Qingqiu didn't seem to have good intentions. His instincts ringing, he silently tried to sit up. However, he'd suffered an impact on his internal organs and was still scrambled up inside. Blood sprayed out again.

Nearby, Shen Qingqiu coolly said: "Ai, don't be so excited. You're still Bai Zhan Peak's Lord, how can you come to look so terrible. Do you have the face to look like this? Come, come, wipe." As he spoke, he passed over a handkerchief.

Liu Qingge spoke as he vomited blood: “Shen..... what kind of thing are you up to now.....”

Shen Qingqiu saw how difficult it was for him and laid a palm on his back. Originally, Liu Qingge thought he wanted to harm him but was unable to dodge; only when the palm connected did he feel a stream of clear and smooth spiritual power channeling into him, straightening out his meridians and his spiritual power. At this, Liu Qingge was even more aghast at Shen Qingqiu than he had been earlier.

Shen Qingqiu had a hand on his back while speaking to him: “Apprentice-brother Liu, this senior brother has recently gained some insights while in seclusion recently. Thinking of past events, this senior brother feels a little ashamed.”

Liu Qingge seemed to vomit even more severely.

Shen Qingqiu pondered: “How about this, leave past events in the past. From now on, let’s join hands in respect and be a pair of model apprentice-brothers. What do you think, junior brother?”

Since he hadn’t killed Liu Qingge, that hatred in the plot had been avoided. Why couldn’t he be even more thorough and just establish good relations with Liu Qingge, perhaps even making him become his back-up?!

Liu Qingge: “.....Are you serious?”

Shen Qingqiu: “Serious. I cannot be more serious. Look at this senior brother’s two eyes, are you moved?”

Shen Qingqiu always felt that after unfreezing the OOC function, he had no more worries and had proceeded without turning back.....

Liu Qingge’s face was bad as he looked into Shen Qingqiu’s eyes for a moment, as he wished. Finally, he seemed to be driven beyond the limits of endurance and said: “You, walk farther away.”

Shen Qingqiu expressed understanding.

After all, they had been in mutual disgust for so many years. A good impression can’t be brushed up so suddenly and can only come along slowly.

He nodded his head and was as good as his word. As he walked along, he waved back without turning his head and said: “If junior brother encounters some trouble while practicing, there’s no need to be shy, you can call this senior brother to come help. All us brothers are close and have to take care of each other.”

Liu Qingge thought that if he had to listen to two more words from him, he would start vomiting blood again. His gaze was terrible.

Shen Qingqiu shut his mouth and left. Liu Qingge was left alone inside the spirit cave.

They were two people who did not get along well. When they were less familiar with each other, Shen Qingqiu was the person who Liu Qingge found the most disgusting. Both extremely abhorred each other.

This kind of hatred was not like an argument between a loving but quarrelsome couple. It was the kind of like-minded hatred that turned to violence. What's strange is that Shen Qingqiu didn't take the opportunity to drop stones on someone stranded in a well,9 not to mention helping him?!

However, with the truth placed in front of him, Liu Qingge's expression twisted slightly.

He knew from memory that his cultivation had gone out of control earlier. But now his spiritual flow was smooth and he definitely could not have broken through the frenzy by himself. There must have been outside help.

Could it be that Shen Qingqiu had truly helped him?

Once he thought that there truly was this kind of possibility, Liu Qingge felt as disgusted as though he'd eaten shit.

—End Chapter 9—

1Mother's egg (媽蛋): Literally translates this way. I'm assuming it's like cursing 'by my mother's ovaries.'

2Zhang (丈): A unit of measurement equal to 3 1/3 meters.

3Chi (尺): Another unit of measurement... Equal to 1/3 of a meter and considered the Chinese version of a 'foot' of measurement.

4Bai Zhan Peak (百戰)... Liu Qingge (柳清歌): Literally 'Hundred Battles/War Peak.' Qingge's name means 'clear song.'

5NB: I have no idea what this means. Yet another thing to sort out in edits.

6Ku Xing Peak (苦行峰): 'Ascetic' Peak. LOOOL.

7Xian Shu Peak (仙姝峰): 'Immortal Lovely Lady' Peak. Guess who's interested. XD

8WS: Slang again...

9Drop stones on someone stranded in a well: Meaning to hit someone when they're down or in a bad situation.

<>

Chapter 10

TN: Been super busy this week so I'll be posting this unedited version up first. Next week should be a double release if all goes well to avoid the Chapter 11 cliffie. :3

Happy Father's Day! ?

Though he was hurried away by the person whose life he'd saved with great effort, Shen Qingqiu was very satisfied.

The Liu Qingge who died by his hands in the original work was accidentally saved by him instead.

If he could have good relations with this person, Shen Qingqiu wouldn't be afraid of anyone even if all his enemies showed up together at his front door!

Even if he took it a step back and his plan to develop his good disciple Luo Binghe was unsuccessful, Liu Qingge as the Bai Zhan Peak Lord at least had the strength to fight against the protagonist for a round!

Why didn't the system have a 【Strategy】 or an 【Intelligence】 value? He could have used those points.

System: 【.....】 The system expressed its unwillingness to communicate with this person.

In the caves, there was neither sun nor moon. Shen Qingqiu didn't feel like he'd done much before the day came for him to exit the spirit caves.

His eyes closed, Shen Qingqiu sat cross-legged on the stone platform. He waited until the last of the spirit power circulated through his limbs and bones before he opened them.

He had devoted himself to cultivating for several months and was now able to freely use the spirit power in his body, even improving his cultivation foundation by another level.

This state increased the amount of control he had over his body to one hundred percent, even solving his awkwardness. The brilliance of his eyes was greatly different. Shen Qingqiu jumped down from the stone table, feeling that his body was very light and easy. It was just as though his four limbs were like a light breeze, his body positively old and awkward in the past.

Of course, this could also just be his own subjective feelings. The time he was in seclusion had felt like pressing fast-forward on a video. If it were in a novel, it would be finished in a chapter.

Before leaving, he felt that he should greet the big brother next door. He pried open the stone door.

Shen Qingqiu cleared his throat and said: “Apprentice-brother, you are aware of the situation? This senior brother has already finished advancing in cultivation and is going to go up.”

His voice wasn’t very loud but was definitely enough for a cultivator like Liu Qingge to hear, echoing in the empty cave.

Since there wasn’t any response from that end, Shen Qingqiu didn’t care. Expressing his good intentions (?) was enough. In accordance to his will, a strong wind under his feet carried him out of the spirit caves into the upcoming storm.

That was right. Storm. Calculating the days, it was about time for this incident. The scene to follow was very important and could be considered one of the foremost little □□ in “Proud Immortal Demon Way.”

Demon evildoers had managed to infiltrate into Cang Qiong sect, triggering a chaotic commotion between humans and demons.

And the book’s two important female leads would also appear in this commotion and start to notice Luo Binghe.

The spirit caves were separated from the outside world. Inside the caves was peace and quiet; once he exited the caves, he was met with Qiong Ding Peak set aflame. All around were disciples in a messy confusion, alarms ringing everywhere.

Shen Qingqiu understood that the demon realm's evildoers had already advanced on the mountain.

He really arrived at such a coincidental time. Just when he got this idea, he got caught up with this riot.

Some disciples under who knows what master saw him and immediately piled over: "Martial Uncle Shen! Martial Uncle Shen, you've finally come out! There's big trouble, the Demon Realm's people have gone up Qiong Ding Peak and hurt many of our apprentice-brothers!"

Shen Qingqiu touched one with his hand and unperturbed said: "Calm. Where is the sect head?"

Disciple A cried: "The sect head went down the mountain outside to do something. If it wasn't for this, the Demon Realm's people wouldn't take the opportunity to attack us!"

Disciple B angrily said: "Demon Realm people are really despicable! Not only did they swoop in, they even want to break the Rainbow Bridge linking the Twelve Peaks. Qiong Ding Peak completely has no way to get support from other Peaks!"

Shen Qingqiu already knew and was only asking. Right now he was genuinely real goods at a fair price,¹ his body full of power and energy. With a heroic air that seemed to break through the skies, he said: “No need to panic. My Cang Qiong Peak is a strong and large division. If we deal with them, I’m afraid not even a remnant will be left of these Demon Realm people.” Once he finished speaking, he rushed towards the path.

The disciples suddenly felt like they’d found their backbones and followed behind Shen Qingqiu like a train. Along the way, the headless flies buzzing around also followed them. They didn’t know what happened but followed along anyway. In the end, the line grew longer and longer until they arrived in front of Qiong Ding’s audience hall.

At the entrance of Qiong Ding Peak’s gate, Cang Qiong sect guards encircled and suppressed the invading Demons. Because of the scene, all of Qing Jing Peak’s disciples ‘coincidentally’ all gathered on Qiong Ding Peak and met the Shen Qingqiu who had recently left seclusion. Shen Qingqiu’s first glance was to look for Luo Binghe’s figure. As expected, he was standing in the middle of the crowd, looking solemn.

Having not seen him for a while, he’d grown a lot taller. His young man’s stature was like bamboo, giving off a fresh and elegant feeling, very eye-catching.

Seeing that the protagonist had arrived, Shen Qingqiu could calm down and turn his attention towards the enemy.

In front of the resplendent and magnificent Qiong Ding hall, more than a hundred clusters of demonic energy were emitted.

The leader of the demon invasion this time is clearly only a fifteen-year-old girl.

In his heart, Shen Qingqiu laughed excitedly: ‘She’s come out! She’s finally come out!’

Even though the demonic style of dress is bizarre and exotic, this young girl’s style is exceptionally unusual. She had a full head of black hair combed into tiny braids, a white complexion, rich and bold eye makeup, and bright crimson lips. Though her age was small, it was easy to see hints of her future glamorous and compelling beauty. Because the day was hot, she wore light clothes that were practically just a few bolts of red veils wrapped around her body. Around her wrists and ankles were silver rings, every movement giving rise to the jingling of small bells.

Her bare, snow-white feet touched the ground. Shen Qingqiu couldn’t restrain himself from taking a second look at her.

It’s not out of lecherous hoodlum behavior, but..... traveling on bare feet all these tens of thousands of li from the Demon Realm over mountains and waters, young miss..... don’t your feet hurt?

Wrong. That’s not the main point!

The main point was that this was the (number one) popular heroine in the novel “Proud Immortal Demon Way” – Demon Saint, Sha Hualing.²

Sha Hualing was a pure-blooded demon, cruel and ruthless, cunning and artful, but fell irrevocably for Luo Binghe. After getting together with Luo Binghe, don't even speak about killing for him; she even dared to do an outrageous thing like betraying the demons for him.

Although this brainlessly infatuated sister invited criticism, nothing could be done. Such a passionately devoted woman was difficult for a man to dislike.

Unfortunately, such a spicy hot sister is destined to fall into someone else's lap. Shen Qingqiu couldn't resist anymore and glanced towards Luo Binghe. Just then, Luo Binghe's eyes also swept over unintentionally and their gazes met. Their eyes suddenly widened. Luo Binghe seemed about to speak but hesitated, excited. Shen Qingqiu nodded his head at him.

At this moment, the Rainbow Bridge linking the Twelve Peaks was cut apart. All the other Peak Lords were not on the scene but Shen Qingqiu this Elder was here, his presence undoubtedly emboldening the disciples. Ming Fan shouted: “Demon girl! My Shifu is already here, see you if you dare to be arrogant anymore!”

People gathered more and more, many hundreds of angry disciples in uniform circling in formation and trapping the invaders in the hall. A few demons wanted to take the opportunity to break through, but Shen

Qingqiu's two hands flashed, raising them up and throwing them back to Sha Hualing's feet.

Sha Hualing was very clever and resourceful. She was arrogant earlier and bullied Qiong Ding Peak disciples because there were no Elders on the scene. Now, the situation didn't seem good and she quickly changed her tune: "My purpose coming up the mountain this time originally isn't to fight. I only wanted to compete skill with Cang Qiong Mountain sect's many talents. My family was curious and wanted to come up the mountains to exchange pointers³ to see what would happen."

Shen Qingqiu waved his fan and said: "Well said, well said. Though you explain your manner as seeking to exchange pointers, why do you have to choose to do it while our sect head's away? Why must you cut apart our Rainbow Bridge? What need is there to wound so many of our sect's disciples? I've never seen such a way to seek pointers."

Sha Hualing bit her lips and pulled out her own young girl's weapon.

She lifted a stray hair from her cheek and slowly said: "This person must be that Elder 'Xiu Ya Sword' Shen Qingqiu who moved the world. Sure enough, seeing is believing. This Ling-er is young and has failed to control her subordinates. If she has offended you, may this immortal master be magnanimous and forgiving."

Though her language is soft, Shen Qingqiu is not one bit moved. He was more clear about the sequence of events than anyone.

The Demon Realm's invasion this time was because Sha Hualing had just been appointed as the demon race's Saint. Her ambition was as high as the skies but she couldn't ground herself in reality. She wanted to enter Cang Qiong Mountain sect's first peak in one fell swoop and seize Qiong Ding Peak's engraved sign, bringing it back to the Demon Realm as spoils of war and proof of her achievement. At the same time, she would use it as a demonstration to the Immortal Realm.

Shen Qingqiu said: "Can this young miss say her judgment now?"

Unwilling to submit, Sha Hualing said: "Although right now my family is weak, that is only because you have many people. That's why Ling-er doesn't dare make a judgment."

Shen Qingqiu put on the airs of an Elder as smoothly as a fish back in water and said: "Oh?"

With red lips and shining teeth, Sha Hualing offered a way that seemed fair and just.

"Why don't we each choose three representatives and hold three matches here right now?"

In the original work, this section was considered a small major plot point so Shen Qingqiu could remember it fairly clearly.

The first trial was Shen Qingqiu vs. the demons' single-armed elder. In order to highlight Shen Qingqiu's scum qualities, he used despicable methods to win. Comparing him to Luo Binghe's open and aboveboard behavior in the third match resulted in a strong contrast.

And here, Shen Qingqiu won't so easily discredit his own image!

The single-armed elder was a purple-black color all over his body, silent. He listened to Sha Hualing's direction and walked forward to a spot of open ground.

Shen Qingqiu's own division disciples at the outskirts cheered him on. He knows this single-armed elder had some weight. He gave a small smile: "You only have one arm. Even if I win like this, it is still not an honest victory."

"Oh? Then what do you want to do?"

Shen Qingqiu smiled slightly, spreading his fan open with a shake. He waved it twice: "I don't need even a single hand."

—End Chapter 10—

1Real goods at a fair price: A pretty self-evident saying meaning that something or someone's the real deal.

2Sha Hualing (紗華鈴): Hua ling means ‘magnificent/splendid bell.’

3Compete skill...to exchange pointers: Going to explain this in case anyone’s confused. In the Jianghu or martial arts world, it’s common to ask for a fight and compare skills. It can also be called exchanging pointers (qie cuo or 切磋). If done right, it’s a good learning opportunity for the participants and sometimes spectators as well. Of course, this is just BS Sha Hualing is spitting out. XD

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 11

TN: There's a bolded word in the text – it was actually in English in the raws lol, just like BOSS. Also, Elder Du Bi = the elder with the single arm. Figured out a bit late that it was actually his name and not just a description of him , though it's definitely that too. XD

Keep in mind this is a 3 chapter release! After Chapter 11 you can hit the Forward button to Chapters 12 & 13. Special thanks to Luen for rescuing me from headdesking due to translation difficulties. :3

Once these words were spoken, everyone was in an uproar. In the crowd, Luo Binghe was also shocked.

He doesn't need even a single hand?

Sha Hualing snorted and thought that Shen Qingqiu was being self-important and conceited, but at the same time felt happy. How could he win so easily, so why not accept? She hurriedly said: "Since Elder Shen has said so, then let's start!"

Many people on the sides felt that this girl's skin was very thick and wanted to take advantage of others, so there were boos everywhere. Shen Qingqiu was the sort of reader who felt that reading was like watching a play. Right now as a character in the story, there was another kind of feeling and he

couldn't stand Sha Hualing's style of doing things. However, he saw that she was young, sweet, and charming and therefore treated her as a cute loli.

In the middle of attention, Shen Qingqiu truly did not draw his sword and instead played with the paper fan in his left hand, a small smile on his face as he faced the single-armed elder.

Elder Du Bi only had one arm but it didn't affect him as he picked up his ghost head knife.¹ But his blade passed, whistling through the air and didn't hit his target. He turned around and saw Shen Qingqiu already stood at another location, shaking his fan and laughing at him.

However, the Xiu Ya sword had already exited its scabbard. Shen Qingqiu didn't draw the sword with his hands, only secretly held his hand in a sword seal to manipulate his Xiu Ya sword to fly through the air. The snow-white sword light was painful and harmed the Elder Du Bi's eyes, so he raised his sword and increased his attacks! The knife and sword clashed, ding dang sounds without end as sparks danced.

Everyone watched with rapt attention. This competition was truly 'good to see' and 'beautiful.'² The first 'good to see' referred to the strength of both parties and their martial skill. The second 'beautiful' referred to the visual effect, which was extremely gorgeous. It was particularly so for Shen Qingqiu: his ease of movement as his sword whirled into afterimages of sword light in the air all while shaking his fan leisurely, every seven steps giving rise to a poem to send forth, this sort of stunning style!

Luo Binghe watched and felt his heart sway. He knew Shen Qingqiu was powerful, but he didn't think that he was powerful to this degree.

So strong!

In the middle of the cheers of the disciples, Shen Qingqiu took the victory for the first trial.

At this moment, Shen Qingqiu could understand a little of the original goods' do-or-die drive to be a pretentious prick.

Because it was really too cool!

All the disciples had stars in their eyes. Shen Qingqiu felt very inspiring!

A scum villain could also have a soul seeking prestige!

At the same time, the system sent good news:

【Demon invasion of the immortal mountain, First trial, Shen Qingqiu's victory, Strength value: +50. B Points: +50. 】

The smile in Shen Qingqiu's heart didn't last long when the system's next piece of news slapped him in the face.

【Urgent warning: If Luo Binghe does not participate in the competition, the protagonist's degree of coolness will be deducted by 1000. 】

‘What?!’ The Shen Qingqiu whose heart wasn't prepared received a big shock and changed color.

The coolness level that he puffed and blew and worked so hard for all this time was still only a bit over 300. This one time will deduct 1000?!

System, are you trying to kill people?!

The competition this time was an important scene in the plot. At the same time, it was a prelude to little □□ or the two female protagonists' debut, receiving the little brother, receiving cheats, and other important roles.

If Luo Binghe couldn't make an appearance here, he wouldn't be able to emerge in the limelight and attract the attention of everyone – so his coolness -1000.

But if he was allowed to be a representative of the sect and fight, then what would the Shen Qingqiu who did this be?

The original goods was able to push Luo Binghe onto the stage because he was shameless! He didn't even care about his own sect's honor! He hated Luo Binghe to the bone, enough to borrow the hands of the demons to abuse him!

But right now, Shen Qingqiu didn't meet any of these three points!

In the end, he still had to blame this completely unscientific system!

When speaking about the protagonist's coolness, why does it have to be based on the efforts of others!

Shen Qingqiu was still angry about how unscientific the system was when the second round was about to begin.

Sha Hualing was afraid of Shen Qingqiu bailing out and slowly said: "If in the following trials only one person goes up each time, then there wouldn't be the meaning of receiving pointers. My family's representative for the second trial will be me."

For her to take the stage, she was firstly confident in her own strength, secondly because she felt that Shen Qingqiu probably wouldn't use his Elder's authority to press her junior's authority. Shen Qingqiu expressed a complete unwillingness to mind these small matters; even if he originally

had the intention to bail out using his power and prestige, it withered upon hearing the system's notice.

But the second round could also be considered very exciting from another point of view.

Shen Qingqiu lazily said: "You all heard her words. Who is willing to take this responsibility?"

Though he was asking all the disciples, his eyes fell on a certain area.

That area was full of graceful female disciples; no doubt they're all Xian Shu Peak disciples. Within this stuffed-to-bursting area of beautiful white Xian Shu Peak MM,³ there was someone who stuck out and wore a veil.

After Shen Qingqiu asked, this person slowly stood out.

Shen Qingqiu felt a burst of hard-to-conceal excitement.

Come! She has come! The novel's two big female leads were about to PK⁵ for the first time!

Liu Mingyan⁴ was a big beauty. A heaven-and-earth shocking, making ghosts and gods weep kind of big beauty. Even if the beauties from the ancient generation of Xian Shu Peak were brought out, she would still stand out from them.

Her older brother was Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord. She only became one of Xian Shu Peak's later generation disciples because her age was small and she entered late.

Because she was overly beautiful, enough to steal a soul, she had to wear a veil to cover her face all year round. She was like a flower high up and unattainable.

In short, in order to write this character's appearance, Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky probably used all the idioms he learned from primary school to high school; it must have been really tough on him.

Shen Qingqiu really liked this female protagonist. The reason was not only because Liu Mingyan's appearance was the highest. It was also because she had great tolerance, great style, understood the overall situation, and was just and upright. In Luo Binghe's enormous harem, it was difficult to find such an intelligent wife with good character.

Another point. Liu Mingyan was the only female lead that Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky didn't describe in detail with his pen to the point of being knocked over. Though this arrangement made many readers dissatisfied enough to spray blood like skyscrapers, this gave Liu Mingyan

something that the other women didn't have: a character as pure as jade and chaste as ice!6

Nothing can be done, can't achieve this matter's best $\neg(\neg \nabla \neg)$.

The thing to watch in this battle were the words. If there is an Evil path Demon girl then naturally there must be a Righteous path Immortal girl. Every man had a dream to be sandwiched between and troubled by angels and demons, seeing them jealously fight for him one moment and give their lives for him the next; it's a male creature's most lofty YY canon scene. The beauty of an Evil demon girl's wild and unrestrained behavior can make him drunk; the Righteous saint girl wavering between abstinence and desire letting people's hearts itch.

Having thought to here, Shen Qingqiu cried some bitter tears for himself and couldn't help but look towards Luo Binghe again.

It was hard for Luo Binghe not to notice all the glances he was getting. Why did Shen Qingqiu notice him so much? Can it be that Shizun really..... looks favorably on me?

However, under Great God Airplane Towards the Sky's pen, the fights between female characters – unless it was ripping [BEEP—] off for men,7 there wasn't anything particularly interesting to see. After a time equitable to the burning of a few sticks of incense, Liu Mingyan was defeated. She hadn't found her sword at Wan Jian Peak8 yet after all, her techniques were all basic swordplay while Sha Hualing was already the Demon sect's

Demon Saint; there was naturally a difference in strength between these two.

Liu Mingyan walked in front of Shen Qingqiu, “This disciple has lost and disgraced the mission, I request that Martial Uncle Shen punish me.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “You undertook this responsibility and burden; it was not easy on you. Having lost this time, pay attention to your martial arts and just win back another day.”

Having won a round, Sha Hualing was radiant and coquettishly said: “This third trial will determine the victory! Don’t know who Elder Shen will send up for the next trial? This time, you had better choose carefully.”

Shen Qingqiu supported himself with a hand and stood. He said with deep meaning: “No need for Young Miss to trouble herself. This Shen has a person in mind who he can guarantee will not only win, but will be your nemesis.”

Sha Hualing acted as though he was just speaking words to frighten her and clapped her hands. She said: “Which brave warrior volunteers for the third trial?”

In the middle of the numerous demons, a giant elder slowly walked out.

He was called a giant because he was really too tall.

He was definitely over ten zhang [feet] high!

A back like a tiger's and a waist like a bear, his hair loose and shaggy, from top to bottom wearing thorny armor, and dragging a fine iron sledgehammer. With every step he took, Shen Qingqiu felt the ground shake a little.

Sha Hualing delightedly said: "I'll give everyone on the immortal mountain a warning first. The spikes on Elder Tian Chui's armor are covered with my family's strong poison. This kind of poison has no effect on demons but if a human is pierced, there is no cure."

The first feeling Shen Qingqiu got after hearing these words was: Damned Great God Airplane Towards the Sky, don't choose a name so carefreely and so easily!

A person with a single arm is called Elder Du Bi [Single Arm]; his weapon's a big hammer so he's called Elder Tian Chui [Sky Hammer]. Does he dare choose a name diligently?!

The people on the sidelines were all enraged.

“Stinking demon girl! Competing is competing; using strong poison, what fairness is there!”

Sha Hualing retorted: “I didn’t hide this point. If you feel anything’s unfair, or if you’re afraid of getting poisoned and losing your life, the custom is to cede the trial and there would be no more need to compete. We demons won’t laugh at you since we cherish life. It’s only human.”

The demons’s loud laughter and the angry condemnations of the disciples sounded. Shen Qingqiu’s heart already didn’t have many good feelings towards the original Sha Hualing and now it reached a new low.

A type of woman like Sha Hualing: when the reader takes the view of the YY protagonist she can be given ten thousand likes. But when standing by her side in reality, Shen Qingqiu didn’t believe there would be anyone who would be able to like her!

It wasn’t because there were differences compared to what was described in the book; in truth, the worst thing was: she was too much like the original!

A fierce and spicy hot character, plus too brainlessly in love. If it wasn’t because she was one of the protagonist’s people, she would have gone to the other side earlier. Once you threaten her or any bit of Luo Binghe’s interests, she would want to take your dog life first even if you were her real father. In the original work, in order to deliver up the Demon Realm seat to Luo Binghe, didn’t she defraud her own birth father.....

Luo Binghe, you're going to have to suffer a little for now.

Towards Sha Hualing's provocation, Shen Qingqiu was indifferent and left a space of blank time. It gave the Demon Realm people pressure (as well as keeping people in suspense) for a time, until he finally turned around and fixed his eyes firmly in someone's direction.

“Luo Binghe, you come out.”

—End Chapter 11—

1Ghost head knife (鬼頭刀): Not sure I translated this right lol. I assume they're talking about a sort of sabre rather than 'knife.' In Chinese, the character for 'knife' is included in the word for sabre.

2 'Good to see' ... 'beautiful': In Chinese, the characters used for these phrases are the same (hao kan) but have different meanings because of the context.

3MM: Slang for 'mei mei' or little sister. In this context, our MC's calling the Xian Shu Peak disciples a bunch of babes. XD

4Liu Mingyan (柳溟煙): 'Ming yan' means 'sea/drizzle mist.'

5PK: Gaming slang for PVP (person vs person) killing. Player Kill, hence PK.

6Pure as jade... chaste as ice: Meaning someone with a pure and noble character.

7Ripping [BEEP–] off for men: Meaning girls ripping clothes off in a catfight for men to see.

8Wan Jian Peak (萬劍峰): ‘Ten Thousand Sword’ Peak. This is where disciples go to find their ‘sword.’

9Elder Tian Chui (天錘長老): Elder Sky Hammer.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

[Report chapter](#) [Comments](#)

Chapter 12

All the Qing Jing Peak disciples were suddenly in an uproar.

The disciples of other divisions were not as bad because they weren't familiar with Qing Jing Peak's situation. They still thought the person who would be sent out must be Shen Qingqiu's eldest disciple. Only with a minimum of thirty years of cultivation would a person be able to confront this Demon Elder who at a glance could be seen to have at least several hundred years on him. Only, the strange thing was that they had never heard of this person. How could Qing Jing Peak disciples not know what Luo Binghe's cultivation was?

Ming Fan's face was white as he stuttered: "Shizun..... sending out this kid..... sending out junior brother Luo onto the stage, perhaps it's not too suitable?" Although he was anxious and didn't want to go on stage, would gladly let Luo Binghe go up and get abused, he still cared about their own division's honor!

Ning Yingying's even more anxious tears came out and she shamelessly hugged Luo Binghe's arm while stamping her foot and shouting: "Don't want, don't want, don't want!"

Luo Binghe didn't have much combat experience. That demon Elder was covered with thorns all over his body and his sledgehammer must have been at least several hundred jin¹; it would be strange if he wasn't killed!

Do you all think I want him to go on stage? I'm also being helplessly forced!

Shen Qingqiu raised his eyebrows and snapped: "I said to let him go up so he should go up. Are you unsatisfied with this master's judgment? Ying-er, let him go."

Met with Shifu's scowling face, Ning Yingying knew that nothing could be done.

Luo Binghe patted her comfortingly even though his face was shock white. He said firmly: "Apprentice-sister, don't be worried. I won't be of any serious use but since Shizun has assigned me to go out, I will definitely use all my strength. Even if my life is forfeit, I won't lose our division's face."

Ning Yingying rubbed away her tears and let go of Luo Binghe's arm. She couldn't bear seeing her sweetheart get hit by others and in a few footsteps, she had run away.

Shen Qingqiu was overjoyed. Well run; if Ning Yingying ran then the trouble that she caused after this scene would also be gone. What a good darling child you are, so sensible!

Though the teenager who stood out from the crowd of people seemed like a clear and upright god, a good seedling with a good foundation, it was also apparent at first sight he was a young disciple with shallow cultivation.

In contrast, the Demon sect's Elder had a sledgehammer and a build with a tiger's back and a bear's waist. No matter where he stood, when compared with Luo Binghe's still-developing body, there was a sense of oppression. Black wisps of demonic energy exuded from all over the Elder's body. Everybody hesitated and some speculated that perhaps he had hidden his strength and was only waiting for the fight to begin. Everyone had no words to say.

What hidden strength! He really couldn't beat him!

How was this a competition, he was being completely beaten by the other party!

Ever since Luo Binghe began the trial, he didn't have any opportunity to make a move. That Demon elder had matchless strength and a swing of his sledgehammer sent out a shockwave. Even though Luo Binghe persisted in advancing and trying to find a chance to attack, the sledgehammer continued to land on his body from time to time.

Not only was the Cang Qiong Mountain sect side dumbstruck, the demon side was also speechless: This was too tragic.....

Someone spoke in a small voice: "Isn't this a sure loss..... what is there to compete?"

Big Hammer, or no, Elder Tian Chui laughed loud and long towards the sky, his voice audible through the entire area: “You’ve said it right! This little doll had better admit defeat soon and get off the stage, this old man can still leave you a life.”

Shen Qingqiu quietly said: “He will win.”

Nonsense. Putting the protagonist in a rough spot like this, of course he would win. Only, it would be a very difficult win.

His voice was neither high nor low. However, it was just enough to carry into the center stage where the competition was.

Luo Binghe had suffered a direct frontal hit and suppressed a few mouthfuls of blood in his chest when such confident words traveled to his ears. Somehow, he was able to swallow down the blood.

Will win... right?

Did Shizun really believe he would win, and so passed the opportunity to participate in this trial to him?

The demons all laughed loudly and booed. They clamored for him to quickly admit defeat.

However, Luo Binghe didn't accede to their wishes. He was hit several times in succession but instead calmed down and turned a deaf ear to the jeers of the outside world. His footsteps became increasingly lighter. Elder Tian Chui's giant sledgehammer came down nine times and nine times was not able to even hit his side.

The only spots on Elder Tian Chui that weren't wrapped in poisonous spikes were his face and his fists. This wasn't any good news. This meant that even though these two spots weren't protected by poisonous spikes, he could still go home without losing out.

But at the same time, it was very possibly the only breakthrough point!

Luo Binghe breathed slowly and carefully concentrated.

Shizun chose him to go on stage. While it looked like it was to make things difficult for him, if looking on flipside, losing this trial meant that not only Luo Binghe would lose face. He would bring along the entire sect and the entire Human Realm, dragging in even the Shen Qingqiu who chose him to go on stage.

Shizun must be very convinced that he would win to choose him to go on stage and compete!

In Student Luo Binghe's rich brain, he successfully started a system that seemed to fill the sky with mist.

There had never been anyone who believed in him like this.

Even if it's only for the sake of this trust in him, he must win a victory for everyone to see!

That sledgehammer came whistling down once again. Luo Binghe's pupils shrank. He circulated power in his palm and it condensed into a technique!

Everyone's attention was grabbed by this persistent teenager. Though Luo Binghe didn't have an opening to act, he didn't give up searching for an opportunity to fight back and didn't admit defeat. And at this moment, the time for the counterattack had come, the tail end of opportunity was firmly and accurately captured in Luo Binghe's hands.

After persisting for half an hour, the third trial finally had a result.

Other than Shen Qingqiu, no one had expected this result.

An Elder Tian Chui with several hundred years of cultivation and was covered in poisonous thorns was actually defeated by a fifteen-year-old boy!

As expected, Liu Mingyan and Sha Hualing were attracted to Luo Binghe. Four beautiful eyes stared in the direction of Luo Binghe's figure, unwilling to withdraw their gazes.

【Gained Liu Mingyan & Sha Hualing's attention; Fame during Cang Qiong Mountain sect's invasion by the demons; Protagonist's coolness level: + 500. 】

Shen Qingqiu was very angry.

For what! It was 1000 for a deduction and only 500 for an addition. What a black-hearted system, it shouldn't have such a serious double standard!

However, it's not an issue. Right now everyone's heart thought about the same thing.

Luo Binghe was really a youth to be regarded with respect!

Shen Qingqiu was really unfathomable!

Sha Hualing held back for a long while before finally squeezing out: "The Central Plains people of the Human Realm have talents as expected, for such a young hero to come out. Ling-er really admires."

Shen Qingqiu said: “Well said, well said. Since the competition has a result, may Miss withdraw her family? Forgive Cang Qiong Mountain sect for being unable to receive guests; as you can see we are in a muddle.”

The meaning underneath..... there wasn't any meaning underneath, he was directly and clearly ordering the guests to leave.

Sha Hualing was angry but had nowhere to vent. Her fingers twisted in the red veil on her body and she suddenly exploded.

Her hand reached out and suddenly slapped Elder Tian Chui's face quickly and viciously. She angrily shouted: “To lose to such a young disciple under Elder Shen in a fight and in such an ugly manner, you've lost face for all demons!”

Elder Tian Chui was also pitiful. The Demon Realm was a hierarchy and Sha Hualing from birth was a noble Saint. Even after being hit, he was submissive and didn't dare resist. He only dared to say, unsatisfied: “This one is incompetent, asking the Saint to punish!”

Shen Qingqiu wasn't able to watch any longer. Without being loud or quiet, he said: “Miss Sha, if you want to discipline your followers, please move to another location. Qiong Ding Peak is not a place for nobility to establish their supremacy.”

Sha Hualing shed her anger with a hit and finally vented some foul words. Once she turned around, her face was full of smiles again as she said: “Elder Shen’s words are right. Ling-er only saw your division’s talented young gentleman and seeing the waste under her own command, her heart was disappointed and lost control for a moment. Elder Shen, please don’t laugh.”

She changed her face again towards Elder Tian Chui, as cold as ice and □□: “Elder Du Bi fighting and losing to Elder Shen is a matter of course. For you to also lose a trial, you don’t need me to say. You can see to yourself.”

What “You can see to yourself” meant; of course Tian Chui was clear about.

Half his heart went cold on the spot. He originally felt that Shen Qingqiu showing up on Qiong Ding Peak was like a big laughable dolly, the disciples were low in cultivation, and he wanted easy pickings. Only then did he believe the Saint’s invitation. Only, he didn’t think that he would take a great fall here and that even his life was not guaranteed. In the blink of an eye, he saw Luo Binghe surrounded by people, his well-being inquired about by others. Malicious intentions arose.

Tian Chui did not dare make a move on Shen Qingqiu. The little dolly who had harmed him so tragically; he wanted to drag him with him to die as his funeral bed!

Shen Qingqiu paid attention to the demons’ every action and emotion. Tian Chui’s eyes flashing with evil light was not missed, of course. But the demons were really an unrestrained race. Once they decided to act, they

acted. There wasn't even any buffer time. Only in the previous second did he have this intention, yet in the next second he'd raised up his sledgehammer and charged forward!

Elder Tian Chui's build was large and he approached quickly, just like a mountain of metal flying over. Luo Binghe's hands were not light and quick; he was slow and his eyes watched as he was going to be smashed. But he heard Shen Qingqiu scoff coldly, suddenly appearing before him, his paper fan hitting Elder Tian Chui behind the knees.

Elder Tian Chui knelt on the spot.

He really knelt! His whole body crashed on the ground, unconscious. That big hammer was also easily picked up by Shen Qingqiu and held in his hand for a moment; it truly had some weight to it. But for someone with such an elegant temperament and appearance to hold such a giant hammer wasn't very beautiful. Shen Qingqiu immediately threw it far away and said: "Losing the competition and you want to kill? My division's disciple isn't for you to bully!"

These righteous and awe-inspiring words didn't just make the demons speechless; in his heart, even Shen Qingqiu's own old face turned dark red.

Please, you sent up your own disciple for others to abuse all right!

Luo Binghe saw the blue-clothed back blocking in front of him and even forgot to thank Shizun. He only knew that Shizun saved him once again.

Shizun was always like this. He appeared to be harsh towards him, but always in the most critical moment would block in front of him.

Shen Qingqiu turned his head around and glanced at him: “Nothing wrong?” He should engender some good feelings.....

Luo Binghe slowly said: “This disciple is all right! Many thanks to Shizun for saving me.”

This child was so silly and sweet that Shen Qingqiu was a little embarrassed. Shen Qingqiu’s old face almost turned red and he quickly turned around and switched to a lofty and cold expression. Towards Sha Hualing: “Miss Sha, you should discipline well your own followers. If you can’t afford defeat, then why did you have to set three trials?”

Sha Hualing didn’t expect there would be a scene like what had just occurred and felt awkward. She really wanted to say some words for the situation but who knew that just at that moment, things changed again.

The Elder Tian Chui who was lying dead and unmoving on the ground suddenly jumped up and rushed towards Luo Binghe again!

—End Chapter 12—

1Jin: Unit of measurement for weight. $1 \text{ jin} = 0.5 \text{ kg} = 1.1023 \text{ lb.}$

Chapter 13

TN: Finally found a good cultivating reference for translation. Jindan = golden core/pellet/dan = Core Formation. LOL. Ling mai (靈脈) = spirit veins. Also the spirit cave that Liu Qingge was in is called Ling Xi Cave.

His hammer had already been taken away by Shen Qingqiu, but couldn't he use his body to crush Luo Binghe to death?

Seeing him open his arms as though to embrace Luo Binghe, it was as though lightning had struck in Shen Qingqiu's mind and cleared a few bends in thought. He broke out in cold sweat!

Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me, fuck me, fuck me, fuck me! He was still wearing the poison-spiked armor!

At this moment, Shen Qingqiu completely forgot about Luo Binghe's golden body and the rule of the undying protagonist. Putting himself in peril, he unconsciously chose to move over and block again.

The Xiu Ya sword exited its scabbard and the snow-white sword light pierced Elder Tian Chui and gave him a critical injury. But Tian Chui relied on his brute force and viciousness to move forward, unwilling to retreat even if a hole was bored through him. Instead, he was overjoyed and charged forward, letting the Xiu Ya sword pierce out through his back. A

grim smile stretched across his face as he changed his direction towards Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu promptly made a decision and let go, but it was already too late.

His right hand felt the pain of getting pierced. Suddenly, he felt a wave of cold from his heart to the bottom of his feet.

Tian Chui collapsed on the ground and spit out a mouthful of blood. He laughed crazily: “Shen Qingqiu was made by me into funerary goods, hahahaha. Worth! Worth it!”

“Shizun!” Luo Binghe suddenly caught Shen Qingqiu’s right hand. His eyes were red: “Shizun, you..... were pierced by the spike?!”

Shen Qingqiu opened his hand and said: “It’s nothing. I didn’t get pierced. Don’t listen to him exaggerate just to alarm people.” As he spoke, he glanced down. In his mind and heart there was a string of scrolling fuck fuck fuck fuck brushed all over the screen.

From the back of his hand to his arm, there were rows of small pinholes! They were already starting to turn red!

Good thing that he didn't have an intense phobia. Rather, it was Luo Binghe whose face turned completely white after seeing it.

Who could hear the raging waves and stormy seas in Shen Qingqiu's heart? Damn, how many times have I been dropped into a pit by the protagonist! It's already been said he won't die, he won't die! You specially went up and hurried to rescue his life for what, ah fuck, fuck, fuck!

Elder Tian Chui had finally dragged someone with him to be his funeral bed and it was even a funeral bed of decent weight. He wasn't depressed anymore and happily said: "This old man never says things just to alarm people. If I say this poison has no cure then there is no cure. Peak Lord Shen, peacefully wait for death!"

Sword light flashed. Luo Binghe drew the Xiu Ya sword and held it against Tian Chui's neck, his movement so quick and smooth that Shen Qingqiu almost didn't see it.

It was as though Luo Binghe had become another person. Angrily, he said: "Impossible! There must be a way, only you're unwilling to give out the cure."

Sha Hualing suddenly said: "Tian Chui truly didn't lie to this young gentleman. This poison is called 'Without A Cure.'¹Towards humans, it truly is without cure. He is already going to die, how can he be afraid of you using his death to bargain with him?"

‘Without A Cure’!

In this life, he hasn’t heard of a poison whose name was given as little thought as this one!

Although he read the original work and already knew there was such a strong poison, there was still no way to stop Shen Qingqiu from cursing Great God Airplane Towards the Sky’s pragmatism in choosing names!

Light flashed in Sha Hualing’s gaze. She saw that the circumstances had obviously changed and was considering the good idea of making a comeback. But how could Shen Qingqiu be unclear about her pissy character? He cycled spiritual power and ceaselessly suppressed the needle-like pain and vacuum-like feeling in his right hand at the same time. Wearing a small smile on his lips, he pretended to be relaxed and said: “Saying words like these isn’t bad. But Miss Sha, have you forgotten how many years I have? Does Middle-Stage Core Formation still count as mortal?”

Sha Hualing’s expression changed, but then she quickly calmed down and laughed: “Whether or not you’re mortal, I don’t know. However, I know a way to prove whether Elder Shen is really poisoned. If someone has been affected by ‘Without A Cure’: starting from the wound, their spiritual power circulation will be interrupted; slowly it will spread to the entire body; finally, not only spiritual power but even blood will stagnate and cause the person to die. I nvite Elder Shen to use his right hand to try a strong spiritual power attack. You will be able to see the outcome.”

A strong spiritual power attack, as the name suggests, is to take a great amount of spiritual power and circulate it to a certain point and then letting it suddenly explode. It uses the violent shock of the spiritual power's explosion to produce an attacking effect. The result is similar to flipping down a switch and launching a missile or throwing out a detonator. The strength is determined by the person's cultivation.

Shen Qingqiu privately tried before and was able to reach the level of throwing out a grenade. But now, his right hand was just like an intricate robot that had part of an electrical circuit removed. He used all his effort and strength but the circulation of spiritual power was completely blocked.

Damn, this old man shouldn't be wasted just like this right!

Luo Binghe heard the description of 'Without A Cure' and his lips trembled.

At this moment, he forgot Shen Qingqiu's bad treatment of him in the past. It was completely erased from his heart.

He was only very clear that Shizun's cultivation had been harmed by the demons to the point that his cultivation might be wasted, to the extent that he might be killed!

And all of this, was all for him.....

Shen Qingqiu saw his expression change and readily touched his head: “No need to worry.”

Raising his eyes, Shen Qingqiu laughed eccentrically: “It won’t hurt to give it a try. But this matter can’t be tried without anything in return. Miss Sha, you entered and created chaos in Qiong Ding Peak and this Shen always kept his forbearance. Now I’ve changed my mind; you can’t just come and go as you please. How can I let my Cang Qiong Mountain sect be laughed at by others? Why don’t we compare a few attacks and make it a life-and-death match; if there are any injuries we have only ourselves to blame. Whatever happens next, no one will pursue. How is it?”

He cannot show weakness now!

Everyone on the entire Qiong Ding Peak relied on him as the sole Elder present to prop them up. Once he fell down, according to Sha Hualing’s calculations, the clear result would be the demons lighting fire and burning down all of Qiong Ding Peak, watching the sect sign be carried away by them back to the Demon Realm, and the sect’s prestige dropping sharply thereafter; if serious, the entire mountain would be massacred!

Don’t doubt; this woman definitely dared to do this kind of thing.

Better to make a bet quickly and gamble!

Shen Qingqiu didn’t notice that unknowingly, he already didn’t consider any of these anxious, steadfast, indignant, or guarding disciples as the mob

characters talked about in the novel.

Sha Hualing bit her lips and felt tangled.

If Shen Qingqiu really had an extraordinary human body, that poison would have no effect on him. Were the two of them to fight, judging by pure strength of their spiritual power, she would die without knowing it. But if he was only standing weakly and immediately dying afterwards or making an empty show of strength, after this trial there would be the great opportunity of Qiong Ding Peak. Wouldn't she regret it for life?

Shen Qingqiu calmly looked at her and waited for her decision as though he wasn't expecting an answer.

Luo Binghe pulled at his sleeve and said in a low voice: "Shizun, this disciple is willing to receive the attack in your stead."

Shen Qingqiu's expression didn't change as he pulled back his sleeve and said: "Since when is there the reasoning that a disciple should stand in the stead of the shifu?"

Luo Binghe said: "Shizun was injured because of this disciple....."

Shen Qingqiu glared at him: "Since you know this injury is because of you, you should properly protect your own life!"

Luo Binghe's mouth opened but he couldn't speak. His eyes became even more red.

In the end, Sha Hualing gritted her teeth: "Then Elder Shen, please forgive Ling-er for being rude!"

Shen Qingqiu said: "I won't be merciful."

Sha Hualing's heart beat rapidly and didn't even dare to speak back. A shadow of red flame rose with her snow-white hand, accompanied by an overbearing demonic energy. She attacked!

With one foot, Shen Qingqiu kicked Luo Binghe clear. Preparation done, he was willing to use his fleshly body to meet this palm!

However, he had neither been sent flying by this strike of Sha Hualing's nor had vomited a burst of blood and died.

Full of killing aura, once his sword exited the scabbard he saw Bai Zhan Peak's lord dissolve Sha Hualing's attack without moving a finger. He simply used the force of a burst of spiritual power emanating from his body.

After a moment of silence, Qiong Ding Peak seemed to fly up to the sky.

“Martial Uncle Liu!” “Martial Uncle Liu exited seclusion!” “Bai Zhan Peak’s War God has exited seclusion, see if you demons dare to be arrogant anymore!”

Shen Qingqiu said in his heart: What kind of rubbish is this playing cool! Would you die if you came out earlier! I damn well thought I was going to have to report back to my original world!

This was indeed a blameworthy stupid author’s stallion novel. After Sha Hualing’s attack was mitigated, in addition to a soft scream, the red veils that originally covered her body broke into pieces. It caused a spate of exclamations.

She used a beautiful posture to tumble and buffer the attack, rolling up with a palm to the ground. As expected, demons really had a bold and unrestrained demeanor. Almost her entire body was a mosaic² but she still wasn’t shy and only viciously pulled over a subordinate’s cloak. She carelessly said: “Everyone, today was my miscalculation. There will be time for goodbyes in the future! Let’s go!”

Liu Qingge laughed coldly: “Coming and going as you please. What big face you have. What the opposite of beauty in thought!”

Once he reached back and the Cheng Luan sword³ behind his back flew into the sky, hundreds upon hundreds of bright tangible sword energies arrayed in the sky. They rained down like hail and pierced down on the demons.

Sha Hualing had to lead and take care of her subordinates as she ran while at the same time making the red veil in her hand into a piece of red cloud and launching it into the sky. However, it completely couldn't block the spiritual swords and quickly the red veil was pierced full of holes all over. Additionally, Cang Qiong Mountain sect's disciples blocked their way and a good half of the demons died, were injured, or taken prisoner. They could only closely follow Sha Hualing's faithful subordinates killing a bloody path to escape down the mountain.

Liu Qingge returned his sword to its scabbard, scowling as he turned around and searched Shen Qingqiu's hand for the wound with his gaze. Qing Jing Peak disciples also surrounded them. Tens of faces were all pale and tense.

Shen Qingqiu grinned: "It looks like making the decision to send someone to imitate Aunt Snow⁴ to slap the wall of Ling Xi Cave and howl for you to come out, was an extremely correct decision."

Liu Qingge: "Who's Aunt Snow?"

Shen Qingqiu: "Not who. How am I?"

Liu Qingge snorted: "You won't die for now."

Though he'd carelessly said those words, his left hand sent spiritual power into Shen Qingqiu's body without ceasing and his expression turned

serious. He specially clarified: “What I owe you back in the spirit caves, I’ll return to you!”

Die proudly!

Shen Qingqiu felt that his plan to pull Liu Qingge to his side seemed very promising and was very satisfied. But the spirit veins all over his body seemed to spasm and twitch from time to time and made him unable to smile.

Luo Binghe suddenly said: “Martial Uncle Liu, this strong poison ‘Without A Cure,’ is it truly without a cure?”

Liu Qingge glanced at him and hadn’t yet replied when Shen Qingqiu’s knees suddenly softened and he knelt down. Fortunately, Luo Binghe was always supporting him. However, Shen Qingqiu really couldn’t stand any longer. He gestured with his hand and said: “Let me lie down..... let me lie down for a while.”

Luo Binghe had never seen a Shen Qingqiu appear so weak. His eyes red, he knelt at Shen Qingqiu’s side and couldn’t speak. He could only choke back his misery and call out: “Shizun.”

Shen Qingqiu raised an arm with great difficulty and rubbed his head. The mouthful of blood that he had suppressed for an entire day had finally come out as he quivered, but he persisted in finishing the key words to promote good feelings.

“I knew..... you would definitely win.”

Hearing these words, Luo Binghe’s entire body startled.

Shen Qingqiu expressed his understanding.

Luo Binghe must have decided that this person was a mental case + schizophrenic.....Truly, if taken from Heaven’s point of view, Shen Qingqiu himself wouldn’t be able to tolerate and would throw down the book and curse: This is what kind of TM5 role, one moment fighting and one moment saving; are you sick!

At this time, the system delivered its notices.

【Complexity of the role of “Shen Qingqiu” +20, Literary and philosophical depth +20, Choosing to fight a trial +10, Total gained B Points: +50. 】

.....Shen Qingqiu was horrified. The role’s philosophical depth could be calculated like this?

Plus, don’t carelessly open such a strange value, thank you!

The view in his two eyes darkening, Shen Qingqiu raised his head and thought that he might have seen Luo Binghe's tears well up in his eyes and fall down.

It had to have been a mistake.

This was his last thought before he lost consciousness.

—End Chapter 13—

1 'Without A Cure' (無可解): No point leaving it untranslated. 100% literal translation is more like 'No Solution.' Pinyin is Wu Ke Jie.

2Body a mosaic: Basically saying that her body is censored. XD

3Cheng Luan sword (乘鸞劍): 'Multiplying Luan' sword. Luan (鸞) is a kind of mythical bird related to the phoenix.

4Aunt Snow: The nickname of Chinese actress Wang Lin. She got the name after starring in the 2001 movie "Romance in the Rain." Neither Luen nor I have watched the movie but I think you can assume that this "Aunt Snow" had a scene involving hands slapping the door and a lot of howling.

5TM: It's short for ta ma de or 'damn/fuck.' Our MC is cursing it as 'what kind of damn/fucking role...'

Chapter 14

TN: Apologies for the late chapter, been busy this week and weekend. >.<

Unedited chapter, will be replaced with an edited version after I get this to Luen.

After falling unconsciousness, Shen Qingqiu woke up like someone half-dead.

He opened his eyes to see above his head a pure white canopy and knew he was in his own quarters at Qing Jing Peak. The chaos caused by the demons should have already been calmed down. He took a breath and wanted to yawn and stretch when suddenly, the door opened and someone came in.

Ming Fan carried a tray and seeing that he was awake, flung the tray to his left and howled.

“*Shifu*, you’ve finally woken up!”

There was still another person standing outside the door. Luo Binghe stood at the door. It seemed like he wanted to come in but was uncertain and unsure.

After howling, Ming Fan turned around and saw him. He reprimanded: “How come you’re still standing here?” Then he turned back to Shen Qingqiu: “Don’t what kind of disease this kid has that he insists on standing here like a stick. Don’t you know that *Shizun* is annoyed once he sees you? I reminded him but he still doesn’t go.”

Shen Qingqiu weakly held up a hand: “.....Might as well. Up to him.”

Ming Fan said: “Bai Zhan Peak’s Martial Uncle Liu said to tell him when you woke up. I-I’ll go straight to call Martial Uncle Liu, Elder Martial Uncle Mu, and the Sect Head!” After finishing, he rushed up and out the door.

Seems like he’d truly slept for a long time..... Yue Qingyuan had already returned to Cang Qiong Mountain sect. As for “Elder Martial Uncle Mu,” that must be Qian Cao Peak’s Mu Qingfang.¹ Qian Cao Peak specializes in medical skill and medicine production, so it’s necessary for him to be on the scene.

Luo Binghe moved and made way so that the path was clear. He was far away but refused to leave, his attention focused inside the room.

Shen Qingqiu slowly sat up and said: “Do you have anything to say? If so, then come in.”

Luo Binghe walked inside the room and with a thump, suddenly kneeled down.

Shen Qingqiu: “.....!!!”

System, wait a moment? What’s going on? I only slept for a while, how come it became like this just after I woke up? How long did I really sleep? Have ten years passed already?

After Luo Binghe knelt, he raised his head. His eyes were hot with tears and guilty: “Asking Shizun to forgive this disciple’s past ignorance.”

This word ‘ignorance’; no matter who it was put with, it couldn’t be put with Luo Binghe!

“This disciple originally thought that *Shizun* didn’t care about me. Only in the third trial did I realize *Shizun*’s troubles in the past.”

Shen Qingqiu: *No, no, no. Your original Shizun really didn’t care about you, he’d rather you died, really..... However, what troubles of mine did you realize? You should say more; I’m also very curious!*

Luo Binghe didn’t continue speaking down that line and only sincerely said: “From now on, this disciple will definitely wait upon *Shizun* with all his heart, obey all your commands and instructions.”

Shen Qingqiu looked at him with a complicated expression.

This child's heart at this moment, was truly..... very kind and honest!

Saved him once and all of the past verbal and physical abuse was completely forgotten?!

If this continued, would he still be able to steel himself and viciously push him into the Endless Abyss?

Shen Qingqiu was silent for a moment, then said: "As long as you understand, it's good. You get up first."

Though he didn't understand at all, what did Luo Binghe comprehend in the end?

He saw Luo Binghe slowly rise but still refuse to leave, a little bashful like there was still something he wanted to say. Shen Qingqiu asked: "Is there anything else?"

Luo Binghe said: "*Shizun* slept for many days and just woke up. I don't know if *Shizun* has an appetite?"

Shen Qingqiu only just noticed that he was so hungry that it felt like his front had stuck to his back. Once he heard that there was food, his eyes turned green with desire and he hurriedly said: “Very much. You bring it up, then.”

Luo Binghe immediately ran to the kitchen. The porridge that he remade every hour these days finally came of use. He braved holding the porridge that was still wafting steam and brought it over, helping Shen Qingqiu sit up properly from the bed. Eagerly attentive to a fault, he almost fed it straight to Shen Qingqiu’s mouth. Goosebumps emerged on Shen Qingqiu’s arms and he took the spoon himself, eating a few mouthfuls before he saw that Luo Binghe was still standing beside the bed and closely watching him.

Shen Qingqiu thought for moment, then suddenly realized and said lightly: “The taste isn’t bad.”

Though he said the taste wasn’t bad, Shen Qingqiu almost had a face full of tears sort of feeling.

Qing Jing Peak’s core customs walked the path of the fresh and light. Even the cook’s style was along those lines so no matter how he ate, the taste in Shen Qingqiu’s mouth was so light that it was like a bird taking flight. But though the bowl in his hands was also porridge – perhaps it was a problem regarding the ingredients or technique – it was on a completely different standard compared to that bowl of light watery soup porridge.

Snowy white rice porridge, lightly watery with some green onion garnish, delicious and beautiful-looking shredded meat, and just the right amount of ginger sliced into thin strips.² It was comparable to what Shen Yuan's own home's head chef made back in his original world!

Hearing his exaggeration, Luo Binghe's two eyes shone and he said: "If *Shizun* likes it, how about having this disciple make new things for you every day?"

Shen Qingqiu choked on the spot.

Luo Binghe attentively patted him on the back. Shen Qingqiu waved a hand to express he was fine. He was just a little horrified.

Luo Binghe's good cooking was the number one weapon to 'kill' sisters. He really didn't think he would have the privilege to eat the dishes created by Luo Binghe that only a few select countable-on-one-hand harem sisters could eat.

Even more horrifying were his lines, his lines. This sentence "make new things (dishes) for you every day," wasn't it used by Luo Binghe to make those select noble eldest Misses let go of their anger and willingly enter his harem?

Things can be eaten carelessly, but words cannot be said carelessly!

Seeing Shen Qingqiu's strange expression, Luo Binghe was a little uneasy and asked: "Shizun, do you not like it?"

Shen Qingqiu thought for a while. *What does it have to do with me? Since he's already done so for me, I would be a fool not to take it. Speaking of that, the male protagonist being a free cook for me is something worth showing off!*

He immediately put on a kind and genial expression as he said: "This Master really likes it. These duties will be given to your care from now on."

He finally won't have to continue eating that light watery soup porridge anymore! This Master was also able to open and lead a tiny cafeteria!

Having received confirmation, Luo Binghe entire body gave out an aura like a flower blossoming during the warm spring. Shen Qingqiu saw his appearance like that and didn't know why he suddenly felt like he wanted to rub his head.

After sending away the (made into a coolie child in vain) open and brightly laughing Luo Binghe, Shen Qingqiu knocked on the system.

'System, I want to ask you some things.' He thought for bit, 'The Endless Abyss scene..... is it unavoidable?'

System: 【If Luo Binghe misses the “Endless Abyss” storyline, coolness level -10000. 】

Shen Qingqiu heard the last number clearly and had a habitual mouthful of blood coming up. Forget it, vomiting is vomiting and he had already become used to it.

Actually, he’d already thought about what would happen afterwards and reached a conclusion. If he wasn’t able to banish Luo Binghe into the Endless Abyss, then Luo Binghe wouldn’t be able to activate his golden finger. If the protagonist was left hanging, how would there be any coolness?

Therefore, the path of the Endless Abyss scene must be walked. And the most wretched part of this book was that this mission fell on the head of the number one scum villain.

He still didn’t want to give up and asked again, though with a bit of a sad sigh. The current Luo Binghe who was like a little sun had to descend into becoming that shadowy and cold-blooded BOSS of the book. Even someone like him who had transmigrated was unable to change this fact.

He was destined to strike the protagonist into the Endless Abyss, opening the path for him to become a legend for generations kind of man!

Shen Qingqiu was even more worried about his own future.

If he didn't do it, his coolness level would drop by 10000. He really couldn't die any more thoroughly.

Too bad Luo Binghe's hands after being blackened definitely wouldn't let him off.

What kind of thing is this!

Luo Binghe hadn't walked off for long when Shen Qingqiu's apprentice-brothers' approached to inspect his illness.

Shen Qingqiu laid on the bed, his hand holding up a book, when he was met with Yue Qingyuan entering first. He wanted to get off the bed but Yue Qingyuan hurriedly stopped him: "Qingqiu, don't move carelessly. Don't attempt to get down only to fall on the ground. It's better to lie down, there's no need to care about things like manners." From another direction behind him was Mu Qingfang: "Martial brother Mu, come and take a look at Qingqiu again."

While he was unconscious, Mu Qingfang already gave a diagnosis for Shen Qingqiu. Right now would probably count as a follow-up consultation. Shen Qingqiu offered his wrist to him and politely said: "I will be troubling martial brother Mu."

Mu Qingfang nodded and sat at the bedside, his fingers took his pulse. For Qian Cao Peak's Peak Lord's medical knowledge, all kinds of difficult miscellaneous diseases only needed a short moment's inspection to make a judgment and determine a countermeasure. However, he still seriously took his pulse for a long while before he withdrew his fingers.

Yue Qingyuan asked: "How is it?"

Shen Qingqiu wasn't reserved and straightforwardly asked: "Can this poison be cured?"

Liu Qingge's shook his sleeves straight and sat down beside the table, snorting: "This poison is called Without A Cure, what do you say?"

Shen Qingqiu sighed: "Then martial brother Mu, simply say how many years I have left to live? How many months? Or is it how many days?"

Mu Qingfang shook his head and said: "Though it's without a cure, it can be repressed."

His voice was even, neither light nor heavy, but Shen Qingqiu felt that he'd gotten a turn of fortune.

Though this poison was called "Without A Cure," it was actually curable.

Because in the original work, at the beginning of that □□ Immortal Alliance Conference, there was a demure and graceful little apprentice-sister from another sect who had contracted this demonic poison.

The key point was, she was the protagonist's girl.

Have you met a stallion novel's male protagonist who let his own girl die from poison?

If you have, then it must be a subpar stallion novel author's protagonist!

It would be a tens of thousands of years failure of a stallion novel!

The cure was very simple! Let us go back and look at the development in the original work.

Because of the irresistible force of the scene, the graceful little apprentice-sister contracted the poison from a demon spirit because in order to save the male protagonist. Luo Binghe felt he had an unshirkable responsibility and took up the task of finding a cure for the graceful little apprentice-sister.

Coincidentally, in the mountain forest at the Immortal Alliance Conference, there grew a thousand-year miracle flower – sorry, Shen Qingqiu forgot it

was called what flower or what grass because in “Proud Immortal Demon Way” there were at least fifty-something kinds of those miracle flowers, and each one was at least thousands of years old and could be counted as a miraculous flower or shrub. The numbers were definitely over three digits and who the heck could remember all those names.

Great God Airplane Towards The Sky, you think miracle flowers are like Chinese cabbages on sale? Give these miracle plants a little dignity, all right!

Luo Binghe thought this miracle flower from the tales would definitely cure the poison in the graceful little apprentice-sister’s body. Not only did he struggle bitterly to pick it for her, he also wasted three days. These three days he searched for the flower while fighting monsters and both of them came to develop feelings for each other. The graceful little apprentice-sister’s poison became more and more serious, her entire body weak when Luo Binghe was finally able to pick the flower. The two people were overjoyed and quickly the graceful little apprentice-sister ate the flower raw (.....).

But, it didn’t work! The poison wasn’t cured!

The hearts of both people went cold. The girl felt that she was going to die and thought she must leave behind an unforgettable memory so her existence wouldn’t be forgotten, so she took the opportunity while she was still weak to push down Luo Binghe.....

Luo Binghe made a show of resistance but thought afterward ‘she’s doing it all for me. I can’t be coldhearted and refuse her last wish.’ And after a show of reluctance, he yielded and obeyed.....

Then, the poison, how was it cured?

After doing *pa pa pa* [sex], the girl’s poison was naturally cured!

Tired? Vulgar? Farfetched? But it’s very cool, right! Cool thunder, cool thunder, hahahaha.....

It’s because Luo Binghe was of mixed demon and human blood. Also, the demon side of his bloodline was that of the demons’ number one Sacred Ruler’s ancient heavenly demon blood! Such a tiny little demon poison was not even enough to stuff between the gaps of his teeth. During the process of the two people having sex, it had already been sucked over by Luo Binghe and digested away. At the same time, even the nutrients of the miracle flower that the girl had eaten raw earlier were absorbed by him, giving him a big boost in cultivation!

—End Chapter 14—

¹Qiancao Peak (千草峰)... Mu Qingfang (木清芳): Qiancao Peak means ‘Thousand Grasses’ Peak. The name suggests it’s the medical division of Cang Qiong Mountain sect even without the explanation later. Qingfang means ‘clear fragrance.’

²Snowy white rice porridge...: A lot more appetizing than it sounds. Here's what it looks like:

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 15

TN: I wanted to switch to WordPress page jump for footnotes so you can click and go to the footnote, then click it again to go back to where you were while reading. It's a WIP, hope it's working right. :3

Two chapter release, so remember to click 'Forward' on to Chapter 16.

The so-called protagonist's treatment was that even if he stepped on dog shit, he'd still find a cheat or elixir of life hidden inside.

Shen Qingqiu's memories of this caused his face to change unpredictably. He even ignored the people beside him and Yue Qingyuan had to call him several times before he returned to himself: "What?"

Mu Qingfang passed over a piece of paper to him: "Every month continue to take these four medicinal herbs while circulating your spiritual power strongly. This poison shouldn't affect you seriously." After a moment, he said: "Only, I'm afraid elder apprentice-brother Shen will occasionally encounter a blockage in using or circulating spiritual power in the future.

The other three people in the room all paid close attention to his expression.

For cultivators, encountering a blockage in circulating spiritual power was a very terrifying problem. It was especially so during a duel between two master cultivators; one mistake could take a life. Though as everyone knew, Shen Qingqiu was already very satisfied with this result.

For someone with a scum villain role like him, encountering an odd poison like Without A Cure but still being able to live afterwards was already giving him a lot of face!

Even if he knew that he only needed to *pa pa pa* with the protagonist to cure the poison, could he? Could he? Hahahaha.....

Yue Qingyuan sighed: “If I had known, I wouldn’t have gone down the mountain to personally arrange the Immortal Alliance Conference. Even bothering Qingqiu.....”

Shen Qingqiu slowly said: “The Immortal Alliance Conference was already a big matter that all the sect heads were supposed to arrange. Elder apprentice-brother, how could you not go? This time we can only blame the Demon Realm people for being despicable and cunning, and myself for not being careful. Elder apprentice-brother, you should never blame yourself.”

If he didn’t make things clear now and things went wrong, according to Yue Qingyuan’s character, he might never go down the mountain again. Even the fall of Cang Qiong Mountain sect was a possibility. Who knew that on the other end, Mu Qingfang said guiltily: “No, it’s my wrong. If it wasn’t because I failed to discover the Demon Realm people’s invasion and wasn’t able to accompany martial brother Shen, it wouldn’t come to this.”

Shen Qingqiu felt his head swell even more at this troublesome matter. All three people were in a complete muddle and doing their utmost to say that they were the one wrong. Liu Qingge was expressionless as he faced towards the window and looked outside. He waited until they finished laying blame on themselves to drink a mouthful of tea and say: "This matter shouldn't be said to anyone else outside the Twelve Peak Lords."

As the number one sect and one of the Twelve Peak Lords, it would not be good if this fatal weakness were to be known by others. All three people naturally understood.

Yue Qingyuan was still worried and asked: "Qingqiu, will you feel that the burden of a Peak Lord will be too heavy?"

If it were the original Shen Qingqiu, he would be eighty percent suspicious of what □□ Yue Qingyuan wanted to do. But now, Shen Qingqiu understood that he was truthfully worried that he would be overly pressured and wouldn't attend to his own health. He held up a hand and said: "Sect head elder brother, you don't need to worry about me. I won't waste away to that degree." He smiled, then continued: "Right now I am able to steadily get better and cultivate even if the poison is still there. I am very satisfied."

They also talked about the problem of the demon invasion. Yue Qingyuan and Mu Qingfang were the first to step away and leave. The former had a rare angry expression and was preparing a large-scale plan for the Human Realm to suppress the demons, looking for major sects to participate. The latter continued to think about a way to solve the poison. Silently sending

them off, Shen Qingqiu found them quite funny but also felt warm and happy.

These Cang Qiong Mountain sect fellow members, although everyone had different characters and there were those who got along well and those who got along badly, they all had a united heart. Though separated into Twelve Peaks, if something happened, they were truly a dependable family. The original goods really had a brain drowned in water [1] to perversely slaughter his own sect members.

His happy mood didn't last for long before Liu Qingge put down his long-cooled tea. Lightly, he said: "If it wasn't because you don't have ghostly *qi* on your body, I would definitely suspect that you are possessed."

Leaving behind these words, it sounded like they just wouldn't get along.

To some extent, your guess would be very accurate.....however, these words would require Shen Qingqiu to have eight hundred points of courage to say out loud, so he could only laugh wordlessly.

Liu Qingge continued: "Saving me in the Ling Xi Cave was already incredible. As for the matter of the Demon Realm attack this time, you almost got killed saving a nameless disciple. Suffering damage from strong poison and blocking your spirit power should have made you angry, but you are indifferent instead. Doing these things is not strange, except that you have been the one to do them. It doesn't make sense."

Shen Qingqiu didn't want to talk with him at all about the problem of his own OOC character. He called Ming Fan inside to switch to new tea and leaned back, smiling: "Nameless? That's only for now. You watch, Luo Binghe will make you shocked."

Liu Qingge remembered Luo Binghe's name and said: "It's that young boy? His foundation [2] is quite excellent. But someone with this kind of good qualification is picked by the big sects in the hundreds if not thousands every year. There's not a single one who can stand out among others to the end."

That's why I say you don't understand! You haven't opened your eyes! There's no way for you to understand the high sense of superiority set by the plot!

Shen Qingqiu kindly advised him: "Believe me, he is definitely different. I dare to say that Luo Binghe will definitely have great achievements in the future. I hope that apprentice-brother will guide him if he has the opportunity in the future. It's absolutely not a trade that'll lose you money."[3]

What if Liu Qingge became a stumbling block in Luo Binghe's path and they faced off? What if he was chopped *ka ca* [4]and KO-ed!

For everyone's good, it was necessary to remind Liu Qingge.

The Shen Qingqiu of the past didn't have many words and was absolutely cold. Whenever he had to open his mouth, he was cultured and sourly envious. His wording matching as though in poetry and carefully neat. But ever since Shen Qingqiu unfroze the OOC function, all kinds of vernacular words would slip out from time to time. Even the Liu Qingge who didn't know what OOC was couldn't listen any further. He swept his sleeves out and left.

Ming Fan was half-dead with depression. He had only gone to change tea yet was forced to hear good words being spoken about Luo Binghe by Shen Qingqiu, who was the person who shared his enmity. His heart felt stuffy to the point it was as though 'the person we cursed as a little bitch and whose home we happily wrecked, we suddenly became fellow CP members.' [5] With an evil heart he decided to do evil things to others. Energetically, Ming Fan found the Luo Binghe who was pondering over what to make for Shen Qingqiu to eat tomorrow morning. He was suddenly right in Luo Binghe's face and shouted and scolded loudly, then commanded: "Go chop firewood for me! Chop eighty bundles! Fill the woodshed! Go fetch water! The water jars in your apprentice-brothers' rooms are all empty, are you blind and can't see?!"

Luo Binghe was puzzled: "But, apprentice-brother, where do I sleep if the woodshed is full?"

Ming Fan's foot stomped the ground and his spittle flew: "Isn't there flat ground right here? Can't you sleep here?!"

"Apprentice-brother, I just filled the water jars in the rooms today....."

“The water isn’t fresh, redo it!”

If it had been in the past, Luo Binghe’s heart would have felt a little wronged or had some grievances. But now his heart was much different.

In his eyes, all these things were training experiences for him.

He already had such a good *Shizun* who, for his sake, could even give up his own life (.....). What kind of experience couldn’t he accept? What kind of bitterness wouldn’t he be able to eat?

Luo Binghe didn’t say anything else and immediately turned his head around to do his tasks.

Ming Fan saw him like this and didn’t feel any happiness from bullying, instead feeling even more stuffiness in his heart. While walking, he cursed: “I really don’t know what part of this stinking brat came into *Shizun*’s eyes, for *Shizun* to treat him with such special interest. What great achievements, what dog shit difference from others! Even if *Shizun* has been blinded by this stinking brat, Martial Uncle Liu won’t guide him. *Pei*.....”[6]

Though he walked while muttering curses, his voice wasn’t loud. However, of course the Luo Binghe whose cultivation improved rapidly and whose five senses were naturally good would hear. Although Ming Fan’s words were broken up, most of the key words could be caught. Luo Binghe immediately could clearly guess most of it.

So it turned out that *Shizun* talked about him like this in front of Martial Uncle Liu.....

In a place where he couldn't see, there was someone who looked so well upon him. This kind of feeling was very wonderful.

A current of warmth suddenly coursed through his heart, surging stronger and stronger, gradually wrapping his entire body.

Luo Binghe felt a firm resolve rise from the bottom of his heart and sprout. The two hands holding onto heavy wooden buckets increased in power.

For this matter, Luo Binghe not only had no feeling of being harassed, he'd even revealed a kind of happy and satisfied expression.

If Shen Qingqiu were here, he definitely would have suspected that Luo Binghe was a trembling M inside.....[7]

However, even if he were beaten to death, Shen Qingqiu wouldn't know. Because God assisted pigs and because of Student Ming Fan, Luo Binghe's favorability towards him had reached a new high. So he was very pleased with himself and laid down.

Today, the always high and cold Qing Jing Peak almost had even its threshold collapse. Each Peak Lord brought their disciples with them to express their sympathies and to visit the afflicted patient.

Since the Rainbow Bridge had been cut away during the Demon Realm invasion, they were unable to immediately hurry to the scene. The fierce fight was all left to Shen Qingqiu alone to oversee as the sole Elder. The good thing was that they were able to preserve Cang Qiong Mountain sect from demon hands. It didn't matter whether their relations were good or bad in the past, they all had to come and express their appreciation once. Shen Qingqiu took this opportunity to memorize the faces of the Peak Lords he hadn't met before and to establish good relations with them.

At night, he thought to himself: *I can finally have a good and peaceful sleep.*

After two hours.

.....Peaceful sleep my ass!

Shen Qingqiu stood in the middle of a chaotic space of nothingness and looked towards the disappearing horizon in the distance.

Before, he had been smiling inside as he comfortably slipped into dreams on his bed. Who could explain why he had been dragged into this space?!

Shen Qingqiu really wished he could get a gong and ring it to get the system to come out. He wouldn't need to raise his voice in his mind and shout: 'System? Are you online?'

System: 【The system provides you with 24-hour service. 】

Shen Qingqiu: 'Where is this? What is the situation?'

System: 【This is a dream realm. 】

Shen Qingqiu: 'Of course I know this is inside a dream. Would I be able to see such an abstract scene in reality? I'm asking why I'm here.'

Please, don't let it be what he thought.

But the god of this world really didn't give him any face. He just thought *no* and the next second, he saw a figure he couldn't be more familiar with.

Luo Binghe stood in the middle of the wilderness, at a loss.

He also didn't seem to know at all why he would appear here. After a moment of stupefaction, he suddenly saw Shen Qingqiu's figure. In a

moment, he quickly became a baby chick seeing a mother hen (what freaking metaphor) and happily ran over.

“*Shizun!*” He had already been trapped in this world for a long time. Seeing Shen Qingqiu appear, he became excited and called him multiple times.

Once Shen Qingqiu saw him, he knew what this place and scene was.

His mind crazily clamored that it was unscientific! With a calm expression, he said: “I heard, you don’t need to call so many times.”

Luo Binghe hurriedly said: “Yes. *Shizun*. How come you’re here too? Do you know where this is?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Of course I know. This is a dream realm.” He lazily copied the words of the system.

Luo Binghe asked again: “A dream realm..... then why am I here?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “It would be strange for anyone to be here. Only your presence here is normal. This is inside your dream.”

—End Chapter 15—

[1] Brain drowned in water (腦子進水): Literally ‘brain in water’ and another way of saying someone’s stupid or witless.

[2] Foundation is quite excellent: Actual characters used are “根骨” or *gen gu*. Literal meaning is “roots bones.” Closest approximation I can find is *ling gen* or spiritual roots but that’s a different set of characters so I’ll use ‘foundation’ for now.

[3] Not a trade that’ll lose you money (賠本買賣): Sorta what it sounds like. Means that Binghe’s a sure bet.

[4] *ka ca*: Pronounced ‘kah-cha’ and is SFX for chopping sound. Usually it implies someone’s head getting cut off.

[5] ...fellow CP members: CP = Communist Party. LOL. One of the values is group unity, so that means no more abuse. And a lot of awkward. XD

[6] *Pei*: An expression of disgust. Actual characters were “我呸” which is more like “I *pei*/pooh” or “I curse.”

[7] M: M as in masochist. LOL.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)
Report chapter Comments

Chapter 16

Luo Binghe was stunned: “My.....” He took a step back and looked at the boundless and desolate heaven and earth and murmured: “My dream realm, it’s actually.....like this?”

The mindset framed how the world was seen. Though at such a young age, he had experienced many feelings.

Shen Qingqiu dully said: “This isn’t a normal dream realm. I’m afraid you were interfered with by someone while unaware. The spirit power inside this dream realm is strong and unstable. This master was unknowingly pulled in by you.”

Luo Binghe’s face showed a guilty expression: “This disciple is useless and involved *Shizun*.” He thought: “Who would interfere with my dream realm?”

Shen Qingqiu fully experienced what it was like to spoil someone else’s fun and straightforwardly got to the point: “You don’t need to think further. There is demonic energy around the edges of the dream realm. This kind of move must be from a demon.”

Luo Binghe heard this and wasn’t excited. Instead, it aroused his hatred towards demons. He said: “Demon realm people are truly poisonous at heart.”

He really didn't know what kind of expression Luo Binghe would have after discovering his own mixed demon blood heritage and thinking back to these words that he himself had said.....

Shen Qingqiu smiled and said: "Poisonous and shameless; it could be that others have an opposite feeling."

From Shen Qingqiu's godly point of view, his words are directed towards the person who interfered with Luo Binghe's dream realm, that very Sha Hualing.

Of course, there were thoughts of harming others. But what there were more thoughts of, everyone knew – naturally it's a young girl's secretly moved heart.

Why else would she not harm others and only harm him? In the eyes of this demon girl, the person she likes should be brought over and viciously bullied $\gamma(\overline{\quad}\overline{\nabla}\overline{\quad})\rfloor$. However, this was only in the beginning; wait for her to be brought into the harem by Luo Binghe. She could only be submissive and docile then.

Luo Binghe didn't understand the meaning of these words he said, but he smiled and thought it was profound. It was flighty and slightly frivolous but was also able to make people feel a bit of adventurousness.

“This dream realm isn’t simple. An ordinary nightmare wouldn’t be able to stop me and changing my belief would be able to break through this dream. But this dream realm was made very exquisitely. I’m afraid destroying the core of the illusion would cause no one to be able to get out.”

“That is to say, we’ll be forever trapped inside this dream realm?” Luo Binghe apologized: “It’s all this disciple’s fault.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “For things to have reached this stage, words are of no use. It’s better to act early and break through the enchantment as soon as possible.”

Luo Binghe silently nodded and followed behind Shen Qingqiu, walking towards the edge of the dream.

Shen Qingqiu’s external appearance looked serene, but inside his brain there were great tempestuous waves as he conversed with the system.

System: 【System warning: You are currently entering an important plot branch: Dream Demon Enchantment. Please ensure that during this plot branch you support Luo Binghe so he attains victory over the Dream Demon’s illusion. Otherwise, you will be deducted 1000 coolness points. 】

It came again. It’s deducting coolness points again. Every time there was this kind of number that let people get a heart attack. *I industriously and conscientiously work hard for some points of coolness and you deduct 1000*

at one go, is this really good?! As a person..... no, as a system you shouldn't be so extreme!

However, this wasn't the key point. The key point was – the plot was a mess.

The premise of this section in the original book was that Luo Binghe was pulled into the Dream Demon's attack range. Before getting attacked, as an unconscious measure of self-protection, he instinctively pulled the person he trusted most with him into the enchantment.

Shen Qingqiu urgently hit the system: 'Great one, baby, great god! Are you sure there isn't a **Bug**? This part is supposed to be Luo Binghe steeping with a sister [1]. Also, the sister is responsible for helping him unravel the tangles in his heart and using love to help him overcome heart demons [2]. How come I'm given this role?! What about the good emotions and spiritual communion leading to acceptance into the harem scene? What about the little apprentice-sister intending to never abandon him in either life or death?!'

System: 【Self-inspection did not reveal a **Bug**. The system is running normally. 】

No **Bug**. That is to say, this scene is do right or die.

Shen Qingqiu experienced the power of the butterfly effect for the first time.

In the original work, the one pulled into the dream alongside Luo Binghe was Ning Yingying. At this early stage, she was recently the person he trusted the most on Qing Jing Peak. This checkpoint + increasing intimacy task plainly should have fallen to her.

What was going on now?

‘The most trustworthy’ and most trusted person, how did this hat inexplicably get buckled onto Shen Qingqiu’s head?

Shen Qingqiu was extremely flattered by this unexpected favor but he didn’t want to wear this hat at all!

Luo Binghe saw Shen Qingqiu’s unfathomable expression and asked concernedly: “*Shizun*, what’s the matter?”

Shen Qingqiu immediately recovered and calmly said: “Nothing. This master is thinking, dream monsters usually attack the weakest part of a person’s heart. You should make preparations.”

Luo Binghe nodded. With a decisive expression, he said: “This disciple won’t let *Shifu* be implicated again.”

Too bitterly forced. Not only was he immersed in a dangerous scene, he was also afraid that if he didn't guess wrong, he would need to take on the sister's responsibilities.

Shen Qingqiu didn't at all want to block knife and gun for the protagonist and follow him through mountains and seas to face fearful heart demons and dream demons and other big things, ah QAQ!

What kind of muddled luck was it to reach this level.....

Earlier he'd complained about this world's god. Thinking it over, God was also very innocent. Wasn't the person who created this world Airplane Towards The Sky? As a red-blooded stallion novel writer, he definitely wouldn't be willing for this kind of situation to occur in his writing. A perfectly good sister was switched to a scum villain, how bad is that.

The two people walked forward for a while. Above their heads, the clouds in the sky and the scenery around them was like a kaleidoscope. Sometimes it stretched and twisted, sometimes it broke into many pieces, unpredictable. Walking in this realm, it was like they were drawn by Da Vinci and the background by Picasso. The styles were completely different and the sense of disharmony was very strong.

Suddenly, a city appeared from the black clouds in front of them.

Shen Qingqiu solemnly said: “Counter soldiers with arms, water with earth [3]. Enter.”

Walking to the city gate, Luo Binghe raised his head and revealed a slightly confused expression.

Shen Qingqiu knew it. He thought this city looked very familiar.

Of course it’s familiar, this was the city that Luo Binghe wandered as a beggar in his childhood.

Naturally, the city gate didn’t have guards and they slowly opened it themselves. Shen Qingqiu led him inside.

This dream was truly terrible, so abstract it was a muddle of colored blocks and there was no delineation between time and reality. The road inside the city, the market, and the houses were all undoubtedly intricately crafted. The lights brightly lit with people coming and going, they watched the people bustle in the crowd from far away. But after walking closer for a better look, even if Shen Qingqiu had prepared himself better, his heart would still have received a shock.

These bustling ‘people,’ none of them had a face.

Their faces were just vague, unclear impressions. There wasn't any sound either. They weren't like living people at all, but still busily walked around in the city as silent as the dead, giving rise to a kind of strange feeling.

Luo Binghe had never encountered this kind of horrifying scene before. He was scared but said: "*Shizun*, what are these?"

Shen Qingqiu was a little panicked but still took the responsibility of explaining like a little Baike [encyclopedia]. [4]

"This is a city built by using dreams. Houses and such are made from dead things and can be created like this in a dream. Live people cannot be created and at most can only be made into these strange and indescribable things without noses or faces. However, someone with the ability to immediately create a city on such a large scale – I'm afraid there's only one person."

Luo Binghe humbly asked: "Which person?"

Shen Qingqiu: "Dream Demon."

The Dream Demon was this dream's BOSS.

The Dream Demon was a famous and powerful demon Elder. Some hundreds of years ago, the demon had its fleshly body destroyed in a battle in the Heavenly Realm. Its powerful soul was able to remain intact and

parasite on people's dreams, relying on receiving spiritual power and refined energy to survive.

At the same time, it was also the protagonist's number one *shifu*.

It was the one who in typical cliché fashion took a liking to the protagonist Luo Binghe after he broke through the enchantment. It took all its body's worth of lost knowledge and passed it into his hands, also coming out with a plan from time to time to give him a hand.

Luo Binghe's experience was not deep, so of course he didn't understand this person had come. He was still thinking about asking some more questions when his eyes swept across the crowd and he froze.

Shen Qingqiu asked despite already knowing the answer: "What's the matter?"

Luo Binghe said: "*Shizun*, I don't know whether I saw wrong. Earlier, I think I saw people with faces in the crowd."

Shen Qingqiu shook his sleeves and walked towards the direction he pointed, concisely said: "Chase."

The two people blended into the crowd, taking seven turns and eight bends [5] before finally stopping in front of a small alley.

There are five people with faces in total. All their faces are clear rather than a vague mess. They looked like they were still in their teens. Four of them stood and held the advantage while one sat on the ground. The sound of cursing was unceasing, some “small mixed-breed” and “bastard” flying around. They were so absorbed in cursing that they didn’t notice the two people arriving behind them.

Luo Binghe said: “They don’t seem like they can see us.”

He looked at Shen Qingqiu as though asking, didn’t you say the Dream Demon has no way of creating people with facial features?

It was time to explain again.

Shen Qingqiu sighed in his heart. He said: “The Dream Demon truly cannot use the dream to create people, but these people weren’t created by it. Luo Binghe, look closer at these people.”

Luo Binghe slowly moved his gaze towards them and looked for a while before suddenly receiving a shock.

Shen Qingqiu said: “These aren’t illusions created by the Dream Demon. They are actually projections of real people existing in your memories. The Dream Demon is only using a small trick to take these images sleeping in the depths of your heart and wake them up.”

It was as though Luo Binghe was already unable to hear his words, raising his hands and holding it to his temples, nerves spasming.

Shen Qingqiu knew that Luo Binghe's heart demon had already come.

These four slimy teenagers surrounded a boy sitting on the ground who looked to be around fifteen years old, punching and kicking him. That shabbily-dressed child whose hands were holding his head, curled up on the ground, silently getting beaten; it really let people worry that such a small child would be beaten to death by them!

“This mixed-breed kid who hasn't grown eyes dares to come to this brother's turf to get a job!”

“Tired of living!”

“Step on him to death. Isn't he pitiful, doesn't he have nothing to eat and is hungry? If he's beaten to death he won't have nothing to eat anymore!”

Luo Binghe's head hurt as though it would split. It seemed he could only see the tragic and weak little figure on the ground. That was the him in years past, from the loose and messy hair to the face full of blood that revealed two eyes like stars. Like two sharp swords, those eyes met his.

Luo Binghe couldn't move his gaze at all.

Shen Qingqiu whispered: "Binghe, this is only an illusion."

—End Chapter 16—

[1] Steeping with a sister: Actual word used is *pao* (泡). Basically 'steeping' or soaking with a sister/babe like a tea bag. LOL.

[2] Heart demons: Pinyin is *xin mo* (心魔) just like the name of Binghe's future, endgame sword. I'm using the literal translation instead of the more common term 'internal demons' because I think it fits better with this story. Heart demons are negative emotions and other mental barriers that hinder practitioners in their cultivation or training. They can attack a cultivator from the inside and cause them to suffer harm and/or qi deviation. If you've played Kingdom Hearts, it's like the darkness in your heart. *is whacked by a Keyblade*

[3] Counter soldiers with arms, water with earth (兵來將擋，水來土掩): A saying meaning to adopt measures appropriate for the situation.

[4] Baike (百科): A reference to Baidu Baike/Baike Baidu which is like an online encyclopedia made by the Chinese equivalent of Google, Baidu.

[5]Taking seven turns and eight bends: Meaning to take a convoluted path.

Chapter 17

TN: Unedited because I wanted to get this out first. Sorry for the wait!

However, this was the Dream Demon's illusion. It was the best at using the feelings in the depths of people's hearts. Bringing out their most ancient terrors or rages or bitterness, it could then break down their psychological defenses. Therefore, all these countless hundreds of years, there had been no one (known) to break free.

Shen Qingqiu always wanted to tsukkomi [1] this point in the original work. It was said very plainly, yet for Luo Binghe and Ning Yingying these two medium-sized children to pull around bitterly for a while and break through; Great God Airplane Towards The Sky, please give the demon Elder more face!

Luo Binghe suddenly charged forward, seeming to want to beat aside the people who beat him in his younger self's beggar days, but his fists went through their bodies. There was completely no way to dispel the illusion. Fists and feet continued to rain down on that small body.

Shen Qingqiu quickly caught Luo Binghe's fist and stabilized his body. Calmly, he said: "See? You can't touch them. This is only the Dream Demon's trap."

If it were the Luo Binghe after activating his cheats, ten thousand Dream Demons altogether would be nothing more than tiny tricks in his eyes. But the Luo Binghe right now: the demon blood inside his body hadn't woken yet and was sleeping dormant in the dark depths of his memories and dreams. What he could see was only his helplessness.

Suddenly, the small illusion the two people were in twisted and became another scene.

It wasn't good for Shen Qingqiu's heart, he was taken unawares and slaughtered!

This was a dilapidated cottage. Inside the cottage, there was only one bed and one crooked little table. On the table was a dim oil lamp and there was a small bench to the side.

On the bed lay a brittle old woman striving to support herself and sit up, not far from death. From outside the door, a small figure rushed in who was just ten years old with a soft and childish face. Luo Binghe supported the old woman as she sat up. Around his neck he still wore that jade pendant. He hurriedly said: "Mother, how come you want to get up again? Didn't you say you'd get better if you rested?"

The woman coughed and said: "Lying down doesn't get anything done. It would be better to rise from bed and get the clothes washed."

Little Luo Binghe said: “I’ve already finished Mother’s work. Mother, lie down and wait for me to stew your medicine. Eat medicine, your body gets better, then do work.”

Shen Qingqiu already knew there was this scene, but when it played out in front of his eyes in reality, there was no way to be unmoved.

That woman’s face was grayish white, the disease beyond cure; she was at death’s door. She smiled and touched the top of Luo Binghe’s head: “Binghe, you’re really obedient.”

Little Luo Binghe raised his face, his entire face strongly smiling: “Mother, what do you want to eat?”

The woman said: “Right now, I have less and less appetite. Last time our estate’s young master poured out that white congee. I’m inclined to have a try, but I don’t know whether the kitchens have any left over.”

Little Luo Binghe vigorously bent his head and said: “I’ll go ask for Mother!”

“Just asking will be fine. If there’s none left over, just any other regular light and watery dish to fill the stomach will do.”

Little Luo Binghe ran *da da da* outside like a gust of wind. The woman lay down for a moment, then pulled out needle and thread from beneath her pillow again and began her women's work.

The light inside the cottage grew dimmer and dimmer. Luo Binghe's figure wasn't clear. He reached out a hand to grab something. Shen Qingqiu grabbed his hand and forcefully said: "Luo Binghe! Look clearly, this isn't your mother, you aren't that weak child unable to fight back anymore!"

The dream's killing power was based on handicapping the person's emotions. The more they felt, the greater the damage they received. Like Luo Binghe right now, his instability was a great threat to his life.

Secondly, it was necessary to be careful. The 'people' in the dream definitely could not be attacked.

All these 'people' in the dream were from the dreamer's own consciousness and heart. Attacking them actually meant attacking your own brain. There were many people who didn't understand this point, or couldn't control their own emotions, and in the dream attacked and grievously harmed their own 'people.' From then on, they entered eternal sleep.

According to the current situation, if Luo Binghe entered into eternal sleep, Shen Qingqiu would also accompany him and be trapped in the dream.

The surrounding scenery changed unpredictably. The scene changed to little Luo Binghe begging a wealthy young master to give his mother a bowl of

congee to eat; another scene change shifted to the time when he just entered Qing Jing Peak, all his apprentice-brothers excluding and making things difficult for him; a small figure struggling to wield a rusty axe; watching a figure carry water buckets up the stairs more and more slowly; his sole treasured jade pendant getting stolen, unable to be found ever again.....

The chaos of the scenes continued to unceasingly pile up. At this moment, these scattered pictures and memories made Luo Binghe unable to see anything or hear anything. There was only the resentment, despair, pain, helplessness, fury, and other emotions tangled in a mess churning in his chest and his mind.

This dream was the collection of ups and downs of this young boy's short ten years of life. Luo Binghe already completely entered into it! His breathing was unsteady and his two eyes were unnaturally red.

Shen Qingqiu felt that standing at his side was very dangerous!

The only way to break the dream was to resolve the tangles in your own heart, then the dream would defeat itself. Luo Binghe's fist was tightly clenched, his bones resounding *ka ka*, spiritual power circulating throughout his whole body.

Shen Qingqiu saw his desire to attack rising and sternly said: "Calm your heart! Don't attack the illusions! Hitting them will only hurt yourself!"

But Luo Binghe was already unable to hear any of his words. His right hand raised, spiritual power surged in his palm and flew out, cutting straight towards the people laughing boisterously in the illusion!

In his heart, Shen Qingqiu let out a cry of grief for himself. No matter how painful, his body still cleverly went up and took the initiative to move forward in front of the illusion, using his body to block this fierce attack.

At this time, Luo Binghe was shorter than him by only a little and coincidentally hit him in the lower abdomen.

Suddenly, Shen Qingqiu felt as though he'd been kicked by an elephant's leg, his eyes growing dark. If this wasn't a dream, he was afraid he'd be spraying out a mouthful of blood.....

He was indeed the protagonist!

Shen Qingqiu's face was full of tears. He was obviously only a little disciple, why could he attack with such a powerful hit..... it seemed that since he opened the OOC function, not only was there not much contribution, he instead had to block knife and block knife and still block knife and continuously to sacrifice his own interests for someone else as a good meat shield!

With this attack by Luo Binghe, the surrounding illusion was broken. The figures of the people and objects all cracked into pieces like shards of glass.

The place where they exited was a piece of remote, wild forest. A cold, ancient moon hung above their heads, the sky dark blue.

Once the illusion was scattered, Luo Binghe was suddenly sober. First, he looked at the unable-to-stand, kneeling on the ground and wordless Shen Qingqiu. Then he looked down at his own fist, a trace of spiritual power still remaining and vaguely recalled what he did earlier. His face immediately paled.

Luo Binghe flew to Shen Qingqiu's side and supported him, anxious and regretful: "*Shizun!* You, why didn't you hit back!"

With Shen Qingqiu's spiritual power, it was completely within his ability to harm him. With both of their spiritual powers attacking each other, not only could he dissolve Luo Binghe's attack, he could also turn the attack back to him.

Shen Qingqiu said some words from the heart: "Silly child." He smiled weakly: ".....The original purpose was for you not to get hurt. If I hit back and hurt you, would there be any meaning?"

Luo Binghe listened to *Shifu's* weak voice and even thought of taking a palm to his own chest and killing himself, "But the one hurt right now is *Shizun*..... this disciple should be dead ten thousand times over!"

The matter of the Demon Realm's three trials hadn't been over for long and he already let *Shizun* get hurt because of himself, this time even hit by him

directly!

Shen Qingqiu saw the child's face overflowing with self-blaming agony and softened for a rare moment, comforting: "This master's cultivation is strong, being hit a few times doesn't matter."

Luo Binghe would rather Shen Qingqiu viciously beat and scold him with biting sarcasm as he had in the past. His heart would feel a little more comfortable. But Shen Qingqiu was so warm and his words so soft that he was struck dumb and unable to speak, his heart somehow feeling even more helpless.

After a long while, Luo Binghe said in a low voice: "It's all my fault."

No no no no no, it's not your fault. Truly at this early stage you are walking the route of sadly abandoned, warm little pure white flower. How can you be blamed?

Shen Qingqiu thought Luo Binghe had fallen into a tangle of self-reflection and taken the matter to heart. Patiently, he said: "It's not your business. Demon Realm people have despicable methods that cannot be avoided. However, if don't want to have something similar happen in the future, you can only become strong."

This was a 'the weak are the prey of the strong' world. Becoming strong was the only guarantee and method against going with the current and becoming cannon fodder!

Luo Binghe's heart was moved and he didn't speak. He suddenly raised his head and his two eyes stared firmly at Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu's heart thumped.

Luo Binghe's obsidian-black eyes held a light more brilliant than the moon and the stars.

This.....this kind of gaze!

This filled with 'determined conviction' and burning morale emanating from the protagonist's gaze!

Could it be..... I already became the protagonist's motivational star?!

Luo Binghe knelt by Shen Qingqiu's body and with a resounding voice said: "I understand."

Shen Qingqiu: Wait a moment, what did you understand this time? Could you not leave things half-said every time? Tell me the rest!

He didn't notice that as these words left Luo Binghe's mouth, he didn't call himself "this disciple." [2] Luo Binghe firmly clenched his fists and opened his mouth again, enunciating every word: "From now on, these things..... I definitely won't let them happen a second time."

Letting *Shizun* protect his weak self, letting *Shizun* suffer injury for him..... these things, will absolutely never happen again!

Shen Qingqiu responded with a cry of unconditional assent, "Mm."

.....What's going on. Suddenly there's a feeling of 'getting covered in the protagonist's reassurance,' what's the matter with this?!

Reassurance my ass, this person in the future is going to slice you into a human stick; wake and sober up a little, Shen Qingqiu!

Becoming the protagonist's life teacher [3] was a **Max** vanity that Shen Qingqiu was very satisfied with, though it wasn't quite right in flavor.

Fuck. Originally, the belief for 'becoming strong to protect his important people' should have happened when the protagonist was confronted with the pitiable and charming female lead who helped him and got hurt for his sake. Afterwards there was a model scene of tender gasps opened.
According to this meaning; system, aren't you piling all the female protagonists' scenes onto me?

—End Chapter 17—

[1] Tsukkomi: Using this Japanese term because it's probably more familiar to you and the Chinese term used is a transliteration of it. Meaning is “to question or comment creatively on something ironic/funny” and is often oversimplified to mean “complain, grumble.”

[2] “This disciple”: In Chinese, the most formal way of speaking makes you refer to yourself as ‘this disciple’ or ‘this master’ and etc. according to your station and who you happen to speak with. Luo Binghe not referring to himself as ‘this disciple’ with Shen Qingqiu takes away that social barrier. XD

[3] Life teacher (人生道路上的導師): Literally ‘life’s path’s teacher’ or ‘teacher for life’ but I’m using this form to differentiate it from regular teacher. This specifically refers to someone who teaches you how to live – like your parents, grandparents, etc.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 18

TN: Unedited again. Freaking first two lines making me have a fit, aaaaaaahhhh. I've added the original Chinese beneath the footnotes at the end of this chapter if anyone wants a go at them.

Do you dare add an extra act and make it come with a boxed lunch too?

Shouldering the protagonist's annoyingly long actor's lines, taking on an opera *longtao* role and getting paid minimum wage. [1] This is exploiting a laborer, you can't deny it!

Out of selfishness, Shen Qingqiu managed with some effort to raise his hand and touch Luo Binghe's head. Luo Binghe's originally stubborn and unbending gaze cooled, as though a handful of clear spring water doused his anger.

Shen Qingqiu smiled and said: "However, you don't need to dwell on it too much. If you have no way of becoming strong, I'll be by your side and protect you."

Letting Luo Binghe become that future monstrously big Immortal Demon BOSS of the Three Realms wasn't as good as letting him remain as a sympathetic little white flower. Shen Qingqiu didn't mind at all taking him under his wing and taking care of him for a lifetime.

His thoughts were simple and pure like this, though if it reached the ears of other people then it immediately might not be the same case. Luo Binghe was already completely stunned.

There had never been someone who had expressed such a straightforward and warm commitment towards him before.

Though the world was large, how many people could say ‘you don’t need to become strong, I’m here and naturally won’t let you be bullied?’

And they weren’t empty words. Shen Qingqiu saying he would achieve it meant he would achieve it. Several times, he had already proven with his actions that he’d rather be injured himself than let Luo Binghe receive the slightest harm.

Moreover, the affection in these words seemed too much. After the tide of warm feelings slightly subsided, a hot sensation quickly climbed up Luo Binghe’s face.

Shen Qingqiu coughed for a moment. He painfully found out that he couldn’t cough blood in the dream and held up his arm: “Well. First, help me up.”

Luo Binghe felt the place where his wrist was held felt different, as though a trailing tingling feeling was left behind. Immediately, he realized he was

thinking too much and scolded himself in his heart. He was really being disrespectful to *Shizun*. He hurriedly readjusted his thoughts.

Suddenly, a voice abruptly rang out. That old-sounding voice cried “Hey,” and interestedly said: “This brat was actually able to break this old man’s enchantment. Definitely not a simple person.”

That voice seemed to come from within the valley, reverberating. It surrounded the two people and they were unable to tell it came from which direction. Shen Qingqiu was elated: This stage’s BOSS had finally shown up! That is to say, if the good relations scene was finished, he could get off work! Quick, quick, quickly come BOSS, quickly take away the protagonist!

Luo Binghe hadn’t fully helped up Shen Qingqiu when his gaze flashed with vigilance. The Dream Demon showing up when Shen Qingqiu was injured made the situation greatly unfavorable. He made up his mind: if the Dream Demon wanted to make a move to kill, even if his own strength was weak, he still must have the strength to delay the other side and strive to leave a slim chance of survival for *Shizun*.

He had only just made up his mind when that voice continued: “You, come over. Let this old man take a look and see what kind of young hero has this kind of skill.”

Luo Binghe watched Shen Qingqiu. Before the master spoke, the disciple should not take the initiative to speak. Shen Qingqiu’s mood wasn’t bad and

he had the intention of baiting him a little: “The other person is asking this young hero. What is your response?”

Luo Binghe’s face was entirely red. He turned and said: “Breaking through Elder’s enchantment is all due to relying on my *Shizun*’s power. I don’t dare to be called a young hero.”

The voice snorted and seemed to be disdainful.

Shen Qingqiu knew why he snorted. This was Luo Binghe’s dream, so Luo Binghe could only rely on his own strength. Though he blocked a hit for Luo Binghe, at the end he still had to rely on Luo Binghe quickly regaining sanity for the enchantment to break.

However, Shen Qingqiu was too lazy to explain and already knew how things would develop from here. He asked: “Is Your Excellency Elder Dream Demon?”

The voice said: “This old man will allow this brat to come over, but I don’t want this common Cang Qiong Mountain sect cultivator to come over. Let him sleep first.”

As expected, the situation was exactly the same as it was with Ning Yingying in the original work. Other than this person Luo Binghe, they would all be pushed out by the Dream Demon.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly felt his head hurt, and he collapsed.

Luo Binghe was extremely shocked. He hurriedly supported him and called: “*Shizun?*”

The Dream Demon said: “No need to worry. This old man only sent him into a dream within a dream, letting him sleep deeper. You, come over quickly!” This time, it could clearly be heard that the voice came from a dark cave in the west.

Luo Binghe couldn’t wake Shen Qingqiu. He laid him lightly on the ground, then turned towards the voice: “I will call this Elder *Shizun* as a mark of courtesy, so please do not make things difficult for my *Shizun*.”

The Dream Demon smiled and said: “Brat, I saw your memories. This *Shifu* doesn’t treat you well. Why don’t you let me just get rid of him? This is me helping you.”

Most of the memories he saw were interactions between the original goods ‘Shen Qingqiu’ and Luo Binghe. Those memories truly made up the majority of the total memories though.....

Luo Binghe shook his head: “*Shizun* isn’t like what Elder thinks. If nothing else can be said, *Shizun* is *Shizun*, he can treat me however he wants. As a disciple, I cannot disrespect this.”

If Shen Qingqiu could still hear at this time, he would need to roar in his heart: Luo-ge, I hope after you're blackened you will still remember these words you said! [2]

The Dream Demon snorted: "Pedantic! The Human Realm's Righteous path is always this kind of hypocrisy. Who cares whether he is your master or not, whether you respect him or not. Once someone angers me or harms me, I kill them! He clearly knew your cultivation wasn't enough to deal with Tian Chui and still sent you out. This kind of intention, can it be you can't see clearly?"

Luo Binghe said indifferently: "At that time, even I didn't believe I would be able to win. *Shizun* believed in me and not only gave me the opportunity, but also encouraged me during the fight. At the end, I truly did win."

There was another sentence he only said silently to himself in his heart: To save me, *Shizun* blocked two attacks for me. He truly treats me well.

The Dream Demon also looked at some memory fragments. He did not understand Shen Qingqiu this person, and didn't want to dwell overlong on this problem. But towards Luo Binghe, his attitude was very satisfied: "Brat. You're a man of strong passions and strong will."

Luo Binghe said: "Not as good as *Shizun* treats me, ten thousand times over."

If the Dream Demon had a mouth, it would have long since started twitching. He decided to change the subject.

Undecided for a moment, the Dream Demon said: “This old man feels that on your body, there is something very extraordinary. I don’t know what it can be.”

Luo Binghe was slightly surprised: “There’s something on me? Even you can’t see it?”

The Dream Demon laughed mischievously: “I can recite my ancestral line right here, but for someone even more outstanding than this old man to seal something in your body is not an impossibility.”

Luo Binghe was shocked.

The Dream Demon wouldn’t throw away the face gained from many centuries just to run over here and trick a young boy in his first decade like him. He couldn’t help but say, disbelieving: “This Elder’s meaning is that what is on my body..... is related to demons?”

The Dream Demon laughed: “How is it? Unsatisfied? Are you in a hurry to make a clean split from demons?”

Luo Binghe's shock didn't last too long. His thoughts revolved very quickly. He was silent for a moment, then strongly said: "Demon Realm people do many evil things and have harmed my *Shizun* many times. Naturally, I cannot have a relationship with them."

The Dream Demon said gloomily: "Brat, do you dare say three words without mentioning that *Shizun* of yours? This old man guesses that your next sentence will be to ask this Elder if there's a way to get him out of here?"

Luo Binghe smiled wryly: "Even if I ask, will Elder tell me?"

The Dream Demon laughed *ha ha*: "It isn't that this old man isn't willing to tell you. It's that this old man really doesn't have the power. If you can't even discern reality, why talk about getting out? If it wasn't because I couldn't figure you out, brat, I would have already killed both of you. There wouldn't be this dragging things on for half a day business. Do you think this old man is very leisurely?"

Luo Binghe didn't speak.

What he thought was: If you don't even have substance anymore and are only a bunch of shadows acting as a parasite on other people's dreams; if you aren't leisurely, who's leisurely?

Though his natural disposition was warm, this was a fact.....

The Dream Demon didn't know that Luo Binghe was criticizing him in his mind and spoke again: "I said I am powerless, however, that doesn't mean I don't have a way."

Luo Binghe was surprised. He probingly asked: "Elder, are you willing to tell the way?"

The Dream Demon lectured: "This old man can not only teach you how to suppress him, but can also teach you even more things."

Luo Binghe understood.

His heart fell. His voice had cooled when he spoke: "You want me to cultivate in the demonic path?"

"What's wrong with cultivating the demonic path? If you can cultivate the demonic path, that thing layered on your body will bring you great benefit. Cultivating at a pace as rapid as a thousand *li* a day and standing above over ten thousand peoples; these things are not only words. Even becoming a supreme Immortal Demon is nothing difficult!"

Hearing his last sentence, Luo Binghe's heart moved.

Cultivating at a pace as rapid as a thousand *li* a day, becoming a supreme Immortal Demon. That..... should be the strongest existence?

Very quickly, he immediately rejected that idea.

Shizun loathed demons the most; if he wasn't able to resist the Dream Demon's temptation and fell into a crooked path, how would he be able to face *Shizun*?

Whether Shen Qingqiu is heartbroken or angry like thunder, neither of those things are what he wants to see himself.

"No." Luo Binghe flatly refused.

The Dream Demon smiled coldly: "If you aren't willing to learn from me, I'm afraid you won't be able to suppress the demon energy on your body. Right now, it's hidden deeply and it can't be seen, so it's all good. But this old man can feel that seal on your body has become weak. Wait until one day the seal is broken, the evil comes out, and a band of demon slayers surround you including your good *shifu*; how will he treat you?"

Mentioning the things that Luo Binghe had the most misgivings about, his face sank: "Elder Dream Demon, I am only a minor cultivator. Why must you force me to cultivate the demonic path?"

This question was really on point. Other than the author, no one was clear exactly why all the outstanding and high-level experts were all crying for the protagonist to become their disciple/inheritor/son-in-law.

No, actually, probably a great number of authors also had no way of knowing the answer to this eternal mystery.

“Brat, you don’t know how to appreciate a favor! This old man sees that you are peculiar, not even wanting my lost body of knowledge by taking advantage of my vanished fleshly body, vanished like smoke and dispersed like clouds. How many people would beg for this kind of opportunity and it wouldn’t come even if they begged!”

Luo Binghe’s face was expressionless. The Dream Demon saw that he didn’t respond and was suddenly filled with an ominous feeling.

Sure enough, when Luo Binghe opened his mouth, there was a hint of an unfathomable smile.

He leisurely said: “Why is this Elder so anxious to teach me? I’m afraid it’s not only because you aren’t willing for your lost body of knowledge to be without a successor?”

The Dream Demon secretly shouted, not good!

—End Chapter 18—

[1] Opera *longtao* (龍套): *Longtao* can be used to refer to a specific kind of Chinese opera costume or to an opera actor playing a walk-on role. The *longtao* costume has dragon designs and is usually worn by soldiers or attendants.

[2] Luo-ge: The suffix ‘-ge’ means ‘elder brother/brother.’ Can be used between actual brothers, good friends/acquaintances, or in some cases as a matter of politeness. I’m keeping this part as is because it really sounds better in Pinyin as opposed to the translation. Plus, there’s an extra at the end of the novel in which it’s important because ‘Luo Binghe’ gets called ‘Bing-ge’ vs ‘Bing-mei.’ The suffix ‘-mei’ means ‘younger sister/sister.’

TN (because I couldn’t resist): Um... Binghe. You do know that you really can’t go a paragraph without mentioning Shizun at least once, right? Right?

Anyway, here’re the two confuzzling lines I mentioned in the original Chinese:

[加戲敢不敢給派盒飯啊魂淡！？]

[背著主角又臭又長的台詞，拿著龍套又乾又薄的工資。剝削勞工有木有！]

Chapter 19

TN: Unedited because RL. Sadly, Chapter 18 isn't edited either. I'll go back and fix them when I have time. You'll know they're edited once these annoying TNs disappear. (▽) y*

Luo Binghe said: “Parasiting on others’ dreams and frequently changing hosts, the spiritual power of your soul weakens with each change. However, if you can latch onto a fixed host long-term, you can recharge your reserves and recover your soul’s original state.”

He paused, then said: “Can it be that Elder Dream Demon must have reached the limit of his lifespan to insist on picking me as a host to develop?”

Having been seen through by him, the Dream Demon didn’t deny it and wasn’t angry. Instead, he generously admitted: “Not bad! I didn’t think a brat like you had such a wide knowledge and powerful memory to even know this point.”

Luo Binghe wasn’t going to tell him that the words he said earlier was just his blind guess.

The Dream Demon saw his calm and collected expression and couldn't figure out this brat's mind. He continued: "However, you shouldn't assume that this old man must have you for a host no matter what. Talented people among the demons are in the thousands upon thousands and they would kneel down for this honor! But you, you should carefully weigh your choices and think about whether you can pass up this opportunity."

In fact, all these years had weakened his soul. Originally living in demonic energy, he was living well and after cultivating for maybe eighty years, he would become as doughty as a dragon and lively as a tiger. However, he couldn't understand why Sha Hualing would muddleheadedly use the demonic energy as a weapon and secretly hide it on Luo Binghe's body. He already didn't have the energy to search for another host.

But after reaching a dead end, he found a new place to live. On this brat's body, there was a weak and almost hidden powerful strength. He was endlessly ecstatic. How could he let this go?

Once he made up his mind, he didn't care how strongly Luo Binghe refused. He coaxed and pestered and coerced and tempted, using all kinds of methods to persuade him to practice the demonic path like himself. All to let his flesh and soul to become even more suitable for him to live off.

The Dream Demon said: "This old man will give you time. You should think it through thoroughly. Otherwise, you and your *Shizun*'s souls will be lost and trapped forever in this dream. This point, this old man can still achieve!"

Luo Binghe suddenly looked up. At that moment, Elder Dream Demon was shocked to a halt by the cold light flashing in the young boy's eyes.

Luo Binghe spoke calmly and deferentially, but his voice was ice-cold: "Right now, you are negotiating terms with me and you can talk about anything. But if you talk about hurting *Shizun*, I won't let you off!"

The Dream Demon was startled for a long while before he recovered himself, shocked that he had actually been frightened by the imposing manner of such a small, low-cultivation Human Realm practitioner. All these hundreds of years across the length and breadth of the Three Realms – even at the bitter moment when his body was destroyed, he had never been pressured by that powerful expert into feeling this kind of pressure.

Of course, he wouldn't know that this kind of miracle was called (the protagonist's exclusive) overbearing aura!

Suddenly, a burst of laughter sounded from the cave.

"You brat, you really thought I meant it!"

After that old voice finished saying these words, Luo Binghe suddenly felt his limbs grow heavy. His surroundings blurred and spun, then all was dark.

Luo Binghe woke in the woodshed, alert and breaking out into a cold sweat. Even his vest was completely soaked.

At the same time, Shen Qingqiu sat up dizzily from his bed.

Only after violently gasping for tens of breaths was he finally able to let out a sigh of relief.

Tragic beyond compare!

For what! In the original work, Ning Yingying was also thrown into a dream inside a dream by the Dream Demon; for what did she get a dream of warm childhood memories of Daddy and Mommy, picking flowers and riding horses and the like; for what did he get a dream of getting surrounded and beaten up by four people, running like mad in a narrow wood path while chased by a huge fireball from behind!

The most frightening thing was towards the end of the dream within a dream. The Dream Demon also pointed out what he was frightened of the most!

In a dark and damp dungeon, he was suspended in the air by a ring around his waist. He couldn't feel his four limbs. Opening his mouth, he wasn't able make a sound and could only helplessly scream. His entire body was burning pain.

He didn't know how long he was in the dream before he heard the sound of door opening from outside. Unhurried footsteps gradually approached and a human shadow was projected onto the floor in front of him.

An inky black robe embroidered with silver thread in beautiful but simple designs. From that person, an ice-cold majesty emanated, more breathtaking than the lack of air in the dungeons.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't see the person's face. But he was clear who that person was!

The Dream Demon was worthy of being the legendary figure of demon legend. This dream was made much too realistically. Even the humid smell of rot seemed to still dwell in his nose, making people vomit.

Shen Qingqiu grudgingly sat for a while, then rolled off the bed and started to vomit.

Ding dong. The undying system chose this moment to pop up with a notice:
【Congratulations for completing the 'Dream Demon Enchantment' plotline! The system awards you with 500 Coolness! Please continue your efforts! 】

Shen Qingqiu exploded: 'Fuck your mom [1], when you threatened to take away points, wasn't it also 500? Is setting all those penalties really good? Also, I already walked through the dream within a dream plotline, how

come you aren't giving this to me as other income? System, don't play dead, we should sign a new contract!'

At this moment, a person burst through the bamboo doors like a gust of wind.

"Shizun!"

Once he heard this voice, he knew who it was. Shen Qingqiu painfully rolled his eyes. Right now, he really didn't want to see this face! He already had trauma! [2]

Sure enough, Luo Binghe had already flung himself to his side, worriedly asking: *"Shizun, how are you? Is there discomfort anywhere?"*

I'm all right! If you were to move away from me a little more, I'd be even better!

Shen Qingqiu listlessly put on a fresh face and stood up by himself: "All is fine with this master....."

Luo Binghe originally wanted to help him up, but had his hand pushed away and couldn't help feeling shocked.

Shen Qingqiu truly hadn't noticed these small changes in his expression. After neatly rearranging his clothes and confirming that his appearance wasn't lost, he asked: "Did that Dream Demon give you any difficulties?"

Difficulties? The Dream Demon could kneel to Luo Binghe and treat him like the heavens and still think he wasn't fast enough. Shen Qingqiu knew it, but still had to ask. Luo Binghe hesitated for a moment, then replied: "That demon Elder didn't have enough spirit power. Afterwards, this disciple was angered out of the dream. *Shizun*, did you encounter anything in the dream within a dream?"

Shen Qingqiu shamelessly boasted: "Even if anything was encountered, there's nothing this master can't deal with!"

Sorry _(:□)┐_. Truthfully, he really couldn't deal with it!

Right now, he was still dwelling on the trauma from earlier. Luo Binghe being so close to him gave him goosebumps all over, even his gaze was strange and evasive. Luo Binghe was unclear about why he was like this, but seeing his odd expression and evasive eyes, his heart was a bit anxious and apprehensive. He wanted to put his head forward, face-to-face, and ask what to do to make things better.

Fortunately, Shen Qingqiu regained his composure very quickly and remembered what he should do as a teacher at this time. In the next moment, he reached out his hand to grasp Luo Binghe's wrist, slightly surprising the other.

Shen Qingqiu sternly said: “A Demon Realm spirit invading your mind is not a joke. Binghe, relax, this master is going to inspect you. This Dream Demon’s interest isn’t good.”

Seeing *Shifu* willing to be straight with him, Luo Binghe was able to relax his heart a little and obediently say: “Yes.”

His heart felt strung up in tension. What if Shen Qingqiu getting pulled out of the dream realm exposed the demon seal on his body.....

Fortunately, though Shen Qingqiu was very diligent in checking him over, he didn’t find any abnormalities. Of course the inspection wouldn’t reveal anything. The power accumulated by the Dream Demon for many hundreds of years was a famous name and meant water-tight skills. But over time, this would pass of course.

Shen Qingqiu’s inspection had no results, but he still focused on Luo Binghe. If anything happened, he should immediately report to him.

Luo Binghe asked: “Shizun, the demons..... are they all unpardonably evil and should be absolutely killed?”

Even without looking at his expression, Shen Qingqiu knew that right now, Luo Binghe must be wavering over matters such as the human and demon

separation and the inability of good and evil to coexist. It was time for him to teach again.

Shen Qingqiu thought, then said: “It might not be the case. Just as humans are separated into good and evil people, the demons also have these differences. We can only see the Demon Realm people persecuting humans, but it could be that from that corner, there are also humans who harm innocent demons. Many times, these are only racial views that let the divide between both sides become deeper and deeper.”

For example, the truth behind the persecution of Luo Binghe’s father and mother that year. Truthfully, it was only two young people who wanted to fall in love, but weren’t careful and were too high-profile to the point that everybody panicked.

This was a reason so old that it couldn’t be any older. In modern times, all kinds of combinations of ancient, wuxia, and xianxia dramas all concerned this hidden truth. However, this human and demon grudge was deeper than the sea and from ancient times to present all kinds of battles were fought over this. They were too unorthodox and earned the condemnation of the world.

This was Luo Binghe’s first time hearing a master-level personage speak like this. He was shocked to a stop, his heart beating *peng peng*. Forcibly calm, he said: “*Shizun*’s meaning is that even though there are relations with demons, it might not be evil, correct?”

Shen Qingqiu saw that he was a little excited and a little nervous waiting for his answer, and smiled: “As long as nothing deliberately wrong is done, as long as the heart is righteous, there can be friends on that side. Dividing lines such as evil are never decided by one race or Realm. Moreover, demons are naturally born with strong spiritual power, far more than humans. On this point, this master fully admires them. If their strength can be put to good use, used for righteousness, how can this be anything other than good?”

The Demon race had an excellent natural talent for cultivation and at ten years, could definitely suppress that of the Human Realm’s. With different races, their strengths would differ as well. The Human race relied on spiritual energy and the Demon race relied on demonic energy; Shen Qingqiu felt that they should be mostly the same thing, just the color and feeling weren’t really the same. He also didn’t know if the Demon Realm *fengshui* was good or what, but a great number of demons were born full of demonic energy. At three years old, they could tear a live person apart; at eight years old, they could split mountains and crack stone.....cough, cough, this was exaggerating a little.

However, the truth of the matter was, many of the Central Plains people could cultivate for ten years but only reach the level of a smiling baby. Even more people were like dry ponds; their spiritual power might as well be a zero egg [3]..... it couldn’t be any worse. If it wasn’t because humans proliferated like a spreading seeds and scattering leaves, the Demon race people rare, the Human Realm would have long since been colonized by the Demon Realm..... otherwise the plan to bully others wouldn’t have been handled so strictly.

These words said, Luo Binghe’s eyes gradually lit up, shining.

Although his heart was just, he wasn't a pedantic man. Since it couldn't be eliminated, it would be better to use it. Perhaps, he could even become strong!

Strong enough that he could protect *Shizun* from anyone with his own hands. Strong enough that *Shizun* wouldn't suffer any bit of harm.

The system carried a notice: 【The protagonist decided to practice demonic cultivation, Coolness level +50! 】

Coolness level only 50..... After Luo Binghe learned demonic cultivation with the Dream Demon, his strength increased by at least ten times. Ever since, for a long he mounted girls and everything went successfully; you're telling me the coolness level is only 50?

Shen Qingqiu already didn't want to argue with the system anymore. Anyway, this was a coincidence. He originally only wanted to experience the pleasure of saying words like these. After all, there were too many dramas that would have at least one person who would have this kind of wise and farsighted role, saying these kinds of profound things.

After being preoccupied about this heaven-and-earth shaking feat for a while, Shen Qingqiu had two dark circles appear from being unable to sleep through the night. He waved his hand: "It's late at night. Since there isn't anything else, quickly go on and rest." Luo Binghe obediently retired.

But he hadn't walked out for many steps before he heard Shen Qingqiu call out behind him: "Come back."

—End Chapter 19—

[1] Fuck your mom: I think this is slang and a pun working off the characters for the word 'paralyze' (麻痺) which sound pretty similar to the very rude curse '*ma bi*' AKA 'fuck your mom.'

[2] Trauma: Actual characters used are 陰影 which literally mean 'shadow.' But that sounds confusing and vague in English so I'm using 'trauma.'

[3] Zero egg: Because the numerical '0' looks like an egg, right? I love Chinese jokes sometimes.

Chapter 20

TN: Unedited. But at least this is ♥ chapter. ^_^

He immediately turned around: “*Shizun*, are there any other orders?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “The rooms are over there. Why are you walking in the opposite direction?”

Whether it’s the disciples’ dormitory or the woodshed, the exit is to the left. However, Luo Binghe went straight to the right.

Luo Binghe said: “This disciple wants to go to the kitchens and prepare for *Shizun*’s breakfast tomorrow.”

Shen Qingqiu felt a bit difficult.

He really wanted to eat the breakfast that Luo Binghe made, but letting a child stay up through most of the night without sleeping to make food for him was like Cinderella with her stepmother..... however it was put, it wasn’t humane.

In the end, conscience prevailed over appetite. He coughed once:
“Nonsense. What do you mean by making a meal in the middle of the night? Go back and sleep.” [1]

Luo Binghe knew that he was worried that he wouldn't rest well. He smiled, but didn't plan to sleep. He was prepared to turn back and secretly go to the kitchens to ponder.

Shen Qingqiu originally wanted to ask him whether he was still sleeping in the woodshed. Young people have some pride and self-respect, so asking directly wouldn't sound good. On the other hand, even if Luo Binghe was allowed to sleep in the disciples' dormitory, he would only be excluded by the others under Ming Fan's command. He felt he was strangely pitiful.

Shen Qingqiu thought for a moment, then said: “Tomorrow, gather your things and come over here.”

Luo Binghe didn't understand what he meant: “? *Shizun?*”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Outside my bamboo house is a room to the side. Starting from tomorrow, move over there to live.”

If he lived a bit closer, making breakfast for him and cleaning the rooms would be more convenient..... Shen Qingqiu felt that his own self-adjustment ability broke through the skies a bit. Earlier he faced Luo

Binghe with serious trauma, but now he even dared to secretly rub his hands and plot to let the protagonist readily carry tea and serve water for him. *Is it really fine like this?!*

His imagination went wild in these flights of fancy and he didn't notice the other person's reaction. Suddenly, Luo Binghe leapt over and firmly hugged him.

Caught off guard, Shen Qingqiu was first shocked, then his old face turned red.

In the years left to him, he was finally given a bear hug and the result wasn't a warm and fragrant jade-like sister but a young teenager with an overbearing aura, ahhh —

Luo Binghe was ecstatic, his arms wrapped around his neck and refused to let go, continuously calling by his ear: "*Shifu! Shifu!*"

Shen Qingqiu held up his hand and didn't where to put it. Tangled for a while, he laid it on Luo Binghe's head and rubbed his hair: "All right. Aren't you embarrassed, you've already become so big and aren't a ten-year-old child anymore, what kind of appearance is this?" [2]

Originally, Luo Binghe wasn't very aware. But after he said things like this, he was suddenly embarrassed. If he hadn't been so happy and excited, how would he dare to be like this to the usually high and unattainable *Shizun*?

Quickly but reluctantly, he peeled himself off from Shen Qingqiu's body, his face completely red: "Yes, this disciple went beyond himself."

Towards the matter of seeking to be hugged, a child under ten years old doing this kind of thing would be considered adorable. For the fifteen-year-old Luo Binghe to do this..... it was still adorable!

A small handsome boy with a face as tender as a still-growing stalk of young green onion, he would be adorable no matter what he did!

Luo Binghe was nervous and flustered for a while but suddenly realized that the color of Shen Qingqiu's face wasn't very good.

Even for an immortal body, having old injuries and strong poison present, followed by his involvement in the Dream Demon's dream because of him, not resting well, and holding on despite being unable to, it was natural for Shen Qingqiu's appearance to be somewhat wan and pallid. Luo Binghe didn't dare to tarry Shen Qingqiu's rest any longer and withdrew. He still didn't return to the woodshed and specially went around to the kitchens.

He made up his mind: For a long time, he must pay great attention to *Shizun's* recovery through nutritional meals!

Luo Binghe had just stepped out from the room when the system sounded a notice.

【Protagonist's Coolness level +50! 】

Shen Qingqiu was baffled.

How come another 50 was added? Is the system delayed? Or did the system suddenly discover mercy and feel that it gave me too little earlier?

Forget it, he was too sleepy and deprived of strength to consider the reason why points were added. Anyway, it's impossible that getting a hug caused this old man to be given more points, hahahahahaha.....

The next day, Shen Qingqiu hadn't fully slept until he woke up naturally when he was woken up by the light and delicious smell of fish and rice intermingling. Outside the bamboo house, Luo Binghe had already prepared the food. That fragrance wafted endlessly and drifted over to the Qing Jing Peak disciples who had only eaten plain meals, spying on the other side.

Ming Fan and the others were so angry that they were spying while biting the hems of their robes, especially when they saw Shen Qingqiu sitting to the left and lovingly praising Luo Binghe's heartfelt handiwork, both of them smiling and their relations joyous and harmonious. Their aggrieved feelings reached the highest point.

Too shameless! So it was through these strange, despicable, and heretically clever schemes that he attracted *Shizun*'s happiness!

And after waiting till dusk, they saw Luo Binghe move to the shed outside Shen Qingqiu's bamboo house. It struck like lightning from clear skies, striking the Qing Jing Peak disciples who'd grown used to bullying Luo Binghe into a field of corpses.

It was called "moving," but only Luo Binghe the person actually moved over. Because he had nothing much to begin with.

Pillow? Bundling up the straw in the woodshed made for a pillow. Blanket? The outer robe he took off was enough to cover him..... and these things, Shen Qingqiu would naturally prepare for him.

Shen Qingqiu always felt that Luo Binghe's life was filled with too much suffering, all of it a history of child abuse. Cang Qiong Mountain, whether good or bad, was also a large cultivation sect and wouldn't be so blackhearted or lacking in resources to that degree.

That night was the first time in Luo Binghe's life lying on a regular bed.

In the past, he had slept in a wood basin floating in the icy river, slept on the damp and cold ground, the loud and noisy streets, and even lain down in a mountain cave in a move of eating the wind and sleeping in the dew. [3] Right now, lying down in a soft and neat and large bed, his body felt buoyant all over and it felt unreal.

Especially when he thought of Shen Qingqiu sleeping just beyond a single wall.

The entire night, it could be that he thought too much. The Dream Demon did not appear in his dream.

Luo Binghe's expression didn't change. He patiently sat and waited. After a few days passed, the Dream Demon appeared again.

This time, the Dream Demon didn't bother with whatever mysterious dream enchantment or concealment. He directly appeared in Luo Binghe's dream.....although he was in the form of a mass of black mist.

In front of Luo Binghe's eyes, this mass of black mist gathered together, changing, and that old man's voice came from inside: "Brat, how did you decide after these three days?"

Luo Binghe asked back: "How I've decided, can Elder Dream Demon not know?"

The Dream Demon laughed *hei hei*: "You've decided on something you definitely won't regret. Brat, remember this day well. Today is the beginning of your meteoric rise!"

That young teenager didn't have the dream of a meteoric rise. No matter how happily he said it, Luo Binghe wasn't moved and only cupped his fist ceremonially and said: "This younger generation has one more request."

“What else is there, it’s all been discussed! Quickly finish talking so you can pledge me as master.” The Dream Demon was still urging, but didn’t know that what he imagined was too beautiful.....

Luo Binghe said: “What this younger generation requests is indeed regarding the matter of a master. *Shizun*’s grace to me is heavy as a mountain. I truly cannot disrespect his discipline and acknowledge someone else as a master.....”

He hadn’t finished when the Dream Demon immediately spoke, driven beyond the limits of endurance: “Fine, fine, fine! This old man doesn’t want the disciple’s title, will that do?!”

Was there a high and mighty expert who had made more of a loss than him? Going forward to teach someone his own techniques and even letting that person not even call him *shifu* once. It was just as tragic as not being able to get the daughter-in-law who’d crossed the family threshold! [4]

Luo Binghe was satisfied: “Then many thanks to this Elder.”

He wasn’t in the least willing to call anyone other than Shen Qingqiu his *shifu*.

The Dream Demon saw his appearance: if he still had his body, he would have been so furious his nose turned crooked.

This Luo Binghe; in front of his *Shizun*, he was well-behaved and obedient, even more like a small white flower. How come in front of other people, he became so difficult to deal with! Completely two different impressions, just like becoming a different person!

Really going to anger this old man to death!

Time flew like an arrow, the sun and moon shuttling back and forth.

.....Shen Qingqiu truly didn't want to use such a terrible and widely known common saying, but other than these words, he really couldn't find a more suitable phrase.

Every day at Qing Jing Peak, he played the *qin*, read books, wrote calligraphy, painted paintings, practiced martial arts, was picky about Luo Binghe not making a meal delicious enough, and even more occasionally bickered with Liu Qingge. Whether he went to Yue Qingyuan's place to report for work, the days flew by and were very much in line with his life goal to 'while away life and wait for death.'

Until the time came for the Immortal Alliance Conference.

This day finally came. His days were too leisurely to the point that Shen Qingqiu almost forgot this first great climax in the novel.

Left hanging as Luo Binghe climbed to the apex of life, married (countless) white beauties, also the first step towards the unremovable blackening..... he was actually able to forget it!

Therefore, upon receiving the bronze invitation, Shen Qingqiu was startled for a good while.

The Immortal Alliance Conference was the first climax and resolution in “Proud Immortal Demon Way.” At the same time, it was also a turning point in the book.

For four years, the Immortal Alliance Conference was a rookie selection offering great opportunities for fame and fortune. The form differed every year according to the major sect heads’ discussions, but there would definitely be a gold list.

Regardless of originating from which sect or from the Jianghu [5], as long as you performed well in the Conference, your name would be on the gold list and made famous throughout the world.

Previously, “Proud Immortal Demon Way” didn’t have a warm or hot reception. But with the Immortal Alliance Conference installment, the book’s reviews and subscriptions increased greatly, immediately soaring!

The reason for the rise didn't just start from here. Great God Airplane Towards the Sky abandoned what original moral integrity he had left and sent up like a surging tide to readers a steel-wrought protagonist and sisters as graceful as water, great segments of presentable writing and all kinds of descriptions that let your face turn red in excitement, and also one important reason. It was also the important reason why Shen Qingqiu stuck through reading to the end.

That was the confusing setting!

Great God Airplane Towards the Sky, as a person who hadn't even researched how to set up a cultivation world properly and who frequently couldn't even get the Qi Refining or Nascent Soul periods straight, truly didn't get a tsukkomi from most people for this because that wasn't his novel's selling point.

“Proud Immortal Demon Way” was a book that could be called a ‘cultivation’ novel, but would be better called a ‘supernatural’ novel. Most of the supernatural contents completely steamrolled over the ‘cultivation’ parts. As a cultivation text, it is a model novel to the letter, but it was also quite interesting as a supernatural novel.

That is to say, very soon, Shen Qingqiu would have to face all the different kinds of extremely fierce and cruel supernatural creatures described in the book.

More importantly, very soon, it would be time for him to personally handle the Luo Binghe who revealed his demonic heritage and cruelly strike him

down into the Endless Abyss.

The wheel of fate (plot) had already started to slowly turn.....

—End Chapter 20—

[1] Making a meal in the middle of the night...: I translated *san geng* (三更) as ‘middle of the night,’ but it’s an old phrasing for referring to the time between 11:00 PM and 1:00 AM. Before the invention of electric lights, people generally went to sleep at sundown and rose at sunrise... meaning 5:00-6:00 AM. Luo Binghe wouldn’t be getting much sleep (if he even got any) by staying up to prepare food.

[2] “All right. Aren’t you embarrassed...”: I can’t translate all the Chinese implications well to English, but Shen Qingqiu’s tone is actually very warm to Luo Binghe despite the meaning. It’s the sort of thing you’d expect your parents to say to you when they’re scolding you but being very fluffy about it. It’s like: ‘Look at you, you’re so big already but you’re still clinging onto me like this, how do you think this looks?’

[3] Eating the wind and sleeping in the dew: A saying meaning to ‘endure the hardships of an arduous journey.’ Or basically someone who just went through a lot of suffering.

[4] Daughter-in-law who’d entered the family gate...: Not sure if I translated this quite right. Original sentence is: 簡直和進了門還得不到名

分的小媳婦一樣慘！

[5] Jianghu: Literally ‘rivers and lakes,’ but refers to the martial arts world. Note that there is a difference between the cultivation world (with immortals and such) and the martial arts world. Cultivators are considered an entire cut above regular martial artists and often look down on regular Jianghu people.

Chapter 21

TN: Unedited. Pretty long chapter to translate (from my standpoint), but there are some LOL moments that made me have to stop translating and breathe.

Shen Qingqiu was silent for a long time before throwing the metal plate to Ming Fan's chest, letting him take it. Ming Fan secretly peeked at *Shizun*'s expression and found that it wasn't very good. He thought of that stinky brat Luo Binghe; after he went down the mountain, *Shizun* was picky about the food from the kitchens in every possible way. He hadn't eaten well these days, so Ming Fan asked: "*Shizun*, should this disciple prepare some snacks?"

Every day, Luo Binghe was taught seriously by the Dream Demon in his dreams and progressed amazingly quickly. He could have taken responsibility long ago; Shen Qingqiu often handed over some of Cang Qiong Mountain sect's trivial internal affairs for him to carry out. After he grew up a little more and went down the mountain to exterminate demons, the Peak Lord's support tasks were also thrown to him. It was to prevent him from loitering about at Shen Qingqiu's side every day. Though he was serviced very comfortably every day, he didn't know if this child had grown crooked or what, sticking to him a little too strongly..... Shen Qingqiu would sometimes reflect on this, whether it was because he had doted on him a little too much. If this continued, when the time came, he would have no way to be ruthless and strike him down into the Endless Abyss.

Shen Qingqiu truly didn't have an appetite. He raised his hand: "No need. You can go down."

Ming Fan didn't dare say more and honestly left. In his heart, his face was full of tears. This brat Luo Binghe, in these years he had already become a dearly loved person in *Shizun's* heart. Other people had no way of letting *Shizun* drink even a mouthful of congee!

Of course, he hadn't considered the possibility that it was a problem regarding the cook.

After an indeterminable amount of time passed, there was the sound of footsteps approaching again.

Shen Qingqiu said: "Didn't I say it's not needed?"

A young man's voice carrying a hint of grievance said: "This disciple came running back from over thousands of *li* away. *Shizun*, are you going to refuse me without even seeing me once?"

This voice was elegant and clear without losing any of a youth's vitality. Hearing it, Shen Qingqiu almost overturned and tumbled onto the ground with his chair. He quickly turned back.

A seventeen-year-old teenager stood like pure jade, dressed in white robes. A hint of a smile lurked at the corners of his lips, his eyes sparkling at him.

Across his back, he carried a precious sword he received from Wan Jian Peak called “Zheng Yang” [1]. The immortal sword was manifested from Luo Binghe’s qi and its body was filled with spiritual energy. This was a good, top-grade sword pulled out by Luo Binghe from the rock wall and attracted his fellow disciples’ exclamations and praise. But compared to the sword that truly belonged to Luo Binghe, it wasn’t in the same league at all.

Shen Qingqiu resettled himself, then smiled and said: “How come you’ve come back so fast this time?”

Luo Binghe sat beside him and steadily poured a cup of tea, then pushed it next to Shen Qingqiu’s hand: “It wasn’t some troublesome calamity. Also, missing *Shizun* urgently, I rode the horse back without stopping.”

These words sounded very smooth. However, as the male protagonist, Luo Binghe must have some ability to make such smooth words come out with sincerity and skill. Regarding this, Shen Qingqiu..... found it very useful!

Shen Qingqiu took up the cup of tea and drank a mouthful. He hadn’t fully tasted the excellent snowy mountain tea [2]when he said: “The Immortal Alliance Conference is about to begin.”

Luo Binghe already knew about this. He asked: “Do you need this disciple to pass to you a copy of the list of participating disciples from Qing Jing

Peak for *Shizun* to see?”

These years, these things whether big or small, were all thrown by Shen Qingqiu to Luo Binghe to handle. Anyway, Luo Binghe right now was very cute, obedient and useful, carrying out tasks accurately and precisely. Shen Qingqiu really couldn't think of a reason why he must do them himself..... before making the final decision, Luo Binghe always conscientiously asked Shen Qingqiu to look over them again and see if there was anything wrong. Shen Qingqiu always wanted to say, *actually, you don't need to give it to me to check anymore, truly, your ability to work is stronger than mine by a lot!*

Shen Qingqiu said: “It would be better to report straight to the sect head from now on.”

Luo Binghe nodded his head. He still wanted to say something, but it suddenly gave birth to a kind of strange feeling.

Today's Shen Qingqiu seemed to pay special attention to him. He couldn't help smiling: “*Shizun*, why do you keep looking at me? Unless *Shizun* also misses this disciple after having gone down the mountain so many days?”

Shen Qingqiu coolly said: “Can't I look at what I raised?”

Luo Binghe laughingly said: “Naturally you're allowed to. Does *Shizun* find me pleasing to the eyes?”

Shen Qingqiu laughed *hehe*.

After a moment of silence, he sought for words, then asked: “Binghe.”

Luo Binghe found that Shen Qingqiu was different from usual. He must have important words to say, so he said seriously: “Yes?”

Shen Qingqiu stared at him with both eyes and said: “Do you want to become strong? Strong enough to be peerless, to the point that no one under the heavens dares to fight you?”

Luo Binghe had an answer to this question since a long time ago.

He solemnly sat and without hesitation, directly replied: “Yes!”

Seeing him answer so decisively, Shen Qingqiu’s heart let out a breath. With urgency in every word, he continued: “For example, if before that, you have to undergo a lot of painful torture, suffer countless hardships, your physical and mental state approaching collapse, would you still want to be a supremely strong person?”

Luo Binghe slowly said: “Towards painful bitterness and hardships, Binghe is fearless and only asks to be strong enough to protect his important people!”

Having received this answer, Shen Qingqiu's heart was finally able to stabilize.

Right. Luo Binghe, for the sake of your future of becoming a person holding a harem of three thousand jade-like flowers, you must become strong!

Although his heart still couldn't bear it, thinking of how this was necessary for the protagonist to experience – just like the process of a butterfly emerging from a cocoon – Shen Qingqiu prepared to readjust his mind and heart for the upcoming inhumane action.

After three days, according to the list, the disciples of Cang Qiong Mountain's Twelve Peaks went to the Conference.

This time the Immortal Alliance Conference was held in complex terrain rising into a thickly forested mountain range. It was called Jue Di Gorge.
[3]

Those who had already made a name for themselves definitely wouldn't go and participate in the Immortal Alliance Conference again to compete with their juniors. There was no need to fight for scraps. Therefore, the Twelve Peak Lords and martial seniors wouldn't participate, but every head could choose at most ten disciples to participate. Since there were so many who had become immortals, the more the better. Hence once everyone was equipped and ready to set out, there were one hundred people who'd already come. So many flying swords would be too high-profile, so they

still set out with carriages. It was a cultivation novel, yet they were riding in horse carriages all the time!

A great number of people chose to ride horses and looked valiant. But since Shen Qingqiu wasn't good at riding and didn't want to fall and break his neck, and secondly because he thought exposing his face to the wind and rain of the mountains wasn't leisurely enough, he drilled his way into the horse carriage with everybody watching.

Finding a seat inside the carriage was first come, first served. Once a fan was seen lifting up the door curtain and a person going in, someone said rudely: "A great big man like you, and you're coming in to steal my spot!"

This woman with the beautiful eyebrows and a full and high chest was indeed the Peak Lord of Xian Shu Peak, Qi Qingqi. [4]

In the original work, Qi Qingqi and Shen Qingqiu didn't have much friendly relations or deal with each other much. But these years, Shen Qingqiu would occasionally work with her and liked her frank, outspoken forcefulness. They got along pretty well. Shen Qingqiu used his paper fan to make a spot for her while he spoke with perfect composure: "I am a sick patient."

Qi Qingqi made some room for him but her mouth still didn't let him off: "You've been pampered and spoiled! The strength of a spoiled baby like you, how is it like a Core Formation immortal cultivator! If you wait awhile, is someone going to come along and serve you refreshments?"

Shen Qingqiu said: “Not wrong. You reminded me.” The handle of the fan knocked on an arm of the horse carriage.

Soon after, the carriage’s curtain was raised. Luo Binghe smiled and asked: “*Shizun*, refreshments, water, or is your waist sore?”

He was riding on a strong and tall horse. Just as spirited as the heavenly white horse, the teenager was handsome and extraordinary. Under the bright rays of the sun, he shone in people’s eyes.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Your martial aunt Qi would like to eat refreshments.”

Luo Binghe quickly took from his waist a package of delicately wrapped and exquisite refreshments, offering it. It seemed like he’d been long since prepared. He said: “*Shizun*, if there’s anything else, please call for me.” Only then did he let down the curtain.

Liu Qingge plied a riding crop as he rode his horse past, grunting out a strong *hmph* once.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Naturally.” He lowered his head and opened the package, “Long Xu Su [5]. Not bad.” He turned around and passed the refreshments to Qi Qingqi: “Want to eat?”

.....Qi Qingqi had a hard time describing what she felt at this moment.

She felt that this feeling was probably indignation. How come such a good disciple who was both intimate and strong in spiritual power came from Shen Qingqiu's tutelage?

In fact, she just didn't know that there was a phrase to describe that kind of feeling. It was called 'a flash of blind dog eyes.'

Qi Qingqi didn't look at or eat the Long Xu Su from Shen Qingqiu. She was still struggling to the death, "Even Mingyan is riding a horse!"

As long as she could make Shen Qingqiu feel even a bit of shame, it was victory!

Shen Qingqiu didn't say anything and looked out. Sure enough, Liu Mingyan with her veiled face and carrying her 'Shui Se' sword [6] was sitting on a horse. With every breeze, her veil fluttered slightly and gave off the feeling of a floating immortal state.

This picture was too pleasing to the eyes and mind.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help taking another look for a moment, then sighed: "Truly too beautiful to take in at once."

Qi Qingqi expressed a *pei* at his face. “Rest your desires to covet my disciple!”

These two sentences traveled into Luo Binghe’s ears. His face turned dark at once.

But Shen Qingqiu completely didn’t notice his expression at all. He just ate pastries while looking towards that side. His attitude was that of the sort of person who before the start of the movie, ate popcorn and drank Coke while waiting for the credits to end and the movie to officially start [7]. That was Liu Mingyan! The male protagonist and the female protagonist were in the same setting, how would it be possible that they wouldn’t rub off some sparks with each other!

Seeing *Shizun* continuing to focus on Liu Mingyan without stopping, Luo Binghe’s heart felt extremely stuffy.

‘Too beautiful to take in at once?’ Her face isn’t even clearly revealed! No matter how beautiful, surely she can’t be as good-looking as me?

Luo Binghe truly wasn’t narcissistic. He was only very clear about his own looks. He was neither complacent nor hypocritically belittling himself.

Half a day had gone by and Shen Qingqiu still hadn’t shown any intention of retracting his gaze. Luo Binghe truly couldn’t take it anymore. He lightly cracked his whip and the white horse quickly trotted forward to walk

alongside Liu Mingyan. Luo Binghe smiled slightly and greeted: “Martial Sister Liu.”

Liu Mingyan was surprised for a moment, then nodded shallowly. She replied: “Martial Brother Luo.”

Ohhh! Ohhh! It’s started!

Shen Qingqiu really didn’t think there would be a day that he would see with his own eyes this scene from the novel of the handsome man and beauty riding alongside each other. He was secretly excited.

Luo Binghe’s gaze swept over and he saw that Shen Qingqiu not only hadn’t shifted his gaze, but was even more actively fixing his gaze this way. With a face full of black lines [8], his heart increasingly stuffy and his teeth itching to grit together, he brightly laughed with Liu Mingyan while secretly making their horses walk increasingly faster without anyone knowing better. In the end, they were far away enough that Shen Qingqiu couldn’t see them unless his entire upper body stuck out of the carriage. Only then did Shen Qingqiu let go and sit back.

Damn, how did he forget: the moments when the male and female protagonist were billing and cooing at each other, their love was never in the fashion of a lightbulb shedding light among the masses. =.=

—End Chapter 21—

[1] Zheng Yang (正陽) sword: *Zheng* meaning ‘upright/righteous’ and *Yang* is the same character used in yin-yang. Yang generally means positive/masculine energy or refers to the sun. Fits this sunshine cutie-pie Luo Binghe pretty well, huh?

[2] Snowy mountain tea: I assume this is a type of tea? Not one I’ve heard of though. Phrase used was “上好的雪山香茗.”

[3] Jue Di Gorge (絕地谷): Meaning of the name is ‘despairing/hopeless land gorge.’ Ominous, huh? Can’t believe MTL translated this as Jedi Valley. LOL.

[4] Qi Qingqi (齊清萇): Her name means something like ‘clear luxury.’

[5] Long Xu Su (龍鬚酥): Literally ‘Dragon Whisker Pastry.’ It’s a light, sweet pastry that’s little like cotton candy but tons healthier. Sometimes you can wrap some crumbly nuts inside. Here’s an image:

[6] ‘Shui Se’ (水色) sword: Literally ‘water color’ sword.

[7] ...movie to officially start: In everywhere in the world except the US, movie credits roll first before the film actually begins.

[8] Face full of black lines: You've seen it in manga/manhua. It looks like this:

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 22

TN: Unedited. Also, I found myself confused over whether they're sitting in a tower or on platforms in this chapter. The word tai (台) is used a lot and it's hard to tell. @

Also, had to check up on a lot of terminology used, etc. (this is #1 reason why I've released this chapter a bit late). I think I got it right, but please correct me if I'm wrong. ^^

Jue Di Gorge.

Jue Di Gorge covered the span of seven mountains in a chain, rising and falling and all covered with verdant growth. Among them were secret undercurrents, waterfalls and strange rocks, quiet and deep secluded valleys with tall peaks in disorderly confusion. As its name suggested, the terrain brought a feeling of being 'pressed to an impasse,' but in the next moment letting someone see a road that showed that the heavens wouldn't seal off all exits.

In Shen Qingqiu's view, even if it wasn't being used as the Immortal Alliance Conference's opening venue, everyone would deem that it was a dangerous place to live.

The main force was the big four cultivation sects. Cang Qiong Mountain sect was in the lead, followed by Zhao Hua Temple, Tian Yi Overlook, and lastly Huan Hua Palace. [1]

Among the four sects, Cang Qiong Mountain sect was the most comprehensive. Each of its twelve peaks had their specialties, a multi-pronged approach forming a hodge-podge. The Temple and Overlook naturally were monastic and Daoist sects respectively; Huan Hua Palace was more complex, the sect's guidance leaning more towards the militaristic school of thought and good at Qimendunjia divination [2]. They were also the ones who had the most contact with the world, the strength of their techniques unclear. However, they were without a doubt the richest. Huan Hua Palace took out the most money for the Immortal Alliance Conference every time.

Additionally, there were uncountable and numerous other small to middle-sized sects. Therefore, the total number of people who registered and gathered at Jue Di Gorge in the end would definitely be above ten thousand.

The formerly silent and cold entrance to the gorge was suddenly filled with an influx of thousands of people. The mountain animals who had never seen people were surprised out. On all sides, there was a sense of liveliness and activity.

The rookie cultivators of the Alliance were preparing to stand neatly in an array. Surrounding the mountain gorge was an immense natural stone platform.

There had long since been a high tower put up at the gorge's entrance for the cultivators who weren't participating in the Conference to observe everything, the colorful flags representing each sect high up on the roof, open and fluttering. The first-class spot reserved for sect leaders was on the highest floor; since Yue Qingyuan was the sect head of Cang Qiong Mountain sect, he led the group to sit at the highest floor.

Shen Qingqiu sat behind. Close to his left sat a poised and magnanimous old man with a *hefa* hairstyle [3] who'd given care towards everyone from Cang Qiong Mountain sect in the past. He also greeted him: "Immortal Master Chen." [4]

The old head of Huan Hua Palace was also the *shifu* of Luo Binghe's birth mother. Shen Qingqiu viewed him as something like a member of royalty as he paid his respects.

Soon, a member of Huan Hua Palace stepped onto the stone platform. Since they spent the most money, letting the major stockholder monopolize control of the ceremonies wasn't a big deal. The people below down in front of him gradually became quiet and attentive as they listened to him read the Conference's rules and arrangements.

This person's basic skills foundation was deep, his breath full and lasting a long time. From the gorge entrance to the highest level of the tower, all were able to hear his voice very clearly.

"The Conference will be held for seven days. After everyone enters the gorge, a large enchantment will cover the entire Jue Di Gorge. Within seven

days, all participants who have entered into Jue Di Gorge will have cut off all communication to the outside world. They will be unaware of the situation outside, but onlookers can freely soar through the skies of the gorge on spirit eagles to see the situation inside the field.

“Hundreds of kinds of monsters have already been placed inside the gorge. There are nearly five thousand in total. With every monster taken down, a bead can be obtained from the body [5]. With the different levels of monsters, there will be a corresponding level of difference in the spiritual energy contained in the bead. Is everyone wearing a gold wire on their wrist?”

Everyone below the platform immediately revealed their wrists, showing the gold wires on them. It looked quite spectacular.

The master of ceremonies continued to speak: “After getting a bead and stringing it onto the gold wire, your grade will automatically be sorted on the ranking boards here.

The ranking boards hung opposite the high tower. Although there were eight boards, people were not interested in first or second place; rather, everyone’s interest naturally focused on the first 100 names on the first ranking board. In particular, they focused on the first ten names. This was the reason for not caring about first or second place.

Finally, that Huan Hua sect person stressed severely: “It is strictly forbidden for there to be fights between sects for beads! If a secret fight is found and despicable means used to snatch other people’s beads discovered, you will

be immediately be stripped of your rights to participate in this Conference and will be banned from participating for three periods!”

Three periods meant twelve years.

Among these new cultivators, there were many young people who hadn't experienced the world but the number of experienced old fritters [6] wasn't lacking either. They were afraid that some people would be shameless and things become a mess of unscrupulous bullying, crooked fishes and honest dragons mixed together. If there was no ban, he was afraid that this entire Conference would become extremely chaotic to the point that even human lives would be lost. Therefore, this stipulation was very necessary.

At this time, near the front there were a few female sect heads who were speaking as though they were secretively discussing their private desires.

“Which sect is that disciple from? He's exceedingly handsome.”

“That one in the white clothes, when compared, doesn't lose out to Senior Martial Brother Gongyi.”

“The spiritual power of Senior Martial Brother Gongyi is very strong, how can you compare them?”

At once glance, Shen Qingqiu saw clearly that the white-clothed figure in the crowd that they were talking about was the clearly outstanding and out-of-this-world Luo Binghe.

In fact, it wasn't only them who were secretly looking and discussing. Even among the disciples participating in the Conference situated below the platform, there was no lack of young girls who were secretly paying attention to Luo Binghe, their two cheeks flaming crimson.

Though sounds were suppressed very low, all of those who were sitting were all capable cultivators and their five senses were extremely clear. How could they not hear? These young women were too young to take care and their words were heard by others. Fortunately, everyone was very polite and pretended that they didn't hear anything, their gazes not straying.

Some people, in order to break away from the embarrassment, coughed twice and smiled: "Everyone has come from all different directions; let's calculate whether there are any new outstanding cultivators for this time's Immortal Alliance Conference?"

Shen Qingqiu's spirits were immediately lifted by this topic!

The 'calculate' mentioned wasn't really talking about any old calculations, but – gambling!

To say it bluntly, it was laying a bet on the young cultivator you looked favorably on.

Cultivators also needed a little entertainment. Moreover, they didn't stop at betting with tacky things like gold and silver. They bet with things like treasured cultivation techniques, spirit stones, and sending a disciple to the other person's sect for training and boosting their reputation. They also wouldn't bet in earnest with important items, but it was still a traditional and fun event of the Immortal Alliance Conference.

Slightly older sect leaders like those of Yue Qingyuan's generation wouldn't play with things like this, but naturally there would be people willing to join the fun. Not even a moment had passed when the viewing platform was bustling with activity. There was no lack of people laying down bets for their own sect or division's promising disciples. For example, Qi Qingqi laid a bet down for Liu Mingyan.

Shen Qingqiu didn't need to consider anything at all and straightforwardly laid a bet of 1000 spirit stones on Luo Binghe!

This overly large move shocked everyone around.

Fellow sect members were all in their hearts muttering how they hadn't heard of this name Luo Binghe before. Actually, they couldn't be blamed. Luo Binghe's temperament right now was rather modest and low-key. He wasn't willing to claim credit for himself and always did some good deed and silently left. His reputation just wouldn't grow, so that was why he didn't shine. The bystanders were unclear what kind of reason would let Shen Qingqiu be like a colorful painting and so inspired about his disciple.

And below the highest level, the master of ceremonies with great energy and breath concluded the details of the Conference, after letting all the new cultivators be sworn in and officially starting admissions.

Because there were so many people, they went in through twelve different exits in groups regardless of which sect they were from. The participating rookie cultivators all nervously stepped into the bounds of Jue Di Gorge. The event begun, the already famous and successful elders on the highest floor remained calm and unruffled in the chaos while idly chatting or eating melon seeds.

How did the people outside know the circumstances inside Jue Di Gorge then?

There were many hundreds of spirit eagles inside the enchantment. The spirit eagles were controlled by special staff to watch. On their claws were silver rings inlaid with a special crystal. When soaring, the entire panorama below was within their view and uploaded to the many crystal screens set in front of the high platform. There wasn't much difference compared to modern surveillance equipment.

Some people beamed radiantly: "Sure enough, the opening ceremony is number one!"

On the red announcement, the names of the top ten were all in brilliant gold. At this moment, the name in first place had already become the characters for "Gong Yixiao." It was followed afterward by the number "Twelve."

That is to say, within the short span of half a *shichen* [1 hour], he had already gotten rid of twelve monsters and gotten twelve beads!

Following close behind in second place was Liu Mingyan, who had gotten rid of monsters and attained six beads, a distance between them of twice the number.

The crystal screen reflected a handsome and light-spirited young teenager, his natural and unrestrained demeanor like drifting clouds and flowing water. When he made a move, it was like lightning. In a moment, the extremely sad spirits who came in front of him were chopped, vanishing like smoke and dispersing like clouds.

Why are you like this!

Shen Qingqiu smiled but didn't speak.

This Gong Yixiao looked like he was positively leaking with a domineering aura, but *hehe*, he was actually cannon fodder on par with himself.

He was that sort of representative for 'looks handsome, good family, high talent, liked by sisters, high-spirited and vigorous, successful young man. But unfortunately, the protagonist is here. You must become cannon fodder for the protagonist.' Despite being the person that the majority of those present thought would become first on the list, he sadly and unfortunately

wouldn't be able to be in the lead for long before Luo Binghe kicked him down.

Luo Binghe's name was now ranked in the middle, the second digit was only a 'one.'

Shen Qingqiu wasn't worried in the slightest.

He knew that when night arrived, there wouldn't be anyone able to ward off Luo Binghe's unstoppable force on the list.

At that moment, a profoundly affecting big □□ riot, a frightening plot, was about to have its curtains drawn open!

The Immortal Alliance Conference, the first day, only a few minutes away and drawing near the time of *jin* [11:00PM-1:00AM].

The sky was dark blue, a round full moon hanging high in the sky. The high platform was ablaze with lights.

Shen Qingqiu always had his mouth closed without a word, pretending to be meditating but actually conserving strength and storing up energy. Then he finally opened his eyes. Within the myriad crystal screens, he finally found a mirror that reflected out Luo Binghe's situation at the moment.

Luo Binghe was slowly proceeding in the forest, carrying his sword across his back, his body spotless, looking completely unwearied. His eyes were like stars and seemed like they could pierce straight through the crystal screen.

However, he wasn't alone.

A great number of people moved alone or partnered with someone they were familiar with. At most there were three disciples in a group. Of course, there were also very powerful female cultivators but speaking of the whole, their raw physical and psychological strength were not enough. Often, they needed to be helped by other people. In this group, they were all elder and younger martial sisters with good relations. All along the road, they seemed like a huge joke and didn't fit the situation at all. Also, there were too many people and their individual strengths indeterminable; how would the bead be split between them? This was also a complicated question.

On Luo Binghe's side, seven or eight people followed. If they weren't weak women then they were very young disciples. This scene was very attention-grabbing. Immediately, some people even left off watching Gongyi Xiao's figure and turned around to look at the sight of this strangely bloated team.

Among them, the one who walked closest to Luo Binghe was a figure in light yellow clothes, a Huan Hua Palace disciple holding up a Night Pearl [7].

—End Chapter 22—

[1] Cang Qiong Mountain sect... Zhao Hua Temple, Tian Yi Overlook, and Huan Hua Palace: I've mentioned what Cang Qiong Mountain's name means in Chinese, so I'll move onto the other three. Zhao Hua Temple (昭華寺) = 'Clear Flower' Temple ('temple' as in the monastery sense). Tian Yi Overlook (天一觀) = 'One Heaven' Overlook but literally 'sky/heaven one look.' Huan Hua Palace (幻花宮) = 'Imaginary Flower' Palace.'

[2] Qimendunshu divination (奇門遁術): I... have no idea what this is other than some kind of ancient Chinese divination tradition. I think. This is the closest thing I could find in my dictionary.

[3] *Hefa* hairstyle (鶴髮): Some kind of hairstyle. Literally translates to 'crane hairstyle.' I tried Google Images but all of them were... really weird. Just know it's an ancient Chinese hairstyle.

[4] Immortal Master Chen (沈仙師): 'Chen' is the old man's surname. 'Immortal Master' (*xianshi*) is something like Immortal Master/Master Immortal and a respectful way to call a high-ranking cultivator. I was tempted to use the pinyin 'Chen *xianshi*' but went with 'Immortal Master Chen.' If you prefer the pinyin version, drop me a comment and let me know. I'll change it if enough people vote for it, otherwise I'll assume what I've done is fine.

[5] Monsters (魔物) and beads (念珠): I was very tempted to translate this as 'demonic/magic creature', but Google-sensei threw me 'monster.' And the character 'wu' (魔物) threw me for a loop because it means 'matter,'

‘thing,’ or ‘object’ and that’s not what you call something that can chew on you. I’ll be using ‘monster’ for now though. It seems to fit best. As for beads (念珠) or *nianzhu*, I’m assuming this is NOT a beast core; like the literal translation ‘prayer bead,’ it’s referring to something probably artificially made for the Conference and put on the monsters for the kiddy cultivators to collect.

[6] Experienced old fritters: Meaning experienced people, but I wanted to keep the funny common language used here at least in feeling. Actual term used is *lao you tiao* (老油條) which literally refers to these yummy fried dough stick things. They’re usually on the salty side and if you leave them out too long, they tend to get chewy (but still delicious). Here’s what they look like:

[7] Night Pearl (夜明珠): Some kind of pearl that’s supposed to glow in the dark. They’re using it as a flashlight here.

Also: Gongyi Xiao (公儀蕭) resulted in yet another edit lol. His name means ‘public ceremony’ and the last part ‘mournful/sad.’ What an ominous name...

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

[Report chapter Comments](#)

Chapter 23

*TN: Unedited. Um... sorry for the cliffie? *ducks**

This girl's appearance was comely and elegant, though she walked with a limp. It seemed like she'd twisted her foot when facing off against the monsters.

Her voice carried an apology as she said: "Martial Brother Luo, I'm really sorry. Earlier I was saved by you, but I still have to trouble you now. If it wasn't for the sake of protecting us, you would have long since proceeded ahead..... it's our fault for dragging you behind."

Luo Binghe was very sincere in his response: "As fellow cultivators, taking care of each other is also a must."

Towards the early stage Luo Binghe's Holy Mother kind of beneficence, Shen Qingqiu had already gotten used to it and found nothing strange.

He was battling creatures on one side and bringing along these weak women and children on the other, which led to his ranking not being high. Otherwise according to his current strength, he'd have no pressure at all competing with Gongyi Xiao for the top! It must be known that even Ming

Fan's ranking wasn't bad..... but no matter, Luo Binghe had a lot of reserves to make a comeback!

Shen Qingqiu completely didn't think about reflecting on his own 'My disciple is the strongest, if it isn't because he's such a good and generous and easy person to bully, then you'd all better not even think of competing with him' feelings and didn't think to wonder whether there was anything strange about this attitude.

Yue Qingyuan laughingly said: "Qingqiu, this small disciple of yours has a good character."

Shen Qingqiu opened his fan and smiled, peacefully secure of himself.

Whether it was from the reader's perspective or *Shizun's* perspective, the early stage Luo Binghe's white lotus level [1]indeed met the standard.

Qi Qingqi snorted: "Since he's like that, it's like he didn't come from his tutelage."

There were bystanders who also passed along words of praise. However, they might not be sincere. What use was there in having a good heart? What the Immortal Alliance Conference paid attention to was strength. In their eyes, Luo Binghe's move was somewhat stubbornly pedantic.

The Huan Hua Palace sect head elder sitting next to Shen Qingqiu, upon seeing Luo Binghe's face in the crystal screen, inadvertently let out a 'yi.'

[2]

Shen Qingqiu's gaze didn't stray sideways, but in his heart he secretly laughed: *Luo Binghe's appearance is handsome, resembling his birth mother. Certainly, this old sect head must see this face and think he coincidentally looks like a certain younger generation person, missing his own proud disciple of that time and sighing a little.* As everyone knew, Luo Binghe was truly the child of his beloved disciple.

And on the other side, inside Jue Di Gorge, Luo Binghe was already thinking in his mind about a safe way to solve the problem and get rid of the current situation.

Morally speaking, he couldn't throw away these Huan Hua Palace disciples who hadn't entered the sect for long, but he also didn't want to let slip the opportunity to put on an excellent performance at the Immortal Alliance Conference and not let *Shizun* be disappointed.

On this side, Luo Binghe was coolly pondering how to settle down these small and weak disciples while Shen Qingqiu actually thought he was rubbing sparks with a sister.

This was the first sister who rolled in the sheets with Luo Binghe!

Qin Wanyue [3]. Shen Qingqiu's impression of this sister wasn't bad.

Though she wasn't much help to the protagonist's undertaking of killing and dominating the Three Realms, she was a warm and gentle person who didn't like infighting in the harem. What man wouldn't like such a sister?

Shen Qingqiu wouldn't say: Sha Hualing and Luo Binghe's main wife living together, all the day contending for his affections and scheming, harming this person and framing another; he'd seen enough several tens of chapters of these kinds of scenes to annoy him to death. *Shua shua shua* and he directly turned the pages over.

The labor of reading was meant for a supernatural novel, not a pretty woman's biography!

I'd rather watch you spend a hundred thousand words to describe how the ghost-headed spider is bred than watch how Sha Hualing made Qin Wanyue have a miscarriage. Thank you!

These people solemnly treated Luo Binghe as their savior, following behind him.

Luo Binghe was helpless, but was unable to be cold and chase them away.

Shen Qingqiu's heart was very happy. The Luo Binghe right now was warm and honest but not easy to fool. Among these closely-following disciples in rank and file, some at this moment were not suited for battle since their

developmental conditions weren't good. At the least, after some adjustment, there would be no problem. But there were also some who had neither learning nor skill, yet were unwilling to withdraw from the competition. They wanted to hug onto Luo Binghe's thighs to muddle along and win some beads and prestige.

If it were the late-stage Luo Binghe, you could die at his hands any second and he wouldn't hesitate! [4]

After walking for a while, the small monsters that came during the night were mostly resolved just by Luo Binghe moving a finger. His sword didn't even need to leave its scabbard. Still, people were unable to pick up speed.

The reason?

A Huan Hua Palace female disciple close to Qin Wanyue started crying loudly: "Big Sister Wanyue, my feet hurt so much."

At the front, Luo Binghe didn't turn around but his feet stopped. His head lowered and he massaged his temples.

Qin Wanyue was suddenly anxious. She lowered her head and quietly said to that young girl: "Little Sister Wanrong, can you please endure? We need to walk a little faster."

Little Sister Wanrong quietly sobbed: “But my feet truly hurt and I can’t walk anymore! And we walked an entire day without a place to bathe. My body feels so uncomfortable.”

In the team, many were unseasoned disciples even if they claimed otherwise. If Shen Qingqiu had the privilege to pass judgment directly, he would have long since invalidated their qualifications to enter the Conference and kicked them out of Jue Di Gorge.

If they cried so easily about their feet hurting, then why did they register for something like the Immortal Alliance Conference? Registration could be forgiven, but why did they have drag people behind? Look at Liu Mingyan, this gap wasn’t just a little bit. No wonder she was the number one female lead!

However, he had no way to deal with this Qin Wanrong. After all, Qin Wanyue and Qin Wanrong this pair of sisters were flowers in Luo Binghe’s harem. They would be the only ones who wouldn’t die even if they died a ‘big death’.....

A strange sense of irritation filled Shen Qingqiu’s heart.

Binghe ah, you... in the future when you start accepting your harem, could you also consider the problem of quality..... don’t just see that a sister doesn’t look bad and take her into your arms. Seeing the quality of your harem so uneven really brings heartache!

Qin Wanyue took another look at Luo Binghe's back, then whispered: "Little sister, we've already given Senior Martial Brother Luo so much trouble....."

Qin Wanrong innocently said: "Senior Martial Brother Luo is such a good person that he won't mind. Isn't that right, Martial Brother Luo?"

Luo Binghe finally turned around. There was still a little smile on his face, handsome without friendliness, unassailably flawless. He didn't speak. Qin Wanyue didn't know why, but she secretly shivered. But Qin Wanrong had cotton for brains. Seeing him smile, she took it as his agreement. 'La la la' like a sudden breeze, she dashed to a little riverbend nearby.

It came! Shen Qingqiu's gaze was filled with urgency.

Luo Binghe was shocked. Connecting with her words earlier, he thought she was going to bathe. Fortunately, this junior martial sister wasn't an exotic flower [5] to that level. She just shucked off her shoes and socks, her feet stepping like 丫 in the river water.

This was the upper reaches of the river, what if someone downriver wanted to drink water.....

Shen Qingqiu secretly lit a candle in his heart for the disciples downriver.

Having led the way like this, many other people followed her example. A group of people just like this began to laugh and make merry.

Luo Binghe, seeing the situation, couldn't do anything about it and also couldn't draw near. He could only say from far away: "Wading into the water is not safe. It's still better for fellow martial brothers and sisters to quickly come up."

Shen Qingqiu felt it was a little strange. In the original work, Luo Binghe shouldn't have stood so far away? He shouldn't be wrong. Luo Binghe should have let go of his worries (or it came from Great God Airplane Towards the Sky's unkillable secret desires), going with them to the rivulet and then enjoying an erotic footbath scene (.....). The same kind of service that was given just before!

The happy laughter and cheers of those people even traveled over to this side: "It's okay! Martial Brother Luo, you come too!"

Even the sect leaders in front of the crystal screens were speechless.

Though he was given an immunity shot in the form of the original work, when this scene actually happened in front of his eyes, Shen Qingqiu was also drunk with disbelief.

With an expressionless face, he asked in his heart: Luo Binghe! You still aren't going to go over? If you still don't go over, you won't be able to catch the scene in time!

Qin Wanyue wanted to conscientiously apologize to Luo Binghe: “Senior Martial Brother Luo, I’m sorry. My junior apprentice sister and them, it’s their first time participating in the Immortal Alliance Conference.....” She knew her own family’s little sister was behaving like quite an exotic flower. She bit her lips, looking very pitiable.

Luo Binghe hadn’t responded yet when suddenly, ear-piercing and sharp screams rose from beside the rivulet.

Ohhh, it’s finally come!

Young people, don’t forget, the number one cool point among the cool points of “Proud Immortal Demon Way”: Those who are going to be made dead, will definitely die!

Only this time, Shen Qingqiu would have never expected that the Qin Wanrong little sister who became part of the protagonist’s harem would! Make! Herself! Dead! Like! This!

Hearing sharp screams, Luo Binghe’s expression changed. He left behind the flowerlike Qin Wanyue, dashing over to the riverside.

At the same time, the faces of the sect leaders who were in front of the crystal screens were also horrified.

Luo Binghe held his sword out horizontally in front of him, lowering his body in a guard position as he said: “What’s going on!”

The river originally held five to six disciples who were leisurely bathing their feet, but now two had disappeared. One of them included Qin Wanrong.

Shen Qingqiu in his heart: You see! Didn’t I tell you to go there earlier?

It’s great now, your first wife is gone just like that! You prodigal son –

The big scene of the future 3[beep—] [6] with the flower bouquet of the two Qin sisters, how’s it going to be done now!

A disciple shrilly screamed: “Just earlier, I don’t know what happened, suddenly the depths of the water turned black and martial sister and them were somehow sucked into the water!”

With one hand, Luo Binghe pulled up some people who were still floating in the water, stunned. It was better to get them out of danger before anything else. But just when he reached out his hand to pull the last person out, that person’s feet slipped and the person fell. Their head hadn’t even gone completely under the river water when they disappeared right in front of Luo Binghe!

At the same time, a dark energy churned in the middle of the river water. Separating the crystal screen out from the others and focusing, Shen Qingqiu saw a woman's countless black hairs just like black silk threads. In the midst of the black silk threads emerged fresh scarlet blood. It had been diluted by the flow of river water, but the thick growth was even more disgusting than Sadako's hair!

Shocked, Yue Qingyuan exclaimed: "*Nu yuan chan!*" [7]

And inside Jue Di Gorge, Luo Binghe quickly determined what kind of creature was in the river water. His sword energy entered the water and he shouted: "Move away from the water! It's a Demon Realm *nu yuan chan!*"

That demon, like a large tract of hair strands, stirred under the water for a while, then suddenly erupted into a burst of hiccups. With a *gu lu lu* sound, it 'spit out' something from the midst of the black strands.

The three had already been sucked dry of blood and flesh, leaving only skinny wet corpses made of skin and bone!

The pores on the corpses appeared unusually large because there were still quite a lot of hairs attached to the skin, inserted through the pores to hungrily to draw human flesh, blood, and vital energy.

The ability to get in through any opening was the most frightening specialty of the *nu yuan chan*.

The disciples by the river were so terrified by the horrific scene that they seemed to have been scared dumb. From the forest, a wailing cry came as someone threw themselves over almost to Luo Binghe's back. Qin Wanyue almost fainted after seeing her little sister's corpse in such a miserable state.

Fortunately, she was very smart and hadn't been actually shocked into fainting. Otherwise in this kind of scene full of chaos and turmoil, who could actually bring her along with them as they ran away!

—End Chapter 23—

[1] White lotus: This is a Chinese term (usually for women lol) that's traditionally used to describe someone who's pure and innocent and absolutely good. So 'white lotus level' is referring to just how much of a white lotus Luo Binghe is.

For those curious, the *modern* meaning of the same 'white lotus' term may be used to refer to a two-faced bitch (yanno, the kind that looks good but has the moral integrity of a pile of trash). This story doesn't use the modern meaning though – so when I use 'white lotus' in translation, we're talking about the traditional meaning of cute white bun.

[2] Yi: A sound someone can make when surprised after seeing something. Sort of SFX, I guess.

[3] Qin Wanyue (秦婉約): *Wan* meaning gentle/beautiful/elegant, *yue* meaning... well, it can mean something like ‘agreement’ as a noun. The name of her sister, ‘Wanrong,’ has a similar meaning.

[4] “...die at his hands any second”: Some pinyin mixed in here. Might be slang... Original Chinese was: 要是後期的洛冰河，分分鐘neng死你們不帶猶豫的!

[5] ...exotic flower (奇葩): Meaning she’s not a ‘marvel’ in the sarcastic sense to that level. In ancient times, a woman revealing her feet to the opposite sex is considered not done even if it’s not as bad as stripping naked. This is why Luo Binghe’s standing so far away despite it only being a scene of pretty sisters having a footbath – he’s being a gentleman. FYI: Among cultivators and Jianghu people, propriety is more lax which explains why some martial brothers are mixed in with the sisters.

[6] 3[beep—]: This is a censored version of the term 3P. 3P = 3 party = threesome. Future Luo Binghe has a threesome with these sisters... at least in the original work. LOL.

[7] *Nu yuan chan* (女怨纏): Wasn’t sure how to translate this. It’s a kind of supernatural monster. Direct translation of name is something like ‘female resentment enwrapping’ so I guess I could have called it Enwrapping Female Resentment? But then it sounds less like an actual monster lol. If someone feels strongly about this one way or another, drop a comment.

TN: ...Binghe, your mind truly is filled with nothing but '*Shizun*.' Even when there's a hot sister right next to you, you're still thinking about him. Also, RIP Qin Wanrong... *clasps hands together and prays*

Chapter 24

*TN: Soo... clifty? *runs and hides**

Unedited. Kept 'nu yuan chan' for the hairy female grudge demon spirit. 'Ghoul' just didn't sound quite right to me.

Nu yuan chan was able to move by water and by land. After sucking the three people dry underwater, it couldn't wait to climb ashore to look for new targets. Luo Binghe wasn't so easy to handle however, his appearance towering and piercingly cold. He snapped his fingers and fire appeared at his fingertips, his spiritual power acting as the catalyst. He threw it at the sneaky monster. Once it came in contact with the hair, the flames quickly grew and fanned into a huge blaze, forcing the black strands of hair to quickly retreat back into the water, afraid to go ashore.

The entire set of moves was carried through smoothly and successfully in one go at full power, without room for hesitation.

In his heart, Shen Qingqiu was satisfied and he raised a placard: Luo Binghe, 10 Points!

Luo Binghe picked up Qin Wanyue's Night Pearl that had fallen to the ground and raised it high, as though it were a beacon. It awakened those

who had frozen in place. He shouted: “Martial brothers and sisters, don’t wander and get lost. Gather in one place and move together!” Afterwards, he pulled out the standard Immortal Alliance Conference item that everyone received, the emergency firework [1], and launched it towards the sky.

The emergency fireworks were given to the disciples to use in case they came across monsters they had no way to confront. Generally, the Immortal Alliance Conference wouldn’t release monsters that were too dangerous. Using it three times also resulted in an automatic waive. It was therefore used as a last resort during the Immortal Alliance Conference; hardly anyone would use it. But at this moment, many bright fireworks bloomed over the entire sky of Jue Di Gorge, one after another. In the original work, this was a very beautiful scene. But now, these fireworks were not only far from being splendid. Instead, they made people feel as though their livers and gallbladders were being torn apart in grief and horror.

Because every firework rising into bloom represented a disciple who was confronted with an extremely terrible monster, his or her life in danger!

“The crystal screens! Quickly look at the crystal screens!”

Tragic screaming and shouting broadcasted from the crystal screens without end. Some disciples had already died on the scene across rows of the crystal screens. Some disciples were still bathed in blood from fighting in close quarters, their eyes full of fear and dread: “Why? Why does this place have... it shouldn’t be like this!”

“People, come and help! Poison Dragon Python [2]! *Shifu*, save me! Elder Martial Brother, save...”

Suddenly, from within a crystal screen came a hoarse cry, the spirit eagles calling sadly and shrilly, then the surface turned entirely black.

Everyone said: “What’s going on?”

Shen Qingqiu felt his scalp turning numb, his tips of his fingertips ice-cold.

That hoarse cry must be the Demon Realm’s Bone Eagle [3]! It was a type of fierce and bloodthirsty flying monster.

He was afraid that these spirit eagles had been torn apart by them and thrown onto the ground, likewise shattering the crystal screens on them into pieces.

Swimming in the water, walking on land, or flying in the air; all were invaded by these frightening demonic creatures!

Facing this kind of grand and chaotic scene, he truly didn’t have a way to act as he originally planned and treat it as a realistic play □□, remaining calm.

And outside Jue Di Gorge, atop the high tower, it was as though a pot had exploded. The Daoists [4] of Tian Yi Overlook snapped: “What’s going on? The approved monsters for the Immortal Alliance Conference have all been chosen according to the strictest standards. How could a purely demonic thing like *nu yuan chan* get mixed in!”

Several Huan Hua Palace disciples had already died. The old Palace head suddenly got up and in a trembling voice said word by word: “Open the enchantment!”

The great enchantment encompassing Jue Di Gorge was supported by several hundreds of Zhao Hua Temple monks. The Zhao Hua Temple abbot was quickly about to use the Thousand Li Transmitter to notify the monks to remove the enchantment. Who knew that Yue Qingyuan would suddenly say: “It cannot be opened!”

The old Palace head was stunned: “Sect Head Yue, what is the meaning of this?”

In Jue Di Gorge, there were many hundreds of Cang Qiong sect disciples who participated in the Immortal Alliance Conference, yet Yue Qingyuan stopped them from opening the enchantment and letting the disciples trapped inside escape with their lives. Naturally, he had very important reasons for this.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Once the enchantment is opened, it’s true that the disciples can escape. But the monsters originally trapped inside will also immediately flee. Within some *li* of distance, you can see smoke from

human villages in this place. At that time, the situation would be even more grave. Our sect disciples have at least some ability to confront monsters. As for those normal, common people who don't have spiritual power flowing through their meridians?"

This remark made every one of the famous sect heads on the high platform unable to say nothing in reply and made them all silent.

At a time like this, no matter how much of a great Core Formation or Nascent Soul cultivator you were, you were still helpless against this kind of uncontrollable situation.

Some people from Huan Hua Palace seemed to have taken leave of their six senses and were at a loss: "If the enchantment can't be opened to let them out, then.....then what should be done?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "If exiting is impossible, then there can only be entering."

Among Cang Qiong Mountain sect members, many people met gazes in silent agreement. Yue Qingyuan said in a clear voice: "All fellow Daoists, today's events must be the intentional move of someone intending to borrow Demon Realm hands to eliminate our young cultivators and future pillars in one fell swoop. Because of their stratagem, we can only let the enchantment continue. Are there fellow Daoists who are willing to come along with my Cang Qiong Mountain sect to enter the gorge to exterminate monsters and save the participating disciples?"

To kill a bloody path and clean up all the monsters required not only strength, but great courage.

Huan Hua Palace's old head was the first to respond: "Huan Hua Palace is duty-bound to assist."

In the Immortal Alliance Conference this time, Huan Hua Palace had the most participants and invested the most. They were the party most unable to bear it. With someone taking the lead, other people immediately followed closely behind and volunteered for the dangerous task. Even if there were those in the minority who were originally timid, they were now shocked awake as well: Their own talented baby disciples were in there, after all!

Shen Qingqiu took one step forward and was just about to enter the queue of supporters when Liu Qingge blocked his path with his scabbard.

Shen Qingqiu's expression didn't change as he used two fingers to push aside the scabbard: "What's the meaning of this?"

Liu Qingge concisely and comprehensively said: "Your poison."

Yue Qingyuan also used a voice only they could hear [5] to say: "Correct. Qingqiu. You shouldn't forget, the remainder of the 'Without A Cure' poison still hasn't been cleaned from your body. Give the safety of the Qing Jing Peak disciples to us to handle." There was one more sentence he hadn't spoken: what if after he entered Jue Di Gorge, he encountered an outbreak of the poison and his spiritual power was obstructed? Surrounded by many

monsters, that would truly be like shouting every day without even an echo to answer for it.

Shen Qingqiu shook his head and said: “With disciples who have encountered difficulties, how can the *shifu* hide on the high platform and relax? Since when is there this kind of reasoning? If I’m unable to protect my own disciples, then I don’t need to be the Peak Lord of my Qing Jing Peak anymore.”

Also, he was an important person for triggering the key scene. If he doesn’t arrive at the scene, there’s no way for things to proceed.

Ding dong, the system alerted: 【Through establishing a positive image early, making the villain a three-dimensional character, B points +30! 】

In his heart, Shen Qingqiu rolled his eyes: ‘This counts as giving me sugar or morphine before stabbing me with a knife.’

Yue Qingyuan’s advice for him not to go had no effect, so he could only reluctantly say: “Then you have to be careful. In the case you can’t confront something, immediately contact us through the auditory technique so we can support you.”

Shen Qingqiu wasn’t as pessimistic about his own ability to deal with monsters as they were. Other than his confidence in his cultivation level and spiritual power, he also had one other additional bonus.

Towards the monsters in “Proud Immortal Demon Way,” Shen Qingqiu had a far greater interest in them than the different kinds of sisters.

He might not be able to remember that female protagonist encountering a small grievance and going with Luo Binghe to watch stars somewhere, that female protagonist’s special ‘flavor’ when doing the *pa pa pa*, or would sometimes even forget to match the name with the person, but he definitely remembered the properties and weaknesses of every monster absolutely clearly!

If you really had to find something on him to hold up as a ‘golden finger’then there was only this point!

In Jue Di Gorge, Luo Binghe was settling and calming down martial sisters and brothers whose souls seemed to have left their bodies and scattered, holding their ground. At a time like this, they absolutely couldn’t scurry around in case a new monster emerged or people got lost again. It would only make the situation even worse.

The night wind blew strongly. On four sides and from eight directions came the ghostly, indeterminable sounds of humans or demonic creatures crying. Those who were less brave were already hugging their heads and weeping bitterly. Qin Wanyue’s face was pale, but upon seeing Luo Binghe leaning against a tree with his Zheng Yang sword propped up in his lap, vigilant and calm as he helped block the invasion of the dark for those by him, she couldn’t help feeling warm honeyed sweetness threading into her heart.

If Shen Qingqiu were here, he would be very excited: Sister, you've fallen in love with him! Gossiper's soul is burning!

At this moment, a *xi xi suo suo* sound poured from the woods. Luo Binghe's gaze turned cold. Spiritual power gathered in the middle of his palm, ready to be used.

From the underbrush, louder and louder, came the sound of something moving. As it came closer, people's hearts came up to their throats. Perhaps it was because they were already terrified to the limit, but no one cried out.

Suddenly, there was a booming *dong* sound, like someone fell to the ground. Then, a round rolling thing rolled its way out of the underbrush.

That was a human head.

Both eyes in the head were closed, the face covered with blood, the hair as messy as a chicken's nest. This picture in the original novel was very frightening. But at a time like this, a dead person's head without any killing power was still better than a man-eating monster. Many people were relieved and let out their breaths.

Qin Wanyue quaveringly said: ".....This.....this martial brother, does anyone know what sect he comes from?"

Every disciple present drew close to identify the head, and all let out a breath in relief: “He isn’t one of ours.” “Have never seen him before.”

Luo Binghe looked towards the dark, black forest. In his mind, he thought: The head’s here and the body must be nearby. I should go see his clothes and figure out which sect’s disciple he is. He increased the spiritual power in his palm and walked towards the darkness.

As expected, a stiff corpse lay behind the dark woods, wearing watery blue robes. It must be a Tian Yi Overlook disciple. Luo Binghe only saw the bottom hem of his robes [6] before he sighed. This kind of disciple must have entered the Immortal Alliance Conference to gain experience, only he wouldn’t have thought he’d encounter an unexpected accident and give up his life.

He continued looking upwards and was stricken with terror.

Above this corpse’s neck, there was still a perfectly good head attached!

Then the head from earlier, where did it come from?

Luo Binghe rapidly returned, Zheng Yang exiting its scabbard, white light like a flood as he shouted: “Get away from that head!”

Those words had just been spoken when the head that had been peacefully lying crooked on the ground suddenly opened its eyes!

Its angry eyes were round and beheld the many people. From somewhere below the neck, eight long, thin, articulated and barbed spider legs emerged. It jumped up!

It was too late for the closest person to avoid it, and it jumped onto his head. He yelled crazily and pulled out his sword and swung it wildly, as other people busily tried to avoid it. Luo Binghe didn't dare to use his sword without a thought, in case he pierced not the creature but that person's head. The consequences would be disastrous. With such a frightening thing crawling all over his head, almost suffocating him, he was desperate and swung the sword around his own head, stabbing.

But he hadn't even raised his hand when those eight slim and narrow spider legs found their positions, inserting straight into his temples!

That person's body immediately turned rigid. Even his tongue seemed to be tied into a knot, making him unable to shout a word. Under the human head, beneath the neck, the spider legs were inserted in deeper and deeper, causing the whole body to twitch.

After a while, the eight spider legs pulled out, leaving behind only two empty holes at that person's temples. Inside the cranial cavity, everything had been sucked away cleanly, absolutely empty.

This scene was appalling. Even Luo Binghe wasn't able to recover himself for a moment. That human headed-spider [7]creature, seeming to have sucked its fill of brain fluids, climbed up and down the body while emitting a shrill whistle, like a baby crying.

Just at this moment, a light arrow condensed from spiritual power flew over, piercing through the mouth that was letting out long wails, beating this child that had forgotten itself in joy through to the correct answer! [8]

In the abrupt silence and dazed shock of the people, Shen Qingqiu rubbed the ears that faintly hurt from all its shouting, adjusting his sleeves and appeared at the scene, low-key.

Spreading his paper fan with a shake and holding it so that it covered his half his face, Shen Qingqiu said with mild dislike: "How noisy!"

—End Chapter 24—

[1] Emergency firework: Original translation would have been literally something like 'help/call for help' firework. I thought about calling it 'emergency flare' but that's not accurate because they don't have flare guns lol.

[2] Poison Dragon Python (毒龍蟒): Translated this monster name literally. I think I got it right.

[3] Bone Eagle (骨鷹): *Gu ying* in pinyin. Translated this literally.

[4] Daoist: In case you don't know, 'daoist' is another way to call or address someone who's a cultivator.

[5] Voice only they could hear: High-level cultivators can speak telepathically, to an extent. I call this the 'auditory technique' later. It's literally a technique (傳音之法). LOL.

[6] Bottom hem of his robes...: In case you don't know, sects (especially for disciples) have distinctive coloring/styles for robes. They're like uniforms that double as company and job ID. And in this case, we can assume that disciple ranks (like outer vs. inner) can be determined by the color of the robe lining. If you've read History's Number One Senior Brother, it's like the system set up in Yan Zhaoge's sect.

[7] Human-headed spider (人頭蜘蛛): Guessing this is species name. Pinyin is *ren tou zhizhu*. I'll leave it as 'human-headed spider.'

[8] Beating this child that had forgotten itself in joy...: Referring to the baby spider. Yes, it's a baby spider. I think I translated this right but this line gave me stitches. Original Chinese: 就在這時，一道靈流凝成的光箭飛來，穿過它正在發出長號的嘴，把這個玩意兒打了個對穿！

*TN: PFFFT HOW IS THAT LOW-KEY, SHEN QINGQIU?!?! *smacks desk while laughing like a loon**

Chapter 25

TN: Unedited. Also, I changed Dream Demon's name to the pinyin version, 'Meng Mo.' It sounds more like a name than the sadsack literal translation lol. It's also in the translation notes below in case you forget. :3

Using 'miraculous flower' and 'treasure flower' interchangeably. 'Treasure flower' is the more literal translation.

"Shizun!"

Upon first seeing Shen Qingqiu, Luo Binghe was completely surprised and overjoyed.

After all, from the beginning of the chaos, he'd already known (in his heart) Shen Qingqiu's character, and guessed that he would be worried and personally come inside the gorge to save them.

After Shen Qingqiu coolly finished his kill and glided to a stop, he was met with several disciples ringing around him. He asked: "Is anyone hurt?"

Luo Binghe said: "Other than at the riverbank.....those few martial sisters and the martial brother who was sucked to death, at this moment there are no losses."

Shen Qingqiu let out an “Oh,” and said, “it’s been tiring for you.”

Luo Binghe smiled slightly, his eyes brightening: “This disciple is only doing his duty.”

Shen Qingqiu looked at the still red-eyed Qin Wanyue. In his heart, he said: you’re still smiling, smiling! Don’t you know you just lost a wife?!

Upon meeting with a powerful elder coming out to rescue them, it was as though all the disciples had met their own real mother. They almost hugged his thighs and cried freely. Shen Qingqiu said: “You all do not need to be so alarmed and frightened. The sect heads outside already know the situation inside. There is also a great number of elders who have entered the enchantment to support you. All you need to do is protect yourselves. It won’t be long before we’ll be able to kill our way out of the heavy encirclement.”

His words were not only worked like a calming pill, but were also ‘eaten’ with great effect by a group of little girls frightened out of their wits, and let them set their hearts at rest. Luo Binghe said: “*Shizun*, what was that thing earlier?” He’d never seen such a strange thing before.

If bringing up the topic of the monsters of “Proud Immortal Demon Way,” then he really asked the right person. With a familiarity as great as if he were naming off his own family’s treasures, Shen Qingqiu said: “It’s no wonder you haven’t seen one before, this thing is called a Ghost Head Spider. Its temperament is irritable, it has hideous features, and uses its

babylike cry to attract prey. Once prey draws near, the suckers beneath the head will firmly attach itself to the top of the prey's head. Its eight legs are sharp and can be directly inserted through the skull to suck at a living creature's brain fluids."

This segment of science was completely copied from the original work. Listening to him speak with such expertise, Luo Binghe was both admiring and amazed: "So the Demon Realm has such evil and vicious creatures. This disciple is ignorant and ill-informed."

Ever since Luo Binghe took Meng Mo [1] as his master, the things that Shen Qingqiu could guide him in terms of cultivation became less and less. This was a rare opportunity for him to show off in front of his disciple. Shen Qingqiu was happy enough to overturn the heavens. He smiled a little: "These things are of demonic origin and unused to the earth and waters of the Human Realm. It's already been many years since anyone has seen them. Next time if you meet one again, remember to strike directly at the temples. The spider from earlier was only a male spider. Thankfully we didn't encounter a female spider, or it would be even more terrifying."

The two people hadn't spoken more than a few words when from above the heads of the crowd, in the leafy canopy, came a rustling sound.

Several upside-down heads on white spider silk threads emerged from the trees!

Shen Qingqiu's expression changed dramatically.

Fuck, how did he forget that this thing's cry would attract a large group of similar things that would encircle them!

The folded fan in his hands opened, sending out a strong wind that cut apart dozens of spiders to death and made the Ghost Head Spiders just like overripe fruit, falling *putong putong* [2] and smashing onto the ground. Shen Qingqiu shouted: "Go!"

Luo Binghe neatly responded an affirmative. Shen Qingqiu took advantage of when the Ghost Head Spiders were thrown dizzy and concussed to run with them. One was at the front opening a path, one bringing up the rear, and a bloated group was sandwiched in the middle. Both ends slaughtered with such carnage that there was a foul wind and bloody rain. Those Ghost Head Spiders' movements were nimble, with strong jumping abilities, flying around and jumping in midair. In their confusion, the sheltered disciples shot out spiritual power without results. It was like the power was wasted like water through a sieve. [3]

Once he knew how to confront the enemy, Luo Binghe was like God lending a hand. Even if he closed his eyes, he would still be able to pierce over two spiders at once. Overhead was a piece of carnage, filled with grieving cries and strange shouts.

Still, the numbers were still too many. It would be difficult to deal with even if there was more time. Shen Qingqiu was truly worried over when that damnably strange poison would act out when his spiritual power felt sluggish and his attack struck empty.

Really speaking of something and having it come! [4]

Shen Qingqiu busily turned his technique into a physical attack, folding his fan and cutting the body of the Ghost Head Spider that lunged at him into two halves.

Luo Binghe paid attention to the situation at his side at any moment. Once he saw there was an abnormality, he asked: “*Shizun?*”

Shen Qingqiu said: “It’s nothing.”

Fortunately, they had already been led by Shen Qingqiu into a special zone. The Ghost Head Spiders seemed to encounter a formless barrier and didn’t dare to continue approaching again. Instead, they clamored loudly while continuously retreating until they reached the shrubbery and canopy of the forest and disappeared.

Shen Qingqiu released his breath.

Qin Wanyue looked delicate and tender as she panted heavily at the side while wondering aloud: “Elder Shen, why are the monsters unwilling to advance further after we came here?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “You’ve all forgotten; what kind of miraculous flower is growing in the midst of Jue Di Gorge?”

In fact, the person who'd forgotten was himself.

Forgive him for truly not being able to remember what the name of that flower was!

Luo Binghe very thoughtfully remembered it for him. In an instance, he spoke: "Thousand Leaf Cleansing Snow Lotus!" [5]

Shen Qingqiu finally knew why he couldn't remember the name of this miraculous flower before.

'XX Snow XX,' or 'XX Lotus,' treasure flowers with those sorts of names were so many that they far exceeded the memory capacities of everyone. It would be strange if you could remember it!

Shen Qingqiu: ".....Not bad, indeed it is the Thousand Leaf Cleansing Snow Lotus. This flower has long abided in the depths of Jue Di Gorge for thousands of years, full of spiritual energy. It is also a natural nemesis towards demonic types. Thus, it has also become a protective barrier to make monsters withdraw. As long as you are within range of its barrier, you will not suffer too many attacks from monsters."

Luo Binghe suddenly followed up and said: "A natural nemesis towards demonic types?"

He had been listening raptly the entire time. When Shen Qingqiu saw that a cluster of starry fire seemed to have been lit in his eyes, a concealed light flashing, his heart felt strange: “That’s correct?”

Luo Binghe said: “Then, *Shizun*. This Thousand Leaf Cleansing Snow Lotus, would it be able to solve..... strong demonic poison?”

Shen Qingqiu was absolutely terrified.

This state of affairs, Luo Binghe wouldn’t.....be thinking about plucking the Thousand Leaf Cleansing Lotus for him, right?

Wait a moment! The Qin Wanyue that he plucked the flower for in the original work was right at his side here! *Right now, right in front of her, you’re going to pluck a flower (and a man at that)?* [6]

Give your wife some face, all right?!

Shen Qingqiu quickly said: “You don’t need to take notice of those things. Currently, we need to first deal with the crisis in front of our eyes.”

Luo Binghe was unwilling to let it go, “Inviting *Shizun* to inform this disciple.”

Shen Qingqiu shook his head and said: “That thing is no use.”

Luo Binghe persevered: “How can *Shizun* know without at least giving it a try? This disciple knows *Shizun* doesn’t want to let this disciple encounter danger, but if this danger isn’t risked, then this disciple’s heart will never be at peace!”

This truly isn’t!!!

Why do you have to you have to concern yourself with an old person like me at this juncture!!!

This old man can’t tell you that the poison can’t be cured unless he does the *pa pa pa* with you?!

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t tell it to him clearly. His face turned cold: “Has this master indulged you too often normally, that you can be wayward at a time like this?”

The simple, crude point was telling him to shut up.

To tell the truth, these years, he had never said any heavier words to this disciple. After Luo Binghe listened to these words, he was first startled,

then obediently closed his mouth. But his gaze was still strongly stubborn, and he still refused to sheathe his Zheng Yang sword in its scabbard, obviously without the intention of retreating.

Just when the two were deadlocked, some movements shook the field of rank silvergrass at the side. Out from the grass came a person bringing disciples behind him who were in an extremely sorry plight, battered and exhausted, who'd gone through blood and slaughter.

Shen Qingqiu vigilantly moved his gaze away. After coming across him, he felt like the heavens had dropped a hammer on his temples.

In fact, this person's appearance could also be considered averagely handsome. Only a tiny bit of his humble origins lingered in his demeanor, impossible to get rid of. After he saw Shen Qingqiu and Luo Binghe, he smiled and returned his shining, bared sword into its scabbard. "So it's Elder Martial Brother Shen. Since we've met up with you all, my heart can be reassured."

Shen Qingqiu made a *hehe* sound.

Reassured. Reassured your ass! You being here isn't reassuring at all!

The person in front of him was the chief culprit of the chaos!

Shang Qinghua [7], this was the person that Shen Qingqiu did a tsukkomi over in his heart before, taking the role of: ‘Shang Qinghua, *hehe*, I’ve even entered Beida University.’ He was An Ding Peak’s Peak Lord.

At the same time, he had another status – a mole during the Immortal Alliance Conference, a sleeper cell seeded by the Demon Realm for thousands of years.

Originally, Shang Qinghua was only just another one of An Ding Peak’s nameless little disciples. Caught by Demon Realm spirits, he was forced to do undercover work.

Ah, no. He wasn’t forced that much, he merrily undertook the task of going undercover without much pressure.

With the demons as his secret backing, Shang Qinghua experienced favorable winds and favorable waters, making a meteoric rise all the way up until he finally sat upon the seat of An Ding Peak’s Peak Lord.

However, he was still unsatisfied. Why?

Because it was An Ding Peak!

Just by hearing this name, you’d know it wasn’t some kind of ambitious place. This mountain peak’s tradition and specialty was the completely the

same style as its name – logistics work.

As a matter of course, the Peak Lord also became a piece of brick who moved wherever he was needed. Today delivering some hard work here, tomorrow bringing support supplies there.

This kind of Peak Lord, was it prestigious? Was it imposing? Did it provide arrogance and swag?

Did it have the dignity of a Peak Lord?

Even a gifted little disciple had more prestige!

So, Shang Qinghua was duty-bound to become a Demon Realm lapdog. Once he appointed himself as the helper for the Demon Realm to dominate the Human realm, he did bad things.

Shen Qingqiu coldly and proudly lifted his chin: “Martial Brother Shang. Having come here, did you meet a large type of monster in the vicinity?”

Shang Qinghua was surprised and said: “A large type of monster? As for this, there wasn’t.”

Shen Qingqiu's heart beat loudly. There wasn't?

A 'large type of monster' here, was also one of the key (plot) props of the story. In the original work, Luo Binghe's Ancient Heavenly Demon blood was exposed because during the Immortal Alliance Conference, a purple-black Moon Python Rhinoceros [8] was let inside.

For the sake of protecting everyone, Luo Binghe risked his life to fight. The black Moon Python Rhinoceros' lethality was the same as its size. Of course he wouldn't be able to succeed in fighting it. If his fighting ability was not enough, what then? His blood exploded into action and was revealed.

As a result, Luo Binghe's blood was revealed in front of Shen Qingqiu.

It was because things happened like this that Shen Qingqiu had the excuse to 'place righteousness above loyalty' and with one strike, hit him down.

Since a while ago, Shen Qingqiu never felt the Moon Python Rhinoceros' demonic energy, much less heard the legendary 'both a python and a rhinoceros' howl. Now, Shang Qinghua also said that he hadn't encountered it. He couldn't help becoming vigilant.

If there wasn't this key scene, then he couldn't suddenly kick Luo Binghe down with no reason.

He couldn't restrain himself from taking a glance at the silent Luo Binghe. This child was still trying to solve the poison, thinking about the fight over picking the flower and the near death scenario. In the midst of his stubborn gaze, there was a bit of grievance.

You're feeling grievance over taking a risk while I'm doing this for your own good! It's fine if you pick a flower, but don't mix up the person you're giving the flower to, thank you!

Truly, asking a scum villain like me to teach the male protagonist people relations is enough to make me drunk with disbelief!

Shang Qinghua bitterly said: "Those who let the monsters in are really vicious. Along the way, not a few sects' disciples were lost. Those were the future of the cultivation world!"

Shen Qingqiu just *hehe*-ed. *What are you pretending for, my ass! Those monsters were all let in by you, all right* – the tsukkomi hadn't finished when suddenly, the earth shook without warning!

Everyone wobbled east and west, overwhelmed by panic, questions flying everywhere. Shen Qingqiu pupils abruptly shrank.

This kind of 7.5 quake was unmistakable.

The Endless Abyss had finally been opened!

—End Chapter 25—

[1] Meng Mo: Pinyin for Dream Demon. I'm using the pinyin now because 'Dream Demon' is a lame name lol. We should all blame Proud Immortal Demon Way's author for being so lazy with naming. XD

[2] *Putong putong*: SFX for something falling onto the ground in succession. Pronounced more like 'pooh-tong, pooh-tong.'

[3] In their confusion, the sheltered disciples shot out spiritual power...: This line was difficult for me to translate. I broke it down into two sentences even, but I might have it wrong. Here's the original Chinese: 那些鬼頭蛛們行動敏捷，彈跳力極強，在半空中飛來跳去，被師徒二人交錯亂打的靈流射成篩子。

[4] Really speaking of something and having it come: I translated this literally, but the meaning is the same as the phrase, 'speak of the devil.'

[5] Thousand Leaf Cleansing Snow Lotus (千葉淨雪華蓮): Pinyin is *Qian Ye Jing Xue Hua Lian*. Tried to translate this as literally as possible. Yes, this freaking long descriptive name only takes up like 5 Chinese characters. Yes, it's still freaking long.

[6] Right now, right in front of her, you're going to pluck a flower (and a man at that)?: 'Plucking a flower' is a euphemism for taking someone's virginity in Chinese. This sentence is a play on words, playing on the literal meaning of plucking a flower (the treasure flower in this case) vs. the euphemism. LOL. It's even funnier if you consider that Binghe probably plucked the flower and immediately followed up with sexing up the sister in the original work... so Shen Qingqiu doesn't want to trigger any flags... (too late, bro, you passed Go ages ago XD)

[7] Shang Qinghua (尚清華)...: Those of you who have read the NU spoiler thread know who this guy is. LOL. His name translates to something like 'qing' meaning clear + 'hua' as in... flower. Also, Beida (Big North) University is one of the top universities in China. You might know it better as Beijing University. An Ding Peak translates literally to 'peaceful peak.'

[8] Moon Python Rhinoceros (月蟒犀): In pinyin, it's 'Yue Mang Xi.' Looks something like a chimera.

TN: LOL at SQQ. You were so busy being happy at being able to show off in front of your disciple that you forgot about where you were... namely a monster invasion... PFFFFT

Also, be ready for heartbreak in like 2 chapters. Just saying.

Chapter 26

TN: Unedited. Next chapter will make you sad. And the one after that one will also make you sad in a slightly different way. But it adds flavor to what comes later so hang on to your skirts (or britches) everyone~ Your hankies too~

Footnotes galore because we get introduced to a new character.

The so-called Endless Abyss was an empty space at the junction between the Human Realm and the Demon Realm.

As a transitional space, the Endless Abyss was full of the dangerous and unknown, full of twisted and rent spatial whirlpools and fiery magma.

The disciples present all along this road had already expended a great deal of energy. After the previous exertion, most had collapsed. The only ones left standing were Shen Qingqiu, Luo Binghe, and Shang Qinghua.

Since the Endless Abyss was opened, it meant that there would be demonic things coming out from that side.

The three people held their breaths, vigilant, and calmly waited.

From the darkness, the figure of a tall man walked out.

Once he saw that face as cold as ice and that aura of a godly figure repelling others for thousands of *li*, Shen Qingqiu immediately knew who he was.

He swept a glance sideways to the pale Shang Qinghua, wanting to laugh but unable to actually laugh.

Why did this future subordinate of Luo Binghe's who did all kinds of evil things at command, committing murder and arson, the jet fuel to his flame, appear here right now!

Mo Beijun [1] was a pure-blooded, legitimate second generation offspring of the demons who inherited his family's territory in the northern boundary of the Demon Realm and succeeded the Demon Lord seat. He came and went like a shadow all the time with nothing to do, heeding no one. Such a maverick character, after being fiercely beaten by the lynched Luo Binghe of that time, inexplicably bowed his head and vowed his allegiance, appointing himself to be at his beck and call. From henceforth, Luo Binghe had yet another errand-runner (.....).

However.....clearly, according to the original development, there should be at least five hundred chapters before it's your turn to make an appearance, all right Great One?! [2]

Messed up, messed up, everything's messed up!

Shang Qinghua advanced a step forward, questioning sternly: "Who are you? Why are you here?"

Shen Qingqiu:Hehe, continuing to pretend?

Isn't that your true direct boss? Letting dangerous creatures into the Immortal Alliance Conference was an order he gave you! You continue pretending!

Mo Beijun slightly inclined towards the side, his handsome and masculine face half submerged in darkness. It let people's hearts feel a deep chill. Shang Qinghua stepped forward another step. He had only just raised his hand when a fierce force lifted him into the air, like hitting and breaking a piece of ancient wood. He fainted, unable to stop spewing out blood straight at Shen Qingqiu, who was unable to stop the admiration in his heart:

Brother, you really go all out for the sake of your job!

In his heart, Shen Qingqiu sighed and groaned in sympathy.

All right, he knew it would still be up to him to make an appearance in the end.

He blocked in front of Mo Beijun's path, holding his sword horizontally in front of him. Neither haughty nor humble, he said: "Is Your Excellency [3] a Demon Realm mediator?"

This was a load of rubbish. If you couldn't see that black mass of demonic energy, then you were blind.

A silver-white light flashed. Luo Binghe actually didn't say a word, blocking in front of Shen Qingqiu.

Earlier he had still been angry and argumentative, but now in the presence of a strong enemy, he blocked in front of him without any hesitation. If you were to say that Shen Qingqiu hadn't been moved at all, it would be false.

Only, he felt more and more that what he was going to have to do to Luo Binghe in a while was really inexcusable. He said: "Binghe, stand down."

Luo Binghe didn't reply or respond. He stood off directly with Mo Beijun, actually unmoved by his power and momentum.

Mo Beijun let out an 'yi,' as though he'd discovered some little thing able to stir up his interest.

Shen Qingqiu raised his voice: “Running wild! Since when does a disciple block in front of the master?”

Mo Beijun said: “You are a Cang Qiong Mountain sect disciple?”

Luo Binghe responded: “Cang Qiong Mountain sect’s Qing Jing Peak disciple, Luo Binghe, greeting Your Excellency.”

Mo Beijun suddenly smiled coldly: “Immortal, yet not immortal. Demonic, yet not demonic. Interesting.”

Hearing these words, Shen Qingqiu suddenly had a feeling of seeing the light.

Could it be..... Mo Beijun’s reason in appearing here..... was to take the place of the Black Moon Python Rhinoceros in progressing the plot?

“Immortal, yet not immortal,” should be speaking of that Shang Qinghua lying at the side, who didn’t forget to vomit blood even while playing dead. Clearly, he was an immortal cultivator, but still worked as hard as a bull or horse for the demons [4]. As for “demonic,” there was Luo Binghe present at the scene; who else could it be? After all, Luo Binghe’s pair of fiery and discerning eyes [5] revealed at a glance that his bloodline was different from others.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't confirm it, but he also didn't dare take a risk. With a cold voice he ordered: "Binghe, this master's words, will you listen or not? Right now, I want you to quickly leave and bring all the other sect elders nearby to here. Will you go or not?"

Luo Binghe fixed his gaze on that unknown demon man: "*Shizun*, he won't let any of us leave. We might as well pit our strength together and do battle."

Shen Qingqiu said: "Staying here is only vainly giving up your life."

Luo Binghe said: "Whether it's dying for *Shizun*, or dying with *Shizun*, this disciple is perfectly happy to do."

Is that any way to speak, you bear child!

Mo Beijun disdainfully said: "Do battle with me?" The 'don't know the heavens come first and the earth after' [6] phrase, he was polite enough not to say out loud. In his heart, Shen Qingqiu thought, *thankfully you didn't say it out loud. It won't even take three years for Luo Binghe to smite you until you can't get up. If you don't honestly become his minion, you'll be hitting your own face!*

Mo Beijun spoke again: "That's also good. Then let me see whether your worth is in *jin* or *liang* [7] to be able to do battle with me!"

The sounds of his words had hardly landed when a murderous aura expanded in the air.

Shen Qingqiu's steps moved unpredictably. In a moment, he flashed in front of Luo Binghe, his left hand sheathing the Xiu Ya sword. Regardless of whether it was of any use, he blocked first and asked later. His right hand was like an eagle picking up a small chicken, picking up Luo Binghe and throwing him out, sending him outside the range of Mo Beijun's demonic energy. Turning around, he confronted Mo Beijun's palm strike!

Both people's palms met. In Shen Qingqiu's chest, blood rose and churned just as though he'd been struck by someone there. His entire body's spiritual power seemed to be boiling excitedly without end. Though his cultivation wasn't low, this Demon Lord's inheritance had a cheat-like arrangement: the new Demon Lord could directly inherit the previous Demon Lords' collective powers, accumulated generation by generation. As one could imagine, a Core Formation cultivator was nothing to look at in front of Mo Beijun.

But he must try his best!

Facing this kind of odd-tempered, fiercely ambitious person required fighting to the death without any regard for life. That was the only viable method to survive. According to Shen Qingqiu's decades of experience reading all kinds of novels, this type of person would have at least a smidgen of respect for someone who fought a bloody battle to the end and had such hard bones they wouldn't bend in the slightest. Towards a soft-footed, shrimpy-hearted coward, he would definitely have no mercy!

Luo Binghe had been sent out by Shen Qingqiu for a certain distance. On his own initiative, he drew Zheng Yang from its scabbard. Mo Beijun took it away with his hand, sending the dazzling white sword into the shadows with a flick. The body of the sword was unable to bear the demonic energy pouring in like the sea. In a burst of white light, it broke on the spot into pieces.

Mo Beijun's palms opposed Shen Qingqiu's two palms, overwhelmingly holding the upper hand. When he lost interest, he used his power to open up a space between him and Shen Qingqiu. He said: "Aptitude is poor. Foundation and techniques are inflexible. Scram."

Shen Qingqiu: "....."

If it were the original goods hearing these words, he would definitely vomit three liters of blood.

Shen Qingqiu himself in the Human Realm couldn't be said to be an unmatched genius, but he could at least be said to be a first-rate talent within thousands of *li*. Cang Qiong Mountain sect's foundational techniques couldn't be called inflexible; it was called orthodox! In Mo Beijun's mouth, it became a bunch of rubbish.....

Luo Binghe's sword had broken, but he didn't pay it any mind. But when he saw that Shen Qingqiu had been shaken by the power of the palm strike until his internal organs suffered harm, gritting his teeth and swallowing the blood down into his stomach, his gaze suddenly became gloomy and cold.

The aura around his entire body instantly changed!

Mo Beijun perceived this startling change. His two eyes radiated an excited, bloodthirsty, and cold light: “First I’ll finish off this meddling *shifu* of yours, then fight again!”

Suddenly, a completely black ice sword coalesced in the air. One birthed two, two birthed four, four birthed eight. The sword split into an ice sword array of hundreds, surrounding and shooting from all directions towards Shen Qingqiu!

These ice swords couldn’t be defended by normal methods at all, because they were formed from the purest demonic energy. Shen Qingqiu’s spiritual power was now nearly exhausted. If they were to confront each other, it would be like facing off against starfire and monstrous waves as high as the sky. The result of this kind of disparity went without saying.

Against a sword array pouring down like rain, in that moment, Shen Qingqiu roared like thunder in his heart.

How much hatred was there, that he couldn’t even die a better-looking death and had to be defeated by many hundreds of black swords stuck through his body, until he was pierced into a sieve?! Could you see?!

However, he waited for a long while but didn't feel the pain of swords piercing through his heart.

At this kind of time, if it wasn't Mo Beijun suddenly changing his mind like the wind and withdrawing his sword array, then there was only one person and one possibility that could withstand this wave of murderous attacks.

Shen Qingqiu opened his eyes without any expression on his face.

Sure enough.

In all directions in the air, the dense and countless sword arrays were smashed to pieces. Smashed into pieces very thoroughly, until it was as though they had disappeared without a trace and there was only a sky full of black ice crystals reflecting the moonlight, falling down little by little.

This kind of scene could be described as beautiful.

Sure enough, he stood in the middle of the scene. In Luo Binghe's body and in his eyes, there seemed to be a blizzard gathering around him that could only be described as 'terrifying.'

Introducing Shen Qingqiu this scum villain; whether it was by morality or ability, how could he cause the male protagonist explode forth and block swords for him?!

This was an inhuman battle.

Shen Qingqiu sat next to a large tree, swallowing blood down into his stomach while circulating energy to recover his injuries and watching this mountain-splitting, world-wrecking demon king battle.

The seal on Luo Binghe's demon blood hadn't yet been lifted. Mo Beijun was also only testing him, yet still they fought until it seemed like the heavens and earth were in darkness without the light of the sun or moon. Both people were like stormy seas overflowing with demonic energy, almost like clouds covering the day.

This area was where the Thousand Leaf Cleansing Snow Flower..... this thing is called this name, right?! Right, the essence of the Thousand Leaf Cleansing Flower and its range, demonic creatures completely didn't dare get near. But after getting inundated by the overflowing demonic energy that was like blotting out the sky and covering the earth, the abundant spiritual energy of the Snow Lotus withered and went into necrosis to its roots. Those creatures that lurked and hid in the black shadows all crawled out, greedily picking out the scents that interested them.

Shen Qingqiu saw some Ghost Head Spiders sneakily climbing onto the bodies of a few Cang Qiong sect disciples, their hairy legs about to □□ into their temples. His spiritual power was just about exhausted, so he couldn't use a technique. He could only directly grab their filthy, tangled hair and throw them to the side.

He'd made sure of where he was aiming before throwing. He took care to throw in the direction of this traitor Shang Qinghua's body!

And on that side, Mo Beijun had just about tested and gotten a feel for Luo Binghe's depths, planning on closing in and making a final hit.

His fingers flicked and sent a bright red light into Luo Binghe's forehead.

That light streamed over and made contact with Luo Binghe's forehead, immediately entering his skin, melting into a fiery red seal [8]. Luo Binghe who had gone berserk with the need to kill, didn't know what it was. He only knew that he had a strong headache, almost making him kneel on the ground. His entire body churned with a savage impulse he had no way to expend. Conveniently, with a toss, the demonic energy exploded as though from the barrel of a cannon towards Mo Beijun.

This time the power was extremely strong. Mo Beijun raised his hand and slashed it apart, slightly surprised as he praised: "Not bad."

He also didn't care whether Luo Binghe's consciousness now was clear or not as he speculated to himself: "The Human Realm is not where you should stay. Why do you not return to your origins?"

Now, Shen Qingqiu could finally confirm with one hundred percent certainty.

Yes, Mo Beijun's sudden appearance, was for the purpose of taking the place of the Black Moon Python Rhinoceros!

Only compared to the original, Mo Beijun had done things more thoroughly. He-he-he, he actually directly opened the seal suppressing Luo Binghe's demon blood.

—End Chapter 26—

[1] Mo Beijun (漠北君): Another poor guy who got saddled with a very literal name, courtesy of Airplane Towards the Sky. His name translates directly to his lineage, i.e. *Mo* (Desert) *Bei* (North) *Jun* (Gentleman/Lord/Monarch). So Northern Desert Lord/Monarch is the closest approximation.

[2] Great One (大大): Not sure if this means 'dad' or 'great one.' But meaning is pretty much the same.

[3] "Is this gentleman...": The term used is *gexia* (閣下) which is a rather formal way of speaking. My trusty little dictionary says it translates to 'Your Excellency.'

[4] Worked hard as a bull or horse (當牛做馬): A saying mean to slave away for someone or something. In this context, it's referring to how bulls and horses are farm animals for hard labor.

[5] ...fiery and discerning eyes (如炬的火眼金睛): This was hard to translate. Literally, it's saying that Binghe's got torchlike/fiery eyes. *Huo yan jin jing* (火眼金睛) is more complicated, translating more literally to 'fiery eyes and diamond pupils.' The meaning however, is more like he's got piercing/discerning eyes.

[6] 'Don't know the heavens come first and the earth after' (不知天高地厚): A phrase meaning someone not knowing their place, in my interpretation. My dictionary's giving me 'high as the heavens and deep as the earth' meaning 'complexity of things.'

[7] ...Worth is in *jin* or *liang*...: *Jin* (斤) and *liang* (兩) are units of weight. Mo Beijun is basically saying that he's going to see if Binghe is all talk or has the strength to back it up.

[8] Fiery red seal (紋章): *Wen zhang* translates to 'coat-of-arms,' but I think it sounds better as 'seal.' From my understanding, this 'seal' is both a leftover of the seal locking his blood and an identifier for his demon bloodline. In Chinese culture, seal stamps are important little things that might be only a couple Chinese characters long at most (or a single one) but can be personalized to an individual or to a specific family/clan/what-have-you. You can just imagine a single red Chinese character glowing on his forehead if it helps.

Chapter 27

TN: Unedited. Bold words were in English from the start lol, not Chinese.

Shen Qingqiu was shocked by this straightforward style to the point of being unable to speak. He saw Mo Beijun just turn around and leave!

Finished his mission and left..... this NPC really did things thoroughly and to the point, briskly..... he came from the darkness, he also returned to the darkness. He came mysteriously and he also went mysteriously. However, he was originally a mysterious character. Wherever Luo Binghe needed him, he would without logic appear there, so this kind of arrangement couldn't be considered far-fetched.

What was far-fetched was only what Shen Qingqiu had to face doing next, an extremely important trial.

Experiencing a fierce battle, half-kneeling in the midst of ruins, Luo Binghe's two eyes looked blank but about to tear apart anything at any moment. Pondering for a moment, the inside of his brain now was like a volcano dormant for twelve years suddenly erupting all at once, the blood flowing through his blood vessels like magma. Even thinking about it hurt. Even Shen Qingqiu's head started to ache a little.

The system issued an unprecedentedly sharp tip:

【Warning! Important new mission: Endless Abyss and Endless Hatred, has officially opened! If unable to be completed, the protagonist's coolness level -20,000! 】

Wait a moment.

Yesterday I confirmed with you, and didn't you say it was 10,000?

Only a few days have pa.s.sed, and yet it's multiplied several times?

System, f.u.c.k your mother until she explodes (#`)凸!

Shen Qingqiu's own injuries hadn't recovered. He weakly wobbled over to the side of Luo Binghe, who was still and half-mad. Pa pa pa a few strikes on his back [1], he inserted a few strands of remnant spiritual energy into his body.

Did you think that it was that simple for it to take effect?

Luo Binghe not only hadn't become conscious again, the demonic energy inside his body rebounded out instead, pus.h.i.+ng Shen Qinqiu to spit out a mouthful of the blood he'd repressed for so long on the spot.

At this moment, Luo Binghe finally awakened slightly.

s.h.i.+zun..... was in front of him.....

.....blood..... suffered an injury?

He slowly pulled away from his chaotic state, able to piece together a few blurry words said to him. That familiar face also gradually became clear.

Shen Qingqiu saw that he finally regained clarity. He rubbed away the blood at the corner of his mouth.

Calmly, he said: “Awake?”

Pausing for a moment, he also said: “If awake, we can have a good talk.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Luo Binghe, tell the truth, how long have you been cultivating demonic techniques?”

Once these words were spoken out loud, Luo Binghe felt as though he’d dropped from a high altitude into a bone-chilling pond. Even if he didn’t

want to be conscious, there was no way.

He saw Shen Qingqiu's face cold as ice and frost, his heart dropping straight down.

In the past, Shen Qingqiu would always call him Binghe, and wouldn't directly call his full name.

He whispered: "s.h.i.+zun, this disciple can explain."

Although Luo Binghe was still an adolescent, he was always composed and calm, with an old head on his young shoulders. This time, an expression of alarm and bewilderment could actually be seen on his face as he hurriedly wanted to explain, but didn't know where to start. The dignified male protagonist had fallen low like this. Shen Qingqiu saw it and couldn't stand to watch it any longer, his heart unable to bear it. He rushed ahead and snapped: "Shut your mouth!"

Seeing him speechless, he felt that he hadn't had a good grasp on things and was overly harsh. Luo Binghe had also been scared by him into falling down, just like a child that had been struck, confused and ignorant. His dark black eyes just stared at him like that, his mouth obediently shut.

Shen Qingqiu relentlessly fixed his gaze on him without softening, dully enunciating his words: "From when did you start?"

“.....Two years ago.”

Shen Qingqiu was silent. He wondered if it was necessary to ask this child. He was so honest, he truly must have been scared silly.

But he didn't know that Luo Binghe would automatically interpret his silence as: 'Very good. You treacherous disciple, you actually hid this from me for so long!'

Shen Qingqiu softly said: “Two years. No wonder you advanced by leaps and bounds to this degree. Luo Binghe, Luo Binghe, you are worthy enough. You truly have a natural talent.”

In truth, these words were expressing his heartfelt feelings of admiration. Originally, as the male protagonist, he indeed had a good natural talent..... but if pressed to ask if there were other feelings, there would be envy plus a smidgen of jealousy.

But in Luo Binghe's ears, the meaning was completely different.

In an instant, he directly knelt down in front of Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu in his heart was scared into a CRY. f.u.c.k me, from the first time I met you, you knelt; how come we've come to this day and you're still kneeling to me?! This boy has yellow gold under his knees. Once the

male protagonist kneels, my life is gone; this old lady truly can't afford to endure it! He waved his sleeve and shouted: "Don't kneel to me!"

Luo Binghe was forced by the movement of his sleeve to retreat some steps, stunned as though his six vital organs had trouble working.

Did he not even have the privilege of kneeling to s.h.i.+zun and asking for forgiveness anymore?

He mumbled, "But s.h.i.+zun, you've said before that people can be good or evil, and that demons can also be good or evil."

Have I said it before? Shen Qingqiu seriously thought for a while.

It seemed like he truly did say so before!

If he were to change his mind and refute it right now, would it be a little too shameless?

"You are not an ordinary demon." Shen Qingqiu calmly related: "You are an ancient Heavenly Demon. This family has always killed countless people in the Human Realm. They have caused countless sins, no matter how things are said. They cannot be mentioned in the same breath as other demons."

Personally hearing Shen Qingqiu speak like this broke his hopes. Luo Binghe's eyes turned red.

He tremblingly said: "But you've said it before."

I've said a lot of words before. Back then, I also stated that Shen Qingqiu should be castrated, enough to cover several hundred-story buildings in s.h.i.+ning red words!

.....It wasn't funny at all.

Shen Qingqiu, who was always good at doing tsukkomis and adjusting himself, couldn't relax.

He could only once again brainwash himself with this reason: The pain and suffering Luo Binghe undergoes right now are all necessary experiences for his wish to become a person above all others in the future.

Shen Qingqiu silently lifted his head and held his hand in a sword mnemonic, retrieving the Xiu Ya sword, holding it in his hand.

The hand holding his sword shook, subtle veins appearing with the faint force exerted. Luo Binghe unbelievably said: "s.h.i.+zun, you really want

to kill me?”

Shen Qingqiu’s gaze went straight through his figure: “I don’t want to kill you.”

In Luo Binghe’s memories, he had never before seen Shen Qingqiu use such a cold and resolute expression towards himself. Even it was back when he had first entered Cang Qiong Mountain sect and he wasn’t in s.h.i.+zun’s eyes, his gaze when he looked at him had never been so hollow, as if nothing was there.

He felt that Shen Qingqiu’s towering gaze was no different from when he directed his judgment at those demons in the past, whether they were evil or not. There was not a trace of warmth.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Only, what that person said earlier wasn’t wrong. The Human Realm is not where you should be. You should return to your place of origin.”

He walked forward a step, Luo Binghe retreated a step, until both people pushed onwards before the Endless Abyss.

With a turn of the head, it was possible to see the tumultuous demonic energy roiling in the ravine endlessly, tens of thousands of wails, thousands of pairs of deformed arms stretching out from the crack facing towards the Human Realm, seeking blood and flesh. The places deeper in the depths were concealed by ominous black fog and crimson ghostlight.

Shen Qingqiu pointed the Xiu Ya sword diagonally down at the Abyss and said: “Will you go down yourself, or do you need me to make a move?”

Actually, he selfishly hoped that Luo Binghe would go down himself. Though this treatment was too cruel to him, it would still be better than being hit down by Shen Qingqiu.

But Luo Binghe didn't give up.

There was no way for him to believe that the s.h.i.+zun who treated him so well would really push him down.

Even though the Xiu Ya sword stabbed at his chest, he was still holding onto that last thread of hope.

Shen Qingqiu didn't want to stab him. Truly. He only wanted to wave his sword around and scare him so that Luo Binghe, for the sake of dodging, would retreat a step and naturally fall down. But he hadn't guessed that Luo Binghe would stand there so calmly and receive his sword upfront.

Dead. Originally, he'd only fallen down. Now there was an extra stab added!

On the contrary, Luo Binghe held the sword edge, though without force. He only held it lightly, as though saying that if Shen Qingqiu wanted to use more force, the Xiu Ya sword would be able to continue to pierce until it went through his chest.

Luo Binghe's throat quivered slightly, without saying a word. Though the sword had clearly not yet pierced the heart, Shen Qingqiu felt like he could feel his heartbeat through his sword to his hand, his arm, and to his own heart.

Shen Qingqiu silently withdrew the sword.

Because of this action, Luo Binghe's body shook a little but quickly regained stability. Seeing that Shen Qingqiu hadn't pierced through, his originally dim eyes flashed faintly with light just like how after a fire, there were embers in the ashes.

Yet afterwards, Shen Qingqiu had to use his last blow and extinguish the last hint of light in his eyes.

He knew that Luo Binghe definitely wouldn't counterattack.

He knew even more definitely that he was afraid that he would never forget that desperate gaze of Luo Binghe's as he fell down.

One strike to send him down!

By the time Cang Qiong Mountain sect, Huan Hua Palace, and Tian Yi Overlook cultivators had finished cleaning up the monsters and arrived, the rent s.p.a.ce of the Endless Abyss had already closed.

Shen Qingqiu had properly treated the wounds of all the disciples that had fainted and lay on the ground (aside from the pretending-to-be-unconscious Shang Qinghua). He hadn't taken care of himself, his clothes spotted all over with blood. His face was emotionless, his expression pale. He looked extremely sorry and embarrassed. Yue Qingyuan went forward to take his pulse and his brows wrinkled as he frowned. He let the expert Mu Qingfang come over to take a look. Each sect went to the disordered masses of people on the ground to find their own, then lifting them up and taking them away for further treatment.

Liu Qingge suddenly found there was one less person and asked: "What about that disciple of yours?"

Shen Qingqiu didn't answer, picking up the shattered sword fragments on the ground.

Qing Jing Peak's disciples rushed over. The sharp-eyed Ming Fan saw that sword and supportively said: "s.h.i.+zun, that sword, isn't that....."

At the beginning, he had thought about the Zheng Yang sword on Wan Jian Peak for many years. After it had been pulled out by Luo Binghe, his heart

burned with jealousy and he had spent countless nights tossing and turning. Naturally he wouldn't admit it.

Ning Yingying suddenly started crying with a 'wa' sound: "s.h.i.+zun, you-you, don't you scare me. Isn't this... is this Ah Luo's Zheng Yang?"

Four bursts of whispers: "Zheng Yang sword?" "You're talking about Peak Lord Shen's beloved disciple?" "If the sword is here, then the person is here. This sword is broken, where's the person?" "He couldn't have also..... hai hai." [2]

Someone exclaimed: "If so, then it's really a pity. Young hero Luo all down this path has become the leader on the Immortal Alliance Conference's gold ranking board!" "Heaven envies genius, Heaven envies genius!" [3]

Among these people, there were those who sighed, who were astonished, who were sad, and those who were just joining in.

Ning Yingying started crying on the spot.

Although Ming Fan hated Luo Binghe, he never really wanted him to die. Also, thinking of how s.h.i.+zun came to be so fond of him, and how this stinky fellow had now died without even bones left; s.h.i.+zun must be very sad, his spirits unable to be lifted. The entire Qing Jing Peak was covered by a cloud of gloom. Xian Shu Peak's Qi Qingqi received Liu Mingyan, but they were also moved.

Liu Qingge was bad at words. He patted Shen Qingqiu's shoulder: "Your disciple is gone, but you can still accept another."

Though he knew he had intended to comfort him, Shen Qingqiu still wanted to send him a feeble glare. Anyone who hadn't thrown their own male protagonist and division disciple down into the Endless Abyss were all people who were talking without feeling back pain! [4]

Forget it, forget it. Everything was a forgone conclusion.

Shen Qingqiu said slowly: "Qing Jing Peak's disciple, Luo Binghe, was harmed by demons and died."

—End Chapter 27—

[1] Pa pa pa a few strikes on his back...: Qingqiu's pressing some important acupoints as well as transferring energy via his palms. It's a thing okay, acupoints help with that stuff since they're important spots on meridians. XD

[2] Hai hai...: SFX for coughing.

[3] Heaven envies genius...: Usually a saying used in cultivation novels. It's like the saying that good people die young, only it's 'genius dies young' in this case.

[4] Talking without feeling back pain (站著說話不腰疼): I'm guessing this means that they're all people who are talking/offering condolences despite having not felt the pain themselves.

TN: Misunderstandings galore, am I right? *clutches hankie*

Chapter 28

TN: Unedited & will probably come back and fix the flow of the language more, because it feels clunky. Alternating between calling the ranking board the 'gold ranking board' and 'gold list' because the literal translation 'gold board' is way too unspecific. Also, bold words are how they were in the original raws. LEL, mixing in English.

The Immortal Alliance Conference this time was the most casualty and injury-laden one since its inception.

The new cultivators from all the partic.i.p.ating sects numbered 1,313 people total. Among them, Huan Hua Palace lost 140 people and Tian Yi Overlook lost 90 people. Apart from the people who didn't partic.i.p.ate in the Conference, the diligently-working Zhao Hua Temple that held up the enchantment was spared. Among the three great sects, Cang Qiong Mountain sect suffered the lightest casualties: only 39 people.

As for the miscellaneous other sects, those new cultivators who had mediocre martial powers and techniques almost all made up the majority. They were the true sufferers who felt the losses most deeply.

Originally, being on the gold ranking board was a joyous thing. But another look revealed that nearly a quarter of the names on the gold list had all perished in Jue Di Gorge. In particular, there was the name hanging high above at first place: Cang Qiong Mountain sect, belonging to Qing Jing Peak, Shen Qingqiu's beloved disciple Luo Binghe. His sword was broken and his person perished; how could his heart not ache?

And these things didn't even take into account the cultivators who'd entered after everything occurred, and been lost inside.

After this battle, each sect could be said to have been wounded deeply.

Qing Jing Peak was sent a crimson proclamation list.

On that crimson paper, the first name at the very top was 'Luo Binghe,' golden and eye-catching.

Ming Fan entered, and reported: "s.h.i.+zun, there are three thousand spirit stones that have been delivered up here. How should they be settled?"

Three thousand spirit stones? Where did they come from? Shen Qingqiu blankly said: "For what reason are there suddenly so many spirit stones delivered here?"

Ming Fan said carefully: "s.h.i.+zun, you forgot? During the Immortal Alliance Conference, s.h.i.+zun bet one thousand spirit stones on....."

Shen Qingqiu remembered. It was the bet he placed on Luo Binghe. Luo Binghe really did prove worthy, showing his hand in spades during the demon invasion and directly leaping over the first-place Gongyi Xiao and

second-place Liu Mingyan. On that high ranking board, he'd turned things around and regained his place twice over.

But he didn't know why; at the time he'd clung onto that mentality of 'earning a fortune at a stroke of the pen' [1], but now, he actually was somehow a little overwhelmed.

In the past, these things he all gave to Luo Binghe to handle, things that should go to the warehouse, or the things used to do other things. With things completed like this, there was no need for him to care for them. Now it came to Ming Fan to ask him how these things should be handled.

Shen Qingqiu thought for a while, and said: "First receive them, then."

"....." Ming Fan actually wanted to ask in more detail about how to receive them, but s.h.i.+zun's expression was truly so far from good that he didn't dare ask further. He judged it was a good decision to stuff his heart in storage and quickly retreated.

For several days, the disciples of Qing Jing Peak were all cautious as though avoiding a thunder strike, afraid of touching that most painful thread in s.h.i.+zun's heart. They all thought that after some days had pa.s.sed, there would be a gradual change. Who knew that, after over half a month had pa.s.sed and Shen Qingqiu seemed to be returning to normal, one day near the house for a moment, they would suddenly hear Shen Qingqiu in the bamboo house call Luo Binghe's name twice.

Ning Yingying charged in deng deng deng [2], scaring Shen Qingqiu: “What are you doing, suddenly rus.h.i.+ng in here? A young lady so energetic, what kind of appearance is this?”

Ning Yingying’s eyes were red like a little rabbit: “s.h.i.+zun, you.....what do you want to eat? I’ll make it for you.”

Shen Qingqiu coughed dryly: “No need. Go outside to play.”

Ning Yingying stamped her feet and said: “s.h.i.+zun! Even if you don’t have Ah Luo, you still..... you still have us other disciples. You, like this..... so distracted like you’ve lost your soul, disciples, all us disciples are all about to be worried to death!”

That this phrase ‘distracted like you’ve lost your soul’ would be used on him, Shen Qingqiu hadn’t thought of even in his previous life. Truthfully, at Shen Qingqiu’s cultivation level, whether he ate or not didn’t matter. He only had a craving and suddenly wanted to eat refreshments. Plus, he just happened not to be careful and forgot that Luo Binghe had already been kicked by him into the Endless Abyss. How could this change into ‘distracted like you’ve lost your soul’?!

Shen Qingqiu opened his mouth, at a loss for how to justify himself, when he saw Ning Yingying so anxious that she was almost crying. Hurrying over to console her, she only started to stop when he truthfully vowed that it just happened to be a slip of the mouth earlier.

After he'd coaxed her out, Shen Qingqiu let out a deep breath. Suddenly, he felt that this little girl who was always spoiled and flighty in the novel, dragging behind the hind legs others, actually grew up a lot.

You know, she was part of Luo Binghe's harem. She was supposed to be the one most whiny and willful, yet she actually knew to come and comfort her s.h.i.+fu.

Did this count as his teaching methods bearing results?

In short, this couldn't go on!

Obviously he was the one who dragged up and beat the little white sheep male protagonist, but how come now it was as though the male protagonist had captivated him. It had only been some days since he hadn't seen him and he was displaying a face as though he was a widow whose husband had died, frightening who!

Not correct, pei! Shen Qingqiu gave himself a slap in his heart.

Who had a widow's face! Whose husband died! To say these f.u.c.king words like they could be said carelessly, this was really living backwards, a dog's mouth wouldn't spit out ivory, ought to hit!

However, with Luo Binghe gone, he truly was a little lonely. Especially when he thought of how after five years, at the time of reunion, what was once a warm relationship between master and disciple (.....) would then become gentle speech and laughter hiding murderous intent.

The ruined Zheng Yang was brought back by Shen Qingqiu. He casually dug a hole in the dirt at Qing Jing Peak behind the bamboo house, erected a sign, and created a sword mound [3]. Other people, seeing him in a trance in front of the hollow monument, thought he missed and was thinking about his beloved disciple, the sad sigh an expression of his deep and true feelings for his disciple as he created the grave himself. Only he knew, in the midst of a sad sigh, that the person buried inside the sword mound, that pleasantly warm and bright young boy, would never return again.

Also, what truly transformed him into a wind-worn and disordered fossil was that, after the system calculated the score, it sent a heart-destroying notice.

【Congratulations! You have successfully completed the important mission ‘Beginning of the Legend: Luo Binghe’s Fall and Rebirth.’ Rewarding Protagonist’s Coolness level 10,000. 】

Once Shen Qingqiu heard this, he was very happy: It’s got some mercy, after all.

Then.

【But also due to special circumstances, the new calculated score: Luo Binghe's Heartbreak level. Because the heartbreak value is too high, the protagonist's coolness is cleared to 0. Please continue your efforts! 】

.....Cleared to 0..... Cleared to 0..... Cleared to 0.....

These three big words endlessly revolved in the sea of Shen Qingqiu's mind.....

What kind of freaking thing is this so-called heartbreak level! Didn't I tell you not to calculate strange data figures?! Go scram! Is Luo Binghe being treated as his own son for him to have even an individual heartbreak score!

He worked hard as cattle or a horse for thirty years, but in one night he'd returned to the time before his liberation. Shen Qingqiu's heart felt as stifled as though it'd been suppressed by the Pacific Ocean.

Since he wasn't happy himself, of course he had to find someone else's unhappiness.

As a result, Shen Qingqiu let Ming Fan run an errand obediently, inviting Shang Qinghua to the bamboo house.

Shan Qinghua lay down the snowy porcelain teacup and smiled: “Senior martial brother Shen’s Qing Jing Peak is truly quiet and elegant. Even a tiny teacup is so exquisite. This degree of elegance really makes Qinghua feel ashamed of his inferiority.” [4]

In the past, Qing Jing Peak and An Ding Peak never infringed upon each other, just like how well water and river water didn’t mix. Their relations were neither cold nor warm. Especially since Shen Qingqiu’s attitude was lofty and cold, they never took the initiative to please him. But this time, he’d sent his disciple to An Ding Peak to draw relations closer. Shang Qinghua couldn’t get a feel for his depths, but since no one hit a person who had a smiling face [5], he first delivered up some pleasing words. There was no way that would go wrong.

Shen Qingqiu’s disciples having retreated, he closed the door and sighed: “Junior martial brother, having said it like this, I have to clear up the matter. This Qing Jing Peak’s every grass and every tree, every cup and every plate, everything was personally arranged by that disciple of mine.”

“.....” Shang Qinghua followed him in sighing: “Ai, martial nephew Luo was a person of outstanding ability. It’s truly a pity. Those demons left us with heavy devastation, truly hateful. The entire world commiserates with senior martial brother Shen restraining his grief.”

Shen Qingqiu tranquilly said: “Junior martial brother Shang, if you truly felt it was a pity, then there wouldn’t be such a devastating event.”

Upon hearing this, Shang Qinghua suddenly turned stiff.

After a moment, his smile curved up without a mark or trace of anything wrong: “Senior martial brother Shen, what’s the meaning of these words? Unless you are blaming my An Ding Peak for not being strong enough? If this is the case, then this junior brother is truly guilty this time and apologizes.”

Shen Qingqiu continued to give him a cup of tea and said: “Where is there a lack of strength? Clearly, too much strength was used. Even monsters such as the Ghost Head Spider, nu yuan chan, and Bone Eagle that have never actively come into the Human Realm have been found and used. How can this senior martial brother blame you for not having enough strength?”

Shang Qinghua suddenly stood up, his facial expression complex and turning colors [6]: “Peak Lord Shen, your words cannot be too excessive!”

Shen Qingqiu put his hand on Shang Qinghua’s shoulder and solemnly asked: “Junior martial brother Shang, why are you so overly excited? Let’s sit down and talk. If I call on you, do you dare to promise?”

Shang Qinghua smiled coldly and pulled off his hand: “What is there that I dare not do? I have a clear heart and blameless conscience. How can I be afraid of your forceful and faulty accusation of wrongdoing?”

Shen Qingqiu: “Airplane Towards the Sky?”

Suddenly, there seemed to be G.o.dly lightning striking from the Ninth Heaven [7] directly on top of Shang Qinghua's head, striking him so that he could not say a word.

A moment later, he trembled and whispered: "You..... how do you know this ID?"

Shen Qingqiu saw his reaction and was dumbstruck, also stricken by lightning.

After three seconds, Shen Qingqiu patted his shoulder. His hand pressed down forcefully as he smiled lightly: "It's really you? This old man finished that book of yours, how can I not know that ID of yours? If Mo Beijun hadn't come out and you were careless enough for me to hear you let slip a word, I truly wouldn't know it was you, Great G.o.d!"

At that moment, in the split second when Shang Qinghua met Mo Beijun, he unintentionally spit out "WTF!"

At the time, Shen Qingqiu hadn't heard it very clearly. That was why he didn't pay attention, though later the more he thought about it, the more he had suspicions.

As an evil black hand (of logistics) hidden behind the scenes, Shang Qinghua hadn't let loose the Black Moon Python Rhinoceros that he did in the original work. But if this explanation could be taken as something to

halt the development of the plot, to cut off the root cause of Luo Binghe getting pushed down the Endless Abyss, then it made sense.

As for why he guessed it was Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky.....of course there was still only one reason – – of those he knew, other than the people he knew about that were uninvolved in the scene, there was only the original author. That was why there was only one option for him to guess!

This kind of foolish guessing hitting the mark every time wasn't his fault!

Both people were relatively silent, both sides competing their skill at diplomacy.

A long while later, Shen Qingqiu said: “Unfilled plot holes! Foreshadowing made useless! Lightning striking everywhere! A grade-schooler's writing! If you're going to write a stallion novel, you should properly write a stallion novel. Why mess around with this mental and physical abuse?! [8]”

Shang Qinghua: “.....I am also a victim. I am the author, can't I be considered as the G.o.d who created this world? Even if I transmigrate, I should transmigrate into the protagonist. Who knew that after plugging in a socket and getting electrocuted, the system randomly a.s.signed a role and matched me with a cannon fodder.”

Shen Qingqiu smiled coldly: “It's still better than me. Our ident.i.ties directly revealed to Mo Beijun means he'll kill us off. We can only wish for a happy death. Meanwhile, I was personally cut by Luo Binghe into. A.

Human. Stick.” The emphasis of each word indicated a rather deep resentment.

Shang Qinghua: “How many years have you been transmigrated? Immediately transmigrated and you’re already at a master’s level? I transmigrated over since infancy. Impoverished and struggling to maturity, the period of suffering as an outer disciple; do you have more experience than me?”

The two people compared tragedies without a clear winner. The final judgment was that everyone suffered the same, as little difference as a half jin versus eight liang [9]. Shang Qinghua sighed emotionally: “I actually met a reader. It can also count as fate. What’s your reader’s ID on Zhongdian? We may be old acquaintances.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Peerless Cuc.u.mber.” [Jues.h.i.+ Huanggua] [10]

Shang Qinghua thought for a while: “There’s a little impression. That one time, are you that one who shouted particularly fiercely among those shouting for the villain to be castrated? It was after, cough cough, the original Shen Qingqiu was obscene and unsuccessfully tried to be licentious towards Ning Yingying.”

“.....” Shen Qingqiu: “Past events should be laid to rest.”

With a positive expression, he said: “Our introductions have finished and extraneous words ended. Today, I have sought you for a talk because after

the Immortal Alliance Conference, I suddenly thought of a solution that will solve the common problem we share.”

Shang Qinghua was surprised: “Really?”

Shen Qingqiu shook his fan: “Is joking about this kind of thing very funny? My solution will be able to secure the root of the problem if the secret is not leaked. Even in the most desperate straits, you’ll be able to return.”

Only, there were still two little conditions missing.

Success or failure depended on one action. He would see if Shang Qinghua, this fellow countryman, would be of help.

—End Chapter 28—

[1] Earning a fortune at the stroke of a pen (賺一筆是一筆): So, uh. This had me stumped. Hopefully I got the translation and meaning right.

[2] Deng deng deng: SFX for footsteps.

[3] Sword mound (劍塚): Translated it literally. It’s like a grave you make for someone when you don’t have a body.

[4] Qinghua feel ashamed...: Yup, he refers to himself in the third person. It's a formal way of speaking.

[5] No one hit a person who had a smiling face (伸手不打笑臉人): Pretty self-evident. You're not going to hit someone being nice to you, are you?

[1] His facial expression complex and turning colors: The original sentence was difficult to translate so I just used the general meaning here. Actual words used were 尚清華霍然站起，臉色青紅白黑交錯. Facial color turning green, red, black, and white. XD

[7] G.o.dly lightning striking from the Ninth Heaven: Uh. Translated this a bit literally, but in cases you're confused, just imagine a bolt of lightning striking him in an expression of cartoon shock. Ninth Heaven is considered the highest Heaven.

[8] Why mess around with this mental and physical abuse?!: Referring to Luo Binghe's tragic history. Yanno, the one filled with child abuse and betrayal.

[9] Everyone suffered the same, as little difference as a half jin versus eight liang (半斤八兩): Just what it sounds like. $\frac{1}{2}$ jin of weight = 8 liang of weight. Meaning is that they're two of a kind.

[10] Peerless Cuc.u.mber (絕世黃瓜): Jues.h.i.+ Huangua in pinyin, as I've put above too. It might be just me having a dirty mind, but I feel like this might be slang for 'peerless c.o.c.k.' If someone can confirm or deny this for me, that would be great. XD

Chapter 29

TN: Preliminary edit. Also, the third person in our traveling group talks in such annoyingly formal language, ughhhhh.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Do you remember a kind of rare, appearing only once every thousand years kind of organism you created?”

“.....” Shang Qinghua was speechless: “This range of yours is too broad. Those kinds of things I created number in the eight hundreds if not thousands, okay.”

You know it yourself, too!

Shen Qingqiu sighed, and said five words next to his ear.

Shang Qinghua heard it and was frightened. A moment later, the gaze with which he looked at Shen Qingqiu was a lot more profound.

Shen Qingqiu: “.....Why are you looking at me?”

“Nothing.” Shang Qinghua said: “It’s just that I feel like you’re a loyal reader of mine after all. You were actually able to dig out from a corner somewhere the creations that I forgot and lost a long time ago. I feel a little moved.”

“.....” Shen Qingqiu said: “Tomorrow, come with me for a trip down the mountain to its origin to search for it.”

Shang Qinghua: “Tomorrow? This.....isn’t this a little rushed?” He stammered: “Actually, I.....can’t recall where its designated location is. The entire text spans nearly twenty million words and it’s mentioned only in one instance. Let me think it over slowly, then I’ll tell you.”

Shen Qingqiu said very sincerely: “Then we’ll wait until Luo Binghe kills his way back, receives Mo Beijun as a follower, kills me, and kills you. It won’t be too late for you to remember then.”

Shang Qinghua: “.....Okay. I’ll definitely remember it by tomorrow!”

Anyway, on An Ding Peak, the Peak Lord didn’t necessarily have to care of trivialities like the allocation of rooms or customization of uniforms for the various new disciples.

Shang Qinghua returned and bitterly thought for an entire night, wracking his brains like overturning seas and rivers [1] until finally, in the darkness before dawn, he was illuminated and circled a spot on the map.

Seeing the map, Shen Qingqiu slapped the table and they set off at once down the mountain. Eating and drinking part of the way, playing and having fun part of the way, defending against attacks part of the way, and traveling by carriage part of the way. It should have been very pleasant.

There was one very tiny, unpleasant exception. Shang Qinghua sat in the driver's seat of the carriage and groaned.

“Why is the person paying for all meals and accommodations me? Why is the person sitting here and driving the carriage also me?”

From inside the carriage, Shen Qingqiu said: “Aren't you ashamed of yourself? These funds are given by senior brother Sect Head as a public expense. You only took the money out from the pouch at your waist.”

Thinking of how earnestly Yue Qingyuan looked at him just before they left, Shang Qinghua felt heartsore for himself.

What would you call, “Martial brother Shang, I will have to give Qingqiu to your care during the pleasure trip. He has poison in his body, so please look after him.”

You're even calling him by name so intimately! [2] It was only that the place he cultivated at when he was little was a bit far away, or he'd really become a toy horse! [3]

Compared to these inner disciples who were carefully cultivated by Peak Lords from the start, the outer disciples who climbed up just had no human rights.

That was why there was really no future in logistics.

As the author, he originally wanted to pit his life to mold Shang Qinghua into an extremely base person, but Great G.o.d Airplane Towards the Sky finally realized the pain of his character role.

Shang Qinghua said: “You have hands and feet, why don’t you.....f.u.c.k, f.u.c.k!”

Shen Qingqiu felt the carriage slam forward and Shang Qinghua reining in the horse afterwards. He drew up the curtains and said warily: “What’s the matter?”

The horse carriage was traveling through a thick forest.

In the midst of ancient trees towering toward the sky and numerous falling leaves, sunlight was blocked by the layers upon layers of leaves. Even a spot of light was hard to see.

Shen Qingqiu saw there was nothing going on, but still didn't relax his guard. He said: "What were you screeching about earlier?"

Shang Qinghua was still shocked and his spirits hadn't yet recovered: "Earlier, I saw a woman crawling over on the ground like a snake! If the carriage hadn't stopped, it would have smushed right over!"

It sounded a bit weird. "That truly is worth screeching about."

It was quiet in the forest, and there hadn't yet been anything strange. Shen Qingqiu did not dare take things lightly. He didn't return to sitting in the carriage and instead sat with Shang Qinghua in the driver's seat, one hand held in a sword seal [4] while secretly surveying the surroundings. With his other hand, he reached into the bag of snacks and pulled out a bunch of melon seeds. He shoved them to Shang Qinghua: "Hush, go inside. Gnaw on melon seeds and play." [5]

Shang Qinghua's abilities at ordering people about and doing odd jobs were decent, but when brought to fight against the supernatural were truly not of much use. Knowing his own level was like that, he honestly and obediently took over the melon seeds and started cracking them. With every step the horse carriage advanced, he gnawed on one.

So, after the time it took to burn a stick of incense [6], they finally..... discovered a very serious problem.

Two people looked silently at the familiar melon seed hulls on the ground.

Shang Qinghua said: “Mm, there’s no need to doubt. Cang Qiong Mountain sect’s Qian Cao Peak’s fragrant longgu melon seeds are cooked red on the outside and golden yellow inside. It’s definitely the pile I gnawed on earlier.”

Shen Qingqiu: “I know peddling melon seeds is one of your An Ding Peak’s side businesses. Enough.”

Then, the question. How did they come around to their original position?

Both people looked at each other.

Gui da qiang [7], a traditional and classic scenario, was now placed in front of them.

Shang Qinghua thought of a folk method: “Why don’t we try using a boy’s urine and drenching the horse’s eyes with it?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “.....The good horse also has its self-respect. Why throw excretions into its eyes? Also, on this wild and remote mountain, where do you want me to go to find a boy’s urine?”

Once these words were uttered, he found that Shang Qinghua was regarding him very seriously.

Shen Qingqiu: “What are you looking at me for? I, myself.....Let’s not talk about that for now. Shen Qingqiu’s original character is of a high and lofty outer appearance and inner dissoluteness, going on all day about harmony until his being burns with it but carrying on clandestine affairs with adolescents. Young people can look for chickens, but do you think I’m still a boy?”

Actually, Shang Qinghua’s character seems about right.

Shen Qingqiu’s brows wrinkled for a moment, then he slapped his thigh.

He turned around and burrowed into the carriage. Suddenly, he heard Shang Qinghua who was still outside wail like a ghost and howl like a wolf.

Shen Qingqiu took what he went to find and came out, shouting: “What is it?”

Shang Qinghua was so frightened that he spoke without proper punctuation: “Once you went inside I felt a furry thing on my neck once I raised my head I saw it was a bunch of hair behind the hair was a big white face I didn’t see it clearly f.u.c.k!”

Shen Qingqiu raised his head. Naturally, he didn't see anything. In his heart, he thought it didn't matter what this thing was. It was quite clever and knew to pinch a soft persimmon [8], only daring to play around with the softer-looking Shang Qinghua and didn't dare bait him.

He patted his shoulder again: "No matter how horrifying it is, it's still something you wrote. What are you afraid of!"

Shen Qingqiu opened his palm. What he went to fetch was actually a map.

Shang Qinghua said: "Big bro, I thought you were so powerful that you could find a map to make sense of this Bailu Forest [9], but look clearly. This is a map of the mainland. The entire continent is at the top. Even if Bailu Forest is on there, it would only be about the size of a dot. You won't be able to find the way while holding that."

Shen Qingqiu said: "Look for yourself, this place."

He pointed towards the lower part of the map.

Cang Qiong Mountain sect was towards the east, Tian Yi Overlook close to the center, and towards the south, it was the territory of Huan Hua Palace.

The spot that Bailu Forest occupied was just on the border of the site of Huan Hua Palace.

Shang Qinghua suddenly realized: “Huan Hua Palace also drew Bailu Forest as part of its territory? So what we’ve entered isn’t a gui da qiang, we’ve entered their protective formation?”

Every large sect had their own formation to prevent various unscrupulous people from causing trouble. For instance, Cang Qiong sect’s Ascending Heaven Ladder – if you were a mortal who didn’t know the way, you would climb yourself half to death on the over 13,000 stairs, forever unable to reach the top. You could only wait for the guard disciples to send you down.

Stuck here without anyone to guide them, they could only keep going in circles on the same spot.

Shen Qingqiu knocked on the door: ‘System? You there?’

He paused. There was no reply. He knocked again: “Didn’t you say you would give 24/7 hours of service? If you don’t come out, I’ll give a bad review!”

System: 【 h.e.l.lo, the system has entered hibernation mode. Right now there is only automated service. If you require service, please help yourself. 】

Shen Qingqiu: ‘.....What, hibernating?’

He suddenly remembered that the system truly hadn't given him scores of B points and other kinds of odd values lately.

Automated service: 【 The system's connection to the main energy source 'Luo Binghe' has broken. It is undergoing maintenance and upgrades in the background. Once the connection is reestablished, the system will be activated. I hope you will find using the self-service a pleasant experience. Thank you. 】

You're already making my b.a.l.l.s hurt so much in this version, is the next version going to straightaway crush my b.a.l.l.s – incorrect, the main point is that it seems that Luo Binghe is still the f.u.c.king main source of energy!

Shen Qingqiu was going to pursue with further questions, when he discovered this kind of service only gave these two sentences.

What sort of freaking automated service, isn't this the same as the QQ automated response [10]? Aren't you embarrassed to add the two words 'self-service' in front!

Shen Qingqiu smacked Shang Qinghua: "Look at your family's system, see if it's still online?"

Shang Qinghua blinked, then after a moment: “It says it’s in the middle of maintenance.”

So Luo Binghe actually wasn’t the power source for just one system! Once he dropped offline, all the systems followed him down! What a big kill!

This matter was serious, but also wasn’t that serious, not unless Luo Binghe was unable to cultivate some levels in h.e.l.l and get B points. Thinking about it, it was pretty good. If he couldn’t get points, then they wouldn’t meet. It would be as though there were no taboos and nothing was forbidden!

Shen Qingqiu was consoling himself in this way when suddenly, a bush moved.

Shen Qingqiu hit with a ringing sound, shouting: “Come out!” From his waist, the Xiu Ya sword came out of its scabbard, following the commands of the sword seal formed by Shen Qingqiu’s hand. It revolved and slashed, but that thing was like a fish, hiding in the bush like a slippery loach. Not even one in a hundred stabs met their mark.

Suddenly, in front of Shen Qingqiu’s eyes, an eye-piercingly strong light passed by. That thing shouted shrilly, rapidly slammed back several feet. The bush had already been hacked into pieces here and there and was unable to hide anything. That playful thing had long since fled, and there was no more movement.

Didn't he just make a big move? It appeared that it only reflected a moment's worth of light.

Shang Qinghua took the advantage to come over: "Can it be that it's afraid of light?"

Shen Qingqiu: "f.u.c.k, it truly is a female ghost!"

Both were about to have a discussion when suddenly, the faint sound of footsteps carried over. This person's technique was very good. If it wasn't for Shen Qingqiu's cultivation being not bad, then he almost wouldn't have heard it. From within the depths of the forest, a white-clothed young man was revealed.

The young man originally held his sword out from its scabbard, his entire face vigilant. But after he saw them clearly, his face changed and he hurriedly withdrew his sword.

"This junior was investigating a change in the surroundings and specially rushed here, but didn't know it was Immortal Master Shen and Immortal Master Shang here, who are of the Nascent Soul stage."

Shen Qingqiu saw he was quite handsome, just with eyes that were a little green with inexperience. He politely said: "And this young hero is?"

The young man's feet slipped.

Shang Qinghua spoke next to his ear in a low voice: “.....You really don't remember a person's face or give them face. This is Gongyi Xiao.”

Gongyi Xiao was a little depressed. Even though he was cast down from the gold ranking board by Luo Binghe rising up, he was still second place and had a very good score. Plus, he was previously regarded as the person with the highest chance of getting the honors, and met many high-level leaders in events alongside the old Palace Lord. For Shen Qingqiu not to recognize him was truly unexpected to him.

Shen Qingqiu: “Truly a young hero.”

Gongyi Xiao said: “I don't dare. For these two Peak Lords to come to Huan Hua Palace's borders, why didn't you send notice ahead of time? We've truly delayed you elders and given you difficulties.”

This was really treating Bailu Forest as their territory.

Shen Qingqiu said: “We have no plan to pay respects to Huan Hua Palace; we've only come to deal with a situation in Bailu Forest.”

Blank, Gongyi Xiao was about to ask them what situation it was. But his brain moved quickly and he kept quiet.

Shen Qingqiu had preemptively put forward that he had come to Bailu Forest to deal with matters, yet didn't clearly state his purpose. There was no need for further discussion. No matter how curious, he didn't dare to arbitrarily ask questions to his elders. After all, he was the old Palace Lord's First Disciple for many years and couldn't be that ky [11]. It was too inappropriate for someone of the younger generation to directly ask about an elder's thoughts.

Considering the situation from another perspective: what if they wanted to figure out why there were suddenly two Cang Qiong Mountain sect Peak Lords here and sneaking around their territory borders and what their plans were? What if they felt that 'if it stands in my home's backyard, then of course it belongs to my home' and 'if it's standing on my home's fence, then it's also one of my home's things'? The logic was just that simple.

Shen Qingqiu originally wanted to say a few words and send him away. However, Gongyi Xiao hesitated a moment: "What the elders are going to do, this junior won't guess at but would please ask to be of assistance to them."

Shen Qingqiu's face carried a faint smile and his lips almost didn't move. Lowly, he muttered: "Why don't we bring him along, he can fight enemies."

The one who was unable to fight enemies, Shang Qinghua also muttered: "What if he doesn't let us take away the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed [12], then what do we do?"

Shen Qingqiu was very shameless: “Are you stupid? When the time comes, just take it and go. He can’t use force to take it back. Returning to his old master to report is something to be handled later. At that time, we just need to stand up early, pat our trousers and leave. What are we waiting for them for?”

Shang Qinghua: “What if the two sects antagonize each other?”

“You call this freaking tiny matter antagonizing? What’s more, Sun And Moon Dew Flower Seed is a lifesaver. Your old life or political relations, which do you choose?”

Shang Qinghua unhesitatingly said: “Take it and go!”

Shen Qingqiu raised his head and resolutely said to Gongyi Xiao: “Let’s go!”

As a result, the hard work of driving was handed over to the younger generation.

While controlling the reins, he curiously asked: “Elder Shen, this junior has a problem he can’t solve.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Please speak.”

Gongyi Xiao said: “According to Elder’s cultivation strength, breaking through my sect’s formation wouldn’t even take a moment and also would be achieved without our knowing why. Why did it result in such a large fluctuation of spiritual power?”

Haha. The reason was very simple. It was like memorizing your formulas completely thoroughly, yet not necessarily being able to do the problems.

Shen Qingqiu spoke half truthfully and half falsely: “That fluctuation wasn’t created when the formation was broken. It was generated when confronting a strange monster.”

Gongyi Xiao was stunned for a moment: “A strange monster?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Actually, it’s difficult to tell whether it was a monster, but its appearance seemed evil and unlike a normal human being.”

Gongyi Xiao said: “Near Bailu Forest, there are signs of human smoke within ten li. There has never been anything regarding monster invasions. There aren’t even wild tigers and beasts.”

Shen Qingqiu said solemnly: “Then what can it be? Loose hair spread all over, bone frame all over the place, and even the face swollen like a hungry

corpse.”

Gongyi Xiao sincerely said: “Whatever it is, it would be best if it never appeared again. If it appears, there is no need to bother you elders to move your hands. It is enough for this junior to handle it.”

The respect within these words was not false. Though he didn’t have much of an understanding towards this Elder Xiu Ya Sword, only having seen his face once from far away long ago, he’d participated in the Immortal Alliance Conference and Shen Qingqiu’s own direct disciple had exceeded him and snatched the ranking board’s first place. He’d also saved not a few Huan Hua Palace disciples and so was, truthfully speaking, truly worthy of special respect.

Shen Qingqiu saw that his bearing suited the occasion, not lacking in the humility he should have, and also that his appearance was of the same mold as Luo Binghe’s. It belonged to the kind that was warm and full of feelings, his features and smile handsome, making it hard to cause others to feel displeased.

Of course, he completely didn’t notice that these kinds of feelings could be described with one sentence: Love the house and its crow. [13]

He only lamented: Luo Binghe, ah, Luo Binghe. This day and age, running east and west, it’s all because he’s afraid of Luo Binghe!

—End Chapter 29—

[1] Like overturning seas and rivers: It's a saying meaning 'overwhelming' or 'earth-shattering.' So it's just expressing how hard he's thinking. LOL.

[2] ...calling him by name so intimately: You don't see this in English, but in Chinese, you get suffixes and certain terms of address to denote familiarity with a person. For a sect head, Yue Qingyuan is calling Shen Qingqiu very informally – using only his first name 'Qingqiu.' These two characters (I mean the original Shen Qingqiu and Yue Qingyuan) have a backstory you'll learn about later. *winks*

[3] Toy horse: Literally 'bamboo horse,' but referring to that toy you see a lot that's basically a stick with a horse head in front that you straddle while pretending you're riding a real horse. Shang Qinghua's point (expanded on in the next paragraph or so) is that normal people who enter the sect like him get no respect and are worked to the bone.

[4] One hand held in a sword seal: I think I might have mentioned this before, but it never hurts to recap. When we're talking about 'seals' made with hands, it's referring to a hand pose – kinda like how you see Naruto moving through different hand seals to make his kage-buns.h.i.+n/shadow clone.

[5] "Hush, go inside...": This cracked me up so hard. Hopefully I got this across in English, but the words Shen Qingqiu uses are spot-on for what you'd hear a parent telling their kid. The term guai in Chinese is literally means 'obedient/obey' or 'be obedient.' Methinks Shen Qingqiu's too used to being a s.h.i.+fu talking to a bunch of little bun disciples. No dignity for the author. RIP author's dignity.

[6] Time it took to burn a stick of incense: This is an old way of measuring time. It's a short time period ranging from 5-30 minutes.

[7] Gui da qiang (鬼打牆): Literally 'ghost hitting wall.' It's referring to the phenomenon of walking in circles (TY readerz, you saved my b.u.m on this one)

[8] Pinch a soft persimmon: A saying meaning to bully the weak. Poor author never gets a break. LOL.

[9] Bailu Forest (白露林): Literally bai (white/clear/blank) lu (road) lin (forest).

[10] QQ automated response: QQ is a popular messenger platform in China. It's like WeChat.

[11] KY: Abbreviation of a j.a.panese term 空気が読めない (kuuki ga yomenai), meaning someone who can't read the atmosphere. So in context of this sentence, Shen Qingqiu means that Gongyi Xiao is someone who can read the atmosphere.

[12] Sun And Moon Dew Flower Seed (日月露華芝): I kid you not, this is the name of this freaking plant. Pinyin is ri yue lu hua zhi.

[13] Love the house and its crow (愛屋及烏): A saying equivalent to the English one of ‘love me, love my dog.’ I.e. to love everything about a person, even the bad bits.

So...anyone else think that Shen Qingqiu’s judging everyone by the Luo Binghe™ standard? Poor Gongyi Xiao, s.h.i.+fu only has Binghe in his eyes. XD

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

[Report chapter](#) [Comments](#)

Chapter 30

TN: Need to add page jumps, but posting first so you can read it. :3

Under Gongyi Xiao's guidance, the three of them quickly broke through Huan Hua Palace's formation and neared the position of their target.

In the original work, the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed wasn't described much. There was only a slight reference that it 'appeared in a grotto covered by thick forest greenery.' After all, this thing didn't have much relation with the male protagonist (and his harem members). It was arranged instead as one of the props for Luo Binghe's opponent to use. In order to think of such a point in the story, Shang Qinghua really pitted his life to the utmost.

But it was only because of this that Shen Qinggui dared to act. If it was something related to the main plot, like the strange and miraculous herbs that were given to Luo Binghe to use, then he didn't have the guts to grab it.

Grabbing the things belonging to the male protagonist's enemies should be no problem!

Duking out resources with the male protagonist didn't guarantee an ending as easy as the person who tried luring a chicken only to lose a handful of grain! [1]

Although the location wasn't clear, the good part was that however large Bailu Forest was, there was only the one grotto.

Shen Qingqiu snapped his fingers and a bright yellow flame leapt from his fingertip. With another flick, the flame wafted round behind them, opening up a path ahead into the dark, wet grotto.

At the beginning, the stone path could accommodate three people walking side by side. But towards the end, the stone path was narrow, and required each person to walk sideways to proceed forward. The path was also complicated, winding around just like a beast's intestines.

Light was dim. It was dark even with Shen Qingqiu's flame. He lit a few more, coalescing them into fireballs following after them. Gongyi Xiao was at the rear; Shang Qinghua originally wanted to wait outside the grotto but was kicked inside by Shen Qingqiu. Shen Qingqiu didn't know if he was afraid or what, but when his arm touched Shen Qingqiu's from time to time, he felt raised goosebumps on his skin.

In the end, Shen Qingqiu was unable to tolerate it anymore. Because there was still an outsider around, he spoke in a low voice: "Can you stop clutching at me?"

There was no response. But there wasn't any more touching. Shen Qingqiu continued to feel his way forward, but who knew that Shang Qinghua would kick him in the calf.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help himself and spit out: "f.u.c.k!"

From far behind, Shang Qinghua's voice carried over: "Senior – Martial – Brother – Shen! What – did – you – say?"

His voice reverberated in the twisted rock passageway, stretching from a long way.

As it turned out, Shen Qingqiu unconsciously walked faster and faster while the slow-going Shang Qinghua lagged behind, blocking Gongyi Xiao's way at the rear and keeping him from walking quickly. He had already left both people behind by quite a long distance.

If it wasn't Shang Qinghua, then who kept touching him back then?

Or that was to say, what was the thing that touched him?

Shen Qingqiu suddenly stopped.

Expressionlessly, Shen Qingqiu patted his arms in an attempt to shake off the goosebumps on them.

Several b.a.l.l.s of fire still hovered in the air, burning faintly.

The enemy is in the dark, I am in the light. [2]

Shen Qingqiu flipped over his left hand and pulled out a few spell talismans from his sleeve while his right hand slowly drew the Xiu Ya sword.

The sword light slowly became clear. Whether from the front or the back, it was all shadowy black rock exuding a damp smell.

He suddenly remembered, that moment when his calf was. .h.i.t, it didn't feel like a kick from a foot. Rather, it was more like..... a headb.u.t.t!

Shen Qingqiu silently lowered his head, just happening to illuminate a pale and bloated face on the ground!

Shen Qingqiu's left hand threw spell talismans towards that face and in that moment, the narrow and rocky path was lit with a mess of lightning and fiery light. Originally, he wanted to use his right hand to draw the sword but the s.p.a.ce was too small. He hadn't even drawn it halfway out before his arm and even the hilt struck rock, making a banging sound.

That thing was soft and boneless, gliding on the ground like a giant snake, fast as a flash. Even at such a close distance, he still couldn't land a hit, instead still moving a step slower. Shen Qingqiu pulled at his sword two

times before he managed to draw it and was late by only a step as he watched it turn and swish away. That direction was where Shang Qinghua and Gongyi Xiao were following up. He shouted loudly: “There’s something coming over! Look out!”

Shang Qinghua heard his words and quickly ducked his head: “Young hero, quick! Let’s go back!” As someone who worked in logistics, how could he stand at the forefront and charge forward?

Gongyi Xiao listened to his words but that stone path was so narrow that it was enough to make people bristle in anger. Even sideways, there was only the width of a fist between the body and the walls. He couldn’t pass by at all. Shang Qinghua heard Shen Qingqiu hollering again from over there: “The ground! Look at the ground! It’s crawling on the ground!” Turning around again, he saw a human snake sliding over with a *chilui chilui* sound.

Shang Qinghua made a prompt decision and quickly lay down!

Gongyi Xiao had also never encountered such a strange creature and was shocked for a moment. Upon suddenly seeing Elder Shang being scared enough to fall over, he was given a fright. But after getting over it and recovering, he said: “Excuse me!” and passed over him with a leap.....

No matter how ugly the process, logistics and the vanguard finally exchanged positions.....

Shen Qingqiu shouted again: “Don’t pull out your sword.....” He hadn’t finished saying the word ‘sword’ before Gongyi Xiao hastily pulled out his sword and made the same mistake. The sword was drawn halfway and the hilt struck the rock wall.

Shen Qingqiu rushed over with his sword, shouting in his heart: ‘Ai, how stupid!’

Gongyi Xiao was very wronged.

Actually, Shen Qingqiu was very clear that it could only be said that he reacted too quickly. He hadn’t finished hearing his words before acting; even if it were someone else, there would be the same result. However, he forgot because when he sometimes joined hands with Luo Binghe and acted in the past, the words didn’t even need to leave his mouth for Luo Binghe to tacitly understand and respond perfectly. Comparing these two like this, Shen Qingqiu thought longingly once again of that worriless disciple.

This stone path was full of twists and turns, both damp and dark. It suited the movements of that thing. By the time Shen Qingqiu held another handful of spell talismans, it had already crawled away without a trace.

Gongyi Xiao was incredulous and said: “Elder Shen, was that thing just now the demonic creature you encountered before in Bailu Forest?”

Shen Qingqiu nodded: “It is. I don’t know how this thing slipped away with both sides pincering it in.”

Shang Qinghua's face didn't change expression as he climbed up from the ground and patted at the gray dirt on his clothes. He said: "It climbed over me."

Gongyi Xiao: "....."

Shen Qingqiu: ".....Let's go. This time, follow closely."

There was no need for him to say. This time, even if he died, Shang Qinghua wasn't willing for there to be as much as two chi [3] of distance between them!

Wandering until their heads almost went dizzy, three people finally exited the stone passage. In the depths of the grotto, the path suddenly opened up in front of them.

At the time, Shen Qingqiu always couldn't figure out how something like the 'Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed' could grow in a place like the deep depths of this grotto with neither sunlight nor moonlight. Upon first hearing the name, you could immediately tell that it was something formed from the evolution of the essential spiritual energy formed by heaven and earth as well as sunlight and moonlight. Finally, he understood why.

It turned out that at the very top of the grotto, there was a big opening revealing the sky. Both sunlight and moonlight passed directly through this

opening down below, just like a spotlight shining onto the heart of the lake in the middle of the cave. And the land at that point was naturally where the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed grew.

That small piece of land was surrounded by a glittering, resplendent, and jade-like lake.

Shang Qinghua let out a “Wu,” sound and said decisively: “Lushui Lake [4]. That’s right.”

Only he could make a final judgment on the settings he made.

Even if it was the color of grass, as the writer, he wouldn’t make a mistake.

Having received his judgement, only now could Shen Qingqiu release his breath in relief. It seemed like they found the right place.

This wasn’t any ordinary lake water. It was water without a tributary made from morning dew.

Water without a tributary + morning dew that was full of spiritual energy nourished the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed. And after the flesh matured, it needed to be immersed in the water and the soil even more in

order to nourish the morning dew in an endless cycle so that the spiritual energy was boundless and inexhaustible.

Gongyi Xiao sighed and finally realized the reason why Cang Qiong Sect sent these two Peak Lords on a trip.

But he didn't understand what the significance of this thing was to them, so he instead felt that it was strange. Cang Qiong Mountain Sect was one of the best sects and collected many unusual and miraculous herbs every day. There would only be excess and no dearth of them. The Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed was a seldom seen and exquisite herb, but it didn't deserve the high regard of needing two Peak Lords to personally pick it themselves.

In Shen Qingqiu's eyes, there was now only that fleshy white bud on the piece of land in the middle of the lake.

This was his hope for survival!

With a sweep of the lower hem of his robes, he went into the lake. The water in the Lushui Lake was good stuff; being in it was even healthier!

After walking some tens of steps, he submersed in the water until it was over his waist. It was neither cold nor warm. It soaked into his skin as though it could directly moisten his heart, making him happy. Shen Qingqiu looked at the tens of small and tender white beans on the little piece of land in front of him. Taking a deep breath, Shen Qingqiu reached out. Carefully, he pulled up each bean with a bit of soil, putting it directly into his sleeves.

Infinite spatial storage sleeve [5], a must-have product for a cultivator away from home. Courtesy of Cang Qiong Mountain sect head Yue Qingyuan. I won't tell anyone!

Although these Dew Seeds were still small, they would only make the cut if they grew more sprouts. If he waited until he found a place where spiritual power and fengshui combined and planted it there, growing it according to plan, then they were life-saving straws!

Shen Qingqiu was really afraid of touching and breaking these little things that looked like they would melt if he put them in his mouth.

He hesitated a moment when he was about to pull them out. After all, these Dew Seeds grew here originally and also counted as a vital organ in the ecosystem. If they were all pulled out, it didn't seem very moral. His thoughts entangled, he thought again. He didn't even know if this method would work or not; what if it was handled incorrectly and ruined? A few more sprouts would remedy the situation. He could only make sure that nothing would go wrong and take them. Preserving his life came first.

The last Dew Seed was held in his hands and hadn't yet been tossed into his sleeve when Shen Qingqiu suddenly heard the sound of a sword drawn behind him.

When he turned his head around to look, Gongyi Xiao held a sword in hand. With Shang Qinghua, they came closer and focused their stares on him.

Shen Qingqiu held his breath. Suddenly, a long and large thing like a giant fish came from behind, heading directly towards Shen Qingqiu. A pale, stiff face flew over from the darkness. It really was that thing that had always been following them along the road!

At the same time, Gongyi Xiao's hand formed a sword seal, his long sword flying towards that thing as swift as the wind and as quick as lightning. But it was sly and agile. Once its attempt to attack Shen Qingqiu missed, it submersed into the lake and didn't come up. It stirred up the sand and dirt that had settled for many years at the bottom of the lake, turning it into a cloudy mess. Gongyi Xiao retrieved his immortal sword and said: "Elder Shen, quickly come up!"

Shen Qingqiu actually smiled: "No need to panic. I'm going to catch some fish to play with."

He stood still in place and didn't move, slowly pulling out a paper spell talisman.

Gongyi Xiao said: "Confronting this thing with a single spell talisman doesn't seem....."

That word 'enough' hadn't left his mouth before he saw Shen Qingqiu's fingers pinch and that one spell talisman become a stack of them.

Gongyi Xiao: “.....”

Shen Qingqiu held that stack of spell talismans and hit them into the water with one blow. One, two, three.

At his count, there was a tremendous noise!

The surface of the lake blasted open waves that were over twelve zhang [6] high!

The snake man that was originally hiding at the bottom of the lake had also been blasted flying out the water, thrown high up and falling heavily on the ground beside Shang Qinghua’s feet.

Shen Qingqiu came dripping onto the sh.o.r.e. The dew water bath was so refres.h.i.+ng that he didn’t hurry himself. He crossed his arms and said: “Take a look. What is this plaything?”

Gongyi Xiao turned over that thing.

Once it was turned over, all three people were stunned.

After a long while, Shen Qingqiu finally turned his head around and asked Shang Qinghua: “What is this?”

Shang Qinghua squeezed out three words: “.....I don’t know!”

He really didn’t know. According to their observations, this organism was covered with a head of dirty hair, the entire body soft-boned, moreover its skin coar.s.e and spread over with scales and in patches. There wasn’t a single even spot, like its scales were sc.r.a.ped off uncleanly all over.

Although earlier Shen Qingqiu thought it was a female ghost, after taking a closer look at that face, it could be seen that it was a man’s face even though it was swollen.

Shang Qinghua waved his hand and said: “I definitely haven’t.....” written about this kind of creature.

Shen Qingqiu said: “.....I believe you.”

If the original work described this kind of creature using over 50 words, there was no reason why he wouldn’t remember!

Gongyi Xiao couldn’t understand what his elders were saying, so he spoke his own guess: “Take a look, Elders. This creature; maybe it was born like this.”

Shen Qingqiu thought it was reasonable. Looking at its grotesque shape that was completely unlike a normal creature, it looked more like it was deformed or a hybrid species.

He muttered: “Heavenly punishment, a curse, or a failure in cultivation.”
[7]

The three possibilities listed above were most likely to result in this kind of strange creature.

It kept staring at Shen Qingqiu’s sleeve. Even though this thing’s appearance was hideous and frightful, making people want to vomit, the eyes in that head of messy hair were very clear, just like the Lushui Lake.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly saw the light and said: “No wonder it wanted to attack us.”

The other two people looked blank. Shen Qingqiu said: “This thing was born from the dew water of Lushui Lake. You take a look.” He pointed: “The brightness of its eyes is definitely something that developed from drinking the dew water. On its scales, some red and green moss is also growing. It’s identical to what’s growing on the rocky walls. It must have lurked in this grotto for a very long time.”

This made sense. If it let Shen Qingqiu and his group pull up all of the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seeds, it wouldn't only destroy the cycle of spiritual energy. Over time, Lushui Lake would also be unable to function and become a pool of waste water, completely exhausted. That was why that thing would follow them all the way and wait for an opportunity to attack.

In his hand, he held that tender and beautiful Dew Seed to prove his point, swinging it about. Sure enough, that creature's eyes brightened. It anxiously raised its head and revealed a mouthful of white teeth.

Gongyi Xiao shouted: "Looking for death!" His hand turned over and held his sword hilt, his movement made with a hint of killing intent.

That snake man struggled to crawl on the ground. Shen Qingqiu looked at it and thought it was a bit pitiful. He turned around and said: "Wait."

Gongyi Xiao stopped, but didn't understand: "Elder?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "The fact that the local inhabitants around Bailu Forest have been safe and sound for so many years indicates that.....this snake man has never done any evil things. There's no need to exterminate it."

These words were not false. If this thing had truly killed people before, Huan Hua Palace would have already discovered it and eradicated it to the roots. Because it had never done evil things, it hadn't died. Speaking of this matter, it went every day into this grotto to take dew water, so Shen Qingqiu and his group entering had disturbed its daily routine.

Since he spoke up for it, Gongyi Xiao thought for a bit and withdrew his sword into its scabbard. Only, Shen Qingqiu and those Zhao Hua Temple masters [8] belonged to the compassionate side. That being known, Shen Qingqiu always had a soft spot for these unusual animals. He'd long since said that was always interested in these mysterious creatures, far more than those sisters who were like a hundred flowers contending in beauty. One could well imagine that he used this kind of loving (.....) vision, to look upon the soft crawling creature on the ground.

But no one noticed that the creature on the ground was currently trembling slightly.

The malformed body secretly pressed down on a thin Dew Seed sprout. That pair of bright eyes incompatible to its body contained a turbulent ecstasy.

After leaving the cave, Gongyi Xiao actively sat on the driver's seat of the carriage.

He asked: "Elder Shen, this junior doesn't understand something. Why did that.....snake man never take those Dew Seeds, and only take the dew water from the lake?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "When you just entered, did you see the ray of light shining down from the ceiling of the cave? When we were in Bailu Forest before, we were entangled with the creature all along the road. One of those times, it was burned by the light reflected off the sword and only

retreated because of that. My guess is, that thing cannot meet light, especially sunlight and moonlight. That's why it can only move freely in the shadows of the forest and the grotto. The Dew Seed is covered by sunlight or moonlight all day, so of course it cannot come close."

Compared to a theoretical education like Baiken [9], Huan Hua Palace focused more on actual combat. Gongyi Xiao didn't understand much but complimented him: "So it's like that. Elder Shen is not only compassionate, but also possesses wide learning and a powerful memory. This junior still has a lot to learn."

Shen Qingqiu laughed a few times to express his modesty. It was clear that the person who spoke hadn't said anything very constructive, but Gongyi Xiao strangely still had to express his personal admiration, serving as a foil to the other's high intelligence. This kind of scene really made people's balls hurt. Even if he wanted to be conceited, he couldn't bring himself to feel conceited. There was only a deep sense of powerlessness. =.=

After exiting Bailu Forest, Gongyi Xiao still wanted them to stay. He invited them to rest at Huan Hua Palace and greet the old sect head. Shen Qingqiu returned with: "Things having finished with your assistance, it's not good to disturb you further."

"Are you joking? What are we going up to Huan Hua Palace for? To show you the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed we just got in our hands? What if your higher-ups couldn't let it go and just had to argue about its ownership rights?"

Shen Qingqiu smiled and said: “Although this trip was made in a hurry, young gentleman Gongyi must visit our Cang Qiong Mountain in the future. Qing Jing Peak will be waiting.”

Shang Qinghua said: “Right. An Ding Peak doesn’t have anything fun. If you go to Qing Jing Peak, your Elder Shen will definitely take good care of you.”

Gongyi Xiao was overjoyed at this unexpected gain. He knew of Qing Jing Peak’s reputation, which was the same as its name. It was peaceful and quiet and normally didn’t like outside guests to intrude. With a face wreathed in smiles, he said: “Elder Shen, I will remember these words. I’ll be bothering you in the future.”

When he said these words, the arch of his eyebrows and his smile was so like Luo Binghe’s that Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help being stunned for a moment. He slowly said: “That’s only natural.”

After separating from Gongyi Xiao, Shang Qinghua sighed at the side: “Similar, he’s really a little similar.”

Shen Qingqiu kicked him neither lightly nor heavily: “Woolgathering?”

Shang Qinghua said: “Your own heart is clear who I’m talking about. I’ve observed you for a long time. There are some words that if I suppress in my heart and don’t say, I’ll feel uncomfortable. Did you really care for Luo Binghe as that obedient and treasured darling disciple of your heart?”

Shen Qingqiu rolled his eyes and pulled his ears.

Shang Qinghua really didn't know whether he wanted to live or die. He continued to analyze reasonably: "Hearing your Qing Jing Peak disciples speak, Senior Brother Shen spent every day like he'd lost his soul and it'd ascended to the heavens those days after returning from the Immortal Alliance Conference. Several times you'd call out Luo Binghe's name. You even uttered sighs while arranging his sword grave. You.....do you really have a bit of a tendency towards being a trembling M?"

This is the second time there are these words 'lost his soul'! Are these words going to become a black stain in this old man's life?!

Every one of my Qing Jing Peak disciples walk the path of having their bellies stuffed with poetry and books. When did they become such lovers of gossip, how could these words be said carelessly everywhere, completely losing your s.h.i.+zun's image?!

Shen Qingqiu suddenly felt a cold chill on his back.

Great G.o.d Airplane Towards the Sky chasing him with these questions was just like high schoolers from the same dormitory gossiping nonsensically: 'Say! Do you have a secret crush on x.x.x!' 'Don't twist words~ Don't be embarrassed O(∩_∩)O, haha~' It was that kind of pink scene..... he was going to go insane!

Sticking this on two big men was truly very disgusting!

Shang Qinghua was very innocent. Actually, he was being very serious and straightforward in expressing his doubts. It was Shen Qingqiu's own heart that was having too many strange thoughts.

Shen Qingqiu interrupted impatiently: "Why aren't you moving?"

Shang Qinghua was stunned: "What?"

Shen Qingqiu looked at him and stuffed the horse whip in his hands: "Gongyi Xiao has left, there must be a carriage driver."

".....Why haven't you driven even once?"

"You want to try a heavily-poisoned patient?"

What d.a.m.n patient!

Who just played around at taking care of that creature and bombed it with spell talismans so happily!

Have some face!

Shen Qingqiu lay inside the carriage and settled his sleeves.

These things were his last resort for preserving his life. Calculating the time, there was still five years before Luo Binghe came out from the Endless Abyss back into the Human Realm, enough to complete a masterpiece.

His only miscalculation was only for one thing.

That was that Luo Binghe would come back so quickly.

—End Chapter 30—

TN: GASP... Did Shen Qingqiu and Luo Binghe have the legendary unspoken communication ability that only the closest married couples have?

is sliced by Xiu Ya sword

Spell Talisman 101: Can also be translated as ‘charm,’ but I think ‘spell talisman’ sounds nicer (符咒). These things are slips of paper that are

drawn with special ink and infused with spiritual power. They're basically portable, instacast spells that can be thrown. The j.a.panese equivalent would be ofuda.

[1] The person who tried luring a chicken only to lose a handful of grain (偷雞不成蝕把米): This is a saying in Chinese meaning someone who tries to gain an advantage but only ends up worse off than before (failing to lure the chicken and losing the grain as well). So Shen Qingqiu is saying that duking it out with the protagonist will end with a result worse than simply 'coming off worse' – likely indicating someone's old life is going to be thrown out the window. XD

[2] The enemy is in the dark, I am in the light (敵暗，我明): This is a saying meaning that you don't know the enemy's position but the enemy knows where you are/what your circumstances are.

[3] Two chi: Chi (尺) is a unit of measurement and is the Chinese version of the foot, approximately 33 cm.

[4] Lushui Lake: Lushui (露水) means 'dew. So that's where the 'Dew' from Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed comes from.

[5] Infinite spatial storage sleeve (無限空間乾坤袖): You'll see 'spatial storage' items a lot in 'high fantasy' cultivation novels. You can think of these as portable storage items – lower-ranked items tend to have a limit on how much you can store within them. An 'infinite' storage item is rarer. The funniest thing is the appearance of the storage item (this is a cultivation

novel), it's the fact that his storage s.p.a.ce is his sleeve..... Typical storage items range from rings to pouches and other accessories, but I don't think I've ever seen a sleeve show up, LOL. (though in ancient China, sleeves were like extra pockets)

[6] Twelve zhang: Zhang (丈) is a unit of measurement.

[7] Heavenly punishment, a curse, or a failure in cultivation: These three things feature in cultivation novels a lot, especially the first and the last of the three. Heavenly punishment is exactly as it sounds (it has nothing to do with religion). The heavens are a.s.sociated with fate/destiny or the natural way of the world in Chinese culture. Cultivation is something that's regarded as going 'against' the world, so that incurs heavenly punishment. Someone who doesn't make it through all right ends up badly off (usually dead), which is why Shen Qingqiu speculates that the creature may have had this happen to him. A curse is... a curse. Very simple. Failure in cultivation is like qi deviation (frequently a.s.sociated with it, in fact). Just know that it can also end very badly, just like a run-in with heavenly punishment.

[8] Zhao Hua Temple masters: It's not very noticeable in English, but the Chinese term used indicates that Zhao Hua Temple consists of monks. In other words, Buddhist monks. Can't escape from them in cultivation novels. LOL

[9] Baike: In case you forgot, this is referring to Baike Baidu, which is the Chinese equivalent of Wikipedia. XD

Chapter 31: Countdown to the Protagonist's Return (Revised)

TN: Translated by readerz, shower her with love~

(ノ◡▽◡)/**°*。★♥♡♥♡♥

In the blink of an eye, three years pa.s.sed.

During those three years, except for the times when Liu Qingge helped him clear his meridians of the toxin or Mu Qingfang made medicine for him, Shen Qingqiu a.s.signed some disciples to supervise the training on Qing Jing Peak and spent most of his time roaming around outside.

In his last life he spent most of his time at home playing video games and reading novels. When he was reborn in this place, all of the these computer-related entertainments were gone. Thus, his interest in tourism was ignited. His days were carefree until he suddenly received a message talisman from Yue Qingyuan, summoning him back to Cang Qiong Mountain.

He had been gone such a long time that even his shadow couldn't be seen, so this time when he returned to the sect, the Qing Jing Peak disciples gathered in front of the sect to welcome their master back. Seeing Shen Qingqiu slowly climbing up, they all cheered and rushed to surround him.

Head disciple Ming Fan was already a tall young man. Although he wasn't handsome, at least he didn't look like a sharp-faced monkey with a petty cannon fodder character's face. Ning Yingying had grown up to become a lovely young maiden with a graceful figure. She had also picked up her own immortal sword from Peak. When she saw Shen Qingqiu, she rushed over and hugged his arm as they walked up.

Although the sweet little girl liked to put her arms around him, Shen Qingqiu couldn't bear it since Ning Yingying's body had developed nicely. She was no longer a cute little loli. Her chest occasionally touched him by accident, making Shen Qingqiu's expressionless face break out in a cold sweat.

This is Luo Binghe's wife! I wouldn't dare!

Ning Yingying complained like a spoiled child: "s.h.i.+zun, you are always away from Qing Jing Peak, your disciples all miss you so much."

Shen Qingqiu said indulgently: "Your teacher also missed ... you."

Wait, this is not right. You should be thinking of Luo Binghe, not missing a sc.u.m villain!

Were the original Shen Qingqiu and Ning Yingying this close? It seemed like Ning Yingying grew up to be a sensible girl. The original Shen Qingqiu probably drooled over her in a one-sided way.

And you, as one of Luo Binghe's wives, shouldn't you be broken-hearted, suffering five years of sleepless nights, growing thin from barely being able to choke down food in your grief?

How come, contrary to expectations, you've actually grown plump and healthy?

The disciples swarmed around Shen Qingqiu as he made his way to Qiong Ding Peak. There, Yue Qingyuan was waiting outside the hall to welcome him back. The two fellow apprentices entered the hall hand in hand.

Inside the Qiong Ding hall, the Peak Lords had already taken their seats while behind them were one or two of their most direct disciples .

Liu Qingge was the only exception.

That was because traditionally, training at Bai Zhan Peak was like setting a herd of sheep loose in a pasture, free and unrestrained. Every one of them were allowed to practice their skills as they pleased. Apart from occasionally beating up a few disciples, the Peak Lord didn't teach anything until a disciple could beat him. Then the position of Peak Lord could be handed over to that disciple. So of course he had no direct disciples.

Shen Qingqiu greeted the others then sat down on the Qing Jing Peak's seat, with Ming Fan and Ning Yingying standing behind him. Opposite him were

Qi Qingqi and Liu Mingyan of Xian Shu Peak.

He didn't know how, but a thought popped up in Shen Qingqiu's brain: If Luo Binghe were still here, he would be the only one standing behind my chair.

Stop!

please don't keep popping out to remind me of your existence, protagonist.
[waves hand bye-bye]

Yue Qingyuan was the first to speak: "You were all summoned to return to the sect because of an urgent problem. Do any of you know Jinlan City?"

Shang Qinghua said: "Jinlan City? I've heard of it. That's a city in the Central Plains that's located at the place where two major rivers, the Luo and Heng rivers, meet. There's a lot of trade going on there and the city is quite prosperous."

Yue Qingyuan nodded: "Yes. People to trade at Jinlan City. It's always been a center of trade but two months ago, Jinlan City closed its gates."

After a pause, he added: "Not only are the city gates closed, no one is allowed to go in or out and messages cannot be delivered either."

A well-established trading center suddenly closed itself off from the outside. There was definitely something very wrong.

Shen Qingqiu lifted his teacup and blew on the surface of the tea, saying: “Jinlan City is closest to Zhao Hua Temple. They have a lot of dealings with each other. If something happened, the masters of the temple should be aware of any anomalies.”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Yes, twenty days ago, a Jinlan city merchant escaped from the city by waterway and went to Zhao Hua Temple for help.”

He used the word “escape” and it seemed that the situation was very serious. Everyone listened solemnly.

Yue Qingyuan continued: “That merchant was owner of Jinlan city’s top weapon shop. Every year he went to Zhao Hua Temple to light candles and burn incense so many of the monks knew him. When he arrived at Zhao Hua Temple he was all wrapped up in black cloth, with only half of his face exposed. He collapsed at the steps of the temple while he kept repeating that there was a terrible plague in the city. The monks immediately carried him to the hall and reported to the elders. However, by the time the elders came out, it was too late.

Dead?

Yue Qingyuan said slowly: “That merchant had turned into a skeleton.”

Shen Qingqiu was terrified.

He just said that the man was tired when he arrived at the temple doorway, how did he suddenly turn into a skeleton?

Shen Qingqiu said: “Elder martial brother just said the merchant’s body was wrapped in black cloth? From head to toe?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Exactly. During that time, the monks tried to help him remove the black cloth but he cried out in pain so they dared not pull it off by force.”

Listening to these words, it might have been like tearing his skin off.

Yue Qingyuan went on: “The abbot of Zhao Hua Temple was deeply disturbed. After some discussion, that very night they sent masters Wu Chen, Wu Huan, and Wu Nian to investigate. So far none of them have returned.”

Compared to Shen Qingqiu’s generation, the “Wu” generation were of higher seniority, therefore their cultivation shouldn’t be worse than his.

Shen Qingqiu said in a slightly surprised way: “No one came back?”

Yue Qingyuan a nod solemnly and said: “Huan Hua Palace and Tian Yi also sent more than 10 disciples. None of them returned either.”

Three of the four great sects had all been dragged down into this mess.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized why they had been summoned today.

Sure enough, Yue Qingyuan said: “Our friends sent a message to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect asking for our help. We must certainly send help. This matter is urgent and I fear that some ‘others’ who like to stir up trouble might be behind this. Some of us have to go and some of us to stay behind.”

The “others,” needless to say, referred to the demons. Liu Qingge was the first to speak: “Bai Zhan Peak’s sense of honor will not allow me to shirk this duty. I would like to escort junior martial brother Mu.”

Since the city was suffering from a plague, then the Lord of Qian Cao Peak, Mu Qingfang must be sent to help.

Shen Qingqiu saw that of the two people who wanted to go, one was the person responsible for making his medicine while the other was the one who assisted him in clearing his meridians of the poison. They didn’t have the protagonist’s halo, so anything could happen to them. This was too

worrying. What if they should meet with some misfortune? He said: ” would like to go with them.”

Yue Qingyuan hesitated: “I intended to ask you to stay behind to protect the sect.”

Shen Qingqiu still didn’t know how to deal with him. All he could do was : “Elder brother Sect Master, why do you think I’m so fragile? Even though I am not so talented, if it really is the demons, I know a little about them that will be of help.”

A walking demon encyclopedia – whether it was the original Shen Qingqiu or him, both of them could definitely be given this t.i.tle. For hundreds of years, Qing Jing Peak had acc.u.mulated this knowledge. If the Peak Lord didn’t read all those books then he would be buried behind the back of the bamboo house...Yue Qingyuan considered this and in the end he let him go with Liu Qingge and Mu Qingfang since it would be easy for them to . Also, the Lord of Bai Zhan Peak can protect them. It was decided that they would be divided into three groups. Liu, Mu, and Shen would go first to check out what was happening in the city. The second group would stay outside the city and make a move whenever they were needed. The third group would stay behind to protect the Cang Qiong Mountain sect.

The situation was urgent, which meant they couldn’t spare the time to use boats, carriages, and other vehicles. Shen Qingqiu wasn’t used to using just his flying sword to travel and he was a little bit scared of heights, too, but he knew that this time he must match his companions’ speed. Three people set off on their flying swords. After half a day, Shen Qingqiu, with his robes fluttering in the wind, looked down from the clouds and shouted to his

fellow sect brothers: “Below us is the place where the Luo and Heng rivers meet!”

From high above, they looked at the two rivers that crossed each other. They looked like two silvery, long, and slender ribbons glittering in the sunlight, as if they were silver scales dancing chaotically.

One of those was the river where Luo Binghe was found floating on an ice floe right after he was born. His surname was based on that river.

The trio chose an open, flat hill as a landing point. From there they could see the upturned eaves of the houses in Jinlan City as well as its closed gates and bridges.

Shen Qingqiu lowered the hand that he had been using to shade his eyes from the sunlight: “Why don’t we fly straight into the city?”

Mu Qingfang explained: “Zhao Hua Temple was asked by Jinlan City to give create a giant formation in the sky. Flying swords or anything with spiritual power that flies over it will be forced to .”

As Shen Qingqiu saw at the Immortal Sword Congress, Zhao Hua Temple was very skilled at formations. If they were ranked in second place regarding formations, then no one would dare to aim for first place. Shen Qingqiu asked no more questions. He thought that if this was not a normal plague, but something spread by someone with ulterior motives who wanted to create mischief, then that person must have openly walked into the city

through one of its gates. Since that person couldn't fly or enter through a gate, there must be another way inside. Just as he had expected, Mu Qingfang, who had been given detailed instructions by Yue Qingyuan, led the other two people into a forest. In the shade of the trees, there came the gurgling sound of water.

The sound of water was coming from a subterranean cave. Mu Qingfang urged his two companions over, saying: "There is an underground river here that leads to the city."

Shen Qingqiu understood what he was saying: "That weapons merchant escaped from here?"

Mu Qingfang nodded: "Some merchants who make covert business transactions use this place to meet or transport goods. Not many people know this place, but the weapons merchant was good friends with some of the Zhao Hua Temple monks and confided the secret to them."

The entrance of the cave was full of vines that were chest high. The three Peak Lords had to bend down to go in. After they had walked for a while, Shen Qingqiu's waist ached but there was finally some s.p.a.ce over his head. The gurgling sound of water had turned into the sound of rus.h.i.+ng water. Beside the river bed floated a few tattered, solitary s.h.i.+ps.

Shen Qingqiu picked a boat that was a little bit better than the others. At least it didn't leak. With a flick of his fingertips, he lighted the lamp that was hanging from the bow.

There was only one paddle. Shen Qingqiu gesture and said to Liu Qingge: “We will be moving against the current. The strongest of us will have to row us into the city. Junior brother, please?”

With a black face, Liu Qingge took the slender paddle and began rowing. With each stroke, the boat leaped forward a great distance. The lamp at the bow shook back and forth in confusion.

Shen Qingqiu pulled Mu Qingfang to sit down comfortably. He looked at the water beside the boat and saw a few fishes happily swimming in the river. He said: “The water is clear.”

He had just finished saying this when he saw that there was something bigger following the fish.

It was a corpse drifting face down in the water.

—End Chapter 31—

Chapter 32: Reunion

Shen Qingqiu sat upright.

A corpse, f*** f*** f***!

I'd just thought "the water's so clear" and you give me a floating corpse? Don't slap my face so heavily, okay!

Liu Qingge used a pole to hook the corpse closer and turn it over. It was actually a complete skeleton. Because it had been wrapped in black cloth from head to toe with the face sunk underwater, it had escaped his notice earlier.

Shen Qingqiu asked, "Junior apprentice brother Mu, do you know what kind of plague will instantly turn an entire body into a skeleton?"

Mu Qingfang slowly shook his head. "I've never heard of anything like this before."

A boat rowing upstream would fall back if it stopped moving forward. Since they'd stopped for a while, the small boat had retreated a short

distance. Liu Qingge lifted his pole again and said to those behind him, "There's more ahead."

Sure enough, five or six corpses floated over. Just like the first one, all of them were skeletons clothed in black.

While Shen Qingqiu was lost in his thoughts, Liu Qingge suddenly stabbed the pole into the rock wall beside them. The thin, brittle bamboo pole was thus inserted into the smooth, seamless stone. Once fixed in place, the boat stopped where it was.

Shen Qingqiu also noticed there was something different and stood up. "Who is it?"

In the depths of the darkness ahead came a rush of rapid breathing. The light at the hull of the boat dimly illuminated a person's figure. They heard a boy's voice: "Who are you people? Why are you entering the city through the hidden river?"

Shen Qingqiu said, "That's what I'd like to ask you."

Even though he was standing on a small and shabby boat, he appeared elegant and refined. With his green clothes, black hair, and long sword hanging from his waist, every movement was like that of an immortal. Additionally, Shen Qingqiu was now very experienced at acting cool and was able to incorporate some of his own style to bluff. As expected, the

young man was stunned by his airs and blanked out for a moment, before he shouted, “Leave! Right now entry into the city is not allowed!”

Liu Qingge snorted. “Who are you to stop anyone?”

The boy said, “There’s a plague in the city. If you don’t want to die, then scram!”

Mu Qingfang warmly said, “Little brother, we’re precisely here for that reason.....”

Seeing that they weren’t leaving, the boy said angrily, “Do you not understand human speech? Leave quickly! Scram, scram, scram! If you don’t, don’t blame me for being impolite!” He had barely finished talking when a spear gun came piercing over, vigorous enough to be frightening. Liu Qingge laughed coldly and pulled out the bamboo pole from the wall. With a single rising stroke, the opponent was sent flying into the water. Hearing the teenager’s curses while splashing in the river, Shen Qingqiu asked, “Shall we fish him up or not?”

Liu Qingge said, “He’s got plenty of breath and energy, why should we bother fishing him out? Let’s just enter the city.” Pulling out the bamboo pole, he continued rowing the boat.

The three of them emerged from the dark river, and the illegal boat floated on the currents back into the darkness. The exit was in the most barren area of the city, in the middle of a shallow swamp. Not a single person was

around. They walked towards the center of the city for a while when the tap, tap, tap of someone's footsteps came chasing behind them.

Drenched like a chicken prepared for soup, the young man from earlier rushed towards them and exclaimed, "Why did you enter the city? There's no use in coming in! Before, there were a lot of people who came and said they'd fix the plague. Some monks, some Taoists, some Hua Palace.¹ Each and every one of them came in and couldn't leave! You're all looking for an early death!"

So it turned out that the young man hid and waited to ambush them for their own good. Shen Qingqiu tolerantly smiled. "What do you think we should do since we've already entered?"

The boy said, "What else can you do? Follow me and don't run around! I'll take you to the senior monk."

Shen Qingqiu saw the other two didn't object. They were all unfamiliar with Jinlan City so it would be best if someone from the city guided them. He gave a small nod and asked, "Little brother, what is your name?"

The young man puffed up his chest. "I'm called Yang Yixuan. I'm the son of the boss of the Finely-Crafted Weapons shop."

So he was the son of the weapons shop owner who had braved death to ask for help from Zhao Hua Temple?

Liu Qingge saw Shen Qingqiu continuously sizing up the young man and asked, “What is it?”

Shen Qingqiu whispered, “This child can stand up after one of your attacks and has a good heart. Both of these things are hard to come by—he’s a moldable talent.”

Liu Qingge said, “Moldable talents are still useless. I don’t accept disciples. Too troublesome.”

As they walked into the main city, the number of pedestrians gradually increased. But this “increase” was only in comparison to the emptiness from before. A single street had at most three to four pedestrians, buried head to foot in black cloth. They walked hastily, acting like birds frightened by the hissing of a bowstring or fish that narrowly escaped the net. Yang Yixuan led them to his house. The weapons-shop was quite large, situated on the widest main road and occupying four lots in a row. Connected together for a single family to use, it had an inner garden, an inner hall, and a basement.

Great Master Wu Chen was in the basement, lying in bed with a blanket covering his lower half. Upon seeing the group from Cangqiong Mountain sect, he greeted them with an “A-mi-to-fo” (Merciful Buddha).

Shen Qingqiu said, “Great Master, the situation is desperate so we won’t dwell on the rest. What kind of plague has emerged in Jinlan City? Why did

the Great Master stay in town and not send a single message out? Also, why does everyone need to be covered in black cloth?"

Great Master Wu Chen smiled bitterly. "What immortal Shen asks is really all the same question."

With that said, he pulled back the blanket covering his lower half. Shen Qingqiu stiffened.

Underneath the blanket was only a pair of thighs. There was nothing below the knee. The calves had completely vanished.

Liu Qingge said coldly, "Who did this?"

Wu Chen shook his head. "Nobody did this."

Shen Qingqiu was puzzled. "If nobody did this, then did your legs vanish by themselves?"

Unexpectedly, Wu Chen nodded. "It truly is so. My legs vanished by themselves."

Above his knees, his legs were wrapped in black cloth. Wu Chen reached out a hand and exerted great effort to pull off the cloth. Mu Qingfang hurriedly assisted him. Wu Chen said, "This might make everyone feel slightly uncomfortable."

The black cloth was unwrapped layer by layer, revealing what was left of his legs. Shen Qingqiu's breathing hitched.

Great Master, you call this "slightly uncomfortable"?!

His thighs were rotting and festering, gangrenous flesh spreading from his stumps. When the black cloth loosened, a putrid stench wafted out in waves.

Shen Qingqiu asked, "This is the plague of Jinlan City?"

Wu Chen said, "That's right. In the beginning stages of this sickness, only a small area is affected by a red rash. This stage lasts from 3 to 5 days, up to half a month. After this, the rash will spread and start rotting. After another month, it will rot to the bone. Only by wrapping the body with black cloth to reduce exposure to the open air can you delay its progression."

No wonder every person in the city wrapped themselves like a black mummy.

Shen Qingqiu said, "If it takes one month, why did Mister Yang, who informed Zhao Hua Temple, rot to mere bones in an instant?"

Wu Chen's face showed grief. "I'm ashamed to admit this, but it was only later that I realized that if the infected person stays inside Jinlan City, they can live up to a month or so. But if they travel a certain distance from Jinlan City, it will rapidly progress. My two junior disciple brothers rashly left the town to go back to the monastery, and the disease killed them on the spot."

So that's why people could not enter or leave!

Liu Qingge asked, "What's the origin of this disease? How does it spread?"

Wu Chen only sighed. "This old monk is ashamed. We have spent many days in this town, but have made no progress towards finding anything about the disease. We don't know where the plague started and we don't know how it spreads. We don't even know whether it is infectious or not."

Mu Qingfang stared blankly, "What do you mean?"

Shen Qingqiu had a slight suspicion. "We've all seen the weapon-shop family's son. He has personally looked after Master Wu Chen for so long, but no part of his body is covered by black fabric. You can clearly see his skin is unblemished—it's healthy. If it really is a plague, isn't it strange that Wu Chen didn't infect him?"

Wu Chen said, “Exactly that meaning. The old monk is truly apologetic to have bothered everyone by being trapped here.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “You mustn’t say that. You intended to save people.” He saw Mu Qingfang examining the rotten part Wu Chen’s leg with rapt attention as if he couldn’t smell a whiff of the putrid stench. He asked, “Has junior apprentice brother Mu discovered anything? Do you know a cure?”

Mu Qingfang shook his head. “This doesn’t look like a plague; it actually looks like...” He looked at the others. “I must see some more infected people before I dare make a judgment.”

Shen Qingqiu left the basement and saw the weapon seller’s son walking back, furiously gripping a long knife. Smiling, he asked, “Young master, what’s wrong?”

Yang Yixuan angrily said, “Another person entered the town. Those something-something Hua people are the most useless of them all—they’re all racing to their deaths!”

Huan Hua Palace probably sent more helping hands (cannon fodder). Shen Qingqiu saw that his face was swollen like a meat bun and had the heart to tease him. “Little brother, I see your skills are quite remarkable. Did someone teach you?”

Yang Yixuan ignored him. Shen Qingqiu said again, “Find that big brother who sent you flying into the water earlier today. He’s incredibly strong, so

fighting with him a few more times will be more useful than if you learnt with anyone else.”

Upon hearing these words, Yang Yixuan immediately abandoned him and ran off. Shen Qingqiu had found a way to annoy Liu Qingge by siccing a clingy person on him—he was delighted by this discovery.

He had just walked around a corner but, upon seeing the scene ahead, stopped in his tracks.

A heavy atmosphere hung over the whole town, and the doors of every household were closed tight. Quite a few homeless people couldn't find anywhere to go and gathered at the corner of the street. In the past, when the street was filled with people coming and going in an endless stream of carriages and horses, they didn't dare stick their head out and show their faces. But now, the street was completely empty. Having no more scruples, they had set up a large iron pot with a pile of firewood beneath it. They boiled water and plucked a few stolen chickens procured from who knows where. Each of them was swaddled so tight in black cloth that not a breeze could whisper through. They were not at all surprised by the presence of Shen Qingqiu, who looked out of place. Instead, they looked at him as if he was a dead person. After all, these past days, they'd seen far too many impressive-looking cultivators enter the town saying they'd save them. Were they any good? Those newcomers died even faster than the residents!

The cook struck the iron pot. “Soup's ready! Come fill up, come fill up!”

Many tramps lying nearby who had been picking at lice scrambled to their feet and went forward, carrying bowls in their hands.

The plague had disturbed the lifestyle of the entire city. This spontaneously organized communal kitchen could save lives.

He had to quickly find the root of the plague. Shen Qingqiu secretly affirmed his resolve. As he turned to leave, someone walked directly towards him. That person looked like an old woman; she leaned on a walking stick, her body stooped, and her hands shook so much it looked like they were about to fall off her wrists.

Seeing the situation, he was about to move out of the way. But because she was perhaps too old and frail or hungry to the point of fainting, she stumbled into Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu supported her with a hand. The old woman mumbled, "I'm sorry... I'm sorry... my old age has made me confused..." Saying this, she hurriedly passed him, probably concerned there would be no more food left.

Shen Qingqiu took two steps forward, then suddenly stopped.

Something wasn't right.

The old lady looked as frail as a candle in the wind, appearing as if she would fall over at a mere breeze. But at that moment when she collided with him, why did she feel even heavier than a man in his prime?!

He abruptly turned back. Amongst the crowd fighting over the soup pot, he couldn't see a trace of that "old woman."

To his left was the entrance to the red-light district.² Shen Qingqiu chased behind and fortuitously saw a bent-over shadow flash past the end of the alley.

F***, isn't this speed similar to a 100-meter hurdle sprint? What "old woman"?! He must have been blind back then!

Shen Qingqiu broke into a run, chasing that figure. Though this old woman looked suspicious, he couldn't be blamed for not immediately realizing something was off because everyone was this type of "swaddled in black cloth, walking shrunk into themselves, suspicious-looking" figure in Jinlan Town!

In the middle of the chase, he suddenly felt an itch on the back of his hand and raised it to take a look.

This hand really was plagued with misfortune: the same one that was pierced full of holes by the Sky Hammer Elder and had now been contaminated with a growing red rash!

Come to think of it, it was also this misbehaving hand that opened [Proud Immortal Demon Way] back then! I really want to cut off this hand aahhhhh!!!

With his attention divided, Shen Qingqiu's footsteps slowed. Sensing an oncoming sword attack from above his head, he spread open his folding fan, prepared to counter with a wind blade. He shouted, "Who is it?!"

The assailant swiftly descended to the ground from the nearby roof eaves. The two of them came face-to-face with each other and Shen Qingqiu blurted out, "Gongyi Xiao?"

The youth immediately withdrew his sword, his surprise greater than his joy. "Elder Shen?"

Shen Qingqiu said, "It is I. How come you've come too?" He remembered that Yang Yixuan had mentioned that Huan Hua Palace disciples had entered the town from the secret river. Presumably, those were the same people who came with Gongyi Xiao. He asked, "Huan Hua Palace asked you to lead a group inside the city to investigate?"

Gongyi Xiao said, "This junior indeed received the command to investigate the town, but ... the leader of the group isn't me."

Shen Qingqiu was surprised. Gongyi Xiao was the most favored disciple of Huan Hua Palace's old Palace Master. Before Luo Binghe's appearance, it was universally acknowledged that Gongyi Xiao would be the leader of the next generation. The old Palace Master's only daughter was in love with him, and whenever the disciples of his generation formed a team, he had to be the one to lead them. Apart from Luo Binghe using the protagonist's halo to defeat him, who could steal his place?

But there wasn't enough time to think in more detail right now. Shen Qingqiu said, "Let's chase it together!"

Gongyi Xiao affirmed loud and clear, and both of them leaped out together.

The hunched over silhouette ran into a three-story building. Just standing outside this building would assail your senses with the scent of face powder and the sight of gorgeously dressed women on stage.³ It seemed that in the past this was a place of pleasure, but now the laughter and flirtatious banter were long gone. Prosperity had fled this place.⁴ The front door was open to reveal the main hall on the first floor shrouded in a heavy and dense air.

The two of them held their breath, attentive, then stepped over the doorsill.

In the main hall, tables and chairs were toppled over messily. Shen Qingqiu looked at Gongyi Xiao. "Let's separate and take a look. You look in the private rooms on the left; I'll take care of the right side."

He used the folding fan to push open the closest door. He could indistinctly make out a person lying on a bed. He first felt his heart lift in hope, but then it immediately fell.

It was only a skeleton wearing an intricate and elaborately designed garment, head adorned with beads and jade. It lay there in a serene posture. It was probably one of the women of the house who, knowing her end was upon her, had groomed and dressed herself in her best clothes and passed away in her sleep. Even in death, she assumed only the most beautiful posture; it was probably in a woman's nature. Shen Qingqiu let out a forlorn sigh. He exited the room and closed the door again.

The next several rooms in a row were all the skeletons of women in decorative clothing. It seemed the entire brothel had completely succumbed. Shen Qingqiu was just about to push open the sixth room when the sounds of people and movement came from the second floor.

The two of them flew up towards the second floor, Shen Qingqiu seizing the position in front as they ascended the stairs. Suddenly, they heard a young and gentle voice. "It's no trouble."

It was only three words, but upon hearing this voice, Shen Qingqiu felt as though he had been struck by lightning. His hand squeezed the folding fan until it emitted a ka cha snapping sound.

In an instant, it was as if all breathing stopped.

Frozen stiff, he was stuck in the staircase, but he could already see the elegant women's chamber at the end of the corridor on the second floor. A crowd of disciples wearing the colors of Huan Hua Palace were surrounding a person in their midst.

There was a youth wearing black clothing, carrying an unadorned long sword on his back. His face was like jade, and his eyes like cold stars glittering in two deep pools as he strolled closer.

He had grown a lot and his temperament was also substantially different compared to before, but... this face that could grace the cover of a romance novel from any angle... even if he was beaten to death, Shen Qingqiu would never mistake it!

At the same time, a familiar, mechanical voice that sounded a lot like a Google Translate that gathered dust exploded in his mind in rapid-fire succession into a series of notifications:

[Hello. System has successfully activated.]

[Activation password: Luo Binghe]

[Self-check: Energy source operating as usual, status is normal.]

[Hibernation mode discontinued. Standard mode launched.]

[Updates downloaded and installation complete.]

****! Wait a moment, you really updated?!

[Thank you once again for using the System.]

Can I refuse this service?

Notes:

- Translated by Scriptor and Wenq.
- I've got enough editors now, thanks.
- LOL the troll System is back! LBH appeared...

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)
Report chapter Comments

Chapter 33: Reunion (Version 2.0)

+

Looking at the young man who seemed familiar yet strange, Shen Qingqiu's limbs felt stiff and his throat dry.

+

Wasn't he supposed to return after five years?

+

Shouldn't Luo Binghe be in the abyss cutting his way through thistles and thorns, leveling up his sword skills? Why did he suddenly appear inside the Huan Hua Palace's barrier?!

+

Why did he appear two years ahead of schedule? If one levels too fast, one's safety can't be guaranteed, Luo-ge!

+

Shen Qingqiu felt the urge to turn around, run down the stairs, run right out of Jinlan City, and not stop running until he had left this damned world behind. He had only recoiled one step back when he was blocked by Gongyi Xiao who asked: "Elder Shen? Why did you suddenly retreat?"

+

...Please use your eyes. Look at the expression on my face and read the atmosphere, Lord Gongyi Xiao!

+

Behind him, a low and soft voice came: "Shizun?"

+

Shen Qingqiu's neck felt stiff as he slowly turned his head. Luo Binghe's face was the most frightening thing he had ever seen.

+

The scariest thing about it was that the expression on his face was not cold at all. His smile wasn't sharp like a knife. Rather, it showed a kind of bone-deep gentleness and amiability.

+

I'm going to go, you don't have to be so scary!

+

The more tender Luo Binghe's smile became, the more his opponent's soul was crushed. This was definitely not a joke.

+

Shen Qingqiu was frozen in the stairway, stuck midway, his back covered with goosebumps.

+

Luo Binghe slowly approached and whispered: "It really is Shizun."

+

His voice was light as a feather and every word that fell from his lips was clear. The sound of his footsteps made Shen Qingqiu's heart jump as though he was going high-altitude bungee-jumping after an ice-bucket challenge.

+

His head was already on the guillotine so why shouldn't he go up? Shen Qingqiu gathered his composure and summoned up his courage. The knuckles of his right hand that was holding his fan tightened, turning white and making the blue veins stand out. His left hand swept up the hem of his green robe as he lifted his foot one step, finally setting foot on the second floor.

+

Just one step and he already almost in tears.

+

When Luo Binghe participated in the Immortal Alliance Conference, he could still look down on him, but now Shen Qingqiu had to tilt his head up slightly to look at him. The imposing manner he wanted to present was somewhat undercut by this.

+

Fortunately, Shen Qingqiu has been putting on a cold, noble air for years and has a lot of experience in it. No matter how he feels inside, he can always put on a calm expression. After a long time, he managed to squeeze out a stern sentence from his tight throat: "...What on earth is going on here?"

+

Luo Binghe smiled slightly and seemed to have no intention of answering.

+

However, behind him the group of Huan Hua Palace's disciples noisy chatter stopped abruptly.

+

Shen Qingqiu saw that these disciples' attitude was very wrong.

+

Shen Qingqiu was a great scholar respected for learning and integrity whose fame had spread throughout the cultivation world in his early years, not to mention, he was revered by the younger generation. Even if he were to meet with his peers, there were few people who wouldn't be respectful. However, the Huan Hua Palace disciples seemed to be full of hostility. They looked at him with unfriendly eyes and some of them had already drawn their weapons. In addition, Luo Binghe didn't speak and just stood there. The group of disciples from a well-known righteous sect looked like a raid party ready to rush forward to kill a boss, like a bunch of evil henchmen about to kill and burn...

+

You'll also like



[Kiss Me Dangerous | ✓](#)

[7.2M](#)

[\[OLD VERSION\] "You shouldn't point guns at people if you aren't willing to pull the trigger-Lola." The way he said my name was like he was somehow reprimanding...](#)



[I Would Never Let You Drown- 2Xuan](#)

[3.2K](#)

[Shi QingXuan x He Xuan \[COMPLETE\] Tian Guan Ci Fu AU Shi Qing Xuan was always meant to be a mortal. So, naturally, he dies. A few days later, in a fishing village on the...](#)



[The Husky and His White Cat Shizun](#)

[14.1K](#)

[Not mine/translation For offline reading Author Meatbun -----](#)

[----- Mo Ran felt that taking Chu Wanning as his master was a mistake. His Shizun...](#)



[Tian Guan Ci Fu - Heaven Official's Blessing...](#)

[10.1K](#)

[TGCF Extra Chapters Eight hundred years ago, Xie Lian was the Crown Prince of the Xian Le kingdom. He was loved by his citizens and was considered the darling of the wo...](#)



[The Mafia's Weakness](#)

[3.2M](#)

[Ruby O'Brian was born into this world of guns and war. After being away at school she comes back to some News. Ruby has been promised to marry one of the most notorious...](#)



[Heaven's Official Blessing](#)

[338K](#)

[\(Completed\) A disgraced Crown Prince meets a mysterious demon who rules the world of ghosts and terrifies the Heavens. This is not my work. For offline purposes only Cre...](#)



[The Scum Villain's Self Saving System](#)

[274K](#)

[THIS IS NOT MINE. ALL CREDITS TO THE AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR I'm not the author nor translator or anything. Of course, its for offline purposes 😊 source: novelupdates.co...](#)

Young men, you've made a mistake! Don't recklessly rush forward to guard someone. You want to protect that person behind you?! The fact that he didn't attack someone is already good. The person who really needs to be protected is me!

+

Gongyi Xiao saw that the atmosphere was wrong. He walked forward between them and whispered: "Put your swords away! What scandalous behavior!"

+

Everyone then exercised some restraint. Those who had drawn their swords reluctantly sheathed them but their hostility towards Shen Qingqiu did not decrease.

+

No wonder. No wonder these people wouldn't take notice of Gongyi Xiao. In the past, Gongyi Xiao was one of the top disciples. Which of his fellow disciples would have dared to not give him face? But now there was Luo Binghe who, after his blackening, has topnotch brainwashing skills. Now he is the absolute central authority. Even after ten thousand years, it would be impossible for anyone else to be the leader.

+

Shen Qingqiu was shocked and can't understand it. When did Luo Binghe get involved with Huan Hua Palace? According to the original novel's plot, it should be two years later!

+

The two groups stood stiffly for a while. Suddenly, a young maiden in a yellow jacket appeared on one side and cried: "You're thinking about that at a time like this? Lord Luo, he... was harmed by that evildoer! Can't you think about that first?"

+

Shen Qingqiu noticed that there was a human-shaped figure in the corner. It was that fake old lady.

+

He looked at Luo Binghe again. This time he noticed that a portion of his sleeve had been cut by a sword, exposing a small part of his wrist. Luo Binghe was quite pale and there were a few red spots on his wrist.

+

He subconsciously blurted out: "Are you infected?"

+

Luo Binghe glanced at him then shook his head sincerely: "It's not important. Everyone is out of danger."

+

Such a selfless and considerate attitude! For a moment, Shen Qingqiu could almost imagine that he was a cute and harmless little sheep grazing on the grass and playfully nudging Shen Qingqiu's knees, bleating, "baa baa."

+

Alas, the Huan Hua Palace disciples broke the mood by pouring cold water, mysteriously saying: "If Lord Luo has been infected with this place, Elder Shen would be very happy?"

+

... Shen Qingqiu began to seriously wonder what crime he had committed against the entire entire Huan Hua Palace.

+

Gongyi Xiao looked at Shen Qingqiu's face and was very embarrassed. He reprimanded the disciples, saying, "Shut up, all of you!"

+

Shen Qingqiu looked indifferent. As an elder with a lot of experience, it was beneath him to argue with the youngsters who had been brainwashed by the protagonist. He simply lowered his hand. His sleeves naturally covered the back of his hand that had a red spot after encountering the fake old lady.

+

The disciple who had spoken, who had pock marks on half of his face, shut up but he still looked angry and unconvinced. Qin Wanyue said with a sigh: "It's all our fault. If you hadn't been protecting us, you wouldn't have..."

+

Shen Qingqiu already had a rough idea of what this thing that was spreading in the city was. He really wanted to take a megaphone and shout in her ear: Girl, wake up! This isn't a plague at all!

+

Shen Qingqiu dared to use his years of reading more than 20 million words of webnovels to fucking guarantee this: First of all! This thing was almost as painless to Luo Binghe as saline solution or glucose. Secondly! If Luo Binghe was hurt protecting others, there's no need to worry over it since that was definitely his plan! Don't you know that it's the easiest way to raise someone's favorable feelings?

+

Shen Qingqiu couldn't bear the atmosphere of mourning at Huan Hua Palace. Of course, what he couldn't bear the most was that he and Luo Binghe were silently watching each other, as if they were both waiting for the other person to open his mouth first.

+

He steeled himself and bit the bullet. Looking neither left nor right, he walked over to the fake old lady's body. Drawing Xiu Ya, he cut the black cloth, revealing the body inside.

+

Sure enough, this "person" looked normal. Its body looked no different from that of an ordinary human. But that wasn't the point.

+

The point was that it was red all over as though it had been scalded with boiling water from head to toe. However, the body wasn't burned.

+

Shen Qingqiu said: "It's a sower."

+

A sower was a type of demon. Basically, Shen Qingqiu knew that in the demon world, a sower was similar to a peasant, farmer or, possibly, a wholesale distributor of food for the demon world.

+

Due to geographical and racial reasons, many creatures in the demon world, including some of the more sadistic demons, have peculiar physiological needs. Specifically, they like to eat rotten things. The more rotten it was, the more nutritious it was for the demons.

+

But where could one find many rotten things to eat?

+

That's why the sower profession was needed. There was once a certain place in the demon world that was a popular feeding spot: The lord of that place would cross over to the human world to grab hundreds of living people at a time, then put them in an enclosed place like cattle. Then he would set the sowers loose inside. In less than seven days, the lord could open the door because the food would be rotten and ready. He could choose to take the people out to eat them or walk in and eat there.

+

This type of exotic eating habit is quite disgusting. Fortunately, the ancient demons, the elite nobles among the demons who have the most potent demon bloodlines and who cannot be compared to ordinary demons, do not seek this type of exotic flavor in their food. Otherwise, even if Luo Binghe grew up to be extraordinarily handsome, Shen Qingqiu feared that psychologically, it would be too hard for him to accept this type of weird setting. If he was that type of half-demon, the girls who kissed him would have to be very brave indeed, hahaha!

+

In the past, because this kind of profession was too anti-human, it aroused the anger of the cultivators, who launched a campaign to suppress the sowers. Many unsung heroes risked being infected and died. Within ten years, the sowers were almost extinct. Now they were hardly ever seen so it was normal for ordinary cultivators to not know of them. As for Shen Qingqiu, whenever he was idle, he liked to take out the messily piled up old books at Qing Jing Peak, thus he knew of them.

+

He made a very clear judgment, but unfortunately, he wasn't taken seriously. Only Qin Wanyue was polite enough to gracefully reply: "What the Elder has said, Lord Luo already guessed. Just now, he told us all about the sowers in detail." After that, the disciples of Huan Hua Palace looked up at Luo Binghe with admiration and longing, as if his face was bathed in a pure golden light.

+

It appeared! This was the legendary protagonist's "overpowering wisdom halo" that had the "no matter what the protagonist says, his words will make people will feel as though their IQ was being crushed" effect!

+

Luo Binghe looked at Shen Qingqiu and said softly: "Everything I know was taught by Shizun."

+

...The terrible thing was that Shen Qingqiu really felt as though his face was bathed by a soft light.

+

Damn. In the end, the villain isn't even allowed to look cool. Is this the right time for the protagonist to show off? [waves bye bye]

+

Shen Qingqiu really can't afford to waste his time in this strange atmosphere. In fact, the sowers were killed by the people of Huan Hua Palace, therefore they had the right to dispose of them. Shen Qingqiu said: "In that case, can I borrow

this body for a look? Perhaps Mu Shidi will be able to discover something. It would be good to find a way to prevent the epidemic as soon as possible."

+

Luo Binghe nodded. "Shizun's every command will be obeyed. Disciple will deliver the body."

+

Being called "Shizun" by him made every hair on Shen Qingqiu's body stand on end. He finally knew how the original Shen Qingqiu must have felt when he faced Luo Binghe, who uttered honeyed words but hid a dagger up his sleeve because he didn't know what Luo Binghe wanted to do!

+

With a flick of his sleeves, he stormed off. When he left the abandoned building, Shen Qingqiu was still in a very bad state. As he walked, he felt confused and disoriented. He could feel an evil influence coming from the soles of his feet. Gongyi Xiao caught up with him and, seeing that Shen Qingqiu was pale, he looked distracted and said apprehensively: "Elder Shen, I'm very sorry. In fact, I always knew but master ordered that everything concerning Lord Luo must be kept strictly confidential. Those who speak of this to outsiders will be

expelled, so I dared not tell the truth."

+

Shen Qingqiu: "I only ask one question of you. How did he end up here?"

+

Gongyi Xiao said, "It was Qin Shimei who rescued Lord Luo Gong who was seriously injured in Luo Chuan last year."

+

Last year. In just one year, Gongyi Xiao supplanted as the Huan Hua Palace leader's most trusted disciple. It seems that Luo Binghe's invasion of Huan Hua Palace was not only earlier than the original timeline, but his efficiency was also improved. Indeed, Gongyi Xiao is a true cannon fodder who gets constantly kicked down from every first place position by the protagonist!

+

Shen Qingqiu said: "After being saved, why didn't he go back to Cang Qiong Mountain sect?"

+

Gongyi Xiao watched Shen Qingqiu's face, then said carefully: "After being rescued, Lord Luo seemed to be reluctant to talk about the past. When he was saying farewell he confided that... he won't be returning to Cang Qiong Mountain sect and hoped that Huan Hua Palace can keep his whereabouts a secret. It seems that he intends to wander around the world. Master likes him very much and continues to detain him. Although, strictly speaking, they don't have a formal master and disciple relationship, he is already being treated like a personal succeeding disciple."

+

I see.

+

Luo Binghe's act was the standard "white lotus silently endures suffering." It was easy for people to guess why he didn't go back. Maybe it's Cang Qiong Mountain sect, especially Shen Qingqiu, sorry. At the time of the Immortal Sword Congress, there must have been some unspeakable secrets.

+

No wonder the disciples of Huan Hua Palace had been hostile to him just now. It wasn't just Luo Binghe's brainwashing skill. They were just following his lead since they knew Luo Binghe's

status in Huan Hua Palace.

+

A disciple of faction A went to faction B group then all the people from faction B, from the highest to the lowest-ranked, cried and asked him to stay, all the while hiding secrets so that no one would know about it – how unscientific and irrational! But this kind of thing was completely logical in the light of the protagonist halo!

+

Shen Qingqiu was silent. Gongyi Xiao thought he was sad and disappointed. His beloved disciple wasn't dead, but he preferred to wander outside rather than go back to see him. He said, "Elder Shen doesn't have to mind it too much. Lord Luo might just need to temporarily resolve some problem on his heart. In the past, he never left Huan Hua Palace but this time he volunteered to come. However, my fellow junior disciples... they must have some misunderstanding about Elder. I hope you won't take offense."

+

Shen Qingqiu's heart was broken into tiny pieces.

+

He had painstakingly worked for many years to build a positive reputation but, as expected, the protagonist was still able to paint it a beautiful black!

+

Wrong! In fact, he wasn't painted black at all because he wasn't being wronged at all. In the end, he really did kick a person down into the abyss!

+

I shouldn't think of excuses for my action!

+

Shen Qingqiu said: "What about you? Why didn't you misunderstand?"

+

Gongyi Xiao was shocked and immediately said, "Although I don't know what happened in the Juedi Valley, I believe that Elder isn't the sort of person who would murder his disciple."

+

Okay, let me tell you why... Because you and I are cannon fodder on the opposite side of the protagonist, we can understand and sympathize with each other's situation.

+

Later the group pf Huan Hua Palace disciples followed. Shen Qingqiu inadvertently looked back, only to see Luo Binghe looking at them. His clasped his hands together and looked at them with the cool eye of a bystander.

+

When Shen Qingqiu saw him, his heart felt unsteady and weak, like a boat caught in a storm. Right now, though Luo Binghe was not very close to him and kept a decent smile on his face, his dark eyes were so cool and penetrating that Shen Qingqiu suddenly felt his heart grow cold.

+

Big brother, uncle! What's the matter with you - two cannon fodder characters conversed and hugged each other to warm up, why are you offended?!

+

When they arrived at the Gold Weapon Shop, they found that the noise inside was so loud that it was almost enough to blow the roof off. This was all Liu Qingge's doing. He was responsible for the most difficult task. After they had split up, Liu Qingge went off to capture some experimental subjects. The people in the city weren't willing to cooperate so at this time, there wasn't anything they could do except to solve the problem by force. What's more, Liu Qingge was not a patient and reasonable person. His style was very consistent with the tradition of Bai Zhan Peak. He simply went out, grabbed more than a dozen burly men, then tied them to forging platform behind the lobby. Now it has become a research site for Mu Qingfang. A group of burly men was cursing and crying, as loud as a bunch of women.

+

Shen Qingqiu went to the underground treasury and explained the series of events to the others. He didn't mention that he himself had been infected.

+

Great Master Wu Chen once again prayed to Buddha to preserve them and said: "Thanks to the Cang Qiong Mountain sect friends, things are finally getting better."

+

Shen Qingqiu said: "I'm afraid it's not that simple. The infected people couldn't have infected each other. As recorded in the ancient books of Qing Jing Peak, the largest group of people affected by a sower is only three hundred. If the infected area in the whole city is so large then there is certainly more than one sower."

+

Liu Qingge put his hand on the hilt and stood up. Shen Qingqiu knew that he was a man of action. He wanted to leave right away to find the other sowers and kill them. Shen Qingqiu said, "Slow down! I have something else to say."

+

Mu Qingfang: "Shixiong, please speak."

+

Shen Qingqiu didn't know how to say it. He hesitated for a moment and then said, "Luo Binghe is back."

+

The others' reaction wasn't much. Among the three of them, Great Master Wu Chen of the Zhao Hua Temple didn't even know

who Luo Binghe was. Mu Qingfang didn't care much about anything except for medicine right now. Liu Qingge frowned, startled: "Your disciple? Didn't he die at the hands of the demons at the Immortal Sword Conference?"

+

Shen Qingqiu found it increasingly more difficult to explain: "...he's not dead. He came back alive." Annoyed, he said, "You and I will go to patrol the city first. When we come back, we'll talk."

+

Mu Qingfang: "Yes. I dealt with the remaining sowers earlier. Fewer people should suffer now. I should also go and have a look at those patients."

+

When he said that, Shen Qingqiu remembered Mu Qingfang's set of shining silver surgical instruments. He had a complete set of scalpels and needles all spread out as though to carry out an autopsy. There were also hundreds of bottles and jars in his infinite storage space, all properly labeled with the description of their contents and effects. It was enough to make people turn pale or be scared out of their wits. He expected that when the group of burly men tied down to the

forging platform saw that, they would really scream loud enough to blow the roof off.

+

Shen Qingqiu gave a dry laugh and was about to follow Liu Qingge out of the cellar. Suddenly, without warning, the sound of his own heartbeat seemed to become hundreds of times louder. Immediately afterward, his movements became sluggish.

+

Liu Qingge immediately noticed the abnormality and asked, "What happened?"

+

Shen Qingqiu didn't answer. A spiritual force surged in his right hand but only a weak flow of spiritual energy passed through his body, unable to cause a spark.

+

I'm at such a critical juncture, but now you act up?!

+

Mu Qingfang whispered: "Without A Cure."

+

Liu Qingge checked his pulse, paused for a moment, then decisively pressing him back: "Sit. Wait."

+

Wait for what?! Wait for Luo Binghe knock on the door?! Shen Qingqiu stood up: "I'll go with you."

+

Liu Qingge: "Don't get in the way."

+

You're the great master of Bai Zhan Peak. If you fly with me, who would be able to hinder us?

+

Mu Qingfang said: "Shen Shixiong, have you taken your medicine today?"

+

Shen Qingqiu really wanted to look up to the sky and shout, "I haven't given up treatment!"

+

I obviously took my medicine on time this month! I also asked Liu to help clear my meridians of the poison in time. So why is it inexplicably acting up now like a bolt from the blue?! How confusing!

+

Right at that moment, a System notification sounded:
[Protagonist Cool Points +100]

+

Scram!

+

Do you mean to say that "Shen Qingqiu is out of luck; the protagonist is very cool"?!

+

Don't you dare be so vague! System, explain why you suddenly added points!

+

Mu Qingfang said: "Shen Shixiong mustn't overexert himself. Liu Shixiong is only thinking of your own good. It would do great harm to your body if you run around during a poison flare up. Stay here and rest. I will go get medicine. Wait for Liu Shixiong to return and use his spiritual energy to help you get through the attack."

+

Shen Qingqiu stood up three times and was pressed back by Liu Qingge each time. Mu Qingfang's tone was like that of an adult scolding a naughty child. Shen Qingqiu said: "Very well. Liu Shidi, listen to me. The sower has scarlet skin and is very infectious. If you encounter a suspicious thing that looks like it, don't rush towards it. Attack from a distance. When you return you must come to my room. I have something important to

discuss with you."

+

The last sentence was the most important. Shen Qingqiu deliberately placed emphasis on those words.

+

Train an army for a thousand days to use it for one morning!
Liu, you must protect me!

+

After two people left the cellar, Great Master Wu Chen said:
"Shen Xianshi, don't you think this is strange? The demon world has been silent for a long time, but in recent years, it has become active again. At the last Immortal Conference, many rare monsters came out again. And this time a sower that hasn't appeared for a hundred years appeared in Jinlan City. I'm afraid it's not a good sign."

+

Not just that, these sowers have obviously been strengthened. Originally, there was no such stipulation that the infected people couldn't move away a certain distance from the sower. Shen Qingqiu shared the same feeling: "The Great Master's

misgivings are why I can't be at ease."

+

Yes. Luo Binghe should have stayed in the abyss for another two years, but he was released in advance. This special circumstance can't possibly be a good omen of things to come!

+

After the Great Master Wu Chen was infected, he suffered great damage to his body and Qi. Soon after their conversation, he became tired. Shen Qingqiu helped him lie down then tried to quietly sneak out of the cellar. Wu Chen hid in the cellar because he couldn't be seen outside. Shen Qingqiu's room was on the second floor of the weapons shop. Liu Qingge hadn't come back yet so he couldn't go to sleep yet. He just sat at the table in a daze. He thought wistfully of a little sheep, Luo Binghe, who would call out "Shizun" all day long. He even wished this was a different story. Then he thought about the black lotus Luo Binghe who made people feel uneasy from head to toe. He almost wanted to pull out his hair.

+

After a while, someone knocked on the door. The knock was neither light nor heavy.

+

Shen Qingqiu stood up from the table and said: "Liu Shidi? I've been waiting for you in the middle of the night, come in!"

+

Both sides of the door were suddenly slammed open.

+

Luo Binghe stood at the door of the room, backed by a boundless darkness, standing with his hands on his back, his lips curled slightly. His eyes were like cold pools thousands of fathoms deep.

+

He narrowed his eyes and said: "Shizun, good evening."

Chapter 34 – This Sadist¹

Oh sh**!

In a flash, Shen Qingqiu's brain seemed to heat up until it was boiling hot.

This was exactly like that part in the movies when the midnight bell starts tolling ominously!

He grabbed his folding fan, turned around, and nimbly escaped through the wooden window.

That gooseflesh-inducing disguise from earlier in the day was finally ripped off. Luo Binghe's true nature was exposed, and he's now come to settle accounts with Shen Qingqiu!

His escape was completely driven by his subconscious mind. Years of habit made him act gracefully and elegantly even though he was running away. After landing fluidly, he used the sole of his foot to spring up and his body flew off like a wild goose.

Like a cold wind, Luo Binghe's voice was clear and penetrating. His tone bore the semblance of a smile, transmitting directly to Shen Qingqiu's ear as he said² : “During the day Shizun converses with Gongyi Xiao tenderly

and intimately. Then in the evening, he lights lamps and trims candles as he waits for Liu Shishu³ with sincere affection until very late into the night. But when this disciple appears, two people are so estranged?”

****! Every time you finish speaking a sentence, the distance between us is halved! This speed is unscientific!

Shen Qingqiu took a deep breath. He thought to himself that no matter what, he should first find a helping hand, so he used the energy from his Dantian to amplify his voice: “Liu Qingge!”

Luo Binghe’s voice came again, but this time it was not so gentle. He said with a sneer in his voice: “Liu Shishu is busy fighting. I am afraid he is not at leisure to come. Shizun, if you have orders, why don’t you tell me?”

I dare not accept your offer!

Shen Qingqiu knew that Liu Qingge had been dragged into a fight by Luo Binghe so he couldn’t count on him. Thus, he poured his entire body’s spiritual energy into his legs, expecting a burst of speed.

But he was so desperate that he had forgotten one thing: the poison in his body had just flared up!

It was too late for him to react. For a moment, all the blood in Shen Qingqiu's body seemed to stop flowing and his body suddenly sank down.

In the next moment, his throat was grabbed and his back slammed into a cold stone wall, making his spine hurt and his head swim.

Luo Binghe was very close.

Shen Qingqiu was slammed against the wall by one hand. The impact on the back of his head made him dizzy and it took a long time for him to regain his sight.

The moonlight shone down on him, making Luo Binghe's outline appear more and more like that of a jade ice sculpture, peerlessly beautiful.

He leaned very close and whispered softly, "Separated for many years, yet upon meeting each other under the golden evening wind and amongst the pure white early morning dew...⁴ Shizun only calls other people's names. This disciple is a little sad."

Though he said he was sad, his lips were curled up in a smile and the expression in his eyes was murderous. Anyone could see that his words were clearly a lie!

Shen Qingqiu felt as though his throat had been caught by an iron hoop. His throat was being choked and it was difficult to even breathe, let alone speak.

Contrary to what one might expect, with some effort, he could manage to form the finger sign to summon his sword, but because his spiritual power was stagnant due to the poison, it wouldn't be of any use. Even with the perfect finger sign, the Xiu Ya Sword wouldn't move.

Moreover, Luo Binghe's hand was gradually exerting more and more strength, slowly tightening.

Suddenly, Shen Qingqiu's field of vision lit up and a huge dialogue box popped up.

This dialogue box was completely different from before. It previously was like an XP system error message prompt box, but now some subtle changes made it look more luxurious... wait, one should focus on its contents! System Hint: [Do you wish to view the System's tips to address the minor problem you are facing at the moment?]

You call this a "minor problem"?!

Shen Qingqiu screamed inside his mind, "Do it! Is there an easy mode? Activate easy mode!"

System: [Permission requested to activate: Do you wish to enable key items to survive?]

Shen Qingqiu was already choked to the point where his eyes were turning green. “There are key items?! How many B Points do I need to buy some?!”

System: [The item is already in your equipment storage. Do you wish to use the “Fake Jade Guanyin” to remove Luo Binghe’s 100 anger points?]

****! That was the only thing Luo Binghe had left from his foster-mother: the fake jade Guanyin!

When he first arrived in this world, he got this life-saving key item and some advanced equipment. How could he have forgotten about it? He was currently begging for food while holding a golden rice bowl—System, you finally gave a reminder of this!

Shen Qingqiu: “Use it!” His Adam’s apple had almost been broken into two!

System: [Please Note: The key item can only be used once and can remove a maximum of 5000 of Luo Binghe’s anger points.]

Shen Qingqiu managed to rein in the horse at the very edge of the precipice:⁵“Hold it—— !!!”

Luo Binghe only had 100 anger points right now? Are you kidding me?! If this is what he looks like at 100 anger points, then I can't even imagine what a beautiful sight he must be at 5000 anger points! The important point here is: to use an item that can wipe out 5000 anger points just to deal with 100 anger points, especially when it can't be used again... even though his life was at stake now, Shen Qingqiu still needed a little time to deal with his distress and confusion.

He wasn't going to die of suffocation, he was going to die of a crushed throat.

Just when Shen Qingqiu steeled himself to use the life-saving key item, the hand on his neck suddenly relaxed.

Running away was not possible, so the only thing he could do was to continue to act cool.⁶ Shen Qingqiu leaned against the wall and was barely able to stand. After a while, he fell to his knees with a plop.

Luo Binghe, who had almost choked him to death, only smiled and helped him up the same way he used to help him get out of a carriage or give him a snack. Dazed, Shen Qingqiu temporarily forgot to break free and felt that this solicitous behavior was extremely creepy.

Luo Binghe sighed. "Why did Shizun run away so quickly just now? This disciple almost couldn't catch up."

Couldn't catch up my foot! Who was the one so calm and unruffled in the midst of chaos? Who was the one playing a game of cat and mouse for a long time without even breaking a sweat?

Shen Qingqiu gasped for breath for a while. When he finally opened his mouth, his voice was a bit unsteady. "You've got a lot of guts to come back openly. Aren't you afraid of others discovering your true identity?"

Luo Binghe's eyes flashed as he said, "Is Shizun concerned or worried about this?"

Shen Qingqiu thought that these words were quite interesting. What was the difference between "concerned" and "worried"?

He couldn't help but ask, "Do you think that I won't tell other people?"

Luo Binghe looked at him and, in a tone as though he pitied Shen Qingqiu, said: "Shizun, your words would have to be trusted by them."

Shen Qingqiu's heart started thumping wildly.

Does that mean he intended to ruin Shen Qingqiu's reputation just like he did with the original, then slowly, step by step, force him down the road to his own destruction, killing him slowly and painfully?

The original Shen Qingqiu had two major scum points: 1 – trying to get involved with many girls and women; 2 – killing many cultivators from the same sect as well as cultivators from other sects.

However, when he took control of this body, he absolutely did not inherit the original's hobbies and ambitions. Could Luo Binghe still ruin his reputation and social status?

System: [Friendly Answer: Of course.]

Shen Qingqiu: “Shut up, OK? You don't have to remind me of this fact. Thank you.”

System: [You're welcome. This answer did not cost any B Points.]

Shen Qingqiu immediately x-ed out of the pop-up dialogue box.

He rubbed his throat and stood for a moment. Unexpectedly, he found that Luo Binghe was simply staring at him intently with no intention to continue.

Still looking?

It's been a few years since we parted, are you trying to make up for it?

System: [Protagonist Cool Points +50]

Shen Qingqiu: "You've been upgraded. How can you omit the reason for the points? Don't say that I got some points. I didn't do anything but the cool points increased? And can you not show up for a while?"

After a long time, Shen Qingqiu said, "Now that you're back, what exactly do you intend to do?"

Luo Binghe said, "I missed the way Shizun treated me so well. I've returned to see him."

Shen Qingqiu immediately understood that he had come back to settle some old scores.

He'd asked one question of Luo Binghe and received one answer; their interaction was actually quite harmonious. Shen Qingqiu gradually became more courageous. Not batting an eyelid, he moved his fingers to the top of his sword hilt and said, "Just to kill me? What about the plague in Jinlan city? It can't be that all the residents of this city have all 'treated you well.'"

Who would have thought that the moment he finished speaking, it seemed as though he had hit a nerve?⁷ In an instant, Luo Binghe's eyes turned cold, as though they were two stars that had fallen from the sky and froze. The faint smile on his face disappeared without a trace.

Luo Binghe sneered. "Shizun really abhors the demon race." There was a trace of intense, suppressed anger in his tone.

Nothing of the sort, actually.

Luo Binghe gnashed his teeth. "No. It would be more correct to say that he abhors me."

You see, you do understand... What, what, what? Shen Qingqiu was unable to speak in his own defense: I never said that!

Luo Binghe suddenly stepped closer to him; Shen Qingqiu stepped back in response. Right behind him was the wall, leaving him no way to retreat further.

Sparks seemed to fly when their eyes met.⁸ Luo Binghe seemed to realize that he was acting too anxious and closed his eyes. It was a while before he opened them again.

“Does Shizun really think that because of half of my bloodline... sooner or later I will be doing such things as murder, arson, massacring everyone in a captured city, and destroying countries?”

Shen Qingqiu could only remain silent.

If he had a physical copy of <> in his hand, he would have slapped his face with the book a long time ago.

Where there's smoke, there's fire!⁹ There were twenty million characters that could be used as evidence. Not only did he commit murder, arson, massacre everyone in a captured city, and destroy countries—it was impossible to exaggerate Luo Binghe's misdeeds.

When Luo Binghe saw that Shen Qingqiu remained silent and his eyelashes swept down to veil his eyes, he took it as agreement. He sneered. “In that case, why did you say that I shouldn't care about someone's race? Why did you say such pompous words as ‘There is no one on this world who is intolerable by both heaven and earth’?”

Suddenly, the expression on his face turned gloomy. Scowling angrily, he shouted, “You're such a hypocrite!”

Shen Qingqiu had already been on the alert for some time, so he was quick to retreat and narrowly avoided the danger. He looked back to see that the wall he had just been leaning on had been smashed into pieces by Luo Binghe's strike.

Although he had known that Luo Binghe's temperament would change when he returned from the abyss, he hadn't expected that it would change this much. Saying that he had become extremely moody would be an understatement.

It was one thing to know the outcome based on his knowledge of the book, but it was another thing entirely to see this change in a once-familiar person—especially since this was the result of his own actions.

Luo Binghe didn't seem to truly want to hit him. After that sudden outburst, he appeared to have let off some steam. He turned his head and moved to grab him, but Shen Qingqiu suddenly pulled out Xiu Ya.

He hadn't manually unsheathed his sword for a long time. In the past, he preferred to use his spiritual energy to summon it, but now he had no spiritual energy and could only operate it manually. There was nothing he could do, he couldn't let himself get caught. At least at this time, he couldn't sit idly by.

He'd made a huge mistake. He had thought that Luo Binghe would have to cultivate for five years before climbing out of the abyss. Who would have imagined that his (protagonist's cheat) talent was so amazing and growing ever better every day?¹⁰ Luo Binghe actually finished his task in half the time! Shen Qingqiu's life-saving trump card, the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed, was not yet ready.

Seeing the current situation, Luo Binghe slowly raised his hand to reveal the swirling purple and red demonic energy in the palm of his hand. He said slowly, “Shizun, guess: if I caught Xiu Ya, how long would it take for the sword to be corroded until its spiritual power is exhausted?”

No need to guess, I bet 50 cents it will only take one try for Luo Binghe to break Xiu Yao! Shen Qingqiu felt even more miserable in his heart.

Luo Binghe stepped closer; Shen Qingqiu had no choice but to use his sword.

He had already mentally prepared himself for Xiu Ya to turn into scrap metal, but to his shock, Luo Binghe seemed to suddenly realize something. He froze for a moment and suddenly removed the demonic energy from his palm, directly intercepting the edge of the sword with his hand.

Shen Qingqiu didn’t think the sword would actually pierce him. This was already the second time! As Shen Qingqiu stared blankly in shock, Luo Binghe chopped down on Shen Qingqiu’s wrist. The pain made Shen Qingqiu’s grip loosen. The sword fell to the ground and was kicked away by Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe held Shen Qingqiu’s wrist tightly in one hand. Fresh blood flowed down from his palm, soaking Shen Qingqiu’s sleeve. The blood kept on flowing down continuously, filling his heart with panic. In the midst of this confusing situation, Luo Binghe turned his hand over: “You’ve been infected?”

Shen Qingqiu's wrist had a few more scattered little red spots compared to earlier in the day.

Luo Binghe's long slender fingers swept over the red spots. Under his fingertips, the spots began to fade away like ink being washed away by water.

Sure enough, for Luo Binghe, this little thing was not a threat at all.

The expression on Luo Binghe's face relaxed a bit. He said, "This hand of Shizun's is really plagued with misfortune."

The two of them unexpectedly had the same thought. Sheng Qingqiu looked at his now smooth and clean hand, confused by the way Luo Binghe's mind worked. Perhaps the current situation had reminded him of friendlier times when this hand had blocked those poisoned barbs for him and brought up some old feelings of affection?

He was still speculating about this when, suddenly, he was punched in the stomach.

Luo Binghe smiled and said, "What's done is done. Shizun must reap what he has sown. Shizun must properly compensate me for the wound that he made."

Shen Qingqiu still thought he was using symbolic metaphors to express the trauma from that wound back in the day when he felt a pain in his scalp. His head was pulled back and Luo Binghe put his hand on Shen Qingqiu's lips, pouring blood into his mouth.

Shen Qingqiu's eyes suddenly opened wide in shock.

He realized that the "wound" that Luo Binghe was referring to was the wound on his hand that Shen Qingqiu had just made with Xiu Ya!

****! He absolutely mustn't drink, mustn't drink, definitely mustn't drink this stuff!

He suddenly swatted that hand away, bent his head over, and vomited out a few mouthfuls of fresh blood. However, Luo Binghe forcefully picked him up from the ground and continued to feed him his blood.

Luo Binghe tore the wound in his hand wider, making even more hot blood flow out. This actually seemed to raise his spirits. "Shizun, don't spit it out. The blood of Heavenly Demons is dirty but it won't necessarily kill you if you drink it, right?"

It won't kill you, but death would be preferable!

Translator's Notes:

- Thanks to everyone who helped me with this chapter. Chapter 32 was skipped due to the translator's illness but it is now being worked on.
- I just picked this up recently and need help. If you would like to help translate then please email me at
- Aws @SQQ running away like a scared little rabbit. Violent "kabedon" by LBH... and blood drinking?!

Chapter 35 – Blackened Reputation

Shen Qingqiu didn't know how he made it back to the Gold Weapon shop. He went upstairs to his room, still dazed, and fell onto his bed. All he could think about was how the blood that had been poured into his stomach was now flowing around his entire body. He tossed and turned all night long.

When an ancient demon's blood leaves their body it can still be manipulated by the heirs of that bloodline. If someone drinks it, death was not the only possible consequence. In fact, among the many possibilities, death wasn't even the worst.

For example, in the original novel, Luo Binghe was able to easily manipulate his blood in a variety of ways, including using it as a poison, tracker, brainwashing and s** tool, human parasitic blood mites, and so on.

Shen Qingqiu was covered in cold sweat, half-awake and half-asleep, until he finally fell into a deep sleep at dawn. He hadn't slept for long when he was awakened by the sound of earthshakingly loud cheering. He stumbled out of bed. Since he had fallen into bed with all his clothes on, he didn't need to dress himself. Just as he was about to open the door, it shot open and an excited teenager bounced his way in.

Yang Yixuan said excitedly, "The city gate is open! The city gate is open!"

Shen Qingqiu: “What?”

Yang Yixuan shouted, “Those red monsters have all been caught! The gates are open! Jinlan City is finally saved!” The thought of his father’s sacrifice brought tears to his eyes. Shen Qingqiu had a splitting headache but he still tried to comfort the teenager. He thought to himself, So fast! They were all caught in just one night?

The moment the gates were opened, various cultivators who had been watching from the sidelines a few miles outside of the city swarmed inside, gathering at the city’s plaza where Mu Qingfang was distributing the pills he had prepared. The formerly lifeless Jinlan City residents were now full of joy. A total of seven sowers had been captured alive. They were currently being kept isolated in an enchanted barrier set by Zhao Hua Temple.

Shen Qingqiu saw Liu Qingge, who seemed absorbed in thought. Shen Qingqiu went up to him and clapped him on the back: “What happened last night?”

Liu Qingge glanced at him and said darkly: “What happened to your disciple?”

Shen Qingqiu: “What did he do?”

Liu Qingge said slowly: “Last night, he caught five, and I caught two.” He looked at Shen Qingqiu: “What happened during the years of Luo Binghe’s

disappearance?”

For someone to fight for kills with the Bai Zhan Peak Lord, and for this suicidal upstart to actually win, was something that could really shatter the worldview of Bai Zhan Peak’s disciples! It’s extraordinarily shameful and humiliating!

Regarding those two’s power rankings, the data is clear. The current situation is this – Luo Binghe: Liu Qingge = 5: 2...

Suddenly, the noisy crowd of disciples simultaneously hushed and parted, consciously making room for a group of people. Not far away from them, a group of leaders slowly walked forward. Yue Qingyuan and the Old Palace Master of Huan Hua Palace walked side by side while the head cultivators of the Tian Yi Monastery and Zhao Hua Temple walked closely behind them.

Luo Binghe stood next to the Old Palace Master.

In the early morning sunlight, Luo Binghe looked refreshed and in high spirits. Shen Qingqiu compared Luo Binghe’s appearance to his own sorry state and felt depressed. Even Yue Qingyuan noticed. When the sect master approached, he looked at Shen Qingqiu for a while and said worriedly, “You look horrible. I shouldn’t have let you come.”

Shen Qingqiu forced himself to smile: “It’s just that Mu Qingfang’s patients kept me awake last night with their crying and wailing.”

When Mu Qingfang returned from distributing the pills, he was also surprised. “Senior apprentice brother, how could that be? No matter how much noise I made over there, you couldn’t have become like this overnight. Did you take the medicine I put in your room?”

Shen Qingqiu said brusquely: “I took it. I took it.” Don’t ask me to take any more medicine today!

There was a sudden racket at the other end of the square. Sheng Qingqiu turned his head to look then suddenly felt the urge to put a hand on his forehead. He saw a middle-aged man in mourning clothes leading a large group of men and women to kneel in front of Luo Binghe. It was the lord of Jinlan City.

He was beside himself with excitement: “The immortals sacrificed their lives to save this insignificant little city! There’s no way that we could ever repay your grace. In the future, if there’s ever anything you need, we will do it even if we have to die for it!”

The corners of Shen Qingqiu’s twitched. This was truly the standard novel plot. After capturing all of the demons, the protagonist collects followers and the rewards. At this time, the protagonist alone steals the spotlight, while the rest who helped are regarded as mere background scenery. Even if Shen Qingqiu himself didn’t contribute much, two of the demons had been caught by Liu Qingge—and what about Mu Qingfang who had been totally focused on distributing medicine just now?

Luo Binghe's response was also in line with the usual plot. He said modestly: "City Lord, please, you do me too much honor. Jinlan City survived this disaster thanks to the concerted efforts of cultivators from different sects. It wasn't accomplished due to one man's efforts."

He spoke and behaved with sincerity and propriety, without upsetting other people. He himself didn't lose face, but the other sects were also placated. The City Lord once again burst out with more compliments: "Last night, with my own eyes I saw this young lord capture those sinister demons. What an outstanding sight! Truly a young hero! A great teacher produces an outstanding disciple! Old Palace Master, your lordship's successor is undoubtedly well-qualified."

When Luo Binghe heard the words "a great teacher produces an outstanding disciple," his smile deepened and, perhaps unintentionally, his gaze flittered to someone. For one fleeting moment, his gaze landed on Shen Qingqiu's face as lightly as a dragonfly touching water,¹ but the latter spread his fan to avoid his gaze.

The leader of Huan Hua Palace looked at Luo Binghe with admiration and fatherly affection in his eyes. Other people may not understand the meaning of that fond gaze but Shen Qingqiu knew very well that this was the proud look of a teacher looking at his future successor + son-in-law.

The seven so-called sowers who were surrounded by a group of cultivators were shouting cruel comments quite noisily, making the crowd anxious. Someone asked: "How should we handle these dirty things?"

Yue Qingyuan said: “Junior apprentice brother, do you have any ideas?”

Shen Qingqiu muttered to himself irresolutely: “Qingqiu has read some ancient books related to this matter. The sowers are afraid of high temperatures. It seems that fire can burn away the corrosive quality of their bodies.”

Everyone understood that he meant that disinfection must be carried out at high temperatures. A shocked cultivator exclaimed: “This... even if it is feasible, how can such a method that is as brutal and cruel as the demons’ be used?”

His voice was quickly drowned out by the angry shouting of Jinlan City’s surviving citizens.

In the days when the plague was rampant, countless innocent lives were lost and there was the ever-present spectacle, too horrible to endure, of the infected victims’ bodies rotting away. A wealthy and bustling center of commerce had become a deserted ghost town. Therefore, expressing sympathy towards the sowers or upholding humanitarian principles on their behalf was unacceptable to the Jinlan City survivors. The monks were quickly surrounded by many people shouting “burn them!” and “anyone who objects should also be burned!”

Most of the seven sowers inside the enchanted barrier were baring their fangs and smiling cruelly, not showing any fear or weakness. Sheng Qingqiu figured that they probably considered themselves heroes who

created a good harvest for the sake of the demon race. Only the smallest sower was weeping disconsolately.

Upon seeing it, some people began to sympathize. Qin Wanyue bit her lip and approached Luo Binghe: “Senior apprentice brother Luo, that little sower looks pitiful.”

“They look pitiful”—alas, where is the pity for those who contracted a mysterious plague, suffered, and died?

Luo Binghe smiled at her but didn’t answer.

In Shen Qingqiu’s opinion, Luo Binghe’s reaction to the girl was really perfunctory. It could be considered a failure! Based on the original novel’s content, shouldn’t he take this opportunity to warmly express his feelings to her at this time? Has Luo Binghe improved his leveling up speed at the cost of his harem master skills?

How could she deal with her family’s head disciple whose face, no matter from which angle one viewed it, always looked gentle as jade, confident, relaxed, and elegant? Qin Wanyue was dazzled. Forgetting the words she had just said, she was content to watch the crowd.

It was then that something far more unexpected occurred.

The little sower leaped up and slammed into the edge of the barrier. Its scarlet face became more and more ferocious because of its howling. It shouted, “Immortal Master Shen, don’t let them burn me to death. I beg you, Immortal Master Shen, please save me!”

In that instant, Shen Qingqiu felt as though something in his brain had snapped.

... Who are you?!!!

How can you casually approach and call me Immortal Master Shen when I don’t even know you?!!

From all over the square, thousands of eyes turned to Shen Qingqiu.

The sower continued to wail: “All we did was listen to your instructions but we never agreed to be burned to death!”

...What the ****!!!

What a simple and crude accusation! What kind of G.o.dly plot development is this?

Shen Qingqiu felt like he needed a drink. What made him crave a drink and the comfort of intoxication even more was the Old Palace Master's words: "The words that came out of this thing's mouth, shouldn't Immortal Master Shen explain them?"

Such a low-level technique and there was a person who actually believed it?!

Immediately someone else echoed: "Yes! Give us an explanation."

And there was more than one person!

The twelve peaks were always banded together in solidarity in the face of outside threats. When these accusations were made, many Cang Qiong Mountain sect cultivators' faces became angry. Yue Qingyuan's expression turned cold.

Qi Qingqi scoffed: "Anyone with a brain can see that this thing isn't reconciled to dying alone and wants to bring down someone to share its fate. It's simply trying to frame him! Demons are all the same, they have no moral integrity. How could people take the bait like this? Don't make me laugh, this is ridiculous!"

Old Palace Master said softly: "Why doesn't it falsely accuse others? It singled out Immortal Master Shen. It's worthwhile to think about that."

Shen Qingqiu was overwhelmed by his logic. Based on this type of thinking, so long as a person was singled out, others would need to think carefully about whether or not that person was innocent. The cost of framing people was also sufficiently low.

Luo Binghe didn't say a word, staring at the scene with rapt attention. Maybe it was just his imagination, but Shen Qingqiu always felt that his pitch-black eyes were like stars, and his smiling expression was full of satisfaction.

In the original novel, Shen Qingqiu was hated because of his unforgivable crime of murdering his own sect brother, killing Liu Qingge with his own hands. But now, Liu Qingge was standing beside him. If anyone tried to beat Shen Qingqiu up, perhaps Liu Qingge would protect him. That charge won't hold water!

Could it be that since the stain on his reputation wasn't big enough, false accusations will pool together until his reputation is sufficiently tarnished?

Based on Luo Binghe's character after he blackened... it's not unthinkable.

Suddenly, a Huan Hua Palace disciple with a pockmarked face stood up. It was the disciple who had sneered at Shen Qingqiu in the abandoned building that day. He bowed and said: "Palace Master, this disciple discovered something but didn't know whether it would be inappropriate to speak."

Shen Qingqiu face was expressionless as he said: “You say you ‘didn’t know whether it would be inappropriate to speak’ yet you’ve already spoken. Isn’t it hypocritical to say that?” As a matter of fact, isn’t this the same as slapping yourself on the face?

The disciple probably hadn’t expected that a senior cultivator would scold him. His face changed colors to red then white until the pockmarks on his face stood out, but he dared not scold him back. He had no alternative but to glare at Shen Qingqiu ferociously, saying: “Yesterday, this disciple and a few senior apprentice brothers and sisters saw that there were some marks of the sowers’ infection on Elder Shen’s arm. We all saw it, but today those marks have already completely disappeared!”

“Cang Qiong Mountain sect sent Senior Mu to announce that the pills that were distributed in the city were created in a rush. It takes the pills twenty-four hours to take effect and they might not even work. Senior apprentice brother Luo took the pill in front of us, but the marks of infection on him have not disappeared. How come only Elder Shen has recovered so fast that the marks of his infection have faded? In any case, this disciple thought this point was very suspicious.”

Shen Qingqiu silently sighed in his heart. He should have known that Luo Binghe wouldn’t be so kind as to remove the infection out of the goodness of his heart.

Yue Qingyuan spoke in a calm and measured way: “My junior apprentice brother is in charge of Qing Jing Peak. As a Peak Lord, he has always been a good role model, a person of noble and unblemished moral character. In the sect, everyone knows everything, we do not keep secrets from each other. You are too easily provoked by such credulous nonsense.”

Even though Shen Qingqiu was thick-skinned, his face was about to turn red. Senior apprentice brother, don't say that! Are you serious? If you must act against your conscience this much in order to speak up and protect me, I'll really feel bad about it! Whether it's the original or the current Shen Qingqiu, neither one of them could possibly touch even the edges of the phrase "n.o.ble and unblemished moral character." Oh no, the original character can touch the third word.

The Old Palace Master said, "Really? That's quite different from what I heard."

Shen Qingqiu's heart sank.

It seems that today he has to be dragged down into the gutter.

Translator's Notes:

This chapter is by Reika (me). The t.i.tle is 冤罪加身 – I understand that 冤罪 means false charges/falsely accused but what does the 加身 part mean? Perhaps it's wordplay with the idiom 黄袍加身 which literally means "to take the yellow gown (of the emperor)." In context, this t.i.tle should mean "to be covered in false accusations." "Has Luo Binghe improved his leveling up speed at the cost of his harem master skills." -Context: LBH was supposed to emerge from the abyss in 5 years but he did it in 3. Also, SQQ noticed that LBH basically never shows interest in girls. Original novel's LBH slowly but surely improved all his skills, eventually maxing

out all stats. On the other hand, our little sheep LBH was too impatient in the abyss and leveled up quickly... while making "romance" his dump stat! LBH, you need to work on your "courting my aloof, tall, rich, and handsome master" skill!

Chapter 36 – Blackened Reputation 2

Shen Qingqiu narrowed his eyes and said, “As for what Cang Qiong Mountain Sect Qing Jing Peak successor’s character may be like, since when did other sects start jumping to conclusions based on a mere rumor?”

The old palace master said, “If it were just rumor and hearsay, then naturally we wouldn’t have believed it so easily. It’s just that these words were spread precisely from people of your respectable sect.” He surveyed his surroundings and continued, “Everyone here knows and would agree that it is common for disciples to have good relations with one another. It is also inevitable for some gossip and slander to spread. It’s only this matter of Peak Lord Shen deliberately suppressing how he beat and harmed his disciples, which makes him unworthy of being described as “a noble and unblemished moral character.”

Upon hearing this, Shen Qingqiu was incredulous.

Harming his disciples?

That was indeed the truth. When Luo Binghe was growing up, Shen Qingqiu would abuse him in every possible way, using him for child labor and the like. All those bygone days could be written into a tragedy novel of its own. As for the rest of the disciples who were outstanding enough to be picked on, treated harshly, or evicted by Shen Qingqiu... they were so numerous they could form their own gymnastics team. Only, the perpetrator of this cruel treatment wasn't him, but the original goods!

Yue Qingyuan said solemnly, "Since you know they were just rumor and hearsay, then how can you not know there's no benefit in dwelling on the subject? Admittedly, my younger sect brother does not habitually pamper his disciples, but to say he abuses them is crossing the line."

Suddenly, a tender voice spoke up. Qin Wanyue could no longer resist the need to speak up for her crush: "If my humble self may be so bold to ask Sect Leader Yue... Ordering a teenage youth to fight against a demonic sect elder with hundreds of years of experience and armor bristling with poisoned spikes—could this not be counted as persecution and abuse?"

This time, Shen Qingqiu could not continue to stand by like a quiet wallflower.

Neither spiteful nor mild, he said, "Whether it is or not, I don't know. But what I do know is, if a master pushed their disciple out of the way of the poisoned spike armor and blocked it with his own body, this probably can't be counted as persecution. What do you think, Luo Binghe?"

Hearing this name, the faces of many cultivators present flickered in astonishment, especially those from Cang Qiong Mountain sect. Some had originally held some suspicions upon seeing his face, such as Qi Qingqi, and were now shocked by the reveal. As for those group leaders who had only just arrived at Jinlan City and been brought to their knees upon meeting Luo Binghe... they had already weathered the hail and storm and were now, in fact, calm and collected.

In the past, because Shen Qingqiu frequently punished Luo Binghe, Yue Qingyuan had also seen Luo Binghe a few times, but that was during Luo Binghe's youth. Later, when Shen Qingqiu started putting Luo Binghe to good use, he would often be absent from Qing Jing Peak running various errands, making it even harder to meet him. During the Immortal Alliance Conference, he'd glimpsed Luo Binghe's

face in the crystal mirror, but only for a brief moment and through the mirror's murky surface no less. Thus, this whole time he had not recognized that this handsome, commanding youth beside Huan Hua Palace's Palace Master was, in fact, Shen Qingqiu's "dearest disciple" from back then. Before this, Yue Qingyuan had heard that the Palace Master thought highly of his most senior disciple, so he had mistaken Luo Binghe for Gongyi Xiao this entire time. Now with Shen Qingqiu revealing this, he was also stunned.

Amongst the crowd, Luo Binghe stared at Shen Qingqiu, gaze fixed. Shen Qingqiu tilted his head, spread open his folding fan, and unexpectedly had the impulse to return a smile—though, the small curl of his lips probably would have been seen as a taunt or provocation.

To say he wasn't angry at all was bullsh*t. Shen Qingqiu admittedly often worried about his own small life, so he was always overthinking everything when it came to Luo Binghe. But when he blocked that attack for Luo Binghe, he was acting on his own instinct. ...Although Luo Binghe probably didn't need any help from others to solve the crisis. No matter how you looked at it, in the three rounds of fighting, the person who had suffered the most damage was him. To go so far as to use even this matter to slander him (drench him in dirty water) incensed Shen Qingqiu.

Luo Binghe said slowly, “s.h.i.+zun placed his life on the line to protect me; this grace I will never forget.”

Qi Qingqi incredulously said, “It’s really you? Shen Qingqiu, didn’t you say he died?” She looked at Luo Binghe again. “Since you’re alive, why didn’t you return to Qing Jing Peak? Don’t you know, for your sake, your s.h.i.+zun was distracted...”

Shen Qingqiu burst into a fit of dry coughing, distracting enough that Qi Qingqi had no choice but to stop and glare at him.

Shen Qingqiu wanted to bow to her. He had a premonition that her next words would be “distracted like he lost his soul.” He never wanted to hear those ****ed words again! A sudden rush of gooseb.u.mps rose on his skin. If Luo Binghe heard this, he would laugh so hard his perfect male protagonist face would crack!

The old palace master persisted on the subject. “That’s precisely the point that puzzles people the most. He clearly

didn't die, so why insist he's dead? And why is it that he clearly could return, but isn't willing to?"

Shen Qingqiu was thoroughly annoyed by his insinuating tone. "If he isn't willing to return, then I can't do anything about it. He comes peacefully, he leaves freely, however it pleases him. If the old palace master wants to say something, please say it straight."

The old palace master laughed. "What I want to say, Peak Lord Shen, you are already well aware. Those here with clear minds will also understand. These sower demons should be incinerated, but if there was someone operating behind the scenes—someone adding fuel to the fire—they should not be spared. No matter what, all of Jinlan City is owed an explanation."

With just that, he succeeded in igniting the enmity of the Jinlan City survivors at the scene. They had just suffered through a big disaster; with their mood already sullen and terrified, they were itching for a target to take their anger out on. Quite a few people responded with hooting and jeering.

Luo Binghe said, “s.h.i.+zun abhors evil. When it comes to demons, he can’t help but kill them on sight and rejoice afterward. How could he collude with them?”

These words seemed to absolve Shen Qingqiu of wrongdoing, except, of those present, only he could understand the hidden meaning behind the words “couldn’t help but kill them on sight and rejoice afterward.”

Now that the cat was out of the bag, Shen Qingqiu might as well come out with it and ask: “Luo Binghe, right now are you a disciple of Qing Jing Peak or a member of Huan Hua Palace?”

The old palace master sneered. “After all this, Peak Lord Shen, you’re willing to recognize this disciple of yours again?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “I never evicted him from the sect. If he is still calling me s.h.i.+zun, I a.s.sume he’s willing to be recognized as my disciple.”

His words were said purely to annoy Luo Binghe's psyche; however, it seemed he didn't succeed. Luo Binghe's eyes flickered. Shen Qingqiu didn't know if it was his imagination, but the expression in Luo Binghe's eyes appeared to clear.

In a moment, the two opposing factions were clear—standing opposite one another, distinctly separated. It was as if sparks collided, emitting an aura of hostility—swords drawn, bows bent. As for the sower demon who had triggered this conflict, he was forgotten to one side. No one cared to deal with him.

Suddenly, a coquettish female voice asked, “Shen Jiu? ...Are you Shen Jiu?”

As soon as he heard this name, Shen Qingqiu's unperturbed countenance was almost cracked into the Great African rift valley.

To h.e.l.l with it all!

Is it heaven's intention to kill me today?!

It's over. It's this woman. It's Qiu Haitang!

In the original work, Qiu Haitang's appearance signified only one thing: Shen Qingqiu's complete fall from grace.

Though Qiu Haitang was no longer a young girl in the spring of her life, her face was as fair as a magnolia, painted gorgeously with makeup. Her body was slim, her bosom ample—her appearance was truly extraordinary. And because her appearance was extraordinary, she naturally could not escape the fate of becoming part of Luo Binghe's harem.

The problem was, she once had a relations.h.i.+p with Shen Qingqiu.

Congratulations! To be involved in ambiguous relations.h.i.+ps with two wives of a stallion novel protagonist, the original Shen Qingqiu was truly one of a kind!

At least from all the stallion novels Shen Yuan had read, he couldn't find a second such character!

But thinking back, this revelation must have been the thing that sparked the second wave of the readers' comments saying "Cut off Shen Qingqiu's 'family jewels'! If you don't, I'll quit reading!"

Shen Qingqiu's heart broke into a barrage of endless "****
**** ... " in response to this perilous situation. Qiu Haitang drew her sword and leveled it horizontally before her chest with an attitude of: if all comes to worst, she'd kill him then herself. "I am asking you a question! Why do you not dare to look at me?"

Big sister, how can I dare look at you? You're coming after my life!

Qiu Haitang's expression was full of sorrow. "I was saying it was no wonder—no wonder I searched for so many years and never saw you again. It turns out—turns out you had long reached a higher place in life and became this lofty Qing Jing Peak Lord. Ha ha, how impressive!"

Shen Qingqiu truly didn't know where to look or what to say. Consequently, he gazed steadily forward and did his best to school his expression into detached apathy.

The crowd was whispering amongst each other. Yue Qingyuan whispered, "Qingqiu, this young lady and you... are truly old acquaintances?"

Shen Qingqiu's tears watered the fields of his heart.
s.h.i.+xiong... don't ask...

On that side, Qiu Haitang spoke again in a distressed tone: "Old acquaintances? Not only were we acquaintances, I and this sanctimonious man were childhood sweethearts... I'm his fiancée!"

Hearing this, Luo Binghe's brows twitched wildly.

No!

You're obviously Luo Binghe's wife! Hurry and wake up!

Shang Qinghua exclaimed, "Huh? Is this true? How come I've never heard Shen s.h.i.+xiong mention this before?"

Shen Qingqiu pulled at the corner of his lips and gave him a fake smile: Could you please not add fuel to the fire?

This melodramatic and hated part that painted him as a sc.u.m villain... who made it up again? And someone even had the nerve to stand there enjoying the show!

And these bystanders, aren't they cultivators? How come they all love watching gossip— Everyone leave, leave, get out get out get out!

Qiu Haitang gave a bitter smile. "This person is a beast in human form, a refined-looking scoundrel. Naturally, he doesn't dare to mention things that would give him a guilty conscience."

Great Master Wu Chen had interacted with the three people of Cang Qiong sect for a period of time and received Shen Qingqiu's care, so he had good feelings towards the latter. During Cang Qiong Mountain sect's dispute with Huan Hua Palace, he didn't have the opportunity to interject. This time, he opened his mouth and said, "mi-to-fo (merciful Buddha), whatever words this lady benefactor has to say, she should say them properly and clearly. Blind denouncements do not inspire trust."

Shen Qingqiu's heart streamed with tears. Great Master... I know you're doing this for my own good, but I'll actually suffer if she speaks her words clearly. This truly is the saying "not frightened of doing a shameful deed, just afraid the ghost (consequences) will come knocking"!

At this moment, Qiu Haitang became the focus of everyone's attention. She was so excited that her face flushed. She puffed out her chest and shouted, "If there is half a phrase of a lie in the following words I, Qiu Haitang, will say... then let me be pierced by ten-thousand of the demons' poisoned arrows and die a horrible death!" She pointed straight at Shen Qingqiu, flames of fury raging in her eyes. "This person right now is Cang Qiong Mountain Peak Lord Shen Qingqiu, the famous and reputed Xiu Ya sword. But no one knows what kind of thing he used to be!"

Her words were rather offensive; Qi Qingqi's elegant brows furrowed. "Watch your words!"

Qiu Haitang right now was the hall master of some miscellaneous small sect. Reprimanded by one of the leaders of the large and influential Cang Qiong Mountain Sect, she subconsciously retreated a step. But the old palace master said, "Peak Lady Qi, there's no need to be angry. Why not let this young lady finish speaking? You can't block a person's mouth, after all."

Qiu Haitang looked at him and gritted her teeth. The hatred in her eyes concealed the fear. Her voice rose again: "When he was twelve, he was nothing more than a slave my family bought from a foreign human trafficker. Because he was the ninth (Jiu), he was called little Jiu. My parents, seeing he was mistreated by the slave-dealer, really pitied him. They took him back home, taught him to recognize words and study, gave him the means for food and clothing until he was full and warm without any concerns. My brothers looked after him like a part of the family. When he was fifteen, my parents passed away and my elder brother became chief of the household. He removed the slave title from him and considered him as a foster-brother. As for me, because I grew up with him, I was deceived by him ... going as far as to

truly think... we complemented each other (we were each other's suns.h.i.+ne) ... and as a result, set up an engagement."

Shen Qingqiu was standing right there, forced to listen to "his own" black history along with several thousand other people. The countless unspoken words in his heart were completely changed into tearful silence.

Tears surfaced in her eyes. "When my elder brother was nineteen, a wandering cultivator came into town and settled there because of its nurturing spiritual energy. At the town gate, he set up a platform where young girls and boys under the age of eighteen could come and test their spiritual prowess. He wanted to choose an outstanding talent to become his disciple. That cultivator had a body full of immortal techniques—not a single townsperson didn't exclaim with admiration and praise. Shen Jiu also went to the spirit testing platform. His apt.i.tude was good so he was picked by that cultivator. Overjoyed, he ran home, wanting to leave my household."

"My older brother naturally didn't agree. In his eyes, cultivating immortality was an affair full of uncertainty. Besides, he was already engaged with me, how could he suddenly abandon his home and leave? He got into a big

argument with my brother. At that time he was morose and cheerless. We thought it was just a temporary mood—we waited for him to understand and naturally accept matters.”

Her expression suddenly changed. “Who would have known, that very night, his true beastly nature would be revealed? He went berserk, killed my brother and many other household servants—the corpses littered the grounds of our home. Under the cover of night, he left the town with that cultivator!

“With this huge change in my family, I was only a weak little girl who was powerless to support the household. Such a big family and all the property—destroyed. I painfully searched for this person (object of my grudge) for so many years, always without finding any trace of him. The cultivator who took him under his wing back then had long died a violent death. From then on, the trail was even more broken... If not for today’s chance coming to Jinlan City, I’m afraid that for my entire lifetime I would not have been able to know that this villain, who bit the hand that fed him and back-stabbed his benefactors... was somehow climbing up in the world this entire time, and even climbed up to the position of a Peak Lord of the biggest sect under heaven! Even though he’s very different from the past... but this face, this face—even if it was turned to ash, I would never mistake it! I’m not afraid to name that cultivator who incited him to commit such a violent

crime either. He was registered in the wanted list for many years, the one whose hands took innumerable lives—Wu Yanzi!”

This Wu Yanzi could be said to be notorious, with countless criminal records. Suddenly bursting out that one of the twelve Peak Lords was one of his disciples, the crowd couldn’t help but be terrified. But amongst the wide expanse of gasps, Shen Qingqiu instead calmed down.

His heart was actually faintly doubtful. At first glance, the experience Qiu Haitang relayed was full of eventful ups and downs. But it was not without its holes. It wasn’t that Shen Qingqiu discriminated against the original goods, but the original work had devoted lots of energy to Shen Qingqiu’s unpleasant personality: his repulsiveness and rigidity, narrow-mindedness and pettiness, impoliteness and lack of communication, inability to know how to win favors, aloofness, and vanity. This kind of personality made it hard to believe that the young Shen Qingqiu would be so lovable that a person with no blood relations.h.i.+p would see him as kin.

But when others interpreted these words, they could not catch these details.

Originally, Shen Qingqiu was most afraid of this part of the plot, but he was not extremely fearful. This kind of old event of bygone years didn't have any definitive evidence. If the accusation relied solely on Qiu Haitang, he could convince Qiu Haitang that she recognized the wrong person as long as he bit fast and refused to confess. So in the end, it would just be a questionable, faint stain on Shen Qingqiu's character vitae.

There was no choice. Shen Qingqiu truly did feel sorry for Qiu Haitang, but that was the original Shen Qingqiu! He really didn't want to carry this black pot (carry this blame)! He much preferred to make it up to Qiu Haitang using other means. He didn't kill Liu Qingge, didn't molest Ning Yingying. No matter what, this shouldn't go as far as to make his "st.u.r.dy as a thousand foot tall building" reputation collapse in a single night, muddling his way until everyone yelled to beat him up.

But right now it really was different.

The situation was bad because all these questionable, insignificant stains had ama.s.sed together. First, the sowers' control. Then, the Old Palace master following close behind. Now, Qiu Haitang's accusations could actually become the proof for his improper character. A sc.u.m man abusing a

woman and then throwing her away, a traitor colluding with the Demons, a disciple of a wanted criminal... it was like adding extra flowers to an already perfectly configured brocade.

They were beautiful coincidences, each agreeing with the other. As a result, people wouldn't find them to be mere coincidences anymore.

The Old Palace Master said, "Sect Master Yue, when taking care of these affairs, being swayed by personal convictions is unacceptable. Otherwise, if word gets out that this grand magnificent Cang Qiong Mountain sect covered up a person whose record is full of notorious stains... How can this be an outcome that'll satisfy everyone?"

Yue Qingyuan's tone was indifferent. "So the Palace Master means...?"

"In my opinion, it would be best to have Shen Qingqiu relocated to Huan Hua Palace for the time being. Wait until we've ascertained the truth before we come to a decision—how about it?"

Everyone knew the true meaning of “relocated.”

Beneath one of Huan Hua Palace’s temporary imperial residences lay an underground water prison. With complex terrain, coupled with Huan Hua Palace’s Labyrinth Formation, this “shoving to the bottom of the trunk” kind of method was not on the same level as those protective arrays only used to stop non-cultivators. The interior of the water prison was densely guarded, the equipment of the torture chambers comprehensive, specialized without compare. All those imprisoned inside were the cultivation world’s most heinous and reprehensible cultivators, their hands having been stained with blood or having violated prohibitions.

To put it briefly, Huan Hua Palace’s water prison was the cultivation world’s public prison.

Apart from this, if a place was needed to temporarily keep custody of cultivators suspected of endangering the human world while they were investigated, those cultivators would also be sent to this place. After the four sects held a joint trial, the punishment would then be meted out.

Liu Qingge sneered. "Said enough?"

After he had controlled his temper to listen to this nonsense for so long, his heart had long harbored fire. He turned his hand and grabbed the Cheng Luan sword behind his back, poised for a fight. Opposite him, Huan Hua Palace's disciples each drew their swords and leveled them in front, glares meeting.

Yue Qingyuan said, "Junior apprentice brother Liu, stand down."

Though Liu Qingge was not pleased or willing, if he had to listen to one person, he could only accept Yue Qingyuan's words and so reluctantly let go of the sword handle.

Seeing him withdraw, Yue Qingyue nodded. "This sort of accusation cannot be supported by mere words."

The long sword at his waist, its hilt as black as ink, suddenly sprung from the scabbard to reveal an inch of blinding white blade.

In an instant, it was as if a giant formless net was cast above the entire grounds. Within the net, spiritual energy undulated like the tide, rolling and rushing without pause.

The cry of the sword seemed to drone in the ear without respite. Quite a few relatively younger disciples inadvertently covered their ears, their hearts wildly pounding nonstop.

Xuan Su sword!

The people of various sects on the grounds were bowled over because of this.

Yue Qingyuan told Liu Qingge to stand down because he was going to enter the conflict himself?! Has the world turned upside down?!

It was said that since Yue Qingyuan took up the position of Cang Qiong Mountain's highest peak lord, he had only drawn his sword twice. One time was the ceremony of receiving his

office, the other time was in the battle with the descendant of the Heavenly Demon's lineage (Luo Binghe's father).

Though Xuan Su sword only emerged an inch from the scabbard, everyone suddenly understood.

To be able to sit on Qiong Ding hall's highest place definitely needed more than just a mild and unflustered temperament!

The Old Palace Master said, "Lay formations!"

Was this the rhythm of war? The demonic clan hadn't even fought their way here yet when humans began fighting first. Shen Qingqiu saw this situation was wrong. He hurried to grab his sword and threw it out in front. Xiu Ya sword flew straight and stuck into the ground in front of Huan Hua Palace's Palace Master.

To throw away a sword was the same as surrender, indicating he'd comply with his sentence. The Old Palace

Master immediately retrieved the sword. He waved his hands to make his sect's people return to their places.

Yue Qingyuan said quietly, "s.h.i.+di!"

Shen Qingqiu said, "s.h.i.+xiong, you don't need to say more, the truth will speak for itself. Qingqiu is willing to be restrained."

This Old Palace Master was like an old and confused person—biting fast and not letting go. Combining forces with the additional sower and Qiu Haitang, being imprisoned was an inevitability (final nail to the coffin). In any case, the original work also had this happen. He thought he had managed to avoid it, but didn't antic.i.p.ate he would still wind up traveling the fixed route of the original plot. There was no need to harm Cang Qiong Mountain and Huan Hua Palace to make two sects fall out (ripping their faces). Shen Qingqiu insisted, "Discussing any more is pointless. I offer myself up freely."

After saying this, he didn't look to see Yue Qingyuan's expression but instead swept Luo Binghe a quick glance.

Neither happiness nor anger could be seen on his face. He stood steadily in his original place, a clear-cut contrast to the surrounding cultivators who had their ears covered while their heads spun.

After a long pause, Yue Qingyuan finally resheathed his sword. It was as if an invisible net was removed from the air.

Shen Qingqiu turned towards Yue Qingyuan and gave a deep bow. With all said and done, he had given this s.h.i.+xiong a lot of trouble; it really was embarra.s.sing.

Qiu Haitang was still sobbing. When Qin w.a.n.g.yue walked past her, she consoled her: “Young lady Qiu, whatever the situation turns out to be, the three sects will give you proper retribution.” She said three sects, pointedly leaving out Cang Qiong Mountain to make her position clear. Qiu Haitang’s expression was moved, eyes br.i.m.m.i.n.g with tears, and raised her head to thank her. Upon catching sight of Luo Binghe standing to one side, both of her cheeks couldn’t help but flush.

Shen Qingqiu internally rolled his eyes. On that topic, he’d just been NTR’d right in front of his face, so why is it he didn’t

feel unhappy at all!

Gongyi Xiao led some Huan Hua Palace disciples to walk up, and the thing he held in his hands was very familiar.

h.e.l.lo Immortal-Binding Cable; goodbye Immortal-Binding Cable [wave bye-bye].

Gongyi Xiao's tone was apologetic. "Elder Shen, please excuse me. This junior should treat you with respect. Before the truth comes to light, I will definitely not let Elder suffer the smallest slight."

Shen Qingqiu nodded, said four words: "Thanks for your trouble."

What good is it if only you treat me with respect? Looking at the expressions of all the Huan Hua Palace disciples present, he could tell that each one of them wanted to eat him raw. After all, back then during the Immortal Alliance Conference, the worst casualties were suffered by Huan Hua Palace; they had endured a great offense.

Once the Immortal-Binding Cable was looped around him and securely tied, Shen Qingqiu felt his body sink. Before, whenever the Without a Cure poison flared up intermittently, he would only feel a blockage of spiritual energy, like a remote control with a bad connection that barely worked when hitting it. As soon as the Immortal-Binding Cable was on his body, it thoroughly cut off his spiritual energy, directly reducing him to an ordinary, physical body.

The Old Palace Master said, “What does everyone think about setting the date of the public trial to one month hence?”

Liu Qingge said, “Five days.”

The longer one was imprisoned in the water prison, the more one would suffer. Liu Qingge saying “five days” was to compress the course of the public trial preparation to the shortest time. Of course, the old palace master wouldn’t agree. “With this speed, I’m afraid much will be overlooked.”

Mediation was Zhao Hua Temple's specialty. An abbot suggested, "Why not make it ten days?"

Yue Qingyuan said, "Seven days. No further delay is possible."

The haggling of a crowd of sect leaders could be mistaken as a vegetable market. Shen Qingqiu had his own considerations and hurriedly said, "No need to say more. Listen to the palace master's arrangements. One month."

Any further delay would actually be favorable to the growth of the Dew Gra.s.s. Out of the corner of his eye, he looked at Shang Qinghua and wriggled his eyebrows. Shang Qinghua understood tacitly, two hands hanging in front of his body, secretly giving a "no worries, let me handle it" gesture.

The only problem was... could he even survive in the Huan Hua Palace that was completely controlled by Luo Binghe?

Reika's Notes

This chapter is by Wenq and Stella. You might have noticed that it's double the length of the usual chapters. In the future, there will be many longer chapters. If you've forgotten who is who, check out the . What do you think will happen to Shen Qingqiu?

Chapter 37 – Labyrinth Water Prison

“Elder Shen, please wear this.”

When Shen Qingqiu bowed his head, a strip of black cloth covered his eyes.

Actually, this was purely superfluous. Given the myriad mysterious patterns in Huan Hua Palace’s labyrinth formation, even if Shen Qingqiu recorded the entire journey with a video camera, he would still have trouble remembering how to enter and exit.

The water prison was humid, the ground somewhat slippery. With both eyes blindfolded, he could only rely on the escorting disciples to lead the way.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Gongyi Xiao.”

Gongyi Xiao had been continuously following behind him, and hastened to answer: “Elder Shen?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “While waiting for the trial held by the four factions, can I contact people from the outside world?”

Gongyi Xiao said: “Only those who hold the Huan Hua Palace passage waist card can enter the water prison unobstructed.”

In this case, it would be a bit of a hassle for Shang Qinghua to visit him in prison to discuss the use of the Dew Seed. Shen Qingqiu thought for a bit and asked: “How were those sowers dealt with?”

Gongyi Xiao answered all his questions: “After they were incinerated, the great masters of Zhaohua Temple took the remains back to perform ceremonies for their souls¹.”

From the side came a dissatisfied voice: “Senior brother, why are you talking to him so much? After entering the water prison, does he actually want to try to leave?”

This familiar voice, it was yet again that pocked-face disciple with a grudge against him!

Gongyi Xiao scolded: “Don’t be rude!”

Shen Qingqiu smiled and said: “At this moment, I am indeed a prisoner. There is no need to reproach him. You may all do as you please.”

Just as he said this, they arrived at the location where he was to be temporarily held in custody. The black cloth strip was removed from his eyes and his line of sight faintly lit up, only to see they were standing in front of a huge stone cave.

Below was the surface of a dark lake. Dim yellow torches were placed at irregular intervals on the four walls. The firelight was reflected on the water’s surface, dancing wildly in the rippling waves. A man-made white stone platform rose from the center of the lake, glittering and translucent in its jade-like color²—it was definitely made from a special material.

Gongyi Xiao took out a string of keys and touched an area of the stone. After performing some operation, the mechanical sound of rolling gears came from the bottom of the lake. A stone path rose up that led to the stone platform in the lake's center.

Gongyi Xiao said: "Elder Shen, please."

The pocked-face disciple picked up an ordinary stone and said: "Watch!"

He threw the pebble into the lake water, which actually floated on the water's surface instead of sinking. After a moment, numerous bubbles rose to the water's surface, sizzling like a piece of fried meat on a hot iron grill. The pebble was swiftly corroded and dissolved without a trace.

The pocked-face disciple proudly said: "This water prison doesn't get to be used often. Whoever wants to escape or abduct someone kept inside is deluding themselves with wishful thinking!"

Shen Qingqiu was shocked by the destructiveness of this liquid.

If someone rolled into this lake, even their bones probably wouldn't leave a trace.

Isn't the Huan Hua Palace a famous righteous sect?! Where did they get so much of this obviously illegal destructive liquid?!

Shen Qingqiu followed the stone path, walking extraordinarily carefully. If he slipped on the stone, what happened next would not be fun. When he reached the stone platform in the center of the lake, Gongyi Xiao turned the key once again, and the small path sank back into the lakebed.

Shen Qingqiu sat on the ground of the stone platform. He took in his surroundings, secretly debating with himself if he would be able to fly over the water with his sword, which would make the corrosive water pointless. He was just thinking this over when he saw Gongyi Xiao turn a mechanism next to the keyhole.

After that, the sound of flowing water came from overhead. Shen Qingqiu looked up and saw dark and cloudy water descending from the sky in all directions, forming an air-tight curtain of water that encircled him on the 20 meter³ square stone platform.

.....I was wrong! Don't mention humans, even a fly wouldn't be able to escape!

The Huan Hua Palace Water Prison really does deserve its reputation. No wonder all the sects unanimously elected it as the public jail!

Shen Qingqiu knew there would definitely be people coming to trouble him, but he did not expect it to happen so fast.

He was awakened from being splashed by a basin of cold water.

The freezing cold made Shen Qingqiu shiver, and at first, he thought that he had somehow dozed off and fallen into the lake. He shook his head and labored to blink against the extremely uncomfortable sensation of ice-cold water in his eyes. Only then did he confirm it was only normal water.

The 108 Immortal-Binding Cables wrapped around his body were extremely thin, but still firmly locked down his spiritual veins and even restricted his blood flow. With his ability to resist cold greatly reduced, he could not help but shiver.

The water curtain on all sides was cut off, and the path connecting the stone platform to the outside world also rose.

His line of sight gradually became clear. Looking up, he first saw a pair of exquisitely embroidered shoes. Looking up even further, he saw a pink skirt.

Standing there was a young girl dressed entirely in pink, richly bejeweled. She arched her willowy eyebrows and glared at him with almond-shaped eyes, as she held a metal whip.

Shen Qingqiu secretly rolled his eyes.

Luo Binghe was of course far too good at tormenting people, and these wives of his were truly enough to test anyone's limits. They kept rapidly appearing one after another, like glancing at flowers while on horseback, and one after another they all gave him trouble. Don't show up anymore—this Shen Qingqiu is not the original goods and simply has no interest in lewd beautiful women, okay?!

The little girl's whip pointed directly at him: "If you're awake, stop pretending to be dead. This palace master has something to ask you!"

Given her (lack of) generation and strength, no matter how discomposed Shen Qingqiu was right now, it still wasn't her place to come interrogate him.

Shen Qingqiu said: "This does not seem to be the kind of matter the little palace mistress should be handling."

This apple of the old palace master's eye⁴, this belligerent head of Luo Binghe's harem, said without a trace of politeness: "Cease your chatter! Since you know who I am, then you should know the purpose of my visit!"

Her eyes reddened and she gnashed her teeth: "You are such a despicable villain, colluding with the Demon world and betraying your fellows! You will get your comeuppance! Today you have fallen into this palace master's hands—I'm going to teach you a lesson!"

Shen Qingqiu: "I don't seem to remember admitting to colluding with the Demon world."

The little palace mistress stomped her feet: "You think just because you won't admit it, I can't punish you? You're so unjust, you've long been a famous senior but you treated Big Brother Luo with such heartlessness and viciousness—naturally, you'd do things like colluding with the Demon race."

The power of heredity is indeed really strong, this logic is absolutely trueborn from the old palace master!

Shen Qingqiu was speechless for a moment before he said:
“He truly said that I treated him heartlessly and viciously?”

The little palace mistress spoke with a beautiful song and deep feeling: “Big Brother Luo is such a good person, of course, he would not say so. The injuries he suffered are all hidden deep within his heart. He will not let anyone touch them, he will not let anyone see... But did you think that just because he did not say anything out loud, I cannot see the wounds on his soul? Are you saying I have no eyes and no heart?”

.....

These true feelings and honest emotions..... Shen Qingqiu’s entire person didn’t feel good!

Is this a f***ing poetry recitation contest?!

He really didn’t know whether to thump the ground and laugh hysterically or to let his eyes brim over with warm tears. I’m sorry! I know that it’s really rude to laugh at a sister who is

sincerely revealing her deep love! But this is truly too humiliating! Simply erotically humiliating!

Although Luo Binghe's harem was immense, it really was a tremendous mess, with all possible types. This was the result of him biting off more than he could chew, going for quantity over quality. It was also the result of Airplane Towards the Sky insisting on writing a stallion novel despite being an eternal virgin who had barely touched a woman's hand a few times—serves you right hahaha!

The little palace mistress was suddenly suspicious: “What’s that expression on your face?”

Shen Qingqiu at once curbed his mirth, checking whether his face had just been stretched. Offending this girl would not lead to a happy ending. Sure enough, the little palace mistress flew into an agitated rage: “Were you laughing at me just now?!”

The little palace mistress was originally enamored with her childhood friend Gongyi Xiao. After Luo Binghe's appearance, all her ardent love surged towards the male protagonist. There was nothing that could be done. From

ancient times to the present, whenever the childhood friend battles the newly appeared fated love rival⁵, the fated rival always wins without a doubt. This kind of “shifting one’s affections to fall in love with someone else” set-up is actually very common in stallion novels, because there are always many NTR⁶ enthusiasts in the world. Whether NTRing someone else or being NTRed, they can all obtain peculiar pleasure from this kind of story.

The one who shifts their affections, of course, thinks they are pursuing their true love and haven’t done anything wrong, but in the end, they possess a guilty conscience. If they see another person looking at them with a strange expression, they will feel that the other person is laughing at themselves. The little palace mistress thus became furious from embarrassment, and with a wave of her arm, the long whip came cracking over!

The whip surged over menacingly, piercing the air with an extremely shrill sound. The Immortal-Binding Cables restricted Shen Qingqiu’s circulation of spiritual power, but his physical skill had not degraded. He rolled to the side just as the whip smashed down not a meter⁷ from his feet.

When the stone platform was smashed, stone chips and shattered dust flew everywhere. Shen Qingqiu knelt on one knee and steadied his body.

What the f***, why is a young girl using this kind of barbed iron whip!!! This style is just wrong!!!

What's even more wrong is that in the original book, the little palace mistress's fine iron whip was especially used to hit love rivals!!! An equipment used for tearing clothes while fighting over a man! It's only ever hit beautiful women who Luo Binghe stared at for a little too long, so why is it now being used to hit a man?!!! It's weeping, can't you hear?!

I've really had enough, can you stop shoving this kind of script onto me?!!!

After the little palace mistress missed this blow, her rage grew stronger. With a whip crack sound, the whip returned with more force. No matter the size of the stone platform or the speed of Shen Qingqiu's reaction time, he had still been tied up, so he was inevitably scraped by the whip wind. His clothes ripped in a few places, though his flesh was still unharmed.

But as he continued to dodge and evade, he soon retreated to the edge of the stone platform. Seeing he could not retreat any further, he could only harshly receive the next lash. Shen Qingqiu resolved to grit his teeth and close his eyes, awaiting the painful strike!

But despite waiting for a long while, he still didn't feel any pain stinging his flesh.

He abruptly opened his eyes, and his heart immediately sank.

Luo Binghe grasped the whiplash with his bare hands. There seemed to be two pitch-black ghost fires burning in his eyes, cold and terrifying.

He spoke one word at a time, his voice cold enough to freeze one's heart: "What are you doing?"

The little palace mistress did not know when he had arrived and was frightened by his sudden appearance. But what truly

frightened her was the frigid expression on his face that she had never seen before. She couldn't help but shiver.

Ever since they became acquainted, Luo Binghe had always been sincerely gentle and soft, very good at cheering others up. When had he ever looked at her with this violent and murderous gaze? The little palace mistress could not help but take several steps back, and hesitantly said: "I... I... I asked Dad for a waist card to come and interrogate him..."

Luo Binghe said coldly: "The joint trial of the four sects is after one month."

The little palace mistress suddenly felt wronged. She shouted: "He has hurt so many of my disciple-brothers and sisters, so many! And he treated you badly! What's wrong with me teaching him a lesson?!"

Luo Binghe snatched the entirety of her whip, disregarding the sharp barbs like they did not exist. His hand did not appear to use any force, but when his five fingers loosened, the segmented fine iron whip had actually turned into a pile of broken and crushed iron.

Luo Binghe indifferently said: “Go back.”

The little palace mistress watched with wide eyes as her beloved weapon turned into a pile of slag just like that. She let out an “Ah” in sheer disbelief.

She tearfully pointed at Shen Qingqiu, then pointed at Luo Binghe: “You, you are treating me like this? I am venting your anger for you, but you are not letting me touch him?”

Luo Binghe did not say anything, only threw the iron whip debris in his hand into the lake. The sizzling and hissing sound of corrosion lingered in their ears.

Watching this, the little palace mistress’s lips trembled.

In that instant, she suddenly felt that what Luo Binghe wanted to crush inch by inch and then throw into the corrosive lake... was her. That wasn’t a joke at all.

Full of grief and indignation, the little palace mistress yelled: “I am obviously doing this for your own good!” After yelling this, she turned around, crying as she darted away.

Shen Qingqiu roared in his heart: “This script is not right, f***——where did it go wrong——”

He hadn’t finished roaring when Luo Binghe’s gaze shifted to him.

Shen Qingqiu’s entire body began to ache. At this time, he would rather the little palace mistress whipped him with one hundred and eighty lashes. At most that would be just pain in the flesh, far better than having pain all over his body from being alone with Luo Binghe in a confined space!

The two of them faced each other in silence for a long time. Luo Binghe took one step closer.

Shen Qingqiu subconsciously preserved the distance between them.

Luo Binghe's extended hand froze in the air for a while and withdrew back.

He humphed: "Why does Shizun need to be this vigilant? If I wanted to do anything to you, I wouldn't need to touch you at all."

That was a great truth. Even one drop of Heavenly Demon blood entering the abdomen was akin to burying a ticking time bomb in the body, with infinite possibilities for suffering. All Luo Binghe had to do was think, and a hook of his finger could make Shen Qingqiu's intestines rearrange and his stomach rot, so excruciating as to make him beg for death.

Shen Qingqiu sat back into the posture of meditation, raising his eyes to meet Luo Binghe's gaze.

One month.

No matter what, he had to hold on for one month. After holding on, he would be as free as a fish in the ocean, as

liberated as a bird in the sky.⁸ I⁹ won't have to care about all these stupid things!!!

The two of them were silent for a while. Shen Qingqiu considered for a moment and said: "If you wish to do anything to me, there is no need to rush. After the end of the four sects' joint trial, I will be completely disgraced and my reputation ruined, with utterly no hope of salvation. Wouldn't settling the ledger at that time give you just cause to be even more overjoyed?"

These words of his were entirely based on the original Luo Binghe's type of mindset. Reasonably speaking, they should fit Luo Binghe's taste exceedingly well. What was unexpected was that Luo Binghe's expression did not clear up, but instead became even more chilly and ice-cold.

He narrowed his eyes: "Why is Shizun so certain that the joint trial will find you guilty?"

Shen Qingqiu: "I should be asking you this, shouldn't I?"

Luo Binghe repeated back: “Asking me?”

He sneered: “Me again.”

Shen Qingqiu was speechless.

Reika's Notes:

This chapter was translated by Attica.
I'm so annoyed at that girl! The prisoner hasn't even
been judged guilty yet she wants to punish him already?

Chapter 38– Labyrinth Water Prison

This story arc in Jinlan City was a new addition. According to the timeline of the original book, Luo Binghe was still leveling up underground at this time and never appeared at all. Shen Qingqiu was not able to take advantage of his omniscient perspective. But Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky had signed off on one thing: After Luo Binghe finished leveling up and returned to the surface, all the slaughters and conspiracies that followed were inextricably tied to him. No matter how one looked at it, the biggest suspect was Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe's face was gloomy. His hands behind his back, he paced back and forth a few times. Suddenly, he turned back and harshly said: "May I ask Shizun, are all the murders and crimes committed by demons in this world entirely my fault?"

Shen Qingqiu's brows tightened.

Seeing that he did not answer, Luo Binghe slowly clenched his fists and said: “You once clearly trusted me to such an extent, but now at every turn you doubt my motives to be unfathomable. Are the differences between races really so significant as to completely change your attitude towards a person?”

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help himself any longer, and mustered up his courage: “In that case, I have something to ask you.”

Luo Binghe inclined his head: “This disciple is listening respectfully.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “You deny having any unfathomable motives for assimilating into Huan Hua Palace, but then what, exactly, are your true motives for doing so?”

Why did the male protagonist himself actually not follow the original story? After suffering enough coercion from both the System and the plot, Shen Qingqiu had to ask the question on his mind.

Upon hearing this, Luo Binghe was startled. His lips moved and he seemed to want to say something, but he ultimately hesitated and didn't speak.

Shen Qingqiu was actually a little surprised: "You can't answer?"

What happened to the original work's persuasiveness that could single-handedly take on Cang Qiong Mountain with his sheer eloquence? Could this be the price he paid for going through the Infinite Abyss instance¹ too fast and neglecting to practice his cheats? Perhaps he didn't raise his "Persuasion" skill enough...

Luo Binghe said: "Shizun will not believe me anyhow. What difference does it make if I answer or not?"

The glow off the water and the light of the torches quivered together in the dim dungeon. Shen Qingqiu's heart seemed to tremble with them.

Both of them remained silent for a long while. Luo Binghe suddenly said: “But I hope that Shizun can sincerely answer one question of mine.”

He pursed his lips and stiffly added: “Just one question.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Speak.”

Luo Binghe softly inhaled.

He whispered: “Do you regret it?”

Shen Qingqiu sealed his lips and did not speak. His eyes turned to evaluate Luo Binghe from head to toe.

The full meaning of this “Do you regret it” was not spelled out, but it should be referring to whether he regrets kicking Luo Binghe into the Infinite Abyss.

You don't say. Of course, he regrets it, he regrets it to death². But what is the meaning of Luo Binghe asking this question in the first place?

Shen Qingqiu's temples pulsed, when suddenly an enormous pop-up window jumped out in front of him.

System: [Please choose an answer from this multiple choice question:

Option A: I regret it. This teacher has long since regretted it. The last few years, I have spent every moment uselessly repenting.

Option B: (sneer) Seeing what you've become today, you know there's no reason for me to regret it!

Option C: Keep silent.]

.....

Fuck off——

What the hell, your upgrade was originally for this sort of thing?——

What's this bullshit inside the bracket?! Even the tone and expression are pre-set for me. Do you think this is a GALGAME³?——

This isn't even as good as the original low-level version. Someone hurry and give me an installation package for the System 1.0—I'll thank him and his whole family!

Shen Qingqiu had a face full of black lines⁴: “A is way too fake! If I was Luo Binghe, I wouldn't believe it, and would even find it disgusting. And what's with B? Do you resent that he didn't choke me to death last time?”

System: [Please make a selection.]

Shen Qingqiu: “CCC!”

System: [Literary and philosophical depth +10.]

Shen Qingqiu: “Can anyone tell me how exactly this ‘literary and philosophical depth’ is calculated?”

Just like that, he looked steadily forward and kept his silence.

Luo Binghe didn’t receive any answer, and his clenched fist slowly loosened. He self-deprecatingly said: “I already clearly knew the answer, yet I still asked Shizun this question. I really am stupid.”

If he didn’t know Luo Binghe was the total power source of all this world’s Systems, Shen Qingqiu would have definitely suspected he had transmigrated too.

If he didn’t have an omniscient perspective that gave him insight into the plot, Shen Qingqiu would have definitely

suspected that... Luo Binghe probably truly was... a little sad.

Silence is golden. The more you talk, the more mistakes you make. Shen Qingqiu closed his eyes and sat cross-legged in quiet meditation.

All was still and silent for a while. Then Luo Binghe's cold and soft voice came again.

"Shizun, you have always been reticent and taciturn. Before, you would at least speak a few more sentences to me—Now you are not willing to do even that."

After a pause, his tone unexpectedly changed. He grinned maliciously: "Well, it doesn't matter. I have plenty of ways to make you speak."

After he finished the last sentence, Shen Qingqiu suddenly opened his eyes.

A wave of slight stabbing pain came from deep in his lower abdomen.

You're not happy when I speak, you're not happy when I don't speak. Why are you bothering with this, what did I do wrong?!

After a moment, the stabbing pain disappeared. In its place came the uncanny sensation of something crawling in his blood vessels.

After hibernating for many days, the Heavenly Demon blood had already fully adapted to the environment of the host body. At this time, called by its original master, it condensed into insect form and began to probe all over the internal organs of the body.

Luo Binghe leisurely said: "Spleen, kidney, liver, lungs."

Every time he named an area, there came an extremely bizarre itchy pain in that area. It truly was both itchy and

painful, like dense rows of tiny teeth gnawing and biting, accompanied by a burning sensation.

Although the pain could not be considered excruciating, it was hitting the limits of his tolerance.

Shen Qingqiu could no longer sit still. He couldn't help but bend over, resisting the urge to curl up into a ball. Following the not yet dried water droplets on his jaw, his cold sweat trickled and fell.

Luo Binghe's style was finally correct, but now it was his turn to suffer. Damn, my stomach really fucking hurts. Is this how girls feel when going through period pain?

Luo Binghe warmly said: "Shizun, where do you want it to exit?"

I don't want it anywhere!

Speaking of that, it hasn't exited yet?! Then what would the sensation of it exiting be like?!!!

Shen Qingqiu slapped the System box: "Think of a solution, will you? Don't I still count as your client?!"

System: [Do you wish to enable the key item: Fake Jade Guanyin? Friendly Tip: This item can only be used once.]

Shen Qingqiu: "What is Luo Binghe's anger level right now?"

System: [30 points.]

Shen Qingqiu: "Why so low? Are you sure you didn't calculate wrong?! This is completely unscientific!"

Using a magic artifact that can eliminate 5000 points to deal with 30 points, he absolutely can't!

Shen Qingqiu: “Are there any other options? What is the second highest rated program in the industry?”

System: [Do you wish to use the “Small Scenario Pusher”?]

...This name doesn't sound too high-grade. But since it is the second highest rated program in the industry, might as well use it. Shen Qingqiu decisively pressed the button!

Luo Binghe sneered: “Refusing to look at me or talk with me, do you think I'm filthy?” Saying so, he abruptly stepped forward and humphed: “In that case, I'll do the opposite of your wish!” He stretched his hand out to grab Shen Qingqiu's shoulder.

Seeing his movement, Shen Qingqiu subconsciously dodged aside. Luo Binghe grasped empty air, only catching a piece of clothing.

This robe had originally been shredded into a hideous mess by the little palace mistress's whip wind. Now with this tear, most of his robe was directly ripped off his shoulder.

This kind of development was beyond everyone's expectations. Both of them stared blankly, petrified.

Shen Qingqiu's face and head had recently been splashed with ice water, and up till now, his dripping wet clothes and hair still stuck to his lily-white flesh. The Immortal-Binding Cables wrapped and bound his body, as thin as a red string. Even though the expression on his face could not be any more honestly dumbfounded, his entire person looked extremely... undignified.

Luo Binghe's eyes suddenly widened.

After a while, he abruptly broke out of his daze. Reacting like he was just burned by a soldering iron, Luo Binghe immediately flung his hand off and turned around!

With this evasive movement, the blood insects originally ready for action in Shen Qingqiu's internal organs seemed to startle. They scattered like frightened beasts and fowl, and the sensation of blockage in his blood vessels immediately dissipated.

Shen Qingqiu breathed a sigh of relief and shed tears of joy in his heart: finally fucking gone!

So how does this “Small Scenario Pusher” operate after all? Is it just making his clothing burst apart? Might as well call it “Small Clothing Burster.” What principle is it based on? Using Luo Binghe’s physiological revulsion at seeing a half-naked man?!

For a while, Luo Binghe stood stiffly with his back to him, as if he didn’t know where to put his limbs. All of a sudden, he took off his robe at lightning speed and tossed it backward.

The robe was plastered onto Shen Qingqiu’s face.

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

What’s this supposed to mean?

This scene, this action... Why does it inexplicably make him uneasy? He couldn't help but think of the classic vulgar scene: "After the devastated girl is rescued from her suffering, her boyfriend drapes his warm coat over her"...

Shen Qingqiu's blood ran cold and his hair stood on end at the thought. With a tip of his arm, he let the ink-colored robe slide off his shoulder.

The soft-textured and exquisite robe fell to the ground, a silver halo following the thin streamlined dusky patterns. Luo Binghe heard the rustling sound and looked back to see the robe cast aside on the ground. Shen Qingqiu even cautiously pushed it back towards him twice.

In actuality, Shen Qingqiu was just considering whether to fold it for Luo Binghe. He was in the midst of considering it and had yet to act, when he raised his head to see Luo Binghe had already turned back towards him. Harsh flames were reflected in Luo Binghe's eyes, and it seemed like his fury had swelled. The blue veins on the back of his hand popped and he flexed his knuckles a few times. As if venting his rage, he ferociously let out a few violent strikes.

These few strikes were actually a combination of attacks, not aimed accurately at all. A few of the blows hit the lake surface, bursting into huge splashes in the distance. Another one exploded against the wall of the cave, creating a large hole. Pieces of stone tumbled down. The torches shuddered and trembled, falling into the lake. They actually did not go out, but instead floated on the water's surface, continuing to blaze and burn. The firelight made Luo Binghe's face rapidly flicker light and dark, his ghastly aura filling the air.

He slowly withdrew his hand and said: "I almost forgot—Shizun surely hates anything tainted by the touch of Demons."

A dignified and formidable male protagonist, actually throwing a messy and unreasonable tantrum with complete disregard for his image. What difference is there between this and a dissatisfied child angrily kicking his toy building blocks? This is cheapening out, truly cheapening out.

A perfectly good cave had to be smashed full of holes and pits before Luo Binghe finally let out enough of his anger.

When Luo Binghe turned around, Shen Qingqiu still had the casual attitude of an onlooker, as if nothing had just happened. Luo Binghe's temple seemed to throb a few times. He grit his teeth: "... I want to see with my own eyes how in one month, you will be completely disgraced and your reputation ruined!"

Throwing down this last sentence, he stormed out. When he left the cave, he brutally smashed the mechanism. After a booming rumble, the water curtain flowed down once again. Shen Qingqiu sat in his original place, looking up in complete puzzlement. He had already been reduced to a prisoner in Luo Binghe's grasp, so where did Luo Binghe's anger come from?

Reika's Notes:

This chapter is by Attica.

Argh! I'm sooo angry at Binghe for torturing Shizun!

"Small Scenario Pusher" is clearly a fujoshi device that activates BL plot developments, hahaha! (Just my idea, don't take it seriously.)

I made . For obvious reasons, it's one of the fan artists' favorite scenes. The fanart page has no spoilers and it's

SFW, of course.
Thanks for reading.

Chapter 39 – Escape from the Water Prison

The inside of the cave was dark and gloomy. Whenever the cold wind blew, Shen Qingqiu's wet clothes would stick to his skin, making him shiver violently.

To one side, Luo Binghe's outer robe still lay tossed on the ground.

Please read the novel at bcnovels.com ♪? ♡?

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but get caught up in a bout of nostalgia. Even though Luo Binghe never got angry during the time that he trained Qing Jing Peak, unlike his current explosive temper, just then the way he looked when he retreated in a rage after Shen Qingqiu threw off his robe unexpectedly made Shen Qingqiu see a shadow of the little sheep he used to be.

After his bout of nostalgia, a vicious burst of cold made him want to sneeze. Shen Qingqiu didn't have a better option, so he might as well grab that black robe and slowly pull it over his body.

There was nothing that could be done. After all, by refusing Luo Binghe's robe he was not expressing self-righteous distaste—he simply couldn't do this sort of thing in front of Luo Binghe.

In the original work, didn't Luo Binghe give girls this very robe each time after s.e.x?

What sort of indignity would this be in front of the protagonist!

Shen Qingqiu discovered that every time he sat to meditate, there would always be some form of outside interference. It happened that time at Ling Xi cave, and again now in the water dungeon.

The stone path rose and the water curtain stopped flowing. Gongyi Xiao hurriedly ran over the path, only managing to glance at Shen Qingqiu before his feet slipped under him.

He stammered, "S...s.. Elder Shen, you..."

Shen Qingqiu didn't notice anything strange. "What about me?"

Gongyi Xiao had a strange look on his face like he didn't know whether or not he should turn around and retreat. He hesitated outside of the stone platform and didn't continue to advance. Following his gaze, Shen Qingqiu looked down.

Gongyi Xiao said, hesitantly, "Those clothes, aren't they..."

Shen Qingqiu sighed. Luo Binghe's outer robes.

Gongyi Xiao finally reacted. He hurriedly coughed, then asked, "How has Elder Shen been these past two days?"

Shen Qingqiu replied, "Satisfactory." You don't need to pay this much attention to me! Within the s.p.a.ce of two days, three people had already visited. During this temporary detainment, he had been receiving such luxurious treatment. Huan Hua Temple must have upgraded their water dungeon recently to include such exceptional hospitality!

Gongyi Xiao said, "I heard that last night Luo s.h.i.+xiong... was in a terrible rage when he left, so this junior was worried that he might have done something to Elder Shen..." As he spoke, his eyes couldn't help but linger on the black outer robe.

Under his stare, Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but pull the robe tighter over his chest.

What could he do? Luo Binghe had only thrown a tantrum and knocked holes all over the place¹, knocking over half the cave. What's with that look in your eye!

Shen Qingqiu sighed. "Luo Binghe is really like a fish back in water² at Huan Hua Temple."

Gongyi Xiao laughed bitterly. “Not only that, but Luo s.h.i.+xiong’s spiritual power is outstanding, his conduct is unwavering, and his actions swift and decisive.³ Other people are left in the dust—it’s no wonder s.h.i.+zun regards him so highly. If he weren’t so insistent on not becoming a formal disciple, I’m afraid it would never be my turn to take the place of the head disciple.”

Seeing the look on his face, Shen Qingqiu could sincerely sympathize.

Gongyi Xiao resolutely said, “This junior came to see you for an important matter. This morning, Peak Lord Shang requested a pa.s.sage waist card from my master but was delayed by other matters and didn’t know when he could slip away. He seemed like he had some pressing business and let this junior bring in a letter.”

He reached into his bosom, where a letter was nestled.

Not only was the letter just hastily folded twice, but it also didn’t have a wax seal or a seal spell.

Shang Qinghua, how courageous!

Gongyi Xiao said, “Please relax, Elder, I’ve already looked through this letter.”

Relax my a.s.s!

Gongyi Xiao continued, “However, I couldn’t understand what it was saying.”

Shen Qingqiu inwardly released a held breath. Good, it looked like he misread the situation. Shen Qinghua wouldn’t f*** up this badly. He most likely used some sort of secret code in the letter, so there was nothing to fear even if someone had intercepted it.

Shen Qingqiu shook open the paper with two fingers. After skimming it, his face turned green. After reading two lines, his face turned white. All sorts of colors bloomed on his face and crisscrossed with each other in a lively show.

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

This letter was written in English.

Not only that, it was written in horrible Chinglish⁴ that was full of errors.⁵

The grammar was entirely Chinese, and uncommon words were just replaced by their Pinyin equivalents.

Great author Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky, did you not consider the possibility that I can't understand your toilet-tier English?

After putting together the pieces of the puzzle to guess the meaning of this message, Shen Qingqiu directed his energy to his hand. The paper broke into fragments and floated to the floor like snow in June—just like his mental state after enduring the rollercoaster of events that occurred the past few days.

As it turns out, it was him who underestimated Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky.

For Peerless Cuc.u.mber's eyes only:

(Translator's Note: Shen Qingqiu's reader ID is Peerless Cuc.u.mber)

Everything is set, all the appropriate preparations have been made. The place has not changed. There was only a small mishap with the time. In order to let the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed mature as soon as possible, I got a little something to help it ripen but accidentally overdid it. Right now, it's as ripe as it will ever get and will rot in no more than a week, so I hope you can leave Huan Hua Temple's water prison as soon as possible. Don't worry, it was only something like chemical fertilizer, there shouldn't be any difference when using it. I hope.

What do you mean a little deviation from the plan? Was there even anything close to a plan in this person's head?

You dare use chemical fertilizer to ripen that green plant that could be harmed by the pure sky? Just to ripen it! “There shouldn’t be any difference when using it”—this sort of guarantee is as trustworthy as the producers of powdered milk to enlarge your baby’s head!

Gongyi Xiao looked around and said, “Elder, are you done reading? If you have, please toss the letter into the lake to destroy it. In fact, last night Luo s.h.i.+xiong issued an order that allowed no one but him to enter the prison. This junior must leave as early as possible in order to avoid being discovered.

Shen Qingqiu grabbed Gongyi Xiao and said, “Do me a favor.”

Gongyi Xiao responded, “Please ask, as long as I...”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t wait for him to finish with “can do it,” and sincerely asked, “Let me out.”

“...” Gongyi Xiao said with difficulty, “Elder, this is really out of the question.”

Shen Qingqiu said solemnly, “I have a reason to insist on leaving. I absolutely am not thinking of escaping trial by the four sects. After finis.h.i.+ng my affairs, I will return to the water prison myself to await judgment. If you don’t believe me, we can establish a blood oath.”

One could not renege on a blood oath, but it didn't really matter whether or not Shen Qingqiu returned to Huan Hua Temple's water prison after completing his affairs. So, he was playing an immoral trick on Gongyi Xiao.

Gongyi Xiao said awkwardly, "I certainly believe you, but isn't it of primary concern for Elder to stay detained in the water prison? What sort of thing is critical enough that you absolutely have to leave? If Elder Shen is willing to explain, I could inform everyone participating in the investigation...."

Shen Qingqiu had some second thoughts. Gongyi Xiao was a Huan Hua Sect disciple, and to be involved in the escape of a prisoner was no small sin on anyone's head. This was a pretty upstanding youngster, and it wouldn't be kind to defraud him. Within the limit of seven days, there were bound to be additional opportunities.

Consequently, he changed his tone and said, "You had better not. It wasn't any worst-case scenario anyway."

As he spoke, he collected all the paper fragments on the ground with difficulty, tossing them into the lake to destroy the evidence.

Because most of his body was wrapped by the Immortal-Binding Cables, movement was extremely difficult. Before having shifted twice, the black robe had slid off his body.

Gongyi Xiao had originally bent down to help, but after seeing that black robe cast aside to the ground, he unintentionally raised his head to take a look. His arms and legs went rigid at the scene.

Shen Qingqiu: “.....?”

The white garment on his body had been neatly ripped from his shoulder. It was obvious from a glance that someone had violently ripped it open with their bare hands. In addition, there were fragments of material left hanging, looking like they had been pulled out by a whip. On the fair skin left exposed by the damage, there were more than a few pale red sc.r.a.pes. If one looked closely, there were also faint traces on his neck which had not yet faded.

Gongyi Xiao’s worldview received a devastating shock.

He said in a trembling voice, “Elder, you....are you sure it’s nothing urgent?”

No wonder Luo Binghe had ordered that no one but him was allowed to enter—even if they had the pa.s.sage waist card—and blocked even Peak Lord Shang’s attempts.

So it’s like this!

Simply a rebellious disciple!

Devoid of conscience!

Worse than a beast!

Gongyi Xiao inwardly cried tears of blood for Elder Shen. Shen Qingqiu himself said, vacantly, “It’s nothing urgent?”

Gongyi Xiao was secretly moved. How....how can Elder Shen show this kind of indifferent expression even in this kind of moment!

Sheng Qingqiu finished tossing all the paper fragments into the lake and said, “You don’t need to take the words I said just now to heart. You....”

Gongyi Xiao suddenly stood up, turned around, then left!

Shen Qingqiu’s expression turned gloomy. I just said you don’t need to take me seriously and you just immediately leave? Isn’t this a bit too blunt?

Who knew that before an hour had passed, Gongyi Xiao would return with an object in his hand. He walked over to Shen Qingqiu, undid the seals binding it, and waved it in a slanted motion.

With the flash of a white blade, the bindings around Shen Qingqiu's body abruptly loosened, feeling similar to an electric circuit had suddenly been connected. Stretching his fingers, his spiritual energy was unmistakably back in operation and flowing smoothly. Last time it had mysteriously been blocked by the poison, but after being bound by Immortal-Binding Cables for two days the poison had unexpectedly been suppressed again. Could it have been a fighting fire with fire, two negatives make a positive kind of principle?

The Immortal-Binding Cables dropped to the ground in pieces. Gongyi Xiao tossed over the thing in his hands, and Shen Qingqiu reached out his hand to catch it.

The Xiu Ya Sword!

Holding the sword, Shen Qingqiu was overjoyed and astonished. Looking at Gongyi Xiao, he said, "I thought this was supposed to be with the Old Palace Master."

Gongyi Xiao said in an apprehensive tone, "Even if I risk being punished by my master, this junior could not sit aloof while Senior is disgraced. I believe Senior Shen, please follow me!"

Shen Qingqiu involuntarily felt a sense of helplessness.

That....I keep feeling like....he seems to have misunderstood something significant....

But....forget about it....this is fine....

Shen Qingqiu said decisively, “Good!”

Although the demonic blood in his body was still dormant, Luo Binghe would be able to know where he had gone no matter where he ran.

However, it didn’t matter if he knew where he was as long as Luo Binghe couldn’t chase him there!

Gongyi Xiao said, deeply worried, “Senior, you... can you walk? Do you need me to carry....”

Shen Qingqiu’s face darkened and he took a step, quickly moving his body to prove that he could in fact walk, and walk very quickly at that!

Gongyi Xiao startled, then promptly followed close behind. Unexpectedly, when the two stepped outside the limit of the stone platform and onto the

path, the water curtain which had just been raised started spraying water with a boom.

Shen Qingqiu ran but stopped quickly, or else he would have been caught head-on by the water. The two stepped back onto the stone platform, and the water curtain retreated again.

It was like something was deliberately preventing them from leaving. Isn't this a bit too well-designed?!

Gongyi Xiao suddenly said, "I forgot, once the water prison has been activated, there must be someone on the stone platform; if this person leaves and there isn't enough weight on the platform, the water curtain will automatically reactivate even if the mechanism has shut off."

He didn't have the experience of helping a prisoner escape, so it was natural that he did not remember this sort of matter.

Shen Qingqiu said, "In other words, there has to be one person left on the stone platform before the others can leave?"

Gongyi Xiao nodded. Shen Qingqiu said, "Then you stay here."

Gongyi Xiao: "..."

After saying this, he flicked his sleeves and headed towards the outside. Behind, Gongyi Xiao weakly raised his hand and said, “Senior Shen, even though junior is very willing to help—but, if you don’t have me to lead the way, I’m afraid you won’t be able to escape....ah....”

Shen Qingqiu looked back and added, “Wait for me to come back.”

Gongyi Xiao blankly stood in the same place. He had half a mind to follow but was hindered by the fact that he had no way of leaving the limits of the stone platform and had no alternative but to wait quietly. In a short amount of time, he heard a m.u.f.fled sound from outside. Shen Qingqiu walked in dragging a person by the back of his neck.

Shen Qingqiu dragged the still unconscious pocked-face disciple onto the stone platform, patted Gongyi Xiao on the shoulder, and said, “I happened to see this one on patrol and borrowed him for a bit. Let’s go!”

In reality, he didn’t just “happen” to see him. There were four people on patrol, and Shen Qingqiu had hidden in a dark place and carefully selected this mouthy disciple!

Reika’s Notes:

This chapter was translated by Lily. “Worse than a beast!” – Did Gongyi Xiao think Binghe whipped him? Or did he think Binghe had taken

advantage of his own master?

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 40: Escaping Death at Huayue

Just then, Gongyi Xiao had also thought of grabbing a random disciple and using them as a weight, but it was only a fleeting idea. Since Shen Qingqiu went ahead and did it on his own, Gongyi Xiao breathed a sigh of relief for not having to knock out someone from his own sect. The two of them walked out together. Seeing Shen Qingqiu gather the black robe closer around himself again, Gongyi Xiao felt as if there was a lump in his throat.

Gongyi Xiao couldn't help but feel sorry for him. Though Shen Qingqiu was a Peak Lord, there was nothing he could do about being imprisoned and disgraced. Not only that, he could only cover himself up with the clothing of the same person who humiliated him. It really made people sigh with regret and pity!

Shen Qingqiu saw that Gongyi Xiao's eyes seemed to flicker with sympathy and something like grief and indignation. He could only react by remaining expressionless.

Suddenly, Gongyi Xiao said, "Elder, please take it off!"

Shen Qingqiu: "..."

What?!

Without waiting for him to recover, Gongyi Xiao already started to take off his own outer robe. Shen Qingqiu was considering whether or not he should throw a critical hit at him to wake him up, but Gongyi Xiao had already taken off his outer robe and presented it to him with both hands. He said, "Please wear this one!"

Shen Qingqiu suddenly saw the light.

Oh, so this is what he meant. Even though Luo Binghe's clothes were black, the clothing was similar to the person. It had the same low-key extravagant connotation that the protagonist himself did, and all in all, it was still very conspicuous if he wore it. If he changed into a common white robe, it would be quite beneficial to his escape, right? Gongyi Xiao was too thoughtful.

He resolutely took off Luo Binghe's outer robe and changed into Gongyi Xiao's. Before he left, he thought a bit and folded Luo Binghe's clothes neatly before placing it onto the floor...

After leaving the water dungeon, he initially felt that the path wasn't all that difficult to walk. But the further they walked, the more he felt that Huan Hua Palace's maze was indeed very terrifying. It was all one cave connected to the next, one path interlocked with the next, circling nine times with every three steps, circling around until it made someone's head spin. Gongyi Xiao's back was clearly right in front of him, but he only narrowly avoided losing him on several occasions. If it weren't for the fact that Gongyi Xiao knew the distribution of the water dungeon's guards and their daily schedule like the back of his hand, who knew how many teams of patrolling disciples they would have run into by now?

Half an hour later, the two of them finally made it out of the underground water dungeon. They walked quite a few kilometers without stopping until they entered Bailu Forest. Even though they were about to leave Huan Hua Palace's territory, the water dungeon's alarm bell still hadn't sounded, which meant that up to now they still hadn't discovered that the prisoner escaped. Luo Binghe's command that n.o.body else besides him could investigate the water dungeon had, in actuality, greatly helped Shen Qingqiu's escape.

After resting for a moment, Shen Qingqiu said, "Lord Gongyi, there's no need to accompany me any further. You should take advantage of the fact that we haven't been discovered yet and go back quickly." He paused a little before adding, "In seven days, if you go to Huayue City, you will definitely be able to find me there."

Gongyi Xiao said, "Since it's like this, I won't escort you any further. Although Elder knows what to do even after what happened today, please be extremely careful. And regarding the trial that will be held by the four factions in a month, please don't worry, Elder. As you said, innocent people will naturally be cleared. The lords and the rest will definitely clear your name of injustice."

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but laugh. First of all, his dark past was final and couldn't be washed off. Second, he didn't give a d.a.m.n about the trial that was going to be held by the four factions in a month hahaha.... Immediately, yet leisurely, he cupped his hands in respect. "We'll meet again."

The path from the edge of Huan Hua Palace's territory to Huayue City went straight through the region of the Central Plains, where the population was the densest and the economy was the most prosperous. This also meant that there was an extremely large number of cultivating sects and clans in the region.

The cultivators of this world greatly valued air defense. Just like Jinlan City, they would often create defensive formations in the sky above their territories. If a flying sword or spiritual weapon went over the speed limit as it flew across, it would undoubtedly be discovered, and the higher authorities of the sect would be notified as well.

As one could imagine, it would be like broadcasting his escape route with a megaphone set at full volume.

Shen Qingqiu flew part of the way and then walked without stopping to rest. Finally, he made it to Huayue City the next night.

Please read the novel at [bcnovels](#) ❀? ?♡?

He came at an extremely unfortunate time. It just happened to be the festival celebrating the establishment of Huayue City, and festive lanterns decorated with garlands were kept brightly lit throughout the entire night. The streets were filled with flying dragons and lion dances, the music thunderous. People and vendors carrying their wares were squeezed together. Almost everyone had come out from their homes.

What was even more unlucky: when he arrived, dark clouds were covering the moon.

Without the support of moonlight or sunlight, the probability of failure would increase greatly. Shen Qingqiu felt that it was impossible, and he decided that for now, it would be better to wait, at most, one more day. If the clouds still didn't disperse within a day, he couldn't afford to care that much and wait any longer. If the probability of failure would increase, then it would just have to increase. In any case, it would be better than hugging an overripe Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed and crying over it. He suspected that even if he made a dish out of it and served it with wine, it would still have a strong chemical taste.

Shen Qingqiu walked along slowly, and he frequently ran into some family's rambunctious children as they played. He brushed past laughing groups of young women and he felt a little bit of regret. If he wasn't currently fleeing desperately, then he could sight-see and stroll along in the city as well.

Suddenly, several men carrying long swords on their backs walked towards him, all wearing clothes of the same style and color. They all walked with their heads held high and chests puffed out, and with one glance he could tell that they were arrogant disciples from a mixture of sects.

It was strange to say, but the smaller the sects that the disciples were from, the more they feared that others wouldn't know that they were cultivators. They might as well have embroidered the word enormously onto their clothes. Shen Qingqiu turned naturally and conveniently picked up a demon mask from the side of the road before placing it on his face, calmly walking past them. Six out of every ten visitors at the festival were wearing masks,

so he didn't fear being too conspicuous when he was mixed among them. He heard one of the men ask, "s.h.i.+xiong, is the Xiu Ya sword really in the city where someone could just come and grab it?"

The leader of the group berated, "This is the bounty that the alliance of the four factions sent out— how could it be fake? Didn't you see that a lot of the sects have sent people over here to surround the place? Look, you guys also saw the reward that Huan Hua Palace posted. Don't you want it?"

Thousands of thoughts flew around in Shen Qingqiu's head. In the end, he had also unwittingly become a wanted man.

"It's no wonder that Huan Hua Palace put down such a big investment. If we're gonna talk about them, then it's also tragic enough..."

Shen Qingqiu thought, At the most, all I did was knock out one lowly disciple from Huan Hua Palace. I didn't even do anything else, so how did Huan Hua Palace become such a miserable victim? He wanted to continue listening, but those people walked further and further away until they were separated by the rush of people and he had to give up. Just when he was wondering whether he should find an abandoned house to rest at for a bit, one of his legs suddenly felt heavy. He looked down only to see a small child hugging his thigh.

The child slowly raised his head. His face was pallid as if he was malnourished but his eyes were big and bright as he stared straight up at Shen Qingqiu, hugging his thigh and refusing to let go.

Shen Qingqiu patted his head. “Which family are you from? Did you get lost?”

The small child nodded, and when he opened his mouth, his voice was soft and meek. “Got lost.”

Shen Qingqiu thought he was cute and looked a little familiar, so he bent down and lifted him up, letting him sit in the crook of his arm. “Who brought you out here?”

The little boy hugged his neck and pressed his lips together. “With s.h.i.+zun...”

Could he be a young disciple from some sect? If an adult came looking for him, then it would be a problem. But for some reason, the child’s sad appearance as he said “s.h.i.+zun” especially pulled at Shen Qingqiu’s heartstrings. He couldn’t harden his heart and just throw him onto the side of the road so that he could continue to squat there pitifully. He patted his soft little b.u.t.t and said, “s.h.i.+zun didn’t take care of you well; his conscience must be extremely bad. Do you remember where you got lost?”

The small child giggled next to his ear. “I remember. s.h.i.+zun personally shoved me down with one strike—how do you not remember?”

Immediately, half of Shen Qingqiu’s body became cold.

He felt as if what he was holding in his arms wasn't a young child, but rather a poisonous snake—an enormous snake that was coiled around his neck, baring its fangs. It could bite down at any moment and inject venom into him!

He fiercely threw the person in his arms away from him and turned, goosebumps forming all over his back. In an instant, all of the fine hairs on his body stood straight up.

All of the people on the street were looking at him.

The ones wearing a mask and the ones not wearing a mask all seemed to be frozen in that second, holding their breaths as they watched him.

Of the ones wearing a mask, the demon masks on their faces were ferocious and frightening; as for the ones without a mask, they were even more panic-inducing—none of them had a face!

Shen Qingqiu's first instinct was to place his hand on the Xiu Ya sword, but he instantly recovered. He couldn't attack!

This was what he had originally taught Luo Binghe. In the Dream Demon's formation, if he attacked the "people" in the dream, it would be the same as attacking his own soul in reality.

Cold sweat covered Shen Qingqiu's forehead. He didn't know when he had actually entered the scope of the formation, though people naturally wouldn't be able to remember when or how the "dream" had started. It couldn't be that his nerves had become so frayed that as he ran and ran, he had just fallen asleep on the side of the road, right?

Behind him, a young and tender voice said, "s.h.i.+zun."

Back then, when the voice was next to his ear, it had clearly been incomparably soft and sweet—but when he heard it now, it unexpectedly contained an unexplainable, sinister intent.

Child Luo Binghe was behind him, and he said distantly, "Why don't you want me anymore?"

Shen Qingqiu resolutely didn't look back and started walking away immediately!

Though all of these faceless people were looking at him—no, it couldn't be called 'looking,' considering they didn't even have eyes, but all of their faces were turned in Shen Qingqiu's direction. He could certainly feel countless gazes on him.

Shen Qingqiu pretended he couldn't see them at all and charged forward abruptly. If there was anyone blocking his way, he shoved them aside. Suddenly, a hand cut off his strike. When he turned his head, he saw that

although the hand was slender, it was so strong that it was scary; it was like an iron hoop.

A fourteen-year-old Luo Binghe grasped his wrist tightly, and besides the bruising on his face that was often there year-round, his expression was full of dejection. Those pitch-black eyes stared closely at him.

You're still coming!

Shen Qingqiu shook his arm three times before he broke free, pushing through the crowd as he ran. The first time was a child, the second time was a teenager. If an adult version came along, then he really wouldn't be able to bear it anymore!

But the street seemed to go on forever and he'd never reach the end. After the small stalls on both sides of the street appeared for the second time, along with the faceless children playing around and the young women wearing demon masks, Shen Qingqiu was finally sure that this road inside the dream was looping continuously. It was impossible to leave it by walking forward!

Since going forwards or backward was useless, he would just have to find a new path. Shen Qingqiu looked left and right before moving quickly to the front of a wine shop.

The big red lanterns were hung high in front of the wine shop's door, the red light dim and alluring. The wooden doors were tightly closed, but Shen

Qingqiu pulled them open and stepped inside. It was only when he completely stepped through that the two wooden doors slammed shut on their own.

The inside of the room was pitch black and a cold wind brushed past him. It didn't seem as if he was inside a wine shop, but instead a mountain cave.

Shen Qingqiu didn't find it unexpected though. You couldn't use common sense to evaluate a dream. Every door held the possibility to lead to anywhere in the world.

At that moment, he heard a series of strange sounds.

There was a voice that seemed to belong to someone whose lungs had been punctured. They were continuously gasping for breath with extreme difficulty and utter agony.

Moreover, it seemed that it wasn't just one person!

Shen Qingqiu snapped his fingers and a flame leaped out from the tips of his fingers, shooting towards the place where the strange sound had come from.

The light of the fire completely illuminated the scene, and his pupils instantly shrank in shock.

Liu Qingge held the Cheng Luan sword in his hand and pointed the blade at himself before plunging it into his own chest.

Shen Qingqiu and Gongyi Xiao meeting Luo Binghe at the stairs (Chapter 32). Image from fan video. Warning: video contains ma.s.sive spoilers. Eng subt.i.tled video.

Reika's Notes:

This chapter is by Yan. The child and the teenager... were just dream phantoms in Shen Qingqiu's mind and not the real Luo Binghe, right??? I guess it could be our dear little sheep going full yandere... Now all of the cultivators are looking for Shen Qingqiu, a wanted man who was imprisoned for helping the demons spread a plague. Poor guy, his reputation has been well and truly been blackened!

Chapter 41: Escaping Death at Huayue (2)

His entire figure was soaked with the ghastly crimson color of blood. Innumerable injuries could be seen all over his body, and even more blood leaked from the corner of his mouth. He seemed to have forgotten how many swords had been directed towards him already. A deranged anger covered his face, and it was clear that he had long let go of sanity, devolving into qi deviation.

This scene, under the brilliant, dizzying illumination of the fire, was terrifying beyond measure. For a moment, Shen Qingqiu forgot that he was within the Dream Realm, and threw himself towards Liu Qingge to pull out Cheng Luan.

The sword had already pierced through Liu Qingge's heart. Shen Qingqiu gently nudged it, only to be met with a spray of blood. Seeing this shocking sight, he slightly sobered up, retreating two steps back and b.u.mping into another person.

He jerked around violently. Yue Qingyuan faced him, his head lowered.

Although they were facing each other, Yue Qingyuan's eyes were empty of any light. From his neck to his chest, through all four limbs and his abdomen... he was punctured with black arrows.

Ten-thousand arrows had pierced through his body.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized what he was seeing in front of him—these were their original deaths!

The deaths that the original Shen Qingqiu had caused with his own hands!

Shen Qingqiu could not bear looking at the sight any longer. He would have rather been surrounded by a crowd of the faceless figures outside than to continue looking on at this kind of scene!

Please read the novel at [bcnovels](#) ?❀? ?♡?

He retreated towards the direction where he had first entered. Unexpectedly, he was still able to find the sliding wood door. Shen Qingqiu ran like a man who had just been granted amnesty, speeding away from the door as soon as he stepped foot outside. This time his mind was unstable, his thoughts a scrambled mess. As he staggered along the street, he couldn't help but stumble over himself a few times, cutting a sorry figure.

The “people” on the street stared at him. The surroundings were deathly silent.

When he had been running for who knows how long, he suddenly ran head-on into the chest of a passerby.

This person's reaction was to immediately envelop him into an embrace filled with heavy emotions.

The other person was taller than him by quite a bit, with a slim and lanky build. He was clothed entirely in black, except for a small exposed area around his neck. Above that, he was wearing a ferocious ghost mask.

Shen Qingqiu hadn't even been able to say anything before he heard an amused voice come from above:

“s.h.i.+zun, be careful.”

He didn't need to look under the mask to know who the person behind it was.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly fought against the other's embrace. The other person didn't attempt to suppress him, and struggling free wasn't hard. Only after he had retreated enough footsteps to guarantee his safety did he look at the figure.

Shen Qingqiu asked, “Did you make this city?”

Luo Binghe slowly removed his mask. The expression on his face almost looked like he regretted the “ghost-chasing-human” game didn't last longer. “Not bad. What does s.h.i.+zun think?”

Shen Qingqiu slowly nodded his head. “You really are worthy of being called the Dream Demon’s prized disciple.”

To be able to craft an illusion at such a meticulous level was an impressive task. Compared to the one that the Dream Demon had trapped them in so long ago, this one wasn’t lacking.

Furthermore, this illusion had managed to accurately grasp on to his greatest fear.

Originally, Luo Binghe’s mood had been somewhat good. Hearing this statement, however, his smile vanished. “I’m not the Dream Demon’s disciple.”

Shen Qingqiu found this somewhat strange. “Didn’t you pay your respects to him as your teacher?”

Luo Binghe choked, then indignantly replied, “No!”

Alright. No meant no. Shen Qingqiu didn’t feel like lingering on this question.

Luo Binghe said, “s.h.i.+zun, if you’re willing to come back on your own, you can negotiate any terms.”

Shen Qingqiu replied, “Can this be considered ‘lenient sentencing’?”

Luo Binghe said, “As long as I don’t remove my blood from your body, any attempts to flee are futile.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Oh. Is that it?”

He laughed. “Then, right now, why aren’t you trying to grab me?”

Luo Binghe stiffened, a flash of light flickering in his pupils.

Seeing this expression, Shen Qingqiu’s heart suddenly sunk.

Slowly, he asked, “That sword of yours, is something wrong with it?”

Heavens help me, ah!

When Luo Binghe had fallen into the Endless Abyss, he had found, inside the corpse of an ancient creature, a strange sword that a master Devil master forged using his own heart blood.

This sword was known as Heart Devil.

Hearing this name was enough for one to know that this was a dangerous item, right?!

That was, of course, a must! The more powerful a spirit weapon was, the more difficult it was to control. From the eons of time between the ancient era and now, the Heart Devil sword had gone through hundreds of owners. All of them were formidable geniuses within their sects—yet, despite this, there wasn't a single one that was able to escape the fate of dying by their own sword.

The Heart Devil sword fought against all that wielded it. If one could force the spirit to acknowledge you, it would serve as a formidable weapon; yet, if there was a day in the future where one was unable to suppress the sword's evil nature, then they were nothing more than a sacrificial sheep being led to the slaughter.

The original Luo Binghe had first suffered the side effects only after entering the Demonic Secret Realm and narrowly escaped being devoured by the sword. In order to resolve this problem, a 500 chapter side plot had occurred, where Luo Binghe had then collected eight or nine more little sisters.

But now, the entire plot of the story was in shambles. The plot event of the sword's counterattack was now occurring too far ahead of schedule!

The Heart Devil sword's counterattack was not at all easy to deal with. It was no wonder that Luo Binghe had been unable to chase him. Being so preoccupied with finding the remedy, of course, he could not catch Shen Qingqiu himself!

Suddenly, Luo Binghe grabbed one of his shoulders, forcefully pulling at his robe.

Oh.

Why was he back?

Luo Binghe's expression looked as dark as the burnt base of a pot. Slowly, one word at a time, he spat out, "Even if I can't personally come right now, s.h.i.+zun shouldn't celebrate too much."

Still, don't rip my clothes! Shen Qingqiu grabbed at the remaining cloth, angrily shouting, "What are you doing?! Is this the only way you know how to humiliate someone?"

Luo Binghe replied, "It was clearly s.h.i.+zun that first humiliated me!"

System: 【Coolness +50】 .

This could also add points? It was too abnormal! Why did he feel like this was too abnormal?

Luo Binghe's hand exerted force, instantly crushing the white fabric into small pieces that disappeared with the wind. He moved forward, his expression not quite hateful yet, and pressed towards Shen Qingqiu's direction. Seeing Luo Binghe's eyes, Shen Qingqiu felt at once a violent dread form inside him.

Although he had never known that Luo Binghe possessed a tendency to rip up clothes, he wasn't about to sit around and wait for death. He aimed a dozen attacks towards Luo Binghe, then quickly tried to make his escape.

Luo Binghe was clearly capable of gaining the upper hand, and yet preferred to play cat-and-mouse, patiently playing around with him.

Shen Qingqiu's speed was extremely fast, but in Luo Binghe's eyes, he was always a beat slower than him. Whenever Shen Qingqiu attempted to strike him, he was able to step aside calmly, then symbolically return an attack. Combined with the annoying people commenting on the System, and with the protagonist's coolness constantly going up 20, 30, 50 times incessantly, it really was enough to drive someone crazy!

After a few back and forths, Shen Qingqiu's face blackened.

Where are you trying to hit?! Are you playing around with me?! Isn't the objective of a fight to knock the opponent down?!

How was this a fight! This couldn't even be considered exchanging pointers—it was practically a.s.sault!

When he thought of this, Shen Qingqiu became distracted and accidentally went too fast, cras.h.i.+ng towards Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe unexpectedly did not even cower, allowing Shen Qingqiu to crash into his embrace. His voice spoke, amused and cheerful: "This maneuver s.h.i.+zun used was something that he personally taught me. Of course, using it has its pros and cons, the greatest disadvantage being that the lower body becomes unstable. How has s.h.i.+zun forgotten it?"

At this moment, Shen Qingqiu's mind became filled with a colorful array of "you little ****er" emotes.

F***! This maneuver really was something that he had taught to Luo Binghe!

His memory went back to the time when Luo Binghe had just moved out of the firewood room. At that time, with his extraordinary Heaven-gifted

talent, Luo Binghe had managed to tentatively develop his own style of fighting. However, other than the few moves that all the disciples were taught, everything else he had learned was worth dog sh**.

Shen Qingqiu, seeing him practice a set of sword, foot, and palm exercises, couldn't help but facepalm. Luo Binghe, at the side, waited for his verdict.

At a time like this, Shen Qingqiu couldn't bear to strike him down. After a while, he finally squeezed out a line: "It's very flexible."

In order to correct Luo Binghe's painful-to-look-at form, Shen Qingqiu painstakingly went to great lengths to give him daily personal training. However, for whatever reason, this smart and perceptive child performed extremely poorly. Luo Binghe, who should have been able to pick up on lessons easily without being instructed twice, in reality forgot what he was taught almost immediately. He would frequently use too much force, crashing into Shen Qingqiu's arms for who knows how many times, until eventually Shen Qingqiu reached his breaking point.

Are you doing this on purpose?!

He couldn't help but firmly slap Luo Binghe's forehead, yelling, "Is this how you fight your opponents? You're practically throwing yourself into their laps!"

After this, the red-faced Luo Binghe finally began to learn properly, not daring to make any more mistakes.

However, today, Shen Qingqiu had unexpectedly been lectured by Luo Binghe on his incorrect posture.

What kind of world was this!

Shen Qingqiu felt like his pride as a teacher had suffered a great blow.

While he was distracted, Luo Binghe's hands began to trail down his back, causing a line of goosebumps to form on Shen Qingqiu's skin.

Shen Qingqiu gritted his teeth. "Luo Binghe!"

System: 【Coolness +100! Congratulations!】

Congratulations my a**!

Luo Binghe tore off another fragment of the white robe, remarking, "When I see s.h.i.+zun wear this robe, my heart becomes ten times unhappier. It's better to take it all off."

Was he implying that he wouldn't be happy until Shen Qingqiu was naked?

Shen Qingqiu said, “If you hate me, don’t take it out on the robe. It belongs to Gongyi Xiao!”

Luo Binghe’s expression deepened. “s.h.i.+zun is the one who hates me. You even rejected a robe because I wore it.”

Why? Why were two grown men debating a robe in the midst of a faceless audience? Luo Binghe, were you really the type to have such delicate feelings?

I even brushed it clean and folded it for you, what else do you want? Did you really expect me to hand-wash it and then personally return it to you?!

Shen Qingqiu’s expression changed erratically. Seeing this, Luo Binghe inquired, “s.h.i.+zun, what are you thinking?”

Coldly, he added, “If it’s Gongyi Xiao, I advise s.h.i.+zun to stop thinking about him.”

Shen Qingqiu’s heart became filled with an ominous premonition. Heavily, he asked, “...What is it about Gongyi Xiao?”

According to the original plotline, Gongyi Xiao's banishment into the prospectless border as a patrol guard followed after Luo Binghe and the Young Palace Mistress tumbled together in bed.

But now that the plot had devolved into a mess that not even Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky could recognize it, anything could happen.

But before Luo Binghe could answer, the faceless people around Shen Qingqiu suddenly began to move.

Before, they had either stared blankly like mentally handicapped people or busied themselves with whatever they were doing. Now, however, they began to condense towards Shen Qingqiu, forcing him into the middle. Unable to force them apart, he sent a look at Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe's eyebrows were tightly knitted together, with one hand was pressed against his forehead. He seemed to be preoccupied with something, as if he was resisting some kind of force invading his head.

Shen Qingqiu was suddenly brought back to his senses. This reaction must have been caused by the Heart Devil sword counterattacking and invading Luo Binghe's mind. Unable to produce enough energy to maintain the illusion, the dreamscape was starting to collapse.

If he didn't leave now, then when?

Since Luo Binghe was currently unable to distract or hinder him, then, according to his experience, he should be able to destroy this weakening dreamscape as long as he could overcome his heart's greatest fear.

Shen Qingqiu, having decided to leave, left. Luo Binghe's splitting headache prevented him from moving. He could only helplessly yell, "If you dare to take even one more step, see what happens!"

Shen Qingqiu immediately walked ten or so steps. Afterwards, he turned around, asking, "What?"

Seeing this, Luo Binghe was angered to the point of spitting up blood. Word by word, he spat out, "...Wait and see!"

Shen Qingqiu didn't turn around. Coldly and loftily, he replied, "Goodbye!"

Do you think if you tell me to wait I'll wait? I'm not an idiot!

Shen Qingqiu looked around at one of the nearby shops. Kicking the door open, he entered the store.

No matter what was waiting for him inside, Shen Qingqiu had resolved to confront it with absolute calmness.

At the very least, his chances were higher here than facing off against Luo Binghe!

As soon as the door closed, the clamorous sounds from outside were cut as if by a sharp knife, enveloping the room in a deathly stillness.

Shen Qingqiu held his breath, silently waiting.

After a while, as if someone had lit a candle, the surroundings gradually lit up. Shen Qingqiu lowered his head, just in time to lock eyes with a foreign, yet familiar face.

A thin boy knelt in front of him.

He was clothed in a coarse cloth garment. In his kneeling position, he gave off the impression of a crestfallen figure. Behind him, his hands were tightly tied together with rope. Although his face was deathly pale, however, his two pupils were filled with life.

Shen Qingqiu was unable to tear his eyes off of him.

This scene was absolutely not in his memory. However, this face really did resemble him. Only the polish of time and cultivation were missing, and there was a youth to the boy's face that was no longer present now.

This was Shen Qingqiu, and yet it wasn't Shen Qingqiu.

What must be made certain was—this was Shen Jiu!

Shen Qingqiu suddenly sat up from the floorboards.

After waking up, he looked around, realizing that he was lying inside an abandoned building. The sky was bright, daylight spilling in from the shabby window frames and the small cracks in the rice-paper walls.

The memories came flooding back. Yesterday, during the festival, he had randomly wandered around until he found an abandoned building. His original plan had only been to rest for a while; however, Luo Binghe dragged him into the Dream Realm once he was asleep.

Thinking back to the dreamscape before its collapse, Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but become pensive.

Although the original goods and him were two completely different people, they shared one flesh body. Inevitably, he would suffer some influence. What he saw yesterday should have been the original Shen Jiu's childhood memories.

This could be considered as cheating. The current Shen Qingqiu suffered no trauma from watching these memories, so naturally the illusion had been easy to dissipate.

However, in retrospect, Shen Qingqiu felt doubt creeping his mind. In the dream, Shen Jiu had been tied up. He had originally thought that this time period was when Shen Jiu was still in the hands of the slave traffickers, yet the room had a soft carpet, all sorts of valuables, and calligraphy scrolls and paintings hanging from the walls. This noble room, instead of a traffickers' hideout, was more like a rich man's study...

It seemed like in the Qiu family, Shen Jiu had not received the love and affection that Qiu Haitang claimed he had.

Reika's Notes:

This chapter is by Cheryl. Thanks for reading and please leave a comment if you can. I love comments.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 42 – Quarrel at the Wine Shop

Shen Qingqiu jumped from the bare wooden floor and, under the influence of his subconscious mind, patted his body. His clothes were still all there.

However, even though his clothes were actually intact, he didn't want to wear them any longer since he now felt as though they could be torn off at any time!

Shen Qingqiu decided to “borrow” someone else's clothes to wear. Who would have thought that just as he finished “borrowing” and jumped down from the eaves, he would find several people staring at him wide-eyed when he turned around?

The enemies he met on this narrow road¹ were actually the same disciples he had seen last night when the festival was in full swing. He did not say a word. The man who was the leader of the other group immediately drew his weapon and shouted in a frenzy: “Shen Qingqiu, you really were in this city! Today, my sect's iron-fisted² disciples will enforce justice on behalf of heaven!”

It really was the standard script but why was there now a part about “enforcing justice on behalf of heaven?” Yesterday, weren't they talking about the reward from Huan Hua Palace? Was it fun to say one thing behind a person's back and another when they were face-to-face with each other?

By the way, what is this “iron-fisted” thing about? I’ve never heard of it!

Shen Qingqiu was too lazy to bother with them. He flung a few freshly made talismans that pasted themselves onto the cultivators’ foreheads. Their limbs went stiff and none of them had the chance to block the talismans.

Shen Qingqiu was in a bad mood. After he finished sticking the talismans on those people, he slowly made a gesture as though he was tearing something.

The next moment, the disciples discovered that they had no control over their bodies and were moving by themselves.

“What are you doing?! Why are you tearing up my clothes?!”

“Aren’t you tearing my clothes off, too?!”

“Senior apprentice brother! Sorry! But I can’t control my hands!”

Shen Qingqiu changed into new, plain, and simple white clothes and didn’t look back as he walked away.

After walking a few steps, Sheng Qingqiu saw that there were many people who had come to Huayue City, drawn by the search for the wanted man.

Even if a lot of the cultivators took off their uniforms and wore regular clothes, pretending to be ordinary people sitting at the roadside stalls, their manner was just too different from ordinary people. Shen Qingqiu felt that it would be impossible to go on like this. He smeared some yellow makeup on his face and carelessly pasted on a beard.³When everything was ready, he slowly walked back to the street.

Looking up at the sky, he saw that the clouds were thin and wispy. They seemed like they were gradually dispersing. If no unexpected mishap occurred, noon today would be the best time.

When Shen Qingqiu lowered his head, he saw a snow-white, slender figure flash past, his movements both fast and light. His face was extremely handsome.

Liu Qingge!

The hatchet man has arrived! Shen Qingqiu's eyes lit up. He was just about to catch up with that figure when, suddenly, he heard a lovely voice scolding someone from inside a wine shop: "What did you say with that filthy mouth of yours?!"

The voice was delicate and melodious. It sounded very familiar so Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but stop. His eyes were drawn towards the source. Suddenly, there came the sound of things crashing and the passers-by started watching the commotion.

At this time, another girl snorted and said: "Hmph, why shouldn't people say it? No wonder this piece of scum, Sheng Qingqiu, came out of Cang Qiong Mountain sect! All of you, especially the people from Qing Jing Peak, are naturally anxious to cover up your shame! Ha! Unfortunately, the whole world already knows what kind of person he is. You think you can cover it up?!"

Her voice was full of resentment. The girl who had spoken earlier immediately retorted, "Shizun is absolutely not the type of person who would do such a thing. Don't you dare slander him!"

Who else would speak so well of him now if not Ning Yingying?

Ming Fan's voice was also heard: "We're only being polite to you to give the Old Palace Master some face, so watch your mouth and speak politely, too!"

Although the most important thing for Shen Qingqiu right now was to find Liu Qingge, looking at the atmosphere here, things were not right. He paused for a while, afraid that the Qing Jing Peak disciples might suffer losses. He decided to stay for the time being in case things went sideways. It was better to wait and see.

The first floor of the wine shop was clearly divided into two factions.

On one side were the two leaders, Ming Fan and Ning Yingying, while behind them was a group of Qing Jing Peak disciples. Each and every one of them had an angry expression on their faces. On the other side was the Young Palace Mistress, standing in front of the others with her hands on her hips. The Huan Hua Palace disciples behind her had already drawn their weapons and the expressions on their faces were more resentful.

Two young girls, both with refined, delicate figures and each with a different type of beauty. Both stood gracefully, convinced of their own righteousness. Even though the air was full of crackling and burning sparks, this scene was also very eye-catching.

Luo Binghe, once again there's a fire in your backyard – no, the Qing Jing Peak disciples had come to this place and they clashed with the people from Huan Hua Palace. This situation truly embodied the saying “enemies meet on a narrow road.”⁴

Shen Qingqiu ventured to imagine that if he were to leave now, Qing Jing Peak would definitely suffer a big loss. You know, this Young Palace Mistress is so arrogant that there is no one that she dared not fight, except for Luo Binghe! Brutally beating people up was nothing out of the ordinary for her!⁵

The Young Palace Mistress snorted. “Not that type of person? Then tell me! Why did he flee to escape his punishment? And he also... also ... also did

that sort of thing!” Her voice was heavy with hate as she gritted her teeth and her eyes grew red.

Ning Yingying retorted: “Shizun hasn’t been convicted. What do you mean by ‘fleeing to escape punishment’? It’s not yet clear who did it. We Cang Qiong Mountain sect haven’t blamed you Huan Hua Palace people for being overly credulous and suspicious. You insisted on locking up the Lord of Qing Jing Peak in your water prison. If that hadn’t occurred then things wouldn’t have gone this far!”

The reason for all the ****ing problems was actually not the protagonist but him?

Sheng Qingqiu’s hands started sweating and a certain Shen’s heart was humbled.

At the same time, the dark clouds in his heart also became even thicker.

Looking at these people’s attitude, something must have happened at Huan Hua Palace after he left. Now the new grudge was added to all of the old grudges, and all of it was on his head.

The Young Place Mistress was furious —— indeed, Shen Qingqiu thought that her default state was one of great fury: “So you’re saying that Huan Hua Palace is to blame for courting disaster?! Well, well! Cang Qiong Mountain sect is really amazing at throwing its weight around arrogantly. Instead of apologizing, you act wildly in front of the victim’s family! With

this type of moral integrity, unexpectedly you still dare to boast of being the number one cultivation sect in the world! How absurd!”

Ning Yingying’s mouth twitched and she said: “Cang Qiong Mountain sect is widely recognized as the number one sect in the world. You admitted it yourself. But whether you admit it or not doesn’t matter. Besides, who is the one who acted wildly first? We disciples of Qing Jing Peak were having a meal in this shop. You’re inverting logic and reason since you were the ones who started shouting abuse at us as soon as you entered, saying that our entire Cang Qiong Mountain sect should be buried along with the dead——who the hell can say something that outrageous? Huayue City isn’t your Huan Hua Palace’s backyard! Or do you think that the whole world is your territory?”

Shen Qingqiu was stunned to hear her speech, which was said in a lovely and clear voice. How could the words of the innocent, unaffected, silly Yingying unexpectedly be so cutting? Why was the Young Palace Mistress acting like a rabid dog just let out of its cage, ready to bite?

Ning Yingying added: “My Qing Jing Peak has always been known for its courtesy and Shizun has taught us well. One shouldn’t argue with children with dirty mouths. That’s why we have tolerated your behavior until now. Have you finished cursing? If you’re done, then leave! Don’t interfere with our mealtime. I don’t feel like eating anymore after I’ve seen you.” Then she picked up a cup of tea from the table and poured it on the other person’s feet.

The Young Palace Mistress dodged but a few drops of tea splashed onto the edge of her skirt. She said, “You, you bitch!”

This time, Ming Fan quit eating. Throwing down his chopsticks, he laughed grimly and said: “Don’t think that just because you’re the Old Palace Master’s daughter that we’re afraid of you. Anyway, you’re nothing but a spoiled daddy’s girl and you’re not even of the same generation. Bitch? I don’t think anyone here is more of a bitch than you. Huan Hua Palace is losing face because of you!”

Shen Qingqiu was shocked.

In the past, Qing Jing Peak’s disciples were always obedient and submissive in front of him. They didn’t even dare to fart. When he told them to feed the chickens, they dared not walk the dog. When he told them to cook for him, they dared not boil porridge. But it turns out, they liked to run their mouths off when they went to play outside.

The Young Palace Mistress’s face turned pale with anger. In addition, she had heard from Qin Wanyue that this soft-looking little witch in front of her had been fellow disciples with Luo Binghe for many years. The two of them were childhood playmates who became childhood sweethearts! Envy and hatred mingled together and the Young Palace Mistress suddenly raised her hand. A dark shadow like a poisonous snake slithered out of her sleeve.

****! It was a new whip!

Seeing that a fight was finally about to start, the customers who had been sitting inside the wine shop were quickly and efficiently hustled out. As they passed by Shen Qingqiu, he noticed that they all looked strangely

calm. It seems as though the people of Huayue City were used to this sort of thing. In fact, with incomparable skill, the waiter even managed to finish totaling up everyone's bill.

The Young Palace Mistress, as the Old Palace Master's beloved daughter, had received a lot of hands-on martial arts training. Her weapon was also extraordinary so the whip's strikes were very fierce. As for Ning Yingying, she was the little junior apprentice sister that everyone at Qing Jing Peak doted on. She rarely encountered dangerous situations and had almost no actual combat experience. Her sword swung left and right but it was evident that soon she wouldn't be able to fend off the strikes. Ming Fan wanted to help but how could he enter the circle of the high-grade iron whip's dance? He could only watch the fight anxiously. When Shen Qingqiu saw how things were going, he picked up a green leaf from the flower bed at his feet and flung it out.

The soft green leaf, filled with spiritual power, collided with the high-grade iron whip. Unexpectedly, they all heard the ear-piercing sound of two hard objects striking each other. The Young Palace Mistress hadn't noticed anything strange but she felt the place between her thumb and forefinger had become numb. Her grip on the whip loosened and it flew off.

Ning Yingying was also confused. She was just about to swing her sword when she saw that the Young Palace Mistress no longer had a weapon to block her strike. Fearful that she might stab the Young Palace Mistress with her sword, Ning Yingying quickly withdrew her sword. The Young Palace Mistress, however, was very quick to react. After her weapon flew out of her grasp, she used the momentum of her arm to slap Ning Yingying.

With the loud sound of a hand hitting flesh, one side of Ning Yingying's face was slapped.

Damn!!!

Looking at the five fingerprints on Ning Yingying's face and how half of her face was swollen, one could clearly see how vicious her opponent's hand had been. Shen Qingqiu's heart was in pain.

I've never struck my disciple but you dare to beat her up?!

Ning Yingying's beautiful face was now asymmetrical – flat on one side and swollen on the other side. It looked quite ugly. The Young Palace Mistress's attitude was full of malicious pride as she rubbed her wrist, raised her chin, and laughed: "Since your Shizun hasn't taught you, then this Palace Master will teach you. The first thing you need to learn is that when people talk, they should observe proper behavior and speech."

Who the **** do you think you are to lecture my disciples in my place?!

Ming Fan drew his sword and shouted, "Bitch! That's going too far! Let's fight them!"

The other Qing Jing disciples had long been unable to endure the insults. Now that their little junior apprentice sister was beaten up, how could they

bear it any longer?! The others shouted and unsheathed their swords. Their weapons were dazzlingly bright.

Shen Qingqiu thoughts raced as he tried to think of a way to take care of the Young Palace Mistress without causing bloodshed or revealing his whereabouts. Suddenly, he noticed that one of Huan Hua Palace's disciples was behaving strangely. His appearance was one hundred percent fishy.

Shen Qingqiu stared at the man for just two seconds before his heart started beating wildly, crying out that something was very wrong.

I'm afraid it won't be easy to get out of here.

At first glance, the disciple actually looked very ordinary. He was in the midst of a group of Huan Hua Palace disciples but he was cowering and refusing to meet anyone's eyes.

Shen Qingqiu noticed him because his face was one color, his neck was another color, and his left and right hands were also two different colors. In addition, in the midst of a situation where everyone was lively, he didn't draw his sword, shout, or look at anyone angrily. He just kept his head lowered among the crowd of Huan Hua Palace disciples as though he was a pickpocket waiting for an opportunity.

As far as Shen Qingqiu knew, there was only one kind of person who would behave like this.

Ming Fan was busily fighting people when he turned back and shouted: “Little junior apprentice sister! How are you doing?”

Ning Yingying was in a daze for some time, as though she had been beaten silly before she came to her senses. Her face turned red then white, both angry and tearful, as she fought using her sword. She had suffered an insult when she was being too softhearted. This time, she didn't show any mercy.

Outside, among the crowd of onlookers, Shen Qingqiu saw an old cat with its tail curled up in the air, lazily licking his fur and basking in the sun. He picked it up and threw it inside the wine shop. The old cat was frightened and yowled loudly as it fled between two groups of people. Shen Qingqiu kept his head low as he followed in its wake, sneaking into the field of battle.

When a person inexplicably entered the room, both sides were startled. Ning Yingying was afraid of injuring an innocent person and was slightly hesitant to continue. On the other hand, the Young Palace Mistress didn't hesitate at all. She retrieved her whip and started fighting. Shen Qingqiu chased the old cat around, shouting out a name that he had just given it. Ning Yingying didn't dare to make a move in the midst of this chaos. Strangely, she felt as though her elbow was being supported by something and her shoulders were being pushed. Her sword was moving with almost no input from her as it danced and flashed with a silvery light.

Suddenly, there was the loud sound a hand hitting flesh twice. The Young Palace Mistress covered her face, struck dumb and frozen in place.

These two sounds were louder and clearer than when she had slapped Ning Yingying earlier.

Just now everyone in both groups saw how Ning Yingying moved her arms, slapping the Young Palace Mistress with one hand then the other, in quick succession. At that moment, everyone stopped fighting as though by mutual agreement.

Reika's Notes:

- This chapter is by Reika (me).
- “Liu Qingge! The hatchet man has arrived!” – 打手 (dǎ shǒu) meaning “goon; hired roughneck; bully; ruffian.” I thought this was weird but that’s what the raw said. I guess it’s because LQG is the one they send when they need to bully the other sects... since some of the other sects are full of idiots. I almost wanted to change it to “The War God has arrived” but that would change the original too much.
- “Luo Binghe, once again there’s a fire in your backyard.” – 后院起火 (hòu yuàn qǐ huǒ) a fire in one’s backyard; conflict close to home. I think Shen Qingqiu is talking about Luo Binghe’s so-called “harem members” causing trouble again.
- “The two of them were childhood playmates who became childhood sweethearts!” – 青梅竹马 (qīng méi zhú mǎ) lit. “green plums and hobby-horse” meaning childhood sweethearts. 两小无猜 (liǎng xiǎo wú cāi) innocent playmates.
- “In the past, Qing Jing Peak’s disciples were always obedient and submissive in front of him.” –

唯唯诺诺 (wěi wěi nuò nuò) literally “to be a yes-man.”

Chapter 43: The Protagonist Dies, Everything Ends

Ming Fan cheered, “Little apprentice-sister, great hit!”

Ning Yingying said weakly, “...no, it actually wasn’t me...”

Ming Fan encouraged, “Don’t be afraid—if you hit her then you hit her! Everyone saw that she started it. Even though other people haven’t hurt her out of the kindness of their hearts, she still launched a sneak attack on them. Serves her right!” All of the Qing Jing Peak disciples chimed in.

Glistening teardrops glimmered in the Young Palace Mistress’ eyes. “You... you guys... how dare you hit me... my dad hasn’t even hit me before!”

Ning Yingying, “No, it really wasn’t me...”

Ming Fan cut her off and spat, “You’re the one who hit her! Remember, if the Qing Jing Peak’s disciples are being bullied, we must return it twofold! If we don’t, we’re unworthy of Shizun’s teachings!”

Shen Qingqiu cheered in his mind with the rest of the disciples: this child Ming Fan really took his teachings to heart. Right right right, it was exactly like this: an eye for an eye!

Shen Qingqiu stealthily slipped into the crowd of Huan Hua Palace disciples and finally caught that howling, shrieking old cat. No matter how stupid they were, they should still be able to tell that something wasn't right. The Young Palace Mistress cupped her big red cheeks, which looked to be extremely cumbersome, and stared at him with a surge of resentment. "Hey! Who exactly are you? You have the audacity to make fun of me like this?"

The Huan Hua Palace disciples encircled him completely and shouted, "Palace Mistress is asking you a question!"

Shen Qingqiu bent down and released the cat. When he straightened, he pointed at the disciple that was hunched over, lurking in the very back. He said, "Why aren't you guys asking who that is?"

Everyone's eyes instantly focused on that person.

The Young Palace Mistress was currently in a fit of anger, and at first, only glanced at the disciple. Unexpectedly, the more she looked, the more she felt something wasn't quite right and couldn't be bothered with Shen Qingqiu for the moment. She looked over and said suspiciously, "... who are you? Why do you look like that? Are you really from the Huan Hua Palace? Why have I never seen you before?"

This disciple faltered and didn't speak. She turned towards her subordinates next. "What about you guys? Who knows him?"

That disciple saw that things weren't looking too good and let out a strange cry. Everyone pointed their swords at him. Shen Qingqiu sucked in a deep breath and shouted, "Don't get close to him!" At the same time, he picked up another green leaf and flicked it over with a flip of his wrist.

This time, Ming Fan also saw the force behind this leaf, not just Ning Yingying, and was stunned. The green leaf cleaved through the air with the glow of a sword's spiritual energy and sliced open the disciple's outer robe, exposing the skin and flesh inside.

This time, everyone looked as if they had seen a ghost, and they kept backing away. Some of them even squawked and immediately ran out of the wine shop.

Scarlet skin!

It was exactly what Shen Qingqiu had guessed. Based on what he knew, there was only one kind of person who would carry themselves like that: a sower who had disguised itself as an ordinary human!

Since it only painted its exposed limbs the same color as human skin and didn't bother with the rest of its body, its identity was revealed on the spot. The sower decided that it basically had nothing to lose and charged forward with a loud yell and bloodshot eyes. Most of these disciples were young juniors that hadn't gone to Jinlan City last time. They had only heard of this strange creature, but they had never seen it before. Yet at that moment, it actually appeared in front of them and, moreover, madly lunged at anyone

in sight, scaring everyone out of their minds. Shen Qingqiu saw that the sower was about to throw itself onto a Qing Jing Peak disciple and flashed in front of it, smashing his foot into its chest. The kick sent the thing flying into two tables, violently spewing fresh blood. He looked back and shouted, “Why aren’t you leaving!”

Ning Yingying was both crying and laughing at the same time. “Shizun, are you Shizun?”

It can’t be—you can recognize me even with a yellowish-brown beard stuck all over my face? Even though he was a tiny bit touched, if she didn’t leave during a time like this and stayed behind to drag him down instead, even revealing his true identity underneath his disguise—sure enough, her IQ was still low!

When he saw that the sower was about to stubbornly rush over again, Shen Qingqiu used one hand to push Ning Yingying out warmly and gently while using his other hand to send out a fire attack coldly and severely.

It didn’t hit.

No, it was never sent out!

The mouthful of blood that concealed itself in Shen Qingqiu’s body for many years rose sluggishly in his throat again. He really had enough of this ‘Without A Cure’ poison that liked to screw him over in critical moments!

He snapped numerous times in a row, but not even a single spark appeared. It was just like a lighter that had run out of fuel, and no matter how many times he snapped, he just couldn't ignite any sparks. Shen Qingqiu was flustered and exasperated, but the sower had already rushed over and latched onto his thigh.

Shen Qingqiu, "..."

He subconsciously raised his plagued-with-misfortune right hand. Indeed, three red spots appeared and started cheerfully spreading at a speed visible to the naked eye.

This was unfair. Why did it infect him so fast every time!

Maybe with his grief and indignation serving as fuel, his last snap finally caused an explosive ball of fire to kindle between his fingers. Shen Qingqiu sent the sower that was hugging his thigh flying with a kick before he cleaved downwards with the flaming fireball in his hand!

The sower's body was obliterated amidst the flames and sounds of shrieking. Ning Yingying and Ming Fan tearfully rushed forward, one on his right and one on his left. "Shizun!"

The other Qing Jing Peak disciples also wanted to join in on the fun, but they were quickly forced to retreat by Shizun's "go outside and run five

hundred laps” gaze.

Since his disguise was already ruined, Shen Qingqiu scrubbed his face with his hands and regained his original appearance. He asked, “Was anyone infected?” Then he sincerely and earnestly said the lines that he had always wanted to say to someone else: “Quickly, take medicine. You must not stop taking medicine!”

A female voice and a male voice, one high and one low, sobbed into his ears. “Shizun, we finally found you.” “Shizun, this disciple has missed you so much!”

Shen Qingqiu had yet to respond when his back suddenly grew cold. He pushed aside the two disciples as the Xiu Ya sword flew out from his robes and blocked the Young Palace Mistress’ iron whip with a clang.

If the Young Palace Mistress could be described as being in a fit of fury during her previous dispute with the Qing Jing Peak, this time, her actions truly carried the intent to kill. In her hands was a short whip that could slice like a dagger and cut like an ax, vicious and threatening.

Shen Qingqiu asked bluntly, “Are you crazy? Where do you get such vigorous anger from every day?” He had wanted to ask this question for a long time now!

The Young Palace Mistress shouted loudly, “Traitor! Return my Shixiong and Shijie’s lives!”

At first, Shen Qingqiu thought that she was crying about the Huan Hua Palace disciples who were killed or injured during the Immortal Alliance Conference again. Who knew that next, the Young Palace Mistress would scream, “All Ma Shixiong did was say something that wasn’t very nice when he was imprisoning you, yet you just... you just... he died so tragically, so tragically...”

Who was Ma Shixiong? Could it be that bitter and sarcastic pockmarked fellow? Shen Qingqiu said, “When I left Huan Hua Palace, I did not take a single person’s life. What’s the significance of you telling me that he died tragically?” He looked back and asked quietly, “...he really died? How tragically?”

Ming Fan also answered softly, “He really died, very, very tragically. His whole body was blue and rotten, and they say that he was infected by the demon race’s poison.”

‘The demon race’s poison really did sound like something Luo Binghe would do.

The Young Palace Mistress said, “There’s no use arguing! Today, I’ll make you pay for the death of my Huan Hua Palace’s disciples with your life!”

Shen Qingqiu said, “All my life, I have never been good at using poison. There are thousands upon thousands of ways to kill your Huan Hua Palace’s disciples, so why would I select the most troublesome method? It’s true that I was escaping from prison, but who can prove that I killed someone?”

A Huan Hua Palace disciple yelled, “Then who can prove that you didn’t kill someone?”

If this knot wasn’t untangled now, he was afraid that the two great sects wouldn’t be able to let matters rest in the future. Shen Qingqiu deliberated for a moment before probing, “What does head disciple Gongyi Xiao have to say about this matter?”

The Young Palace Mistress’ eyes opened wide, and the tears that she had originally held back started to fall from her eyes again. “You still dare to mention Gongyi Shixiong?”

She pointed her whip straight at Shen Qingqiu. “Do you think that just because he’s dead and there’s no evidence left, you can just make up whatever you want about him now?”

Shen Qingqiu felt like he was struck by a thunderbolt.

He caught the edge of her whip with two fingers and suspected that he’d heard something wrong. “What did you say? Gongyi Xiao died? When did that happen? Who did it?”

Even in the original work, wasn’t the most tragic thing that happened to Gongyi Xiao the fact that he was assigned to go to Huan Hua Palace’s most remote region to do some trivial labor?

The Young Palace Mistress said viciously, “Who did it? You still have the nerve to ask who did it!”

All of the Huan Hua Palace disciples rushed forward at once, and she commanded, “Kill this despicable traitor, and get revenge for Gongyi Shixiong and the Shixiong and Shijie who were guarding the water dungeon!”

Shen Qingqiu’s heart went cold. Did Luo Binghe kill all the disciples guarding the water dungeon, including Gongyi Xiao, without sparing anyone?

Could these hundred plus human lives all be placed on his head?

Ning Yingying said angrily, “We can’t ever explain things clearly to you, you stupid girl. Can’t you see that my Shizun also didn’t know about this?” The Qing Jing Peak disciples immediately entered into the fray as well. There were countless swords, and it was too late for Shen Qingqiu to think carefully. When he saw that only endless fighting would ensue if things continued like this, he leaped out of the wine shop and lightly called, “Come out!” Indeed, both sides couldn’t be bothered to keep fighting, and they scrambled to squeeze out of the shop.

Once he landed on the street, Shen Qingqiu was speechless.

A large group of cultivators who were all wearing different styles of clothing stood in a line, combat ready, glaring at him menacingly.

Alright. After all, they had caused too much chaos inside of the wine shop just now, so it didn't make much sense if people weren't drawn over, right...

With a tap of his foot, Shen Qingqiu leaped onto the roof before flipping over and standing on the upturned eaves. He sucked in a deep breath of air before shouting from his core, "Liu—Qing—ge!"

Someone flew up on his sword and furiously rebuked, "Shen Qingqiu, you're so evil. Did you purposefully run here and draw all of the manpower from various sects in a single place just so you could collude with the demon race and round up everyone in one fell swoop? Do you want to re-enact the tragedy of the Immortal Alliance Conference? My Ba Qi Clan won't let you get your way!"

They could just blame whatever they wanted onto him at this rate, couldn't they?!

Shen Qingqiu wasn't even in the mood to strike back. The sharp whistling sound of sword energy came from the east, and a person in white flew over on his sword as fast as lightning. He had too much momentum, and he needlessly created a strong gust of wind to the point that it threw the criticizing person off his own sword.

Liu Qingge stood steadily on Cheng Luan, arms crossed. “What is it?”

Too reliable, Renowned Master Liu!¹

Shen Qingqiu said sincerely, “Take me away.”

Liu Qingge, “...”

Shen Qingqiu said, “My poison flared up again, so I can’t activate the energy to fly on my sword. If you don’t take me, I can only fall down from the sky.”

Liu Qingge sighed. “Come up.”

The crowd watching from below continued to endlessly denounce him with things like ‘the Cang Qiong Mountain sect is a pit of wickedness’ or ‘the Bai Zhan Peak and the Qing Jing Peak are partners in crime’, but both of them acted as if they couldn’t hear anything. The Cheng Luan sword shot towards the sky, the wind whistling in their ears, as they left the rest of the people on their flying swords far behind.

Liu Qingge said, “Go where?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “The roof of the tallest building in this town. Please help me keep these people away in a bit.”

Liu Qingge said, “What on earth is up with you? If you didn’t want to go into the dungeon, why didn’t you say so earlier instead of making things so troublesome? Even if the Cang Qiong Mountain sect doesn’t know how to navigate the water dungeon, did you think we wouldn’t know how to tear it apart?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “That... there’s no need to tear the water dungeon apart...”

Liu Qingge said, “Get off.”

Shen Qingqiu, “I only said that there was no need for it anymore, but actually, I’m still grateful for your good intentions. It isn’t necessary to throw me off, is it?”

Liu Qingge, “Something’s coming.”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t say anything else and instantly jumped down.

The tips of his feet landed on the tiles, and he stood on the eaves of a roof. Cheng Luan’s momentum was extremely strong, so Liu Qingge did a dazzling backflip on his sword in the air before finally coming to a stop. He

looked attentively off into the distance, and Shen Qingqiu followed his gaze to look over as well.

But then, he heard a sneer come from behind him. “Where are you looking?”

Shen Qingqiu narrowly avoided staggering off the roof on the spot.

That ‘wait and see!’ unexpectedly wasn’t just lip service.

That also made sense. Since when was Luo Binghe someone who gave lip service?

Despite bearing the risk of the Heart Devil Sword’s counterattack, Luo Binghe actually still came to catch him... what a deep resentment.

Luo Binghe stared unwaveringly at them, his expression gloomy. He slowly reached out a hand towards Shen Qingqiu and said, “Come with me.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Gongyi Xiao died.”

Luo Binghe froze.

Shen Qingqiu continued, “The disciples guarding the water dungeon also died.

“Luo Binghe, was it really worth it to exchange over a hundred Huan Hua Palace lives just so that I would be hated by everyone?”

Red flashed through Luo Binghe’s eyes.

He said coldly, “You won’t trust anything I say regardless, so there’s no need for this nonsense! I’ll ask you one more time—are you going to come over or not?”

He stubbornly refused to retract that hand. Shen Qingqiu still hadn’t answered yet when ten or so people suddenly appeared in the air around him on flying swords, completely surrounding them.

The one in lead was that man from the Ba Qi Clan. This time, his body seemed to be a little lower, as if he was using the horse stance on his sword to prevent himself from being thrown off again. He yelled, “Shen Qingqiu is ours! No one else should even think about touching...”

Luo Binghe violently turned his head and shouted, “Beat it!”

He didn't even unsheathe his sword before a powerful wave of energy burst out of him, and there seemed to be a high-pitched whistling noise in everyone's ears. This time, all ten or so people were thrown several meters away, swords and all. Half of them even crashed into a wall or pillar, causing fresh blood to spurt from their mouths.

The Ba Qi Clan encountered a truly powerful and overbearing aura and were completely wiped out. The observers left behind were all terrified: this black-clothed youth's cultivation was extremely exceptional, so why had very few heard of his name before?

Liu Qingge pushed Shen Qingqiu. "Go. Do what you have to do!"

Shen Qingqiu said, "Can you handle him by yourself?!" 5:2, ah, 5:2, he hadn't forgotten this score. He had called over Liu Qingge only because he wanted him to help take care of some of the small fries and conveniently give him a lift along the way. He didn't want to bring misfortune on his head!

But these two were both characters who absolutely wouldn't obediently listen to someone else. With some disagreement—no, without a single word, they both started fighting. The Cheng Luan sword was extremely powerful, but Luo Binghe didn't draw his sword. Instead, spiritual energy began to gather in his hand, and he faced the attack head-on, using his palm as a blade!

Shen Qingqiu knew why he couldn't draw his sword. There was no room for a single mistake during a duel between two masters, and this was the

kind of moment where it was the easiest to be sucked into the void by the Heart Devil Sword. If the demonic energy invaded and seized his mind with killing intent while everyone was watching, then it wouldn't be worth it. Luo Binghe actually had two cultivation systems in his body; one set was for spiritual energy, and the other was for demonic energy. Since his mixed blood had blended successfully enough, the two cultivation systems coexisted peacefully and worked well on their own. If needed, he could even use two different attacks in his right and left hands respectively and combine them to show off. But right now, first of all, he couldn't draw his sword, and second, it wasn't convenient for him to use demonic energy. There was no way to hold back its destructive power, and so, unexpectedly, he was on the same level as Liu Qingge.

A burst of enormous noise shook the roof, and the white rainbow of spiritual energy exploded together. They were fighting too intensely, so the cultivators below who were from the various sects didn't dare to just rashly rush in. Even a brainless rookie who had never experienced such a thing before could see that if they even barely touched the two's murderous auras, they wouldn't need cultivation to instantly fly away!

They fought so fiercely that Shen Qingqiu also felt an itch in his heart. If it weren't for Without A Cure activating at such an inconvenient moment, he truly would have also wanted to go up and fight a bit too. Unfortunately, time was about to be up. He narrowed his eyes and stared at the sky before leaping onto the tallest floor of the building.

The wind whistled past him as he stood on the roof as if it could blow him right off.

Luo Binghe looked at him from afar and suddenly felt a burst of impatience. He was in no mood to continue fighting, and ruthlessness rose sharply in his eyes as he placed his hand on the hilt of the long sword on his back.

He actually dared to draw his sword here?!

Shen Qingqiu said hastily, “Luo Binghe, don’t be impulsive!”

Luo Binghe said severely, “Too late!” With a flick of his wrist, the Heart Devil Sword slid out, surrounded by visible, seething black energy!

Cheng Luan stabbed straight towards him, and Luo Binghe lightly tapped the edge of the Heart Devil Sword, which was as thin as a cicada’s wing. It seemed as if waves and waves of terrifying intent slowly oozed from the center of the sword, and Cheng Luan came to a complete stop in mid-air.

Cheng Luan wasn’t obeying his command. Liu Qingge had never once encountered this kind of situation before, and his momentary shock was hard to conceal. But Shen Qingqiu knew that the situation was serious.

If Luo Binghe was actually counterattacked by the Heart Devil Sword right now, then the people here in Huayue City and within a hundred kilometers all wouldn’t need to live anymore!

As a last resort, the Xiu Ya sword left its sheath, and Shen Qingqiu said, “Luo Binghe, come here. We should settle things today.”

Luo Binghe raised his head and looked at him darkly. In the next moment, he flashed to about three feet in front of him before raising his hand to create a formation that covered the entire upper half of the roof, cutting them off from everyone else.

He laughed with a twisted expression. “Settle things? How do you want to settle things? Shizun, can you and I still settle things cleanly by now?”

How could they not settle things cleanly?

Shen Qingqiu drew in a light breath of air. Even though he was holding his sword in his hand, he had no intention of crossing blades. In reality, he couldn’t do much right now even with this sword.

He said sincerely, “As matters stand, I have nothing much to say. As expected, even if every trick is used, it is difficult to disobey destiny.”

Luo Binghe sneered, “Destiny? What’s destiny? Is it allowing a four-year-old child to be bullied and humiliated without anyone lending a helping hand? Is it letting an innocent old woman die from anger and starvation?”

With every sentence, he took a step closer aggressively. “Or is it letting me fight with a dog over a scrap of food? Or is it allowing the person who I wholeheartedly, genuinely admired to deceive me, abandon me, betray me, and personally push me down into a place worse than purgatory?!”

He said, “Shizun, look. Am I strong enough the way I am now?”

“Do you know how I spent those three years underground?”

“During those three years in that endless abyss, all I did was spend every moment, every second, thinking about Shizun.

“Thinking about why Shizun would treat me like this, why you wouldn’t even give me a chance to explain or beg for mercy.

“You want me to acknowledge that this is the destiny that the heavens assigned me?”

“I thought about it for so long, and I finally understand now.”

In Luo Binghe’s smile, there was a hint of savagery.

“None of that is important, it’s enough if I do what I want to do. Destiny doesn’t exist at all, or if it does, then it’s something that should be trampled underneath my feet!”

The scorching sun was directly overhead, and the last of the clouds also vanished without a trace. Sunlight flooded the entire city, causing everything to glow radiantly as if pure gold had been spilled all over the land.

Shen Qingqiu looked away from the sky. Because he had been looking directly at the sun, it seemed as if there were some tears glistening in his eyes.

Even though there had been no other alternative, he truly had played a large role for Luo Binghe to reach this point today, turning him into a dark youth who was vindictive against society. His original intention had been to prevent Luo Binghe from going to the extremes, but everything he did not only failed to achieve any real purpose, but also carved Luo Binghe’s hatred and resentment even deeper into him.

When Luo Binghe saw his expression, he suddenly softened and couldn’t help but be a little dazed. But simultaneously, a fierce, sharp headache pierced his head. He clenched his teeth and gripped the Heart Devil Sword tightly, which was attempting to struggle free.

Not good. At the very least, he couldn’t be counterattacked by it here!

Suddenly, Shen Qingqiu said in a soft voice, “Don’t let it suppress your heart.”

When he heard this voice, he was suddenly taken back to his years at Qing Jing Peak.

It was even more difficult for Luo Binghe to control himself. It felt as if there was a sharp knife churning his mind, and the black flames surrounding the Heart Devil Sword abruptly surged out.

This time, it pressed down on him violently, and Luo Binghe was struggling to endure the severe pain when he suddenly felt someone gently embrace him.

Like the collapse of a vast dam, a burst of spiritual energy flooded into Luo Binghe’s body, bringing a relief akin to a torrential rainstorm after a long drought. In an instant, it extinguished the evil energy of the Heart Devil sword that he was currently in a deadlock with.

Luo Binghe’s breathing evened out and everything returned to normal, but immediately, his heart went cold.

Self-destruction!

Some of the people below the roof were already gasping and shouting, “Shen Qingqiu self-destructed!”

Shen Qingqiu let Luo Binghe go and slowly moved backward, staggering once.

The Xiu Ya sword fell first. Its master had already self-destructed his spiritual energy, and a sword was only there if its master was. It broke into numerous pieces in midair.

Shen Qingqiu always had the bad habit of swallowing his blood back down his throat, but at that moment, he couldn’t swallow it down anymore.

After his spiritual energy destructed completely, he was now a good-for-nothing that was even worse off than an ordinary, common person. His voice was light and buoyant, and most of it was blown away by the wind, but Luo Binghe still heard it clearly.

What he said was: “Everything that’s happened in the past, I’ll repay it all to you today.”

It could be considered a final act of kindness.

Afterward, he toppled backward and fell from the roof.

At first, Luo Binghe only stared blankly at him, and it was as if everything had been slowed down several times for him in that second. Even the moment where Shen Qingqiu fell was so slow that it was incomparably clear.

The body that was falling in mid-air was like a bloodstained paper kite. It was only when Luo Binghe's body started to move on its own, fighting to catch Shen Qingqiu before he hit the ground, that he discovered Shen Qingqiu's chest was light and flimsy—his entire body was empty of spiritual energy. He truly seemed like a paper kite that would break with one tear.

He didn't even need to tear anything. It was already broken.

He still didn't dare believe it.

Didn't Shizun loathe his kind the most?

Wasn't he always unwilling to get close to him? Didn't he draw a clear line between them?

Then why would he tell him to control his heart so gently, as gently as back then, at the last moment?

... why did he not hesitate to self-destruct his soul and help Luo Binghe suppress the Heart Devil Sword's counterattack?!

It seemed that there were people shouting things like 'execute the demon' and 'righteousness above loyalty' all around him. The inside of Luo Binghe's head was a muddled mess, and he could only hold onto Shen Qingqiu and murmur, "Shizun?"

The Qing Jing Peak disciples and Huan Hua Palace disciples fought each other the entire way over before they finally reached them. Ning Yingying had long since heard that Luo Binghe wasn't dead, and she was both surprised and happy to be reunited with him, but then she saw Shen Qingqiu, whose eyes were already closed peacefully. The words she was about to say suddenly changed, and she said, trembling, "A-Luo... Shizun... what's wrong with him?"

Liu Qingge walked over. There was still a trace of blood next to his lips, and he said with a heavy expression, "He's dead!"

All the disciples were dumbstruck.

Suddenly, Ming Fan shouted, "Who killed him?!"

Everyone's eyes landed on Luo Binghe.

Even though, strictly speaking, Luo Binghe couldn't really be regarded as the one who killed him, but Shen Qingqiu indeed self-destructed and died in front of him.

Ming Fan and the crowd of disciples behind him all drew their swords, ready to strike. Liu Qingge said, "You all cannot defeat him."

Ming Fan's eyes bled crimson. "Liu Shifu! Then Liu Shifu can kill him and get revenge for Shizun, right?!"

Liu Qingge said evenly, "I also cannot defeat him."

Ming Fan choked.

Liu Qingge wiped away the traces of blood next to his lips and said, "He didn't kill Shen Qingqiu."

"But although he was not killed by him, he did die for him," Liu Qingge said, one word at a time, like a sharp sword being drawn, "The Cang Qiong Mountain sect must avenge this wrongdoing!"

Luo Binghe turned a deaf ear to everything else, greatly agitated and at a loss of what to do. He was still holding Shen Qingqiu's body, which was rapidly cooling down. It seemed like he wanted to call for him loudly and

forcefully shake him awake, yet he didn't dare to, as if he was afraid of being scolded. He said slowly, "Shizun?"

Ming Fan shouted, "Stop calling him Shizun already, he can't bear the responsibility of being called your Shizun! My fellow Shidi, who cares if we can't defeat him? At the most, we'll just be beaten to death by him!"

Ning Yingying raised a hand to stop him. Ming Fan was seized by an outburst of anger, and he thought that Ning Yingying was still recalling her former affection for Luo Binghe. He accused, "Little apprentice-sister, it has already reached this point. Why are you still being childish?!"

Ning Yingying said, "Shut up. Even if you rush up and court death, would Shizun know? What would he say if he knew? Shizun would rather himself be infected before letting us suffer or be taken advantage of. This is how little you treasure your life?"

For so many years, Ning Yingying always had the charming attitude of a young maiden. When she suddenly grew unyielding at that moment, Ming Fan was completely stunned.

After a long pause, tears abruptly started to fall from his eyes.

He sniffled and sobbed as he said miserably, "But... if it's like this, Shizun was wronged too much..."

“Clearly, he didn’t do it, yet everyone said that he colluded with the demon race, that he killed people, that he’s scum, so they shut him in the water dungeon... he didn’t even have a chance to clear his name.”

He was choked with sobs. “Clearly, he liked this brat so much... he even bet five thousand spirit stones on him during the Immortal Alliance Conference, carrying such high expectations for him. He was so happy when other people praised him... afterward he wasn’t willing to return the Zheng Yang sword to Wan Jian Feng, insisting on keeping it and making a sword mound behind the mountain... he was heartbroken for such a long time... and in the end, this is the kind of fate that he meets!”

Luo Binghe listened faintly as if he was half in a dream and half in reality.

Was that how it was?

Back then, Shizun was also actually... very heartbroken?

Ning Yingying took a step forward, and though the rims of her eyes bright red, the tone of her voice was steady. She said, “A-Luo, even though we weren’t there during the debacle at Jinlan City, we all heard about it. I don’t know why you didn’t return to Cang Qiong Mountain sect or the Qing Jing Peak even though you didn’t die, and I also don’t know why you didn’t speak up for Shizun. I know even less about what exactly happened at the Immortal Alliance Conference. But at the very least, Shizun’s kindness to raise you and train you throughout the years, as well as his tender affection for you and his desire to protect you, were not fake. Everyone knew this naturally.”

After a pause, she continued, “If you feel that Shizun wasn’t good to you a very long time ago, then think of the day you lost your jade pendant. Shixiong and the rest were inexplicably beaten back, and you must have also thought that something wasn’t quite right. There isn’t another person on Qing Jing Peak who would pick leaves and send them flying as weapons to teach others a small lesson.”

Luo Binghe involuntarily held Shen Qingqiu closer.

He said in a small voice, “I was wrong, Shizun, I really... know that I was wrong.

“I... I didn’t want to kill you...”

Ning Yingying said loudly, “Everything that needs to be said has already been said. Even if there was once a time that Shizun was unfair to you or there’s some grudge that you can’t let go of in your heart, today everything can be considered to have been repaid to you, right? From today onwards, you...”

When she reached this part, she still couldn’t bear it and looked away. “I ask that you... do not call him Shizun anymore.”

“Repay”?

Yes. It seemed that Shizun had said he would “repay it all” to him just then.

Could it be that he was referring to... when he struck him down into the abyss in the past, so today, he would fall from a high building for him?

Luo Binghe panicked.

“I don’t need you to repay me. I... I just couldn’t control my anger,” he said out loud to himself. “I just couldn’t control my anger, since you acted as if you saw a ghost every time you saw me. You went on talking and laughing with other people as if nothing had happened. You were like that only with me in the past, but now you aren’t even willing to speak to me, always suspecting me... I was wrong.” He stammered and stuttered, wiping the blood off of Shen Qingqiu’s face as he spoke.

“You don’t like the fact that I’m part of the demon race, so I was afraid that if I went straight back to the Cang Qiong Mountain sect, you would chase me out. I thought that if I could seize the Huan Hua Palace and become a peak lord of the righteous path like you, maybe that would make you happy...”

Luo Binghe said in a trembling voice, “Shizun... I... I really...”

Reika's Notes:

- This chapter is by Yan. Yan asked if we ought to not put the chapter title up there but I was like, “Ummm the author put that there, we only translate, we don’t censor the author.... only the crab does that.” So yeah, massive spoiler in the chapter title.
- Farewell, dearest cannon fodder Gongyi Xiao.
- I cry every time I read this chapter. The comments are open, go ahead and let it all out!

Chapter 44: Manual Rebirth

At the border.

The night breeze was swift as it whistled through the tiny town between its scattered houses.

Along the entire street, only one small teahouse leaked warm light, giving it a bit of life.

The so-called 'border' wasn't the boundary between two countries or two cities, but rather the demon world and human world.

The two races were separated into different worlds. Originally, there was still a space-rending Endless Abyss that served as a partition in the middle, but there were always a few weak spots in the formation that kept the two worlds apart, causing time and space to be in disorder. One could often find residents of both worlds passing through those spots to run away, and things like maliciously sneaking across the border was a common occurrence as well.

No normal person would want to live in a place where the demon race came and went like shadows, stealing things one day before committing murder and arson the next. Therefore, the population at the border became more

and more scarce. Even though it used to be a flourishing metropolis, many people moved away once the space between the different worlds started to blur together. Only the disciples of the sects that came to mend the boundary stayed behind to guard the border.

Lu Liu poured a bowl of hot wine for the newcomer, exchanging greetings with him and a few other people as they surrounded the stove. “Brother, where did you come from?”

“From the south.”

“Oh, from there?” The people glanced at each other before making understanding expressions. “It isn’t easy to cross that area right now, is it?”

The newcomer held up his bowl of wine and frowned. “Who said it is? There’s a fight almost every day. Nobody can handle this kind of suffering.”

Someone chipped in from the corner, “Cang Qiong Mountain and Huan Hua Palace can both be considered one of the four big sects, so why have they stirred up so much trouble these past few years? Disciples from either side can’t go a day without fighting if they see each other. Why don’t the two Sect Masters do something about it?”

Lu Liu said, “How many years have you stayed in this cursed, god-forsaken place? You’ve been gone for too long. These disciples only fight so furiously because those two Sect Masters tacitly agreed to it!”

“Why’s that? Brother Liu, you should explain it a bit.”

Lu Liu cleared his throat and said, “This is complicated to explain. Do you guys know who the current head of the Huan Hua Palace is?”

“I heard that it’s a young brat.”

Lu Liu laughed coldly. “If Luo Binghe can be called a young brat, then both you and I don’t need to live anymore. It’s no simple task if we’re going to talk about this Luo Binghe. He came from Cang Qiong Mountain sect and was Qing Jing Peak’s Shen Qingqiu’s head disciple. Back then, during the Immortal Alliance Conference, he topped the rankings by a large margin. That was truly impressive.”

Someone else said, unconvinced, “If he came from Cang Qiong Mountain sect, then how can he be the head of Huan Hua Palace?”

“After the Immortal Alliance Conference, Luo Binghe went missing for three years, and nobody knew where he went or what he did during those three years. At that time, Shen Qingqiu said that he had passed away, so everyone believed that he was already dead. Who would’ve thought that, three years later, he would make a comeback as a key figure in Huan Hua Palace? He forced Shen Qingqiu to self-destruct then and there at Huayue City.”

The newcomer said, “I never could understand that. Was this Shen Qingqiu wronged, or did he deserve to die?”

Lu Liu said, “Who can say. The Cang Qiong Mountain sect has definitely been united in their treatment towards outsiders: they beat up whoever mentions it. Their sect has been like that all along; they recognize family, not logic. They don’t even allow other people to gossip about something resolute and final like An Ding Peak’s Shang Qinghua defecting to the demon world. Not long after what happened at Huayue City, Huan Hua Palace’s peak position changed hands. The Old Palace Master retired, and now you can’t even find his shadow anymore. Luo Binghe became the dominant authority, and if anyone brought it up, he’d kill them.”

Someone muttered, “Just because of a dead person.”

Lu Liu said, “The disturbance that this dead person created wasn’t small. Shen Qingqiu was someone from Cang Qiong Mountain sect, and he also used to be the Second Peak’s Peak Lord. His body definitely should have been sent back to Qing Jing Peak to be buried with the previous Peak Lords—but the problem is, Luo Binghe refused to return the body.”

Everyone thought of Luo Binghe doing something like whipping the corpse and putting it on display, and the hairs on their bodies stood on end. “If he refuses to return it, wouldn’t Cang Qiong Mountain sect forcefully steal it back? Bai Zhan Peak’s Peak Lord is still here.”

Lu Liu shrugged. “He can’t defeat him.”

“What?!” Everyone’s worldviews were destroyed. In the common people’s minds, Bai Zhan Peak’s Lord had always been like an undefeatable battle god. “He can’t defeat him” was something that was ... truly unacceptable.

Lu Liu said, “You guys don’t know? After Huayue City, Bai Zhan Peak’s Liu Qingge fought countless times with Luo Binghe, but he never won once! That’s not the end of it either. When Luo Binghe brought Shen Qingqiu’s body back to Huan Hua Palace, only a few days passed before he personally abducted Qian Cao Peak’s Mu Qingfang.”

Someone said, “Qian Cao Peak has always disregarded worldly affairs, healing the wounded and rescuing the dying. How did he provoke this tyrant?”

Lu Liu said, “Luo Binghe dragged him to Huan Hua Palace and told him to revive Shen Qingqiu.” He sighed as he said, “His corpse had already stiffened. What was there to revive?”

The newcomer said, “When I saw the two sides fighting, Cang Qiong Mountain sect always liked to call Huan Hua Palace ‘the demon race’s lackey.’ Why do they say that?”

Lu Liu said, “That’s because the entire Cang Qiong Mountain sect, for some reason, continues to insist that Luo Binghe is associated with the demon race. Even though countless Zhao Hua Temple elders personally inspected him and found that the spiritual energy in Luo Binghe’s body works normally, Cang Qiong Mountain sect still persistently calls him that... they continue to seek revenge on each other, and the hatred between

the two sects just keeps growing and growing. In my opinion, there'll be a day when everything boils over and nobody will need to live anymore." When he got to the end, he didn't forget to console them a bit. "It can also be considered a good thing that we were sent to guard the border, leisurely and idly."

The person in the corner said, confused, "I still don't understand what happened between this pair of master and disciple and the two sects."

"One explanation is a hatred as deep as the sea. But there's still another explanation that I, Old Lu, find more believable. Let me tell you guys..." Lu Liu was about to happily continue speaking when, suddenly, the sound of knocking came from the door.

Everyone in the room was instantly on alert, and their previous exhaustion and sluggishness was swept away at once as they each readied their own weapons.

The population at the border was scarce, and it was extremely bleak and desolate. They were the only team that was permanently stationed in the town to guard the border, and those on patrol outside wouldn't return so fast. The few remaining residents even more so wouldn't come out seeking death in the middle of the night to stroll around.

Nobody answered from inside the room. After a long pause, there were two more raps on the door.

Lu Liu said severely, “Who is it!”

Suddenly, a cold wind blew across, extinguishing the oil lamp and the candles on the table. The room was instantly plunged into pitch darkness, leaving only the dim red light of the coals in the stove to burn faintly.

The shadow of a man carrying a sword on his back reflected against the paper window of the door. The person said in a loud and clear voice, “Brother Liu, it’s me. It was too cold today, so I came back first. Let me in quickly so I can drink a cup of wine to warm myself up.”

All the other people let out the breaths they were holding and berated him. “Do you want to die, Old Qin? Just knocking on the door without saying anything—if we didn’t know better we would’ve thought that you were eaten by a ghost!”

The person outside the door chuckled. Lu Liu felt that something wasn’t quite right but couldn’t pinpoint just what it was, so he said, “Come on in!” and opened the door.

A gust of cold wind blew directly in from outside. It was completely empty.

Lu Liu slammed the door shut. “Light the lamp! Light the lamp, light the lamp!”

The newcomer turned and struck up a flame with his slightly shaking fingers, and the trembling light of the fire cast their shadows. He hadn't lit the candle yet before he turned around again. He stuttered, "Brother Liu, I... I want to ask you something."

Lu Liu said impatiently, "What are you wasting time for?"

The newcomer said, "There were only six people in this room before, right?"

"But when I look around now, why ... does it seem like there are seven?"

Dead silence.

Suddenly, there was an explosion of noise. It was unclear who moved first, but the sound of screaming and weapons clashing against each other mixed together, high and low. Lu Liu shouted, "Light! Light!" Everyone hastily created flames, but their movements were too chaotic, and the flames swayed wildly as their shadows shook violently, swaying to the point that it made their eyes dizzy. The more light there was, the less they were able to discern who was who. Everyone was afraid of hurting someone on their side, so they didn't dare to act ruthlessly, allowing the thing that had wormed its way in to reap the benefits from their confusion. There was a claw here, a knife there, and Lu Liu was currently resenting everything when something suddenly gripped his neck.

His eyes rolled upwards as his feet slowly left the ground, unable to see what was choking him. Just when he thought that his life would end right

then and there, the door abruptly burst open and a fierce wind rolled in. A human figure rushed inside.

Without seeing him make any particular movements, Lu Liu heard a strange shriek next to his ear, which seemed to come from the thing that was choking him. Afterward, its grip around his throat loosened.

The six people inside the room were still badly shaken, and there were some that were already lying on the ground. The person snapped, and all the oil lamps inside the room lit up at the same time.

He bent down to inspect the ones on the floor for a moment before standing up and saying, “Unharmed. They just fainted.”

This person was covered in black mud, and he looked exactly as if he had just crawled out of a grave. Furthermore, his face was covered with a beard, densely concealing his features. His figure was clearly thin, but his face made it seem as if he was a big burly man with sideburns. Lu Liu finally managed to stop coughing, and he looked him up and down for a moment before he cupped his hands and said, “Many – many thanks to Your Excellency for chasing away that demon just now!”

The person placed a hand on his shoulder. “I have something I wish to ask.”

Lu Liu, “Please do.”

The other said, “What year is it now?”

When Shen Qingqiu rolled and crawled down from the mountain, covered completely in mud, he really wanted to destroy Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky ten thousand times over. Destroying his soul, or destroying his backdoor, either was fine.

Back then, the life-saving method that he had considered the most was actually faking his death.

But what was the point of faking his death? He could find a puppet or someone who looked like him to die in his stead so he could slip away and escape, but the dramas had already overused that trope!

So, the method he used was to actually die.

That day, he had honestly, genuinely self-destructed, and he had done a good deed on his way out, drawing out a large portion of the out-of-control berserk energy from Luo Binghe’s body. To say that his spiritual veins had been ground into dust wouldn’t even be an overstatement.

When faced with death, he could only fight to survive.

The Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed’s nickname “Flesh Seed” represented its literal meaning. Even though this seed wasn’t much use for cultivating, it

was still grown from the synthesis of the spiritual energy from the world and the essence of the sun and moon. If its seedling was planted and cultivated in a place abundant with spiritual energy, meticulously molded and vigorously watered, it would be able to grow a living human body by the time it matured. Though the human body could be grown, there was no way to create a soul using this method. In other words, what was grown was a soulless, empty shell, and it couldn't be any more suited to be a vessel.

It was no longer just a dream to “plant a small Shen in the spring and reap a big Shen in the fall”!

But it wasn't as if the Dew Flower Seed was a big white cabbage that could be raised if you just sprinkled some fertilizer on it. Shen Qingqiu had ruined several Flesh Seed sprouts before he finally grew one that wasn't crooked.

He and Shang Qinghua had calculated various coordinates well in advance and implemented remote operations. They set up a transportation array underneath Huayue City's tallest building, and when the sunlight was at its strongest, Shang Qinghua set up a propelling array at Cang Qiong Mountain. Once Shen Qingqiu's soul left its body, he would be transported to the matured Dew Seed that they had long since buried deep in the mountains at the border.

Three locations, three arrays. When they were connected, they would form the most stable equilateral triangle shape. It should've been completely stable, completely reliable.

The only flaw rested with a certain someone.

Great God Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky was much too reliable.

Even though the mistakes Shen Qingqiu was worried about happening didn't occur, like 'his arms and legs didn't finish growing' or 'a key part of his body forgot to grow,' a Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed that had been forced to ripen too early using chemical fertilizer indeed had some side effects.

When he first woke up, Shen Qingqiu waited quietly for a while, but he didn't hear that abominable Google Translate beep.

His heart went wild with joy: The System didn't come out, hahaha the System didn't come out! I changed my hardware, I'm not going to install your virus software again hahaha! Even though he was only temporarily set at ease, he still couldn't help but dance for joy... dance for joy, his ass.

His whole body was still buried in the mud, unable to move!

He was buried for a whole day, storing up strength first from his fingers all the way up to the point that he could control his limbs. Only then did Shen Qingqiu climb out shakily.

The moment he broke free from the dirt, he had yet to revel in the pure and fresh air of freedom before he fell down face-first. Ah, his body wasn't listening to him again. He laid on the ground.

For an entire day, he did warm-up exercises as he walked, and only then did Shen Qingqiu's walking posture seem like that of a normal person by the time it was night. At any rate, he was no longer walking with the same arm and foot forward anymore.

He based this body on the appearance that he, Shen Yuan, originally had in his past life. It wasn't as good as Shen Qingqiu's immortal demeanor, but it could still be considered a pretty good body. The only thing was that it gave off a bit of a dispirited feeling like he was a pretty boy sitting around waiting to die. But because they had used a bit of his blood when they were raising the Dew Seed, it would still have some effect no matter what. When Shen Qingqiu rolled to the edge of the stream and used the sharp edge of a rock to shave his beard and take a look, this face still looked thirty-to-forty percent similar to Shen Qingqiu's. He silently picked up the beard again and stuck it back on his face.

After that, he finally managed to get down the mountain and grab someone on the side of the road to ask—holy sh*t, five years had already passed!

He could understand that the reason his body was uncoordinated or occasionally wouldn't move when he first woke up was because it needed a certain amount of time to adapt and reconfigure itself, but to be buried for five years before waking up—how did that happen?!

He had complaint after complaint, but in the end, this body... was simply overflowing with spiritual energy!

If the original Shen Qingqiu's body didn't have Without A Cure occasionally causing trouble, then it could also be considered as having abundant spiritual energy. The only thing was that if he compared it to the feeling he had now, it would be like comparing two bars of battery (still enough to use) to a full bar of battery (just unplugged after it had finished charging). Or, in other words, he could just be called a generator!

Could this be considered casting off one's old self and completely remolding it?

Was this a sign that his life as a protagonist was also about to begin?!

After many years, this was the first time that Shen Qingqiu felt like he had gained a little bit of dignity as a reincarnator, the first time he felt like the incompetent him was no longer dragging down the long line of seniors who had reincarnated before him!

When he refocused again, Lu Liu was still talking endlessly. "The problem of the demon race invading these past few years has become more and more serious. All kinds of monsters have come pouring into the human realm, and I'm afraid that a huge battle is about... oh, I still haven't asked for Your Excellency's name?"

Shen Qingqiu's 'haha I am Shen Qingqiu of the Xiu Ya sword from the Central Plains' Cang Qiong Mountain sect's Qing Jing Peak' didn't even reach his throat before it made a sharp u-turn. Close call, close call, he almost used his old name. He momentarily couldn't think of another name,

and he hesitated for a second before resolutely spitting out two words, “Peerless Cucumber.”

His past vanished like smoke. From today onwards, he would walk off the beaten path, and he would use this ID that had swept through book review sites for countless years.

After he finished speaking, Shen Qingqiu glided away, leaving behind a room full of frozen people.

A long pause later, the newcomer murmured, “Did he just say... Peerless... what was it?”

Lu Liu guessed, “Peerless... Chrysanthemum?” (t/n: 黄花/huang hua sounds like 黄瓜/huang gua/cucumber in Chinese)

“Wasn’t it Peerless Crown?” (t/n: 皇冠/huang guan, same thing)

“No no no, it seems like it was Peerless Wild Flower!” (t/n: 狂花/kuang hua, they’re just getting further and further away at this point lol)

Shen Qingqiu had walked several meters away when his feet nearly slipped out from under him.

Perhaps he should rethink it later and change it to a different name...

Naturally, the first step towards the start of his new life had to begin with the item that Shen Qingqiu was the most familiar with. The first prop he needed was a folding fan.

A fan with a white silk base and an ink-splashed landscape on it.

Shen Qingqiu opened the fan with a swish, fanning it in front of his chest, sending his long hair and beard flying. He probably didn't look very good, as he didn't really match his prop, but it didn't matter. With a folding fan in his hand, he now had the tool he needed to seem pretentious.

Shen Qingqiu placed one foot on the mountain rock and said, "Spill it. What exactly are your intentions for sneaking into the human world?"

Reika's Notes:

- Chapter translated by Yan.
- This chapter marks the birth of a brand-new character, Peerless Cucumber! As you know, this name is an innuendo since "cucumber" is one of the euphemisms for... *cough* you know.

- Oh, no! It seems that Shen Qingqiu's reputation has definitely suffered even after he sacrificed himself. Hmph, I would have thought Luo Binghe would want to cleanse his poor Shizun's reputation.
- There have been so many people reading Scum Villain that this website went over the website hosting bandwidth limits. I had to pay the bill prematurely and when the hosting has to be renewed in February I will have to get a more expensive one.
- This is because BC Novels is now getting more than 500,000 views per month. It's around 18,000-20,000 per day now.
- If you would like to donate then you can use either Ko Fi or Patreon. Please note that I do not offer advance chapters of Scum Villain on Patreon. I'm happy that all of BC Novels' projects are popular so if you can't donate then please don't worry or apologize for it.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

[Report chapter](#) [Comments](#)

Chapter 45 – Demon Culture

A pile of trembling people were squeezed in front of him... ah no, not people, they were demons. Although, just by looking at their appearance, there wasn't much of a difference.

The one in front shook with fear. "We usually just ... steal some small trinkets from the human world and take it back to exchange for some things."

If you are reading this on a website that isn't BC Novels then this content was stolen. Please read only at BC Novels.

The demonic race didn't have a common currency and mostly bartered. If something looked pleasing to the eye then they'd exchange for it—if not, then they would leave it. As for the demon race's level of craftsmanship and art, a piece of ordinary embroidery was equivalent to high-quality handiwork, so the various little trinkets of the human world were enthusiastically received. The things of least value were the various special crystals that were thought to be tacky and omnipresent in the demon world.

But what the demon world considered tacky and omnipresent was well received in the human world!

Shen Qingqiu snapped closed his fan. He said seriously, “This poor, remote, godforsaken place, producing ability is backward, the economy is not flourishing, and the people’s happiness is lower than the average level. Despite this, you take advantage of others’ misfortune and commit thievery—truly, this is something that should not be done.”

The little demon was greatly confused.

How come he remembered when he was captured, this... great person was also in the middle of stealing... ah no, borrowing some clothes to wear?

And this folding fan that was happily waved around was the same.

Shen Qingqiu thought, I was forced by the circumstances—surely he should not have to keep wearing clothes dug from the ground, wandering around like a savage?

But this opened up a new avenue of thought. If you can give the little demons, previously only petty thieves, a means to acquire these small goods, could this possibly set up a prosperous and peaceful farming community, giving them new ground in a society based around cultivators fighting demons?

Shen Qingqiu, like an irresponsible YY novel character, thought that if he were to take some underlings under his wing, then he must first understand the opposing side’s life. He asked amiably, “Do you eat rotten flesh?”

All the little demons shook their heads. Shen Qingqiu was just about to give a relieved sigh when he heard the leading little demon say resoundingly, “My father said only rich people can afford to eat rotten meat...”

Shen Qingqiu interrupted. “Enough.”

It’s hardly an economic question, ok! Luo Binghe, after he ascended to his position in the demon world, is enough of a big person, right? How come he’s never seen him enjoy eating this type of thing!

A pause. He changed the question. “What is your name?”

The first one replied, “Six Balls.”

Shen Qingqiu asked, “What does that mean?”

Six Balls said, “When I was born, my father held me and said I weighed six balls.”

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

What kind of ball? Shot-put or ping-pong ball?! This kind of name is completely senseless.

The rest of them fought to not be the last to announce their name. None of them could endure being the last heard. It seemed they regarded this as quite an honor.

Are all the names given to ordinary demons of this practical/pragmatic type!

Family names didn't exist in demon culture and the names they chose were incredibly unrestrained and imaginative, brazen and bold. Those generals whose titles render people speechless—for example, the Sky Hammer Elder or Single-Arm Elder—anyone could tell that they'd climbed there from loser stage in a glance. But if born a noble—for example, Mo Bei-Jun, Sha Hualing, or Luo Binghe's father Tian Lang-Jun—their situation was slightly better.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly had a thought. It was fortunate Luo Binghe hadn't been thrown into the demon world and adopted from there. If he were raised by ordinary folk of the demon race, according to this style, he would probably be given a name that seemed as if his parents bore him a grudge.

What would he be called?

Jade Face Little Lang-Jun?

No, no, no, it should probably be more impressive—thunderous to crack stones and startle the heavens. Remembering in the original work that a young lady had shyly expressed how Luo Binghe in “that respect” is so etc. The harem 3000 nights... even after a thousand centuries the golden spear didn’t fall and remained robust as ever. In fact, the name Peerless Cucumber suited Luo Binghe quite well, but since Shen Qingqiu was already using it, then Luo Binghe might as well be called... Heavenly-Pillar Lord?

Hahaha, holy f***, Luo Heavenly Pillar hahahahahaha how sick but invigorating!

Shen Qingqiu had just begun laughing when he suddenly gave himself a slap.

You’re f***ing crazy!

Are you really so pleased with yourself that you start thinking vulgar jokes in your head?

What is there to laugh about? Did you figure out who you should be making wretched?!

All the little demons, who saw this great person laugh until he fell to the ground and furiously slap himself in the next moment, were in a puzzled

fog, but they didn't even dare breathe. Suddenly, Shen Qingqiu's smile froze. His fan pressed down on Six Ball's shoulders and pulled him over.

Shen Qingqiu took a sword tassel from his waist. "Where'd you get this from?"

This was a sword tassel, but it wasn't an ordinary tassel.

This is the primary female protagonist Liu Mingyan's sword Shui Se's sword tassel!

This is the male and female protagonist's token of love, do you understand? Back then, at Cang Qiong Mountain, Shen Qingqiu had paid special attention to it—there didn't need to be a lot of distinguishing features for him to recognize it. How did this thing end up in this random little demon's hands?

Six Balls whimpered, "Th-th-this isn't stolen, this was picked up..."

You go to a random street and pick up another tassel again for me to see. Shen Qingqiu asked, "Where did you find it?"

Six Balls said, "Th-th-these past days, there are great people occupying the road at night, ordering their subordinates to come and clear the way. We

were a bit curious, so we hid next to the road, and picked this up off the road afterward.”

The great people the little demon spoke of were, without a doubt, the demon society’s nobles.

This type usually wouldn’t appear much in frontier zones, thus catching the attention of many people. Rather, the environment here usually didn’t suit them. What kind of important person would have the audacity to parade around and occupy the road, even leaving behind Liu Mingyan’s item that’s always kept close to her?

The first person Shen Qingqiu thought of was, naturally, a certain someone.

He asked, “The great person you speak of, is it... a not bad-looking youth?”

After a moment of thinking, he decided against concealing his thoughts, changed tactics, and said, “He isn’t just not bad-looking, he’s really quite attractive. Very attractive. White skin, charming face, tall, doesn’t smile much, but when he does it is quite dark.”

Six Balls shook his head, his face suddenly reddening.

What is he blushing for? Shen Qingqiu interrogated him further, but couldn’t get a word out of him. He mulled it over and thought it probably

wasn't Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe had the Heart Demon sword, which was an OP item defied the natural order, could at will slash apart the space between the two worlds, and, with just a slash, flick aside an opening to step into the demon world. He would never use up this much energy to run over to this remote area and dutifully walk the smuggler's road instead.

In that case, questions arise. If the demon sect passed through this area and left behind Liu Mingyan's things, could it be that Liu MingYan slipped up and was captured?

He couldn't remember a moment in the original work where the primary female protagonist Liu Mingyan was subject to this treatment. What kind of rustic little bandit dared to touch Luo Binghe's wife?

Though the Liu brother and sister pair usually stayed in their respective Peaks and cultivated independently, the original work mentioned they had a good relationship with each other. It was probably because neither of them were the clingy type that it seemed the brother-sister relationship was distant. But no matter if it was Liu Qingge's little sister or Qi Qingqi's beloved disciple, Shen Qingqiu couldn't ignore Liu Mingyan and not interfere.

Moreover, at this time, the system was (or should be) unable to threaten him (for now). He also didn't need to fear limitations or a flurry of deducting B points etc. Why not go over and have a look?

Shen Qingqiu asked, “The break/fissure between worlds—where is it?”

At midnight, Shen Qingqiu hid in the treetops, concealed all traces of his presence, and watched below.

He didn’t know how long he waited when a patch of air suddenly became distorted enough for the naked eye to see.

Shen Qingqiu’s eyes lit up as he held his breath, attentive. He saw only a single black-robed youth leap out.

The distance between them was quite far, but Shen Qingqiu’s eyes were exceptionally keen and saw him clearly. This youth was approximately seventeen years old, a strained expression upon his sharp, handsome face. Shen Qingqiu was quite familiar with this face, but he just couldn’t recall where he’d seen it before—he was, regardless, sure he’d seen it before.

Suddenly, the silence of the night was broken by a ringing female voice, sweet and cold, echoing in the forest. “As expected, Bai Zhan Peak’s disciples are exceptional—a hundred Immortal Binding Cables tied around the body, yet still able to beat my numerous subordinates to the ground and escape for this long. There really is not a single moment of laziness!”

Upon hearing this voice, Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized something.

Beautiful, noble, had subordinates, a demon who little demons would blush upon mentioning—so it's Sha Hualing.

Apologies, this girl is one of the female protagonists. With that said, it's been too long since we were reminded of her existence and more or less forgot about her!

If Liu Mingyan fell into her hands—what happened next would make people even more concerned. His face paled.

No wonder this youth's running posture wasn't right, like his body was particularly heavy. Shen Qingqiu had only looked at his face, but now that he moved his gaze down, he could see that there were numerous thin silver strands wound around his body. Seeing the color of his robes, he could tell he was someone from Bai Zhan Peak, but he had no impression of seeing such a young disciple at Bai Zhan Peak before.

This youth knew he couldn't outrun his opponent and suddenly halted, intensity streaming from his forehead. "If you want to fight then fight!"

A flash of red cloth, Sha Hualing sauntered over with swaying hips, emphasizing her figure. With a full-bodied laugh, she said, "I spent so much effort catching you, how could I fight you? Quick, why don't you just come back with me?"

This youth's temper was explosive, and he spat in contempt. Sha Hualing said, "Not willing? Though I won't harm your soul, chopping off an arm or

leg or something wouldn't affect your usability.”

Saying this, she stretched out her right hand to grab that youth but hadn't been able to make contact. From her fingertips, she felt an unusual tremor. Sha Hualing thought the youth retaliated, retrieved her hand in haste, raised it to look, and saw that her five painted scarlet fingernails were cut off to a shorter length.

Though it was just the fingernails and didn't hurt at all, Sha Hualing still felt her hair-raising. She shouted, “Who's there?!”

If there was someone else here who could effortlessly sever her fingernail, then they could effortlessly sever her neck.

Shen Qingqiu, content, returned the tree branch leaves to their original place.

He just wanted to scare Sha Hualing, but at the same time, letting her nails grow so long was no good, really. Every time he sees it he would worry it'll break, which made him feel awful. Also, it would frequently rake Luo Binghe's back to the point of making it bleed... Even if Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky enjoyed this kind of hardcore thing, even if Luo Binghe's rejuvenation ability was inhuman—it didn't mean it was a proper and healthy way of living, right?

Sha Hualing's killing intent rose, swirling her red sash, and a ball of imposing demonic energy gathered around her five claws, which was then

sent flying over to smother that youth. This young lady wasn't scared stiff; conversely, she was scared angry. She really was a character. Shen Qingqiu, helpless, leaped down from the treetops, appearing to drop out of thin air between the two people. He gathered strength in a single hand and released a sudden assault that collided with Sha Hualing.

He knew this body's spiritual energy was full to bursting but didn't think it was full to this degree. Their two palms had not yet made contact when Sha Hualing was sent flying away as if she was a repelled magnet—at the same time, those clothes that barely covered her once again ripped apart...

Though it was a bonus, Shen Qingqiu always insisted on following a “don't look at a woman who has an above average face in this world” doctrine, so he conscientiously pixelated her himself. Sha Hualing was direct: last time she was about to let loose ruthless words—this time she just measured her strength and, not speaking a single line for the occasion, skipped straight to roll away, rolled right into that distorted air, and vanished in an instant.

Shen Qingqiu tossed his fan back and forth between his hands, infused spiritual energy, and transformed the fan into a blade. With a flip of a hand he chopped, and the Immortal Binding Cable broke into a hundred or so pieces. The youth, with great form and decorum, cupped his fists respectfully said, “Many thanks to senior for saving me!”

Shen Qingqiu, also with form and decorum, asked, “You are a Bai Zhan Peak disciple?”

“That is correct.”

“Under who?”

“My master is the Bai Zhan Peak Lord, Liu Qingge.”

Shen Qingqiu was astounded.

Liu Qingge never took disciples. At his Bai Zhan Peak, there were, at most, only his contemporaries—otherwise, there would be the disciples of his contemporaries, but he himself had no interest in teaching disciples. Though Bai Zhan Peak claims to teach, they really just pick on people...

Shen Qingqiu was suspicious. “What’s your name?”

That youth answered clearly, “Yang Yixuan.”

I was saying he looked familiar so I must have met him somewhere before, right?

Five years was more than enough for a child to grow up. Shen Qingqiu gave Yang Yixuan an evaluating glance up and down.

Yang Yixuan said, “Elder?”

Shen Qingqiu inquired, “Your Shizun—how has he been these past few years?”

Losing to Luo Binghe at Hua Yue City would have been quite a blow for Liu Qingge. Shen Qingqiu felt a duty to ask after his Shidi’s situation.

Yang Yixuan answered sincerely, “Defeated in every battle.”

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

“Defeated in every battle”—these words became associated with the Bai Zhan Peak Lord. It truly made one’s courage fail.

Shen Qingqiu asked, “Who is he fighting against? Luo Binghe?”

Yang Yixuan grouched, “Apart from that little bas***, who else could it be?”

Shen Qingqiu’s expression faintly twisted. Yang Yixuan himself was much younger than Luo Binghe, but called him a “little bas***” Who did he learn this from?

He doesn't know, but the entire Cang Qiong Mountain sect had taken to calling Luo Binghe—if not “little bas***”—“evil demon” “white-eyed wolf,”¹ or addressed him without his honorific title. Calling him a “bas***” was considered to be courteous.

Shen Qingqiu said, “How did you fall into this witch's hands? I heard what she just said and thought it was strange. What does ‘how could I’ mean?”

Yang Yixuan promptly flushed. “If not for this witch using treacherous methods—first pretending to be a lady in distress, and after I became skeptical she all of a sudden took... took off... I'd never be trapped and caught by her!”

He understood in a flash. Shen Qingqiu lectured, “Look at yourself. Do you look like someone from Bai Zhan Peak? Even if you don't interact with women, doesn't mean you should dread interacting with them. What's the matter with undressing? What's the matter with a girl undressing in front of you? Your Shizun, back in the day, fought female demons in an entire cave full of naked ones!” Of course, with that said, when they were together at that time, he was suspicious Liu Qingge was either frigid or had some physiological issues...

Yang Yixuan's entire face was full of longing admiration. “An entire cave? He truly is Shizun!” and followed up with a puzzled question, “Elder is familiar with Master? Otherwise, how could you know that my Shizun fought the female demons?”

Shen Qingqiu sighed. “Old affairs, old affairs.”

They changed the topic of their conversation to more pressing matters. Sha Hualing not only caught Yang Yixuan, but she most likely also caught Liu Mingyan and brazenly seized Cang Qiong Mountain Peak’s disciples—there can be only one reason.

Something was wrong with Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe’s system of practice is an extremely unscientific system. Born of the demon and human worlds, the two types of energy would normally mutually reject each other when they were in one body. Thus, his spiritual energy and demon energy needed to balance each other.

However, the involvement of the Heart Demon sword would make demonic energy surge, disrupt the balance, and cause the energies to no longer work in harmony.

Important:

It has come to my attention that the line:

“When Luo Binghe brought Shen Qingqiu’s body back to Huan Hua Palace, only a few days passed before he personally crippled Qian Cao Peak’s Mu Qingfang.”

is incorrect. For various spoiler reasons that I can’t mention right now, I thought this was right but it’s not. Mu Qingfang wasn’t “crippled.” He was captured or kidnapped. There was some confusion because the raw used a contraction.

By the way, I know some people forgot who Mu Qingfang is. Reminder: He is the Peak Lord that specializes in medicine. He made the pill that healed the people who were infected by the sowers.

Reika’s Notes:

- This chapter is by Wenq.
- Thanks to all those who joined my Patreon and donated via Ko-Fi! In November the website got 591,741 views. Wow! Thanks for reading this.
- I notice that people are actually sharing this translation on Twitter and Facebook. That’s great... but many fans are actually linking to the aggregate sites that steal content instead of this site. *sad face* I guess they just don’t know any better.

Chapter 46 – Commotion in the Devil's Nest

To resolve this issue, Luo Binghe employed a method of using human vessels to draw out the demonic energy. Every month on the full moon, he would seek out someone with strong spiritual energy and transfer the excess demonic energy from his own body out to them. In exchange, he would absorb the greater part of the other's spiritual energy. Using this method, he would naturally be able to maintain equilibrium.

However, because Luo Binghe's demonic energy was excessively overbearing¹, the human vessel would be crippled after the energy transfer. Basically, each human extraction vessel could only be used once.

Luo Binghe certainly wouldn't do the demanding work of catching human vessels himself. Without much persuasion, Sha Hualing was, of course, willing to store people in cages for him to pick from as he pleased. On the night of the full moon, Luo Binghe would only need to use the Xin Mo sword to cleave open a passage into the Demon Realm and grab a person to use.

The sad thing was, in the original work, Luo Binghe married three of her personally selected female priests from the Tian Yi Monastery after Sha Hualing went through all that trouble. As one can well imagine, Sha Hualing went mad with anger!

Shen Qingqiu asked, “Did you see anyone else when you were caught? Where were you held?”

Yang Yixuan shook his head. “After we entered the rift between the worlds, we were in the lair of that demon woman, Chi Yun cave. I was shut in a solitary cell and didn’t see anyone else.”

Shen Qingqiu tossed Liu Mingyan’s sword tassel and said, “I think it wasn’t you alone who was captured.”

He thought a bit and decided it was best to go and take a look. In any case, tonight was not the full moon, not the time for the extraction. Luo Binghe was busy stirring up havoc and sowing dissension in the human realm, so he shouldn’t come looking to meet with Sha Hualing.

Shen Qingqiu asked, “You’re not scared she’ll take off her clothes?”

Yang Yixuan said disdainfully, “I’m by no means scared. Besides, during this whole journey, she took them off dozens of times. It’s not a rare occurrence anymore.”

Shen Qingqiu turned, speechless. Turns out she shut you in a solitary cell so she could strip for you to see—this good fortune is unbelievable. Young man, if you continue along these lines, the male protagonist will absolutely put you to death. It’s so worrying that this is indeed Liu Qingge’s sole disciple!

Passing through the rift between worlds felt like passing through a sheet of warm flowing water. After they re-emerged, they were in the territory of the Demon Realm.

On the human side, it was already past midnight, but on the demon side, twilight had only just fallen. The air was particularly arid. After standing there for a moment, Shen Qingqiu felt a bit dizzy, like he was suffering from altitude sickness. As far as the eye could see, there seemed to be little difference from the Human Realm—only the trees were a bit more sparse. Looks like the reforestation efforts weren't going too well.

Yang Yixuan led the way. Passing through craggy stones, they quickly found the opening of Chi Yun cave. It's an honor to see you at last, this cultural landmark of the demon race. Seeing it with one's own eyes, sure enough, it's... remarkably uncommon.

The demon race had an aesthetic preference for darkness. For the most part, both their permanent and temporary residences were all built underground. The entirety of the entrance appeared to be an exceptionally splendid mausoleum.

Shen Qingqiu thought, you're telling me, a big pile of stone with a stone sign erected in front and three letters in red calligraphy on top—what is this, a tombstone?

He cupped a handful of spiritual energy, ready to roast the face of any enemy who might appear at any time. Yet, descending the tomb passage—

no, the entrance—he didn’t encounter any guards. Thinking over it, this seemed reasonable. It was always demons stowing away to the human realm to abuse people—what sort of human would run to this side to court death? There was simply no need to arrange a guard.

The two slinked into the depths. Passing through stone corridors, they arrived at a large hall.

Spread throughout the hall were intact skins of all kinds of strange beasts, appearing to still be alive at first glance. Sha Hualing was currently barefoot, treading on a huge tiger skin spread on the floor of the hall.

Shen Qingqiu was worried that Yang Yixuan would recklessly make a sound and alert their opponent. Just as he was about to remind him, he saw that the boy had taken the initiative to shut his mouth securely. Feeling reassured, he turned back around.

On both sides of the hall were several cages of trussed cultivators, each wearing differently colored uniforms. Looking around, some were extremely young, some were old, some were drowsily nodding off, and some were glowering with righteous fury.

Sha Hualing walked over to one of the cages and said, with her arms crossed, “You Cang Qiong Mountain sect people are truly troublesome and annoying! It was hard enough to capture two of you, and one even escaped before they were put in a cage.”

She clenched her teeth and said, “If not for, if not for... I’m really itching to break all your legs!”

In this cage, Liu Mingyan sat with closed eyes and crossed legs, a veil covering her face, not reacting to outside disturbances.

Sha Hualing saw that she was being ignored and, smiling coldly, said, “That thing on your face, don’t you ever take it off? Oh, I see, don’t tell me your face is just too ugly and you don’t dare take it off because you’re self-conscious?”

Shen Qingqiu: Sister... are you aware who you will be most jealous of in the future? Saying she’s ugly is indeed just hitting yourself in the face!

Her women’s intuition causing mischief, the more Sha Hualing looked at Liu Mingyan the more displeasing she looked. Opening the cage, she dragged Liu Mingyan out and yelled, “Kneel!”

Liu Mingyan was naturally unwilling to kneel. Though she had no spiritual energy, she still stood firm. Sha Hualing pushed and shoved, but was simply unable to make her knees bend even a little. Spouting smoke through the seven orifices², she hauled off the veil on her face.

In that instant, Sha Hualing’s snow-pale face became even more snow-pale.

Shen Qingqiu roared internally: Turn around! Turn around! I want to see! Quickly, let me see what sort of appearance the book's most beautiful woman has!!!

These years, he was careful to maintain his dignified persona and couldn't say, "Hi, martial niece, I heard you're very pretty so I want to look at your face. Can I?" This sounded like sexual harassment from a vulgar man. Not being able to see Liu Mingyan's face this whole time—he was almost stifled to death!

But before Liu Mingyan turned and before he could experience the joy of seeing her face for the first time, an ominous glint flashed through Sha Hualing's eyes. Her five fingers forming a claw, her hand shot towards Liu Mingyan's face.

Consequently, Sha Hualing was shocked when she found herself flying a second time this night. She finally couldn't bear it, spitting out a sullen mouthful of blood. A reassuring thought suddenly flashed through her mind: At least this time my clothes weren't damaged. I don't need to change again, right....

Although Shen Qingqiu had sent her flying, she still scratched five gashes in his sleeve. Frightened, he said internally: Didn't I cut these fingernails off an hour ago? Is it possible that even her fingernails have unlimited regeneration?

After hitting Sha Hualing, he promptly turned his head to look at Liu Mingyan, but his feet slid out from under him as soon as he saw her. In this

short a time, she had unexpectedly put her veil back on right away—how about letting me take a peek?!

Yang YiXuan had found his sword sticking out of a seam in the rock and started to chop the chains on the cage doors with matchless speed. The freed cultivators huddled in a mass. Shen Qingqiu saw, out of the corner of his eye, the blue silhouettes of San Mayou and said with great alarm, “Stop, stop! Don’t do anything impulsive!”

Yang Yixuan, worried about his shout, turned back to look: “Is there some sort of problem, Elder?”

Before he finished speaking, he saw which cage he had just broken open. From within, three dainty Daoist nuns, looking like they had been cast from the same mold, rushed out of Chi Yun Cave like three whirlwinds.

Buddy, going through and randomly releasing everyone like this—you’ve released some people who really shouldn’t leave!

The three sisters responsible for absorbing Luo Binghe’s demonic energy long-term had been released!

This blunder had already been set in stone. Even if he watered his heart with his tears, he couldn’t chase them down and stuff them back in the cages. There was no other way. He could only join in releasing people.

As he started freeing people, he sighed in despair. We're dead. He managed to spoil the 'first meeting between the male protagonist and three members of the harem' plot thread. A freak accident managed to disturb the 'fooling around and cultivating' storyline. He could only attach himself to the hope that the hardworking employee Sha Hualing could fight them by enormous force of will and recapture them to present to Luo Binghe next time. What a crime, what a crime!

Shen Qingqiu was still wallowing in remorse when, lowering his head—his heart gave a thump—he suddenly found himself looking at a familiar face.

Not good, not good. It sure is an unlucky year, meeting enemies on a narrow road.

Qiu Haitang was huddled in the cage, staring at him with a bewildered expression.

Shen Qingqiu froze for a couple of seconds and decided to feign ignorance, motioning to her to come out, then nonchalantly turned around.

In his current body, no one (should) recognize him. In addition, five years ago countless pairs of eyes had witnessed the scene of Shen Qingqiu's self-destruction. There was no good reason to have a guilty conscience.

After spitting out blood, Sha Hualing dizzily lay on the floor for a while before finally struggling to a seated position with great difficulty. Staring at

Shen Qingqiu, she said in a stern voice, “It’s you? Who the hell are you? You even dare to chase me over here—you really have some guts!”

Yang Yixuan looked like he had suddenly thought of this question as well, blurting out a sentence while setting people free: “Oh right, Elder, who are you?”

‘Oh, right’—you’re kidding me. Young man, this reaction time really is too long!

Also, what’s with you carelessly asking this in passing!

Shen Qingqiu was considering whether to announce himself with the title of Peerless Cucumber again, when Sha Hualing humphed, “Whatever, if you came then don’t think you’ll be able to leave.”

She clapped her hands, bells jingling around her wrists. After a moment, Chi Yun Cave’s guard regiment finally flooded into the hall.

Chi Yun Cave was Sha Hualing’s official private residence so her standard underlings weren’t here. The shrimp soldiers and crab generals³ were nothing to be afraid of. Those minor demons circled around them as they raised and lowered their arms, looking exactly like they were doing a sorcerer’s dance. Shen Qingqiu was mystified by this sight. In a twitchy state of mind, he prepared to send them flying with his fan when suddenly he felt like his body was bound with countless strands of hair.

Immortal-Binding Cables.

Even though those mixed troops didn't have much fighting strength, they were clearly well-trained. Holding a strip of hair-thin Immortal-Binding Cable, they around circled him non-stop, winding him into a giant ball of string, fully wrapped with Immortal-Binding Cables.

Sha Hualing hadn't managed to cheer in victory before Shen Qingqiu laughed, then violently stomped on the floor. The air filled with the sound of snapping strings.

They burst. The Immortal-Binding Cables had indeed been filled to bursting by this person's spiritual energy!

Almost everyone on the scene was so terrified that they completely forgot the task at hand. This was truly the first time they had seen someone who could use spiritual energy to simply burst the Immortal-Binding Cables.

What a simple and brutal method of freeing oneself!

Shen Qingqiu yelled, "Run first!"

The freed cultivators didn't need any more encouragement—most of them were already long gone. Yang Yixuan and Liu Mingyan had struggled free of the Immortal-Binding Cables not long ago, but the circulation of their spiritual energy was still unstable. Knowing they would only get in the way if they stayed and seeing that they shouldn't inconvenience Shen Qingqiu with a reply, they crisply retreated, leaving only a “take care of yourself.” Seeing this, Sha Hualing's underlings didn't know whether or not to chase them and stood stricken in their original places, waiting for their superior's orders. Sha Hualing's eyes lit up. She pointed at Shen Qingqiu and shouted, “Catch him! Don't worry about the others! Just him—get him even if you have to die first!”

Shen Qingqiu sent the few mixed soldiers who threw themselves at him flying with his fan when suddenly something heavy pushed down on the top of his head.

A giant net!

Countless strands of Immortal-Binding Cable that were as thick a pinky finger were woven into a giant net, pelting down onto his head. When it fell onto his body, the weight of the net alone made Shen Qingqiu soft in the knees, nearly tossing him to the ground.

So it's this sort of unnatural prop. For every strand of cable to be this thick—are you trying to use it to bind ‘immortals’ or elephants?!

Sha Hualing waited a while, and, after confirming that Shen Qingqiu couldn't struggle free this time, slowly approached.

The difficult situation freshly swept away, Sha Hualing felt that she had performed a great service. Perfectly contented, her reprimands took on a coquettish tone. She said, chuckling, “If a hundred Immortal-Binding Cables can’t tie you up, then why wouldn’t I use a thousand, or ten thousand? This Immortal-Binding Net originally wasn’t prepared for you, so you should feel extremely honored that it was used on you. Don’t flail about! I’ll go easier on you if you’re well-behaved.

Shen Qingqiu said, “If you’re talking about going easy on me, can I trouble you to withdraw this net?”

The demon race’s star employee Sha Hualing started her grand missionary speech. Crouching down, she said as if talking to herself, “It looks like you were endowed with extraordinary innate skill. If you were to pledge allegiance to my banner, you could easily obtain splendid power and influence. Of course, it doesn’t really matter if you’re not willing to pledge allegiance. What has to be done has to be done, and suffering for your actions is unavoidable. You should carefully consider your options.”

No wonder Sha Hualing had ignored the others just now and concentrated all her firepower on him. Luo Binghe needed human vessels with rich and powerful spiritual energy. Of all the cultivators she had captured, none could compare to his current level of spiritual power. It seems like this girl was planning on offering him to Luo Binghe as a human vessel!

Releasing the three beautiful flowers was a thoughtless mistake, pure and simple. But Shen Qingqiu certainly never planned on making up for the shortfall himself. This feeling of accidentally picking up the wrong script

made him vaguely wish that fraudulent System was still there. While he was still pondering plans to escape, Sha Hualing suddenly neatened her slightly messy hair, and, with a swing of her hips, forged ahead out of the hall.

Far away, Shen Qingqiu heard the sound of her docile laughter. “My lord, today isn’t the night of the full moon. Why did you think to visit this subordinate? But you came at just the right time. As it turns out, I’ve prepared a special gift for you—it’s already here.”

In a split second, a flood of hot blood surged to Shen Qingqiu’s head even as he broke out into a cold sweat.

Not knowing where he got the burst of explosive energy, he grabbed the side of the net, willing the bottomless pools of spiritual energy in his body to emerge as explosive power.

“Bang!”

A giant sound boomed. Sha Hualing’s smile suddenly froze stiff on her face. She hurried back into the inner hall in a panic, immediately staring tongue-tied at the sight.

In the middle of the hall, Chi Yun Cave’s minor demons all swayed unsteadily, laid out on the floor in disorder. There was an immense hole in the center of the Immortal-Binding Net, edges still sizzling with flashing sparks, wisps of white smoke drifting through the air.

This person is truly too formidable. He even blew a hole in this Immortal-Binding Net with brute force. He's gone!

The person behind gained on her, unhurriedly stepping into the hall. Chi Yun Cave was lightless and dim, and one could only see a straight and slender silhouette dressed in black robes faintly patterned with reflective silver thread.

After a moment, Luo Binghe spoke in a tone that was neither pleased nor angered.

“This is your special gift?”

Sha Hualing said hatefully, “... A momentary miscalculation, he got away!”

Her distressed heart was dripping blood. When used against Cang Qiong Mountain sect's loathsome cultivators, an Immortal-Binding Net woven from over a thousand Immortal-Binding Cables got blown a giant hole just like that. This isn't the sort of thing that could be sewn up by a needle and thread and be reused!

Luo Binghe, with his back facing her, lowered his head and looked over the wreckage. He said, coldly, “I seem to have told you Cang Qiong Mountain sect's people were off-limits?”

Drops of cold sweat dripped down Sha Hualing's forehead. Luo Binghe had indeed told her such, but the spiritual energy of Cang Qiong Mountain sect's disciples was universally stronger than the spiritual energy of the disciples of other sects by a chunk—they made the best human extraction vessels. Holding on to wishful thinking, she had still captured a few, thinking that maybe she could switch their clothes and slip them through undetected. She didn't expect that through some unknown method, Luo Binghe would still be able to tell what sort of people she had captured even after they had all escaped. Internally, she couldn't help but feel her blood run cold, and said hurriedly, "Don't be angry, my lord, I had accidentally captured two of them, but I soon let them go. This time, this subordinate found an exceptional individual. I had never before seen a cultivator with more abundant spiritual energy. With that one person, you'll never need to switch to a new human vessel every month."

She bit her lip and continued, "As long as you'll give me... a certain thing."

After waiting for a moment, she suddenly extended her hand to catch the certain object tossed her way. Securely grasping it in her palm, she showed a determined smile.

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 47 Jianghu Gossip

At that time, countless reasons had already appeared for Shen Qingqiu to be all torn up about his situation.

These reasons were not that he had just made an explosive escape under Luo Binghe's eyes, but because in that split second he had heard an extremely familiar and hateful sound.

A voice with a mechanical accent like Google Translate.

I thought I had already scrubbed this clean. I thought I established that switching the hardware would get rid of the virus?! That since turning over a new leaf I could melt into the sea of people and have the freedom to fly like a bird through the broad skies?

Blocking his ears like the bell thief with covered ears,¹ Shen Qingqiu rushed from the demon realm to the human realm as fast as lightning, running like a hurricane all the way from Huang Ling to the outer borders. That devilish sound continuously poured into his mind like it was setting up camp in his psyche.

【.....Activating.....Activating.....Soul binding.....】

【.....Debugging.....Contacting customer service.....】

Was it because of this ‘soul binding’ that the System reactivated after running into Luo Binghe?

Did the connection break after switching bodies, so you needed to contact customer service to debug the program?

Luo Binghe is truly the devilish guiding star of his life!

Fortunately, aside from repeating those few keywords in a half-dead manner, at least the System could not speak in complete sentences. Shen Qingqiu had been smacking his head the entire way back, but after seeing signs of human habitation appearing ahead and considering his appearance, he slowed his steps and walked back to the garrison town.

This small border town seemed more alive in the day than during the night. It couldn’t be called flourishing—the streets were neither wide nor bordered with homes and pedestrians were neither many nor few—but with the storefronts open it could be called thriving in its own right.

Next to the tea shop, sign flag² fluttering in the wind, a young man and woman stood gazing into the distance, swords in hand. Shen Qingqiu

walked over and asked, “Why have you still not returned to Cang Qiong Mountain?”

Liu Mingyan sent him a small salute. Yang Yixuan hastily said, “The disciples from the other sects have already gone back. Seeing that Elder has managed to escape, we won’t have to worry anymore either.”

Shen Qingqiu went along with them into the tea shop, finding a table to sit down. To the side, some people who were originally chatting idly, suddenly cried out in alarm after getting a glimpse of him. “Ah, it’s... it’s...”

Shen Qingqiu turned around to look. It turns out it was those border guard disciples he had saved the night he had just crawled out of the ground. The person who had first seen him stammered, unable to call out a name. Lu Liu hurriedly said, “It’s you, Mister Peerless...!”

He had said the last two characters of the name after “Peerless,” but it sounded extremely vague, becoming too ambiguous after being pressed under his tongue. The others, a bit hurriedly, followed his lead one after the another: “It’s you, Elder Peerless...!”

Shen Qingqiu nodded his greetings, internally deciding that he must take another title, brooking no delay. Yang Yixuan blankly said, “Elder, is your last name Huang (Yellow)? Huang Hua (Yellow Flower)? Guang Hua (Magnificent Light)?”³

Shen Qingqiu sighed, twice, and also said vaguely, “It’s...” After using this ID for so many years, he finally felt a bit ashamed for the first time.

He put on a stern expression and said, “Last night, you disciples from various sects saw me in Chi Yun Cave. I couldn’t conceal myself there, so if other people ask about me, say as little about me as possible. It would be best if you could keep your mouths shut entirely.”

Yang Yixuan said, “Why? Elder, aren’t you familiar with my master?”

“Uh, we are indeed quite familiar...”

Shen Qingqiu still didn’t know what to say when the table to the side continued their conversation. One person asked while spitting out melon seed shells, “Liu-ge, why don’t you elaborate—what sort of alternate explanation could there be?”

Lu Liu said, “That alternate explanation is very interesting. This opinion seems to have spread from people on the inside. This Luo Binghe and Shen Qingqiu...”

Upon hearing these two names, Shen Qingqiu’s heart gave a thump. Involuntarily, he straightened his posture, pricking up his ears to listen. The waving of the fan in his hands slowed. The two from Cang Qiong Mountain sect also could not resist looking over.

Lu Liu drank a mouthful of tea and said, “This Luo Binghe and Shen Qingqiu were master and disciple, right? This Luo Binghe came from a poor and humble family and suffered the hardships of the world since he was young. After becoming a disciple of Cang Qiong Mountain sect he was still underappreciated for a while and was beaten down and humiliated by his peers. Fortunately, Shen Qingqiu treated him with generosity and deep affection.”

He spoke with grandeur and musical inflection, vibrantly acting out each word, giving professional storytellers a run for their money.⁴ Shen Qingqiu subtly nodded. Right, before he had kicked Luo Binghe down into the Endless Abyss, you bet he was quite kindhearted.

Yang Yixuan snorted and said, “What use did that generosity and affection have? It still wasn’t...”

One person said, flabbergasted, “Isn’t this version of events the complete opposite of the rumor that Shen Qingqiu oppressed his disciples?”

Lu Liu said, “You’re already astonished at this? Then what are you going to do when I continue to explain the rumors that this pair of master and disciple were together day and night with sincere emotion born in secret?”

The three people at Shen Qingqiu’s table had taken a mouthful of tea, but upon hearing this sentence, Shen Qingqiu and Yang Yixuan simultaneously spat it out. Though Liu Mingyan didn’t spit out her mouthful, her hand shook, tilting her teacup and spilling tea all over the table.

The whole table sucked in a breath here and there: “There’s this sort of rumor?!”

Lu Liu said, “That’s right! But, strictly speaking, it was Luo Binghe harboring one-sided impure thoughts towards Shen Qingqiu, his own wishful thinking.”

His own wishful thinking? His own wishful thinking?!

“What sort of person was Shen Qingqiu? Qing Jing Peak’s Peak Lord. What was the way of Qing Jing Peak? Tranquility of heart and forsaking of desire, setting one’s heart on throwing oneself into the lawful path of cultivation. Shen Qingqiu saw through the mortal world and didn’t get tangled in the foolish sentiments of normal people. It was because that Luo Binghe sought something he failed to get that hate was born from love!”

Blue veins popped up on Shen Qingqiu’s forehead and the backs of his hands.

Yang Yixuan said, astonished, “H-hate born from love?”

Lu Liu continued, “Thinking of it this way, it’s very easy to explain everything else. The whole sequence of events at the Immortal Alliance Conference was definitely like this:

“Luo Binghe, as Qing Jing Peak’s head disciple, was sent to compete. Because of his remarkable performance, he was filled with confidence in himself. It just happened that at that time, demons ran loose within the sealed mountain and Shen Qingqiu entered Jue Di Gorge to provide backup. Luo Binghe was caught up in the moment and seized the opportunity to confess his true feelings to his Shizun.”

Shen Qingqiu facepalmed in pain.

Why, why does it always seem like for this person, out of every ten sentences there are nine that are not bad, but it’s always the last one that sounds so strange?

In addition, it’s exactly this sentence that changes the meaning of the whole incident into something so strange!

Lu Liu said solemnly, “Shen Qingqiu had a noble and unsullied character and naturally gave a firm rejection.”

Shen Qingqiu was faintly moved. Other than his Zhangmen Shixiong,⁵ he never expected to find an outsider willing to apply the phrase “noble and unsullied character” to his person. Who would have thought that immediately afterward the storyline would take a dramatic turn? Lu Liu said with a voice full of emotion, “Who could have guessed that after being rejected, Luo Binghe would become desperate? Overflowing with evil

intent, he even lost his mind and went berserk. In a disgraceful and unfilial act, his desire led him to try and make Shen Qingqiu submit by force!”

Shen Qingqiu sunk his fingers into his head of messy hair, sunk in deep despair.

Yang Yixuan was already speechless. The gates of a whole new world had just been opened for that young man, and he was being battered by new perspectives. Liu Mingyan, on the other hand, just let out a soft “Ah.”

She only carefully said, “So it was like that.”

‘So it was like that’ what?!

Which ‘that’ is ‘that’ referring to?!

Don’t think I won’t fight you just because you’re the female protagonist!

Before they had noticed, a crowd of spectators had congregated at Lu Liu’s table to listen to the gossip, melon seeds and wooden benches covering the floor. Listening with rapt attention, they all sighed at this point, “What a beast of a person—”

“Not only a beast, simply worse than a beast—”

In the sound of these sighs, all seemed to have satisfied a matchless interest.

Big Brother, are you the captain of the border patrol squad or the gossip squad?!

Lu Liu abruptly slammed his teacup down like a gavel.⁶

“There’s no way Shen Qingqiu would be willing to submit! The master and disciple crossed swords. The end result was that the Shifu won an extra chip and Luo Binghe retreated in defeat, sadly making his exit.

“Even though they had an acrimonious falling-out and tore into each other, Shen Qingqiu still couldn’t bear to ruin the reputation of his beloved disciple. It wouldn’t do to explain things clearly, so he used the excuse that Luo Binghe had met his death at the hands of the Demon Race. Though he did preserve the reputation of this disciple, he wasn’t willing to go to extremes.

“So, this is the truth behind Luo Binghe’s years-long disappearance after the Immortal Alliance Conference and why he did not return to the Cang Qiong Mountain Sect even though he was not dead.

“It’s not that he didn’t want to see, it’s that he didn’t have the face to see his Shizun!”

On that end, his story was in full swing. On his end, Shen Qingqiu was watering his heart with tears.

What an intense storyline!

Who are these two—the assaulter and the white lotus flower Virgin Mary!?

The key is whether he was able to succeed in forcing himself or not—this is really dampening the point of a dam**d urgent issue. How could this happen to Luo Binghe? If he wanted to force himself on someone, who wouldn’t obediently spread their legs?!

Lu Liu said, “After the frustrating emotional affairs of the Immortal Alliance Conference, Luo Binghe had another fortuitous meeting. He trained until he gained exceptional achievements from head to toe, and even gained the favor of Huan Hua Temple’s Old Palace Master. But, he was still unwilling to give up on Shen Qingqiu. Returning in a swirl of dust, then occurred the events of Hua Yue City.

“Doesn’t Cang Qiong Mountain Sect all flatly insist that Luo Binghe is of the Demon Race? The way I see it, it’s not necessarily wind from an empty cave. Most likely, they discovered tiny hints that he was colluding with the Demon Race to slander Shen Qingqiu’s reputation.⁷ Shen Qingqiu was aloof and untouchable and Luo Binghe couldn’t come into his sight, so he

wanted to pull Shen Qingqiu off his high horse. A complete bodily defeat and fall from grace would destroy his haughtiness!”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t know what he had let go of. In short, he suddenly felt his body and mind relax. He didn’t want to listen to anything or care about anything.

He said with a pleasant countenance to the other two, “Let’s order our dishes.”

Lu Liu took the chance to say, “Mister Peerless... you can count your table on my tab.”

Then turning back around, he continued with a tone full of grief and lament:

“Luo Binghe thought of every possible means to shut Shen Qingqiu in Huan Hua Temple’s water prison. You ask what he was up to? His rapacious designs were clear to see. Huan Hua Temple had long been in his pocket so he could command wind and cloud with a wave of his hand. They claimed to be keeping Shen Qingqiu in temporary custody pending the four sects’ joint investigation, but there was little difference from keeping a lamb in a tiger’s den. In those few days shut in the water prison, Shen Qingqiu was bound with Immortal-Binding Cables. Completely without spiritual energy, who knew what this perverse disciple did to him?!”

The crowd, in one voice, interjected in disgust, “What a perverse disciple!”

“Raising a tiger invites calamity!”

Shen Qingqiu threw aside his menu. “How about we go somewhere else.”

Lu Liu said, “Shen Qingqiu couldn’t bear this humiliation, and gathered up all his strength to escape. Who knew that he would be cut off in Hua Yue City by the search party that Luo Binghe sent? Cang Qiong Mountain Sect was of one heart, and Bai Zhan Peak’s Peak Lord Liu Qingge naturally went ahead to provide assistance. This attempt at assistance was met head-on by Luo Binghe.

“Luo Binghe’s seas of jealousy could overturn the heavens. Not allowing any explanation, he knocked Liu Qingge head over heels, hand raised for a ruthless killing stroke. Shen Qingqiu, with no other way out, could only self-destruct on the scene....henceforth....”

He didn’t continue on after that, profoundly leaving a blank space in his work, inviting a chorus of sighs from his audience.

Finally, Lu Liu arrived at his conclusion. “This is precisely the secretly spread alternate explanation. Even though it sounds a bit absurd and could be regarded as complete nonsense by some people, it does contain many details which give one something to consider. Gentlemen, remember at all costs that official histories are often whitewashed or embellished by official scribes, the actual facts being concealed, and that in many cases popular history is taken as official!”

The particulars are not even a little reliable, okay!

‘Official history’ your sister!

Big brother, even if I suffered a worse tragedy than not getting any sisters for twenty years I wouldn’t resort to becoming a cut-sleeve! Let alone hooking up with the male protagonist!

After the young waitress gracefully wove her way up to deliver the dishes, Yang Yixuan and Liu Mingyan were still staring blankly into the distance. Shen Qingqiu reprimanded, “Hurry up and eat. After you finish you should return without delay.”

Staying any longer in this sort of dangerous place—who knows what kind of attacks these two children would suffer against their lives, their worldviews, and their values!

After escorting the two juniors out of the borderlands, Shen Qingqiu picked a direction opposite to theirs.

Walking until the moon was high in the sky, his extremely keen hearing focused on an indistinct peal of demonic bells.

Shen Qingqiu said, not even turning his head, “You truly are the spirit that doesn’t disperse after death.”

Her whereabouts having been discovered, Sha Hualing didn’t plan on staying in hiding. Confidently strolling into view, red muslin at her wrists, she smiled. “Who taught you to make Ling-er so curious, sire? To treat those two so attentively, what sort of relationship does your distinguished self have with Cang Qiong Mountain?”

Shen Qingqiu turned around and said, waving his finger, “I’m not going to fight with you, and you shouldn’t get any ideas about fighting with me.” Weighing Sha Hualing’s current importance, she couldn’t defeat him. He was just thinking about giving her a scare when suddenly, his whole body gave a jolt. It felt like a thousand-legged centipede was boring its way through his organs.

Sha Hualing’s smiling expression took on a crafty bent. “Yes, I am no match for you, but do you think that means there’s no way to control you?”

Shen Qingqiu felt his legs go soft for a while but still stood firm. He clenched his teeth and said, “When did you make me eat it.”

Sha Hualing said coquettishly, “How was the food and drinks you had today? Were the waitress sisters pretty? Fortunately, you did eat it—if you were in a high state and fasting, refusing to let anything enter your mouth, it would really have given Ling-er a headache.”

Careless. At the time, his complete attention had been drawn in by the gossip squad captain's lively and emotional performance. Gossip kills people, ah!

She circled a loop around Shen Qingqiu and said, immensely self-satisfied, "Do you know what's currently in your body? This is certainly no ordinary poison."

No kidding! This elder is more familiar with it than you. I've already eaten Heavenly Demons' blood two times, two times!

Normally you eat it once and die once. Who won this lottery more times than me!

Other than the original master, no one can control the Heavenly Demons' blood, and now the blood parasites were beginning to stir in his body. That could only mean one thing.

Sha Hualing suddenly bowed to something behind Shen Qingqiu, saying, "This subordinate did not fail you. I have captured this person just now."

Shen Qingqiu stiffly turned his head.

Dark lightning had split in the air, creating a rift that was slowly closing.

A tall and slender silhouette stood behind him. As Shen Qingqiu turned his head, they finally met face-to-face.

Luo Binghe towered above him. Though his gaze was expressionless, under the gaze of those eyes like two cold pools, even another layer of facial hair or a mask would be like no disguise at all.

Shen Qingqiu fixed his gaze on him.

The former Luo Binghe, while cold, was like the reflection of warm sunlight on fresh snow. Even in Jin Lan City and the water prison, he had some traces of humanity, some faint facial expressions, and would lose control in anger. But this young man—his expression looked as if it had been frozen for a thousand years, directly conveying the fields of snow and glaciers in his core, and made others' insides freeze over with fear.

Despite this, Shen Qingqiu's current state of mind was not like what he had expected. It was difficult to explain since all sorts of emotions were tangled up in his mind, but the one emotion that most would have experienced was missing: fear.

Maybe it was because the best plan he had didn't succeed in hiding him and that the stars had aligned to return them to their original places, but a state of tranquility and indifference settled over him.

A puzzled expression flashed across Luo Binghe's face for a split second, making his face soften a bit. But quickly, this trace of softness dissipated, leaving no trace. His pupils suddenly contracted and an intricate red mark flickered on the center of his forehead.

Before his sleeves had finished a swing, Sha Hualing was suddenly hoisted into the air, coughing painfully like an incorporeal hand had snatched her by the neck.

At the same time, that drop of Heavenly Demon's blood in Shen Qingqiu's inner organs frantically split into thousands of threads, boring through his insides. Cold sweat soaked his back.

Luo Binghe said, lightly, "You've certainly got some guts."

Though his tone was light, anyone could feel the violent rage hidden beneath the surface.

You've got some guts? Who is he speaking to—him or Sha Hualing?

Shen Qingqiu's brain shifted into high gear. Luo Binghe shouldn't have recognized him, even if this current face had a bit of resemblance to Shen Qingqiu's original. Even if Luo Binghe's perception was so meticulous that he could easily recognize minute differences through a layer of whiskers. It seems like he had recognized his resemblance to another....though this line of thinking bore no fruit. It would certainly be disastrous if he was recognized, but not being recognized didn't lead anywhere good either!

Chapter 48 – Not knowing they've met by chance

Sha Hualing didn't understand why Luo Binghe would suddenly react with such fury. Though she struggled to hold back her tears, they escaped in rapid currents down her face, blurring her vision.

As she tried to figure out what she had done to be punished, she happened to look at Shen Qingqiu's face. Suddenly, her expression looked as if she had seen a ghost.

Terrified, she shrieked, "My lord, forgive me! This subordinate knows her wrong, but this subordinate swears that it was all a coincidence! My lord, forgive me, it really wasn't me who did this!"

Sha Hualing's heart was extremely bitter since she already had a black mark on her record. Back when she was first recruited by Luo Binghe to serve under him, she had seen the way that he treated Shen Qingqiu's body and had a vague impression of what it meant to him. Thus, fancying herself clever, she managed to find someone who looked around fifty-percent similar to Shen Qingqiu. Using one of the demon race's techniques, she eventually managed to make the fake look exactly like the real, to the point where it was almost a perfect copy. She proudly presented the copy to Luo Binghe, not expecting that not only was he not pleased, he also went into a rage and almost destroyed the entire cave.

Sha Hualing would never forget that moment and naturally didn't want to see Luo Binghe with that expression ever again. From then on she was always cautious, never daring to broach the topic in any way. Who knew that the vessel she was eyeing now would actually resemble Shen Qingqiu by quite a bit? This no doubt enraged Luo Binghe's wrath!

Luo Binghe said, "Didn't I warn you not to get any ideas about using this face?"

Sha Hualing was suspended in the air. Her face turned red from the lack of oxygen, and she could only make choking noises again and again. With great difficulty, she managed to say, "...this time...it really wasn't this subordinate's plan..."

Although Shen Qingqiu wasn't very clear on the details, he could guess that the matter had something to do with that face of his. He closed his mouth, thinking to himself: He has been dead for five years, and yet Luo Binghe still becomes angry when he sees someone who resembles him. It looks like I deeply traumatized Luo Binghe that time.

Suddenly, Shen Qingqiu felt a sharp pain in his stomach. It was as if a thousand needles were threading through his internal organs.

Even if he had an abundant amount of spiritual energy now, it was useless. His eyesight darkened as he spat out a warm mouthful of bright red blood.

The air pressure around Luo Binghe's body was extremely heavy. He looked at Shen Qingqiu as if he were staring down at a dead animal.

The Heart Devil sword on his waist began to shudder with excitement, buzzing without end, as if it would tumble out of its scabbard at any moment. With one hand, Luo Binghe forcefully pressed down on the sword hilt, his eyes overflowing with a blood red color.

Shen Qingqiu wiped away the blood on the sides of his face, staring at the scene blankly.

In the original course of events, Luo Binghe should have adjusted to a relatively balanced mental state after entering the demonic world. Every month he would absorb the cultivation of one or two people, only taking in more for the purpose of strengthening himself. But why did Shen Qingqiu feel that Luo Binghe's current state of being was becoming increasingly worse? It was even more violent than when he had so helpfully detonated his soul to suppress the Heart Devil sword's influence.

Sha Hualing was being hoisted higher and higher into the air. Seeing Shen Qingqiu spit out blood, she knew that Luo Binghe had steeled his heart and was currently manipulating his body's Heavenly Demon blood. With all her might, she yelled, "My lord... you must not kill him... today is the full moon. He will definitely be useful—there is no one more suitable than him..."

Of course, she wasn't actually concerned about Shen Qingqiu living or dying. Rather, if she allowed Luo Binghe to lose himself in his fury and

take this strange person's life, she would definitely suffer even if he didn't lose himself to his demon side. Thinking about this, Sha Hualing felt that she must have been born under an ill star.

As sincerely as she could, she hoarsely shouted, "Even if you don't care about this person, or about me, at least think about... think about that..." She used all her effort to raise her voice on the final phrase: "Think about the Holy Mausoleum!"

Hearing the last two words, Luo Binghe's movements instantly became sluggish.

The Holy Mausoleum was the eternal resting place of the demon race's elders. No one was allowed to enter except for the current ruler; any violators were met with death.

As generations passed, all sorts of magic weapons and spirit tools were buried as funerary objects within the mausoleum. Not only were they countless in number, but the quality was of a rare sort unable to found anywhere else, enough to make anyone drool at the thought.

It was also rumored that within the mausoleum, there was an item that was able to raise a person from the dead. The original Luo Binghe, with Sha Hualing's help, achieved the premier position and entered the Holy Mausoleum. There was no question as to whose bag all those rare items ended up in.

By bringing up the Holy Mausoleum, wasn't Sha Hualing reminding Luo Binghe that he couldn't dispose of her yet?

In any case, she was clearly on the right track.

Hearing the last two words, Luo Binghe's eyes flashed with a red light. Sha Hualing's body slammed downwards until her toes were barely touching the ground.

"You've reminded me." Luo Binghe's fingers gently stroked the Heart Devil sword, comforting the restless blade. Lowering his voice, he said, "That's right, there's still the Holy Mausoleum."

Sha Hualing was finally about to breathe when she heard Luo Binghe ask, "So you're threatening me?"

Her soul nearly flew out of her body in terror. "This subordinate doesn't dare!"

...too tragic. How had one of the two domineering female leads of the Proud Immortal Demon Way, ranking top three for the most popular (female) character for years on end, been reduced to this state!

Shen Qingqiu didn't even have a chance to lament before he felt someone grab his chest, dragging his body forward.

His eyes became blurry. A sudden freezing feeling emanated over his upper torso. When he lowered his head to look, one of Luo Bing's hands were pressing against the left side of his chest.

It felt like he had been shot in the chest, the ammunition being the sinister demonic energy. After entering his body, the energy spread through his veins and extended to all four of his limbs.

The system's sudden, lucid beep distracted him from the pain.

【Touch verification successful!】

【The power source has been connected. Storing power!】

【System self-evaluation: all system operations normal. Thank you for your continued usage!】

Wasn't this system inspection a bit too advanced?!

The original spirit energy in Shen Qingqiu was akin to a full pond. This time, a good amount had been sucked away by Luo Binghe.

But this emptiness lasted only for a second. The body formed from the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed quickly began to gather spiritual energy, replacing the missing energy taken away by Luo Binghe.

Shen Qingqiu felt that his current body was like a powerbank.

Inwardly, he roared: So maybe in my previous life I might have been too excessive with some of my novel reviews, but the things I blasted were all about Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky's writing ability, and never anything against the actual male lead! So why is Luo Binghe always getting involved with me?!

Luo Binghe made an exclamation of surprise, withdrawing his hand.

This meat vessel was unlike any of the vessels he had used before. Though he had already extracted most of the spiritual energy away and infused it with a huge volume of demonic energy, it appeared that it was able to regenerate quickly. It looked like Sha Hualing's insistence on capturing this person had its merits.

Sha Hualing fell onto the floor with a loud bang. She knew she had made the right decision in capturing this person and probably escaped death by a narrow margin, passing by a great tribulation. Still, she was extremely terrified, unable to stop her knees from shaking. She hurriedly attempted to straighten her posture as she knelt on one knee.

Luo Binghe said, “I don’t care if this really was something that you did. But remember that I don’t want to ever see him using this face.”

Sha Hualing hurriedly lowered her head. “As you say!”

Luo Binghe raised his hand and sliced open a rift in the space in front of him, stepping through it. His arrogant way of leaving was enough to make most people furious. The two of them were left behind inside of the barren wasteland just like that as if Luo Binghe didn’t care if Shen Qingqiu tried to run away or not.

But then again, there was no need for him to worry. Shen Qingqiu had already ingested his blood, so if he tried to flee, Luo Binghe only had to flick a finger to find Shen Qingqiu’s whereabouts and cause him a pain worse than death.

Shen Qingqiu had a sudden thought: so... he could be considered to be this Big Brother Bing’s follower?

Of course, Luo Binghe hadn’t officially acknowledged him. But if he played his cards right, did that mean that it was possible his future prospects were looking hopeful?

Wasn’t it only a once-a-month matter? After a while, he would basically be accustomed to it!

As his thoughts whirled about in frenetic chaos, Sha Hualing suddenly grabbed at his face. Shen Qingqiu extended two fingers, blocking her. “What are you trying to do?”

Sha Hualing gnashed her teeth. “Didn’t you hear him? He just said that he didn’t want to see your face!”

Shen Qingqiu stared at her blankly. Out of the blue, he reached out an arm and tore a piece of muslin off of her robe.

Sha Hualing shrieked, “Why are you tearing at my robes?!”

Then Qingqiu tore two holes through the fabric, pressing it against his face so that it revealed only his eyes. “My robes have too many holes, so I can only use yours. Do you only know how to tear apart a person’s face? Using a piece of fabric is enough. There’s no need for disfigurement.”

If it wasn’t for the fact that Luo Binghe needed to use this person once a month, meaning that every hair on his head was to remain intact, Sha Hualing would have long hacked him into mincemeat. But then again, just because Luo Binghe despised seeing fake versions of that face didn’t mean that he would enjoy seeing a shredded, bloody appearance either. Sha Hualing could only swallow her anger, yelling, “Let’s go!”

If they were going then they were going. Either way, wherever they ended up in didn’t matter; it wasn’t worth calculating every step. Shen Qingqiu deduced that after Luo Binghe successfully suppressed the Heart Devil

sword, there would be no need for him anymore. At that point, he could say goodbye to the cultivation world, which probably wouldn't be an event too far into the future. As long as he was careful, it would be fine as long as Luo Binghe didn't realize that his soul had escaped into the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed's fake body.

Shen Qingqiu's adaptation to his new role was fairly quick. He followed after Luo Binghe into the crack, and with Sha Hualing bringing up the rear, the crack slowly disappearing afterward. The adjustment speed of the Demon race's most outstanding general could also be considered quite excellent; after a few breaths, Sha Hualing was completely calm.

She asked, "What's your name?"

The other side of the crack led to a long hallway. On both walls, complicated engravings could be seen, with all kinds of patterns carved into them. It was just that the lighting was a bit too dim.

Shen Qingqiu felt that this place was somewhat familiar. Without thinking, he replied, "Peerless Cucumber."

Sha Hualing muttered, "Peerless Cucumber?" Soon after, she angrily demanded, "Are you making fun of me?"

The more Shen Qingqiu stared at the carvings, the more he was sure that even if he had never personally seen the patterns before, it was possible to deduce where he was from a previous description of it.

In the process, he completely ignored Sha Hualing. Seeing that she was met with no response, Sha Hualing furiously threatened him, “No matter what your previous history was since you’ve drunk the Heavenly Demon’s blood you are one of the lord’s people now. If you have any contrary thoughts about him, dying without an intact corpse can be considered a light punishment!”

When he turned a corner, which revealed several followers dressed in familiar yellow robes, Shen Qingqiu finally realized where he was: the Huan Hua Palace, Luo Binghe’s headquarters in the human realm.

But this place was too different from the Huan Hua Palace that he recognized. The Huan Hua Palace was supposed to be majestic and splendorous, dazzling the eyes with luxury. Every wooden plank and stone was made from the most lavish materials.

But the building in front of his eyes could be described with one word:

Lifeless.

The rulers of the previous dynasties had always loved extravagance and Luo Binghe was no exception. However, the supposed luxury was now a bleak dimness. Even the lanterns that lined the corridor flickered as if they would be extinguished any moment.

In a moment, Sha Hualing had changed into the same robes as the rest of the Huan Hua Palace followers. Unable to release demonic energy, she looked the same as any other good-looking human girl.

Luo Binghe passed through the halls, taking a seat inside a large palace chamber. Shen Qingqiu had originally wanted to wander somewhere else, only to be stopped by Sha Hualing: “Where are you going? Don’t wander away. Stay with me!”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t want to go against her, and could only reluctantly stand rigidly beside her with the other followers, arranged in straight lines. Shortly after, a follower stood up to deliver his report.

Several other followers also followed suit, paying respects and deferentially reporting current events. Shen Qingqiu absentmindedly listened to what was being spoken, until the mention of a familiar name pricked into him.

A follower said, “Palace Lord, when you left, that Liu Qingge came over two times. Seeing that you weren’t here, he smashed all of the water caltrop blossoms.”

Hearing this, Shen Qingqiu’s heart became anxious and his teeth ached slightly.

Liu Qingge, he... was he trying to take revenge for him?

Luo Binghe's face was filled with a "Who cares, this old man has plenty of money" kind of security. "Let him smash them. What else?"

The follower looked at him, wiping away his cold sweat. Cautiously, he added, "Also... the Young Palace Mistress... wants to meet with you."

Originally, Shen Qingqiu had thought that Luo Binghe would wear a tender and affectionate expression as he declared his love to his concubine to the entire palace hall. Who knew that instead, a cold and standoffish expression appeared instead. As if he was too exhausted to even speak, he waved his hand, rejecting the subject.

That follower was put in a hard situation. "But..."

"But I've already arrived!"

When he heard this voice, Shen Qingqiu's teeth and skin ached. Faster than could be said, the Young Palace Mistress's fiery temper shone through as she charged into the palace. By her side, in a similar yellow robe, was a slightly older beauty. Her eyes were hazy, as if tears would spill out any moment. This person was none other than Qin Wanyue.

Shen Qingqiu stared at the two of them, feeling that this development was rather unexpected.

These two girls should have been in the blossoming stages of their youth, yet they both looked pale and haggard. It was especially evident on the Young Palace Mistress, whose unevenly distributed red patches on her cheeks were most likely artificially created through cosmetics.

Why was it that she didn't even look half like a young mistress spoiled with luxury by her lover?

The Young Palace Mistress lifted her head to look at Luo Binghe. "You've returned."

Luo Binghe stared at her, silent. Qin Wanyue quietly said, "Young Palace Mistress, let's go back."

The Young Palace Mistress sharply said to her, "Do you think I don't know who you think about day and night? The reason you endure by my side, why you'll do anything, isn't it all to catch a glimpse of him? Why is it then when you actually see him you pretend to be lovable and pitiable? Why was it that before I came here you made no efforts to stop me, and yet only advise me now?"

Qin Wanyue lowered her head, not daring to say anything else. Her ears flushed a dark red.

The Young Palace Mistress once again turned to the palace hall. "Have you found my father yet?"

Luo Binghe said, “The Old Palace Master has disappeared into the clouds. There’s no trace of him anymore.”

This reply was really too insincere. In Shen Qingqiu’s impression, gleaned from several television dramas and ReadNovelFulls, the “I don’t know his whereabouts” person who typically said that line that was almost certainly the chief culprit who had orchestrated the former leader’s disappearance.

The Young Palace Mistress coldly sneered, “It’s this phrase again. Could it be you don’t even have the energy to think of a new excuse to give me? Alright, I won’t mention Father. Let’s talk about me.”

She shrilly demanded, “If I didn’t come and find you, would you have looked for me?”

Was Luo Binghe the kind of brute who would go around push around a sister? Don’t insult his dignity as the male lead of a stallion novel!

But it was a pity that Luo Binghe had apparently forsaken this dignity. A few Huan Hua Palace followers appeared onto the palace steps, looking as if they were going to console her, only to forcibly push the Young Palace Mistress outside. As she was dragged out she continuously screamed and yelled, Qin Wanyue awkwardly following her at the side. From time to time she would cast a teary glance at Luo Binghe, as if expecting something.

Sha Hualing, who had previously been standing straight and at full attention, now wrinkled her eyebrows and followed them outside. Standing on the veranda, she berated them, “What are you guys doing? When I told you to watch her you consider this your job done?”

Reika's Notes:

- This chapter is by Cheryl.
- In case you forgot, Qin Wanyue is someone from Huan Hua Palace that Luo Binghe saved during the Immortal Alliance Conference.
- Old Palace Master disappeared, huh? What do you think happened to him???
- Peerless Cucumber became one of Luo Binghe's followers (and powerbank)! I'm surprised that he doesn't even seem to mind it, lol. Or does he?
- Thanks for reading and happy holidays!

Chapter 49 – True Disposition

Shen Qingqiu had always kept himself at a respectful distance when it came to the tussles and catfights between the female characters. But when he saw what was happening, he felt the gap between his expectations and reality was too great, so he hurriedly followed to continue spectating.

Qin Wanyue held back her tears: “I’m sorry, I neglected my duty and did not stop the Little Palace Mistress...”

Sha Hualing immediately interrupted her: “It was your fault in the first place! I heard that women of the human realm are particularly modest and moral, but how many times have you failed to seduce the lord yet still refuse to leave? If you don’t leave that’s fine, but you’re incapable of looking after even a single person. Her cultivation isn’t even as high as yours. You’re her senior martial sister. You didn’t stop her early and didn’t stop her late. All you did was to let her make this unreasonable scene in front of the lord. Who are you putting on this pitiful and wronged appearance for?”

Hearing Sha Hualing point out all her weaknesses in front of her face, Qin Wanyue was so ashamed she wanted to die. Back in the original novel, Sha Hualing held an extreme hatred for Qin Wanyue and always found ways to quarrel with her. It seemed that although the two had not entered the harem together this time, their relationship had not improved by the slightest. Sha Hualing turned away and changed the expression on her face, now looking at the Little Palace Mistress with a face full of smiles: “The Little Palace Mistress has been living a life of luxury all these years just like before.

Aside from being occasionally grounded, it seems you have never suffered any mistreatment, right? Why are you now so aggrieved?”

The Little Palace Mistress ferociously replied: “And what the hell are you? A seductive wild fox of a demon who came from who-knows-where, actually daring to talk to me like this in the Huan Hua Palace?! What’s the difference between how he treats me and how he’d raise a pig?!”

Sha Hualing stuck out her lip: “Then why doesn’t the Little Palace Mistress tell us: besides eating and sleeping like the animal you mentioned, what else can you do?”

Qin Wanyue wept: “Little Palace Mistress, let’s hurry and leave. Everything... has long since changed...”

The Little Palace Mistress became completely hysterical: “Why should I leave?! This is my Huan Hua Palace, mine! All of you, get lost! Everything’s reversed from how it should be!”

The scene was one of utter turmoil and warfare. Shen Qingqiu had discovered an incredibly shocking fact. He used his fingers to carefully calculate:

Sha Hualing: Not received as a wife, but as a subordinate instead. Slaving away, working herself to death with all the overtime. Her salary and working conditions were also inhumane. The boss’s attitude suggests that he does not want to engage in office romance ×

Liu Mingyan: Even the love token sword tassels were not exchanged ×

Ning Yingying: After puberty, no longer shows the same passionate love for the male protagonist like she did when she was young and ignorant.
Lovesick brain seems to have been cured ×

Little Palace Mistress: Aggrieved woman confined at home. Even said herself that Luo Binghe only treats her like a pig to raise ×

Qin Wanyue: Aggrieved woman confined at home #2. Numerous attempts at devoting her life and body have all failed. Now a part-time nursemaid for the Little Palace Mistress ×

Qiu Haitang: Didn't we already establish that after dragging Shen Qingqiu down, she would happily go NTRing with Luo Binghe? How come she's still wandering around outside, travel-worn? ×

Three Taoist nuns: Cameos as short-lived as the night-blooming cactus,
hello goodbye ×××

.....

Looking at it from this perspective, Luo Binghe really... is doing quite miserably!

Dignified Stallion novel male protagonist, are you still okay in that department?

A perfectly good harem, tormented by him into complete pandemonium. If this was a novel, how could coolness points even be in the conversation without having received even a single wife?! Shen Qingqiu hurriedly knocked on the System to check all the various values. But he suddenly discovered: the B points and coolness value had not only not been reduced, but instead had actually shot up to more than 900!

Since many of these values were added during the sleep and offline states, he had not received any notifications for them. Shen Qingqiu poked open all the narrow windows that he didn't know when he had received. Lined up inside was a pile of historical records.

[Ning Yingying: Reversed the female character's brainless pursuit. B points +100]

[Ming Fan: Reversed the supporting character's illogical mental retardation. B points +50]

[Liu Mingyan: Reversed the female character's inexplicable pursuit. B points +150]

.....

The ubiquitous pursuing female characters and mentally retarded cannon fodder—these two constituted the classic elements of Stallion novels and the like. Now the female characters did not pursue the male protagonist and the supporting characters' IQ seemed to have improved, so the B points naturally increased. This Shen Qingqiu understood just fine.

But even though Luo Binghe had not hooked up with a single girl, the system did not deduct any of his coolness points—this was unscientific!

Could it be that the male protagonist's coolness level was now no longer tied to him? Or in other words, was the male protagonist's "coolness" no longer here?

This... Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but look up at the gloomy Luo Binghe, and suddenly felt like he couldn't stare straight.

Oh no, could it be that he has committed a sin by raising a perfectly good Stallion novel protagonist... into an asexual?!

With a complicated mood, Shen Qingqiu closed the window. He suddenly realized his location wasn't quite right.

He had clearly just been curiously onlooking in the Huan Hua Palace. How did he unknowingly walk into a bamboo forest? And no matter how he looked at it, it was a quite familiar bamboo forest....

The bamboo forest rustled in the gentle serene wind.

Shen Qingqiu did not have any doubt. Even if he could see only a small corner of this place, he would be able to tell where this was.

Cang Qiong Mountain, Qing Jing Peak.

This place where he had lived in for so long... how could he be unfamiliar with it?

System: [Your current location: Luo Binghe's dreamscape.]

When Luo Binghe's consciousness was unstable and wildly fluctuating, bystanders would often be affected. They would be sucked into this dreamscape as immense as a deep-sea whirlpool. In other words, they would get screwed by falling into his immeasurably vast "brain hole."¹ See the beginning of the original Dream Demon encounter transcript for details.

Shen Qingqiu had previously walked with Luo Binghe through the Dream Demon encounter. This was the so-called "acquired taste."² It was the same

as how, after connecting to a WiFi network once, you don't need to enter the password again when connecting the second time.

Shen Qingqiu quickly touched his face and found he had been restored to his original appearance in the dreamscape. His face was no longer bearded, leaving him with no sense of security at all. He was just about to look for a place to hide and wait for Luo Binghe to wake on his own when some disciples came walking along the road in twos and threes. Shen Qingqiu froze in place, and even forget where he had been going to hide.

Even though these passersby disciples had slightly wooden and slow expressions, they really did have noses and eyes, their facial features complete. Many of them Shen Qingqiu could even name.

Even Dream Demon had no way to support such a huge enchantment while also ensuring the facial features of the creatures inside. Yet Luo Binghe was actually already able to do so and had even shaped their features in such refined detail. Even though he had long since known that Luo Binghe had the talent to cover the heavens and earth, Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but let out a sigh of awe.

Outside of the small bamboo forest was the Qing Jing bamboo house. Spring water flowed between the staggered bamboo eaves, reflecting the sunlight into seven colors, jingling peacefully and orderly. Shen Qingqiu worried that Luo Binghe was inside, so he stopped his steps and did not go forward. He had passed through this bamboo forest who knows how many times to pass the time, so he routinely found a concealed spot in the shadows to rest.

Suddenly, light footsteps sounded on the fallen leaves. From the alternately hidden and visible bamboo emerged a fifteen-year-old white-clothed teenager.

This young boy's complexion was fair, and he seemed to have run all the way over here. His forehead was covered with a thin layer of sweat and his cheeks were flushed red, overall appearing very cute. The lines of his eyes and brows were clear yet not sharp, giving the air of inexperienced freshness.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but lament: It's been a long time since he last saw such a little fresh sunshine youth Luo Binghe.

During his time cultivating at Qing Jing Peak, he liked to wear white clothes. Then after rebelling, the devil king in human form Luo Binghe only wore black clothes, almost completely reversed from before. This kind of fresh and tender appearance, in particular, could no longer be seen at all.

As he strode over, Luo Binghe called out in high spirits: "Shizun!"

Shen Qingqiu was hidden in the dark, so this was naturally not directed at him. He turned his gaze and indeed saw someone wearing a green robe standing at the end of the stone-paved road.

The "Shen Qingqiu" derived from the dreamscape memories stood amidst the lush green bamboo. His figure was lean and thin, resembling a spiritual bamboo himself. His expression was calm, suffused with the cold and clear

air of an immortal. Just looking like this, he really did possess some bearing of gracefulness and unworldliness. As a bystander, the current Shen Qingqiu tried to nit-pick himself and still could not help but be convinced.

This acting cool had actually acted all the way to this level, it was truly too tasteful!

In the meantime, Luo Binghe was truly worthy of being Dream Demon's direct heir, to be able to restore every detail to such perfection!

That other Shen Qingqiu in the bamboo forest seemed to be in a trance, but then tilted his head: "Finished running?"

Luo Binghe nodded his head: "Ten laps... all finished."

Shen Qingqiu finally remembered what event this was.

The "ten laps" mentioned by Luo Binghe referred to running ten laps around the fence boundary of Qing Jing Peak. Shen Qingqiu had personally given him this task.

This wasn't because he had the sick sense of humor to punish the great male protagonist, but because he couldn't take it anymore. Ever since he took over Luo Binghe's education, he had mulled it over: as the teacher figure, Shen Qingqiu had to somehow teach something real so that when the two of

them had their falling-out, he could at least bring up the phrase “affection between teacher and apprentice, grace for bequeathing teachings” without first blushing from shame. According to the general teaching outline, the first step was to correct Luo Binghe’s messy walking position and body technique.

As for the results of these teachings... they were mentioned earlier. The biggest achievement was that Luo Binghe rammed into his arms for half a month.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Again. If you don’t get it right this time, it won’t be just ten laps.”

Luo Binghe obediently tried again. As a result, this time Luo Binghe did not ram into him. Instead, with a slip of his feet, he directly hugged Shen Qingqiu’s waist.

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

Luo Binghe bashfully said: “Shizun, this disciple is useless. After running ten laps, my feet are too soft.”

Shen Qingqiu sighed.

Luo Binghe self-consciously said: “This disciple knows. Twenty laps.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “What do you mean, more laps? Go back to your room and rest.” He didn’t have any hobby of child abuse. At that time he had truly given up on himself, doing whatever he felt like doing.

He’s not gonna teach anymore, he didn’t get any sense of accomplishment at all, he’s throwing away the textbooks!

Luo Binghe totally did not feel he was being avoided, and even became elated: “Thank you, Shizun! This disciple will definitely make up the twenty laps tomorrow. What do you want to eat tonight?”

On the side, Shen Qingqiu rubbed his forehead.

Luo Binghe back then.....was really too silly, sweet, and naive.

Enduring labor, resentment, beatings, scoldings; getting taken advantage of, getting kicked, and getting sentenced to making food..... cough cough, of course, Shen Qingqiu had not done most of these things.

He watched this artificial master-apprentice pair leave, one tall and one short, the two of them still chatting. Shen Qingqiu then left his hiding place and began to wonder.

In the dreamscape enchantment that Luo Binghe created for himself, he would certainly only choose memories he felt were the most beautiful. If the memories of Qing Jing Peak could occupy a place here, they should be related to Ning Yingying. Why would there be this section?

Dreamscapes were the most direct reflection of the truest side of a person's heart, and would not have any false disguises. A thought was spontaneously born in Shen Qingqiu's mind, one that he had never considered before.

Thinking like this seemed a little vain, but..... probably... perhaps... just maybe... this section of master-disciple affection was placed a bit higher in Luo Binghe's heart than Shen Qingqiu had imagined?

At the very least, he had still given Luo Binghe some moments that could be reminisced upon. Those times weren't so bad as to be completely ignored out of disgust.

Although... was Luo Binghe a little masochistic? It wasn't that Shen Qingqiu wanted to badmouth him, but... In general, the memory of getting punished to run ten laps and twenty laps didn't have any connection to the word "beautiful" no matter how you looked at it, right?!

Suddenly, a thread of chilly air crept up Shen Qingqiu's neck, as if there was a both cold and hot line of sight climbing up along his spine.

He subconsciously turned his head back. A black-clothed Luo Binghe leaned against a green bamboo, arms crossed and eyes looking directly at

him.

The two faced each other without words.

.....the man himself?

The man himself!

Shen Qingqiu's first reaction wasn't to take to his heels and start sprinting for it, but to stay in place and adjust his facial expression to his most natural.

It wasn't that he had been scared stupid to the point where his legs turned soft and he couldn't run. Instead, it was because he had long since made the psychological preparations for this kind of situation. "Running" could not solve the problem at all. This enchantment was Luo Binghe's home court, so no matter how fast Shen Qingqiu ran it would be useless.

That both cold and hot line of sight just now wasn't an illusion or a mistake in his description. Luo Binghe's gaze was truly like ice and fire, with both gloomy frigidity and blazing heat. These two temperatures were bizarrely mixed and condensed in his eyes, and firmly locked onto Shen Qingqiu's body.

Shen Qingqiu braced himself and met his gaze.

After a long while, it was Luo Binghe who first sighed.

He murmured: “Being able to dream... is still nice.”

Hearing this sentence, Shen Qingqiu knew his desperate move had succeeded—he had successfully passed himself off.

He had mustered up his courage and actually won the gamble. At this moment, the entranced and absent-minded Luo Binghe thought he was a creation in his own dreamscape.

Seeing him leaning against the bamboo and staring blankly, Shen Qingqiu remembered his dazed appearance on the head seat during the day, all alone. Then upon comparing this version of him with the impressive commanding splendor of the original work, Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but feel a little sad.

Luo Binghe didn't have a single wife by his side to treat his injuries and care for his well-being. As his teacher, how could Shen Qingqiu not feel sad for him? A dignified Stallion novel protagonist had actually fallen to this point. What man could bear to see this?

Luo Binghe said: “I wonder if Shizun could have a word with me.”

Shen Qingqiu's heart was currently filled with sympathy for Luo Binghe, so he pleasantly and amiably replied: "Okay. What do you want to talk about?"

He didn't expect that after he spoke up, Luo Binghe instead froze. He instantly stood up straight and left the bamboo, a trace of disbelief showing on his face.

Oops. Shen Qingqiu thought: Does he think this reaction isn't right?

But since the performance had already started, he had to play it to the end—he absolutely could not abandon it halfway. Awkwardness was just a small matter, but giving the game away was a big deal. Shen Qingqiu smiled slightly and said: "Didn't you let this teacher talk with you?"

His tone of voice was the same that he had always used when living with Luo Binghe in the past. The corner of Luo Binghe's mouth twitched, and he slowly walked on over. Shen Qingqiu did not change expression. He slowly opened and closed the folding fan in his hands, using these light and small movements to ease his tension.

After remaining silent for a while, Luo Binghe spoke up: "In the past, Shizun never even bothered to look at me, just walked off on his own, don't even mention talking with me. Perhaps my imagination today is a little too beautiful."

Shen Qingqiu's heart stirred.

Even though he felt there was something a little strange about this, these words truly did sound a bit pitiful. Could it be that Luo Binghe had always previously imagined “Shen Qingqiu” as treating him with this aloof, elegant, and noble indifference?

He probably does actually have some masochistic tendencies...

As Shen Qingqiu was thinking this, in his distraction his hand subconsciously moved on its own, systematically patting Luo Binghe’s head. He had performed this action countless times before: people always said you shouldn’t touch the head of a man or the waist of a woman, but on the contrary, this action being forbidden made one even more tempted. Shen Qingqiu especially loved to pat people’s heads, but regrettably, as an adult, he couldn’t act so impolitely and hadn’t had anyone willing to let him touch. Fortunately, Luo Binghe previously did not mind having Shen Qingqiu’s hand placed on his head at all. Shen Qingqiu had patted him when bored to the point where he’d actually made a habit out of it, and he did the same action now.

He had barely patted twice when all of a sudden, Luo Binghe raised his arm, his left hand gripping Shen Qingqiu’s left wrist.

Shen Qingqiu’s expression solidified as he thought: Isn’t this a bit too close?

Immediately afterward, his right wrist was also firmly grasped. Suddenly looking up, Shen Qingqiu felt his vision blur.

As if gently touched by feathers, his cheeks were swept. A strange sensation came from his lips, both soft and slightly cool.

His eyes opened wide, meeting Luo Binghe's dark pupils. His throat bobbed with difficulty.

He wanted to speak but had no way to open his mouth. Because his mouth was bitten.

Luo Binghe closed his eyes, his long black eyelashes casting curved shadows on his cheeks. He looked very well-behaved, but his mouth and hands were the exact opposite. He bit Shen Qingqiu's lips with a hint of resentment and indignation, carrying a little childlike hatred. His right hand loosened the hold on Shen Qingqiu's stiff arm, instead supporting his waist and pressing him into his arms. Their two figures clearly weren't much different in stature, but his embracing posture took Shen Qingqiu into his arms.

Shen Qingqiu's worldview blitzed through a continuous cycle of destruction and reconstruction at the speed of light.

What ultimately breached his state of complete breakdown was a system reminder accompanied by its own celebratory BGM: [Coolness Points +500! Congratulations! Congratulations! Congratulations! Important things must be said three times!]

Shen Qingqiu: “What. The. F***—————?!?!”

He finally understood why Luo Binghe had not pushed down a single girl to the point where not a single shadow of the 3000 harem beauties had been seen, yet the coolness points had never decreased.

Because he had used Shen Qingqiu to make up for the coolness points
aaaaaaahhhh!!!

Reika's Notes:

- This chapter is by Attica.
- (づ^ー 3^ー)づ What a great chapter! I'm sure this one is a fan favorite.
- Happy New Year, everyone!

Chapter 50 – Completely Shattered Worldviews

Upon abruptly realizing the truth, Shen Qingqiu was half horrified and agitated, half aggrieved and indignant. He immediately raised his foot for a kick!

Luo Binghe did not evade or dodge. He received the kick straight-on, yet he did not retreat a single step. He even refused to let go and kept holding Shen Qingqiu, looking both angry and wronged as he asked: “I can’t do it even in a dream?”

Hurry and wake up! Even though you’re dreaming, I’m not something you made while dreaming, okay?!!!

I can’t slap him awake, but I can’t let him continue this muddled sleepwalking either!!!

This is what’s truly called being stuck between the hammer and the anvil!!!

Shen Qingqiu had yet to think of anything to roar to calm down his mood when, caught off guard, his back slammed into the green bamboo and was pushed onto it. Luo Binghe bowed his head and pressed down again.

It wasn't Shen Qingqiu's first time being kissed, but this was his first time feeling the very real threat that the other party could go crazy and bite off his lips at any moment. In the interval of their chaotic breathing, Luo Binghe whispered: "Shizun, I was wrong..."

Shen Qingqiu finally managed to pull out a hand and press it against Luo Binghe's chest. He really didn't want to make the same posture as "a woman from a good family resisting a ruffian," but did Luo Binghe's appearance f***ing seem like someone who understood he was in the wrong?!

Shen Qingqiu was the one who was wrong, truly wrong, completely and utterly wrong. What "wind from an empty cave"¹? Jianghu gossip was all based on scientific evidence. Every single gossip must have been an angel who could see the essence of reality through appearances in their past life!

He didn't raise the male protagonist into an asexual, and it wasn't a problem of him being masochistic either. The truth was far more terrible than those options: he had raised the male protagonist into being gay
aaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh!

No wonder he hadn't received a single wife and his harem was in such an awful state. Women were already incapable of attracting his interest and couldn't be linked to his coolness level!

What the f***!

Shen Qingqiu refused to submit, sparing no effort to struggle and stubbornly resist. Just as he was considering which fate would be more miserable between self-detonating himself again vs. kicking Luo Binghe's key area... Luo Binghe suddenly let him go. He looked up at the swirling vortex of clouds in the sky above them and his face unexpectedly turned gloomy.

In an instant, the scenes and figures before Shen Qingqiu's eyes collapsed and disappeared, shattering into thousands of pieces. At the same time, Shen Qingqiu leaped onto the roof of the Huan Hua Palace's main hall.

This was the true real world!

Shen Qingqiu took vigorous breaths for a while. After finally settling his mind with much difficulty, he was surprised to see flames lighting up the entire main hall area. The ringing of various alarm bells blended together. He poked his head out, his clothes continuously furling in the night wind. From top to bottom, countless lanterns converged toward this side—Huan Hua Palace's various departments of disciples were currently flooding here from all directions.

“To your stations! All departments listen to orders, to your stations!”

Someone cursed: “Broke in again? How many invasions has this been? Has there been one successful prevention?”

Shen Qingqiu was overjoyed. An invasion was the best situation for him to take advantage of the chaos to escape. Who cares about that “Heavenly Demon Blood” stuff? How could it compare to the importance of integrity? I’m leaving first, we can talk later, goodbye! He had not yet flown two steps when he heard someone shouting:

“He went towards Huan Hua Pavilion—lay formations to stop Liu Qingge!”

Shen Qingqiu’s feet slipped, and he immediately turned around to come back.

Dammit. Liu Qingge just had to come at this time. There was no way Shen Qingqiu could throw him to the completely broken down Luo Binghe who was in the middle of throwing a fit, right?

The Huan Hua Pavilion was the place where previous dynasties of palace masters cultivated and resided, and wasn’t far from his current location. Shen Qingqiu jumped off the roof in a couple steps and mixed into the large army rushing over. Before they even entered the Huan Hua Pavilion, forceful waves of chilly air greeted them face-on. From within came a shout of rage full of killing intent.

“Get lost!”

When the crowd heard the alarm bells, some unaware disciples had broken in the door. Dozens of people in the front row of the crowd were all sent flying out by a wave of extremely powerful energy. Shen Qingqiu, who was

in the next group of people, managed to perfectly dodge this attack and pick a good position. Fishing in troubled waters,² he fished his way inside. Just as he entered the door, goosebumps rose on his skin from the freezing chill.

The entire Huan Hua Pavilion seemed to have become an enormous ice cave. Just taking one step inside was like stepping into a frozen world of ice and snow. Cold air flowed into Shen Qingqiu's sleeves and robes, and the cold sweat on his forehead and the back of his hand rapidly froze into a layer of thin ice. You can imagine the sheer extent of the cold in the room.

Not only was the temperature extremely low, but the walls on all sides were also tightly sealed and the doors and windows were all airtight. The entire chamber was both cold and dark. If it weren't for the intruder (i.e. Liu Qingge, director of the Cang Qiong Mountain Demolition Office) forcibly smashing open a large gap, the entire place would resemble a coffin of ice.

On the seating table³ at the center of the pavilion, a curtain was half drawn back. A few black and white outer robes were messily piled up on the side of the table.

Luo Binghe himself was only wearing his inner clothes, looking like he had just gotten up from his bed. His black hair was scattered and loose, his clothes disorganized, his neckline crooked and open. His face was pale white but his lips carried a touch of bloody red. Cold light flashed in his eyes, the ghastly energy exerting immense pressure. The cutting edge of his sword was exposed and his posture was one of preparation for battle.

Seven steps away, precisely facing him, the bones of Liu Qingge's sword hand protruded explosively from his grip. His whole face was green and blue.

Liu Qingge stared at the calm and composed Luo Binghe sitting on the table. He enunciated every syllable: "You bastard."

On the Cheng Luan sword, spiritual energy and killing intent rose with scathing violence. Shen Qingqiu vigilantly glanced back and forth between the two sides. However, just taking one look in the direction that Liu Qingge's sword was pointing, in his mind he could hear the noise of the very last shred of his desperately resisting worldviews completely shattering.

Luo Binghe's right hand was placed on the Xin Mo sword that never left his side, and the snow-white blade had already left its sheath by half; on the other side, his left hand held a person.

Instead of saying it was a person, it would be better to say it was "a body": completely lifeless, head hanging down, limbs weak, but very soft. It was wearing a thin layer of inner clothes. The collar had slipped below the shoulders, revealing half of a back as white as paper.

Liu Qingge said: "What have you done?"

He truly would never be able to forget the scene just now. When the Cheng Luan sword had cut open a gap, the room was empty aside from the

overlapping shadows among the curtains on the seating table. Liu Qingge knew that Luo Binghe must be inside, but he could never have imagined that it was not just him inside!

Luo Binghe raised his eyebrows and tugged the soft body in his left hand up further into his arms: “What do you say I have done?”

Shen Qingqiu was completely speechless. Two people—to be specific a living person and a dead person—who were not wearing covering clothes as they rolled down from a place similar to a bed and hugged into a ball——no matter how one looked at it, it didn’t seem like anything positive!

Liu Qingge did not speak a word, and Cheng Luan stabbed out. Xin Mo sword was still not completely out of its sheath. Only using the scabbard, Luo Binghe blocked Cheng Luan’s sharp edge. As the fierce sword energy approached, he leaned slightly sideways. He blocked the biting cold sword energy while protecting the body in his hand behind himself, anger showing on his face.

Liu Qingge also discovered that activating Cheng Luan in such a narrow room also carried the risk of sharp sword energy damaging that corpse. He immediately called his sword back into its sheath and began to fight Luo Binghe using spiritual energy.

During their rough and tumble duel, that body’s clothes loosened and slid down to the waist, and Luo Binghe’s palm directly attached to the fair flesh. Liu Qingge’s eyes turned completely bloodshot: “Brute, no matter what, he is your Shizun!”

Luo Binghe calmly said: “If it were someone else, do you think I would do this?”

The encircling Huan Hua Palace disciples were utterly dumbstruck and slack-jawed. Luo Binghe did not pay any attention to them either, entirely focused on dealing with Liu Qingge. In the air around both men’s bodies, spiritual energy roiled like boiling water, shooting in all directions. The expressions on their faces grew more horrible with each passing moment. No one dared to step inside the Huan Hua Pavilion for fear of adding to the chaos.⁴

Shen Qingqiu wasn’t afraid of adding to the chaos. He was simply unable to look directly at this sight.

.....too hardcore. Way too f***ing hardcore!

His brain was as full of holes⁵ as the surface of the moon, but he had never once imagined there would come a day where he became one of the main characters in this hardcore PLAY. The one held in Luo Binghe’s arms..... was indeed dead, right? Absolutely correct, because that was his corpse, alright?!

This was no longer something “horrible once one carefully thought it over.” Even without carefully thinking it over, this was a clearly horrible predicament!

Although he couldn't look directly, he still hadn't forgotten why he came back.

Shen Qingqiu flashed behind Liu Qingge's back. The latter raised his guard, thinking it was a sneak attacker. He sneered and prepared to use his spiritual power to shock this other party away. However, a hand was placed on his back and a gentle but firm stream of power began flowing into his spiritual circulation.

With Liu Qingge receiving this aid, Luo Binghe was now the one being slightly suppressed. Liu Qingge still did not dare to act carelessly and slightly tilted his head. Looking behind himself out of the corner of his eyes, he could only see a blurred face that seemed to be using something to cover its appearance. Liu Qingge whispered: "Who's there?"

Shen Qingqiu did not answer, while his hand used more force. The two peerlessly strong streams of spiritual power merged into one. Although Luo Binghe managed to bear it straight-on, this wave of aggressive spiritual power would inevitably follow his body and transmit into the corpse in his hands. He was capable of dispelling this energy, but the dead person in his arms could not. If he didn't let go, the body would most likely be badly shocked to the point of explosively bursting. Luo Binghe was not willing to damage the corpse, so he could only loosen his hand. The body was immediately bounced away by the boiling spiritual energy and flew out.

Even after Luo Binghe was forced to let go, his line of sight remained firmly stuck on that body, and his face showed unwillingness and helplessness. Seeing his expression, Shen Qingqiu abruptly could not bear

it. Using this method to force him to let go felt a little bit like they were bullying him.

A few disciples with no appreciation for the gravity of this situation wanted to act, but Luo Binghe yelled: “Don’t touch!” As he waved his sleeves in the distance, screams rose from that side. Shen Qingqiu removed the stream of spiritual power applied to Liu Qingge’s back. With a flick of his soles, he leaped forward and carefully caught that body in his arms.

The sensation of holding your own corpse truly was a one-of-a-kind strange experience. Shen Qingqiu roughly glanced himself over. His former body still had a very rosy complexion and soft limbs, no different from a living person in a deep sleep except for the tightly closed eyes and lack of breath.

Upon death from self-detonation, one’s spiritual power would dissipate. There would not be any remaining cultivation preventing the corpse from rotting. Five years after death, just freezing it in ice would not be able to preserve the body to this extent. There was no herbal scent on the body, so it should not have been treated with any chemical preservatives. It was unclear what method Luo Binghe had used.

Shen Qingqiu dodged a spiritual burst powerful enough to split mountains and crack stone. He looked up to see Luo Binghe’s gaze completely fixed on him, his expression savage and ferocious. Only then did Shen Qingqiu discover that the corpse’s clothes had slipped down from its upper body, bones and flesh exposed as he held it in his arms. Added to how he was touching and looking at it.... It was overall an extremely unhealthy and rather provocative sight.

He hurriedly pulled up the corpse's clothes and sent this hot potato towards Liu Qingge: "Catch!"

Luo Binghe wanted to seize it, but he was caught up in Shen Qingqiu's entanglement. Shen Qingqiu was originally worried that Luo Binghe would activate the Heavenly Demon blood parasite, but whether because he had been overwhelmed by killing intent or been struck silly by his anxiety, Luo Binghe actually did not think to use this trump card. Liu Qingge caught the body with one hand and called Cheng Luan with the other, easily beating back the siege of the Huan Hua Palace disciples. After being tossed back and forth by them, the corpse's clothes had completely split off its upper body. Liu Qingge had just touched it when he felt his palm sticking to smooth skin, both fine and cool. The area he touched seemed to have a slight electrical current crawling over it, and his entire body froze. No matter where he held it, everywhere seemed unsuitable, and he almost pushed it away from himself. In the end, he managed to resist this impulse. He took off his outer robe, the white clothes spreading wide like wings, and wrapped the body in his arms up. Cheng Luan flew back to him and steadily floated before his feet.

Luo Binghe's pupils had completely turned bright red. The entire Huan Hua Pavilion was akin to a sealed box with a bomb placed inside. When the bomb exploded, all the walls collapsed with a roaring crash.

Along with the flying sand and hurtling stones, aside from all the numerous people, there were two items that made a resounding metallic clang when they hit the ground. Shen Qingqiu focused his vision and saw these were actually two swords.

Zheng Yang, Xiu Ya.

These two broken swords had once shared a common destiny and been shattered in countless pieces. It was unclear how they had been repaired, tied together, and placed in the Huan Hua Pavilion. Only with the pavilion's collapse did they once again see the sky and sun.

Seeing these two swords once again, Shen Qingqiu felt an unclear taste rising in his heart and looked at Luo Binghe. His clothes had originally been untidy in the first place, and now after this wave of bombardments, his well-defined clavicle and chest were all exposed. On his chest wall, a hideous sword scar approached his heart.

Luo Binghe's self-regeneration ability was extremely strong. Even if his limbs were cut off, he could seamlessly re-attach them, and even re-grow them without a problem. Unless he deliberately chose not to heal them, there were no wounds he couldn't completely recover without even leaving a scar.

Luo Binghe fiercely shouted: "Liu Qingge, for Shizun's sake I have spared your life time and time again. If you insist on seeking death, then don't blame me!"

His sudden outburst of spiritual power and murderousness quaked Shen Qingqiu to the point where he almost changed positions. He knew Luo Binghe's temper had flared up, so he hurriedly yelled at Liu Qingge: "Still not leaving?!"

It felt like ever since he came to this side, he was frequently making these selfless sacrifices to cover others' retreat! Liu Qingge glanced at him and indeed did not do a sloppy job—he left straight away, carrying that body under his arms as he leaped onto his sword to exit as quick as lightning.

Luo Binghe originally wanted to attack, but he unexpectedly felt his heart quake—the backlash of the Xin Mo sword came out of the blue and slowed him down by a hair. Just from this missing hair, he could only look on helplessly as Liu Qingge left with Shen Qingqiu's corpse under his arm.

In a daze, Luo Binghe stood in place as if the sky had fallen, even forgetting to counterattack. For an instant, blankness appeared on his face, like a child who had his most beloved thing in the world taken away from him. Shen Qingqiu had been planning to take advantage of his daze to fish in troubled waters and slip away. But when he saw this situation, for some unknown reason, his heel stuck to the ground and that flash of unbearableness grew more and more intense.

But even if he couldn't bear it, there was nothing he could do. If he continued to let Luo Binghe hold that corpse, it was unclear what horrifying sinful developments would happen!

The problem came with this untimely softening of his heart. He had not successfully snuck away when Luo Binghe suddenly turned his head, those two violent red eyes fixated directly on him.

The Xin Mo sword trembled in its sheath with joy and maliciousness. Luo Binghe's eyes very clearly told Shen Qingqiu that he would definitely

become mincemeat in just a little bit. Seeing his furious and grieving gaze, Shen Qingqiu took two steps back. All of a sudden, as if his reason had been bewitched, he wanted to tell Luo Binghe the truth.

He wanted to tell him: “Don’t be this sad, Shizun is not dead.”

Just as he moved his lips, a black shadow flashed out from the crowd of Huan Hua Palace disciples.

The figure moved with remarkable swiftness, wrapping up Shen Qingqiu and leaving like a whirlwind. Even with Luo Binghe’s superb eyesight and reaction speed, the explosive shot he made actually failed to hit.

He stood in the same place, staring coldly at the remaining ruins of the Huan Hua Pavilion, dilapidated and crawling with forces. The crowd of Huan Hua Palace disciples had been continuously unable to get involved, but they understood Luo Binghe was ill at ease tonight after these unexpected defeats and would inevitably erupt in a thunderstorm. The masses of disciples hurried to kneel down. At this time, Sha Hualing finally managed to make it over and quickly rushed to the front. The moment she arrived, she was sent flying backward by Luo Binghe and vomited three liters of blood.

She had long since known him to be capricious and temperamental, and she did not know what had angered him again. She could only say in a terrified tone of voice: “Lord, quell your anger. Lord, quell your anger!”

Luo Binghe spoke: “The person you brought back was truly not bad.”

This “not bad” was even more terrifying than if she heard Luo Binghe order her execution on the spot. Sha Hualing’s soul almost left her body as she hurried to say: “This subordinate has a matter to report! When the intrusion occurred, this subordinate had detected the invasion and acted to deal with it. But Liu Qingge was not the only intruder! This Bai Zhan Peak Lord had previously scouted inside the palace at night, but he was unable to break the maze formation. This time someone else first destroyed the maze formation, and that is why Liu Qingge was able to successfully break through.”

Luo Binghe stared in the direction that Liu Qingge had disappeared on his sword. He slowly clenched his fists, his knuckles cracking.

Chapter 51: This Dream is Pitiful

Sha Hualing thought that Luo Binghe definitely didn't care who the other invader was. He most likely only cared about Shen Qingqiu's corpse, which had been stolen away, so she hastily changed her tone and said, "Liu Qingge can't get very far carrying that... that... by himself! This subordinate will take people and chase after him at once!"

Luo Binghe said, "No need."

Sha Hualing trembled, her heart ice cold as a vague premonition welled up in it.

Only to hear Luo Binghe say coldly, "I'll go myself. You call over Mo Bei."

This time, Shen Qingqiu finally knew just how gentle Luo Binghe had been in the past while controlling the blood parasites in his body.

If Luo Binghe truly wanted to kill someone using his ancient demon blood, then there was no way that it would just be pain to the degree of period cramps. He could make you wish that you were dead rather than alive, where you would be in so much pain that you couldn't even stand straight or speak. You could only roll around on the floor, and after you finished rolling around, you could only lie there like a corpse, but the agony in your

body wouldn't lessen a single bit. There was no way you could wait for the pain to dull or get used to it.

After the fury from the fighting passed, Luo Binghe finally remembered that he still had something like the ancient demon blood.

The person who had taken advantage of the chaos and dragged him out just then had most likely already brought him to a safe place. He slowed down and supported him as they walked. Shen Qingqiu wanted to sit, not walk, but he no longer had the strength to speak. He was dragged along for a while, more dead than alive, before that person finally discovered that something wasn't quite right.

He placed Shen Qingqiu on the ground. His voice was both gentle and refreshing, and he talked a little slowly. He seemed to be a young man, and he asked in deep concern, "How are you? Did you get hurt just now?"

Shen Qingqiu moved his lips a little, but he still didn't have the strength to say a single word. Right now, it felt as if there were millions and millions of parasite worms having a carnival inside his blood vessels, biting and expanding, wriggling and twisting. It felt both disgusting and agonizing.

This made it seem like when Luo Binghe was controlling the blood parasites in his body in the past, he didn't have any malice whatsoever. Instead, he was basically being extremely tender, as if he was just teasing him a bit.

Shen Qingqiu rapidly flipped through all the various achievements and honourable accomplishments that he had gained under the coercion of the system during these past few years, and he truly felt that this was absurd and comical. Just what part of the story went wrong, causing Luo Binghe to be like this towards him?! Shen Qingqiu knew that he himself was an unmistakably straight man ever since he was born. There should be no need to doubt Luo Binghe's sexual orientation either. Then whose fault was it exactly?

There was no need to think about it anymore. If the characters crumbled, then it was definitely the author's problem. It was all Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky's fault!

Shen Qingqiu had just laughed dryly before he was instantly wracked by more intense pain, and Shen Qingqiu really did roll a few times on the ground. It seemed like it could relieve the pain a little this way.

He didn't manage to roll around for very long before he was restrained by that person, who touched Shen Qingqiu's forehead and cheeks. His sparse beard had already pretty much fallen off completely by now, and he was covered in cold sweat. The person continued to stroke downwards until he touched Shen Qingqiu's chest and abdomen.

For some reason, the places that he touched would all feel a little more bearable. Shen Qingqiu caught his breath and couldn't help but say, "Uh, my dear friend, where... are you touching?"

If this was the past, he really wouldn't have cared about where other people (referring particularly to those of the same sex) touched him. They could touch him wherever they wanted to, please do as you wish. But ever since Luo Binghe had opened a series of doors to a whole new world for him, the worldview that Shen Qingqiu had formed during his past twenty or so years had received a heavy blow. From now on, he would have to use an entirely new outlook and sensitive attitude to view this world.

Especially the problem of making friends with those of the same sex!

That person made an 'ah' noise and hastily let go. He apologized, "I'm sorry. I... didn't do it on purpose."

Shen Qingqiu said, "No no no! Go ahead and touch! Please continue! Thank you!"

It wasn't a mistake. When this person let go, Shen Qingqiu instantly started to hurt again. It seemed that this person... could truly placate the ancient demon blood!

Shen Qingqiu turned his head. Underneath the moonlight, he couldn't make out the other person's features very clearly, but it was more or less the outline of someone with bright and delicate features. His eyes were extremely limpid, overlapping and reflecting Shen Qingqiu's figure and the clear, shining moonlight like dew.

Shen Qingqiu looked at those eyes and faintly remembered something, but before he could think about it more deeply, his head suddenly felt as if it had exploded. It hurt so much that he let out a low moan before he buried his head downwards and slammed his fist violently onto the ground.

All of a sudden, Shen Qingqiu felt someone lift him by the back of his robe. There was a pain in his lower jaw as his mouth was forced open and a liquid was poured in. His tongue felt numb from the acid reflux from his stomach, and he couldn't taste what the flavor of the liquid was, but it shouldn't be anything that tasted good. He choked and wanted to spit it out, but that person covered his mouth. Though his movements were forceful, his tone was extremely gentle, and he coaxed, "Swallow it."

Shen Qingqiu's throat bobbed violently, and in a moment of haste, he actually swallowed that liquid. A bit of the unknown fluid trickled from the corner of his mouth, and he lowered his head as he coughed violently. That man stood to the side and patted his back, helping him calm down.

Shockingly, after this liquid entered his mouth and stomach, the agony from the blood worms' biting, which had tormented him the entire way, swiftly disappeared.

Shen Qingqiu's body felt better, but his heart grew tight instead. He grabbed the clothing at that person's chest with one hand. "What did you give me to drink?"

The other person uncurled Shen Qingqiu's hand, finger by finger, and took it away from his chest. He smiled slightly and said, "Does it still hurt?"

It didn't hurt anymore. It really didn't hurt anymore. But the reason it was scary was because it didn't hurt anymore. He had never heard of something like ancient demon blood having an antidote!

As his sense of taste slowly returned to his tongue, Shen Qingqiu felt the scent of blood in his mouth grow even stronger. Strong to the point that he almost wanted to vomit. The original work said it very clearly: there was no medicine that would be effective against ancient demon blood.

Only ancient demon blood could keep the ancient demon blood in check.

F*ck.

Not only did he drink it twice, he drank the ancient demon blood of two different people.

Shen Qingqiu felt that he could really f*cking be considered someone with neither predecessors nor successors in this world.

After thinking this, Shen Qingqiu let out a cheerful sigh and toppled over.

The sound of flesh being ripped apart.

Also accompanied by the distant and hoarse sound of miserable screaming.

Shen Qingqiu pressed a hand against his temples, and the scene before his eyes slowly cleared.

An ocean of blood. A mountain of corpses.

Luo Binghe stood woodenly in this purgatory-like environment. He wore all black, so it couldn't be dyed with the color of blood, but half of his face was splashed with spots of dark red. The sword in his hand rose and fell callously like a machine.

Originally, when Shen Qingqiu saw Luo Binghe, the image of him hugging his own corpse and rolling off the bed with it should have surfaced on its own in his mind, and it should've been hard to look straight at him. But right now, Luo Binghe was actually massacring the things that he had created in his own dreamscape. This was the same thing as him taking a knife and using it to stab his brain. What was the difference?

If he wasn't intellectually disabled and didn't know better, then only a lunatic would do something like this!

Even though Shen Qingqiu always liked to say that Luo Binghe was a masochist and loved to torture himself, there was no way Shen Qingqiu

could squeeze out a few dry laughs and find the time to roast him if he tortured himself to this degree.

Luo Binghe lifted his head and looked at him with hazy eyes, seeming as if his mind was unclear. But the moment his eyes reflected Shen Qingqiu's figure, they lit up instantly, and he threw his long sword far, far away. He hid his bloodstained hands behind his back and called in a quiet voice, "Shizun."

Afterwards, he suddenly remembered that his face was also bloody and used his sleeves to wipe at the traces of blood on half of his face, as if he was trying to save himself. But the more he wiped, the dirtier it became, and he grew more and more uneasy like a child who was caught red-handed for stealing something.

It was difficult the first time, but easy the second. Shen Qingqiu now had experience pretending to be the product of artificial intelligence,¹ so he felt quite calm. When he spoke, he couldn't help but make his voice gentle. "What are you doing?"

Luo Binghe said quietly, "Shizun, I... I lost you again. This disciple is useless. He can't even protect your body."

When he heard this response, Shen Qingqiu's expression and state of mind were similarly complicated.

So, just then, when he was brutally killing the things he had created in his dreamscape, it could be considered that he was... disciplining himself?

Looking at how skilled Luo Binghe was at this, Shen Qingqiu was afraid that this was not the first time he had done so. No wonder Luo Binghe was unable to even differentiate if he was a figment of his imagination or an intruder from the outside world last time.

Shen Qingqiu sighed and deliberated for a bit before he comforted him softly, "It's fine if you lost it. I don't blame you."

Luo Binghe stared blankly at him. "... but right now, that's all I have left."

Shen Qingqiu suddenly didn't dare to look directly into his eyes. Could Luo Binghe have really hugged his empty shell of a corpse, which Shen Qingqiu didn't even want anymore, for five years?

Luo Binghe's voice suddenly cooled down. "After Huayue City, I swore that I would never lose Shizun in this life again. But I still let someone else snatch you away."

The resentment and dark red color in his eyes were similarly turbulent and ingrained. The sword that he had tossed away flew up into the air from his summoning, and it pierced through the chests of several 'people' who were dying and struggling. The sound of screaming filled his ears, and Shen Qingqiu hastily restrained him and reprimanded, "Don't be reckless. Even if

it's just a dream, this is the same thing as harming yourself. Don't tell me you forgot!"

Of course Luo Binghe wouldn't have forgotten. He stared straight at Shen Qingqiu before gripping the back of his hand. He said only after a long pause, "I know that I'm in a dream. Only in a dream would you scold me like this, Shizun."

When he heard this, Shen Qingqiu suddenly woke up to reality. Not good. Wrong.

He couldn't treat Luo Binghe like this. If you didn't have that kind of intention towards someone, then you shouldn't give him hope. The bigger his hopes, the bigger his disappointment. He would continue to be delirious, and the probability of him going crazy would also increase.

Even if it was in a dream, he still shouldn't drag things on fussily like this. He had to make a firm decision or else if their relationship continued to be ambiguous, then it would only lead to misfortune. Shen Qingqiu firmly withdrew his hand and adjusted the look on his face, adopting his best aloof and unapproachable expression before turning and walking away.

When Luo Binghe was thrown off, he was stunned for a moment before he instantly caught back up to him. "Shizun, I know that I was wrong."

Shen Qingqiu said coldly, "If you know that you were wrong, then don't follow me."

Luo Binghe said anxiously, "I've long since regretted it, but I just never knew how to tell you. Are you still mad that I forced you to self-destruct your soul? I've already completely repaired the spiritual network in Shizun's body, I'm not trying to trick you at all! As long as I can enter the Mausoleum, I will definitely find a way to wake you up again."

Shen Qingqiu didn't answer, hesitating over whether or not he should say something a little crueller so he would forget this idea. But Luo Binghe suddenly rushed over and hugged him from behind, embracing him firmly, and he refused to let go even if he rolled on the ground screaming. Shen Qingqiu's entire body went stiff when he was embraced and felt as if he was brushed by something feathery, making all his fine hairs stand straight up. He collected energy in his hand but still didn't strike out in the end. He gritted his teeth and forced out one word: "Scram!"

He said that after the blackening, they wouldn't go down the tragedy path! Don't push and pull back and forth!

Luo Binghe acted as if he couldn't hear him. "Or is Shizun angry over what happened at Jinlan City?"

Shen Qingqiu said, "Correct."

Luo Binghe still refused to let go and murmured, "When I first returned from the Endless Abyss, I knew that Shizun declared to the outside world that I was killed by the demon race. At first I thought that Shizun was being tender-hearted and still had some lingering sentiment for me, and that you

didn't want me to lose my reputation. Unexpectedly, after we met and I saw Shizun's attitude, I became afraid that it was just my wishful thinking again. I was scared that the reason Shizun covered up the truth for me was only because you felt that it would stain your name if others found out you brought up a demon."

He spoke pathetically, sentences tumbling one after another out of his mouth as if he was afraid that Shen Qingqiu would rudely cut him off and not let him continue. "I'm really not the one who arranged for the sowers. At the time, I was just so angry that I grew confused, and so I allowed Shizun to be locked in the water dungeon... I've known for a long time that I was wrong."

If this was the Luo Binghe from reality, there might never be a time when he would pour out his words so steadily, disregarding his image. It was likely he would only ever dare to ramble so much in a dream that he created. If Shen Qingqiu pushed him aside now, it would be just like giving a tearful, trembling, heartbroken young maiden who finally worked up the courage to call her Chicken Soup for the Soul² 'big sister' a slap right in the face. It was truly a bit too cruel.

Shen Qingqiu felt empathetic and greatly moved, but he also felt that this was all extremely ridiculous. What was more ridiculous than finding out that the person you did everything you could to run away from during the past few years didn't even want to kill you, but wanted to do you instead? But no matter if it was killing or f*cking, the end result was still the same. Shen Qingqiu would still run away as fast as he could.

One person wanted to see the other but couldn't, so he hugged a corpse for five years. The other person wanted to do all he could to avoid the first

person, but he still felt like he saw him too much.

Shen Qingqiu's hands were stiff. He raised them before lowering them again, clenching them into fists before relaxing. Finally, he ended up sighing and patting that head which was even taller than him.

He thought, "Heavens, I've really lost!"

Never mind his harem, a perfectly fine dark stallion protagonist didn't have anyone else and was still a virgin. He had made himself like this, so if Shen Qingqiu continued to strike back, it seemed a little too unkind. Shen Qingqiu still lost to Luo Binghe, who had single-handedly made himself very tragic, as well as his own sympathy.

Luo Binghe instantly seized his hand tightly. Shen Qingqiu felt that the skin of Luo Binghe's palm was slightly uneven against the back of his hand, and when he looked closely, he discovered that it was a sword wound.

At first, Shen Qingqiu didn't understand how he got so many scars on his body, but at that moment, he suddenly remembered. During their night rendezvous at Jinlan City, Luo Binghe had played a game of cat and mouse with him the entire way. When he finally caught him, Shen Qingqiu had stabbed him. At that time, Luo Binghe had caught the edge of the Xiu Ya sword directly with his own hand.

As for the wound on Luo Binghe's chest near his heart, Shen Qingqiu even more so shouldn't have forgotten that one. That was the injury from when

he had accidentally stabbed him when he was forcing him down into the abyss during the Immortal Alliance Conference.

It seemed like every time he had gone to stab Luo Binghe, he had never once dodged. He never avoided or evaded it, but caught it head on, letting Shen Qingqiu stab him, allowing him to pierce him. This was exactly why Shen Qingqiu had struck him, even though both times Shen Qingqiu didn't actually want to stab him. After being stabbed, Luo Binghe didn't even go to treat his wounds. Instead, he deliberately preserved them.

Reika's Notes:

- This chapter is by Yan.
- Some people have been complaining about “missing parts.” There are no missing parts. We use the latest official text from JJWXC. The author changed some parts but mostly only moved things around. For example, what used to be the last part of a chapter could be in the next chapter in the newly edited version. There's nothing missing.
- Who is this mysterious person who gave his blood to Shen Qingqiu?
- At last Luo Binghe took the opportunity to show his remorse apologize and explain himself. What do you think? Are you satisfied with his apology?
- Thank you for reading!

Chapter 52 – Eternal Regret of the Chunshan

(TN: Chunshan means “Spring (time) Mountain.”)<

Not long ago, Shen Qingqiu would still have been able to believe that Luo Binghe was naturally still holding a grudge and kept the scars so he could remind himself of his hatred at any time. But now, Shen Qingqiu could not deceive himself any more about the meaning of these actions.

After reading that long a novel, even after raising him from childhood, he had never discovered that Luo Binghe was actually a pure-hearted young man. This deeply emotional stallion protagonist, after becoming a cut-sleeve, went so far as to completely drop the ‘stallion’ part of his character. This Luo Binghe, who he had raised bent to who knows where, had a heart more delicate than a young maiden—both a masochist and easy to harm.

Or maybe it wasn’t that he had never discovered it, but that he had never thought to find out. When all was said and done, Shen Qingqiu had still regarded Luo Binghe as the protagonist in a novel and himself as an observer from afar, occasionally playing around for his own amusement. Most of the time he had kept himself at a distance. In his eyes, he had superimposed an image of the original Luo Binghe who had the strongest presence onto reality, attaching the most importance to that model of behavior.

Even though Shen Qingqiu felt that this kind of Luo Binghe was extremely inconvenient to deal with, he was really at a loss for what to do.

He was still wracking his brain for solutions and, from this angle, couldn't see the wisp of a twisted smile that tilted the corner of Luo Binghe's mouth.

After waking, Shen Qingqiu opened his eyes and saw a snow-white muslin veil above him. Someone pushed open the door and walked in. Lightly closing the door behind them, they said, "You're awake?"

Shen Qingqiu rotated his neck and looked at the other out of the corner of his eye.

Under the light of lanterns and the warm moon, that man was indeed born with a good face. The corner of his mouth held in a smile, and he was clearly of incomparable intelligence and talent. His eyes, especially, exhibited a kind of warm and quick-witted air.

He knew this pair of eyes. Eyes that had risen from Lushui Lake.¹

Shen Qingqiu rolled to a seated position and an ice bag fell from his forehead. The man stooped to retrieve it and placed it on the table, replacing it with a new one.

Upon seeing this, Shen Qingqiu would be embarrassed to say the flood of “Who are you”s and “What do you want”s piling up under his tongue. Coughing once, he said with a reserved tone, “Many thanks to your distinguished self for your assistance in escaping Huan Hua Palace.”

That young man stood up by the table and said, smiling, “Humans have a saying, a drop of kindness is repaid as a gushing spring.² Besides, the kindness that Master Shen offered me far surpassed a drop.”

First of all, this young master was indeed that snake man from Bai Lu Forest.

Second of all, this young master knew that the person under this shell was Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu sounded out a name. “Tianlang-Jun?”

The reason why the ancient line of Heavenly Demons was called “Heavenly” was because, according to legend, their bloodline had chosen to fall from grace and leave the heavenly realm to become demons. Only a Heavenly Demon with a lineage purer than Luo Binghe’s could suppress the Heavenly Demon’s blood within Shen Qingqiu’s body. In that case, a problem arose. Of the Heavenly Demon lineage, Shen Qingqiu knew, the original work had only named two: Luo Binghe, and his father. Who else could it be?

But he couldn't strike gold more than three times.³ Shen Qingqiu's genius riddle-solving method, which had succeeded every time to date, finally hit a wall here.

The man shook his head and said, "Master Shen, treating me as Junshang is really an excessive honor."

Hearing these two characters "Junshang," Shen Qingqiu finally knew which character this person was.

At the opening of the original work, Tianlang-Jun had already been suppressed under a high mountain. As for this war of many years past, Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky only roughly covered the matter because it had little to do with the protagonist's slaughtering and stallion habits. He merely said that Tianlang-Jun was "no match for a siege by the combined powers of the cultivator magnates of the Human Realm, he was suppressed under XX mountain, eternally unable to turn around, separated from his trusted general and confidant by death or injury."

Which mountain was XX mountain, exactly? Shen Qingqiu had never properly considered this question. But after his curiosity was piqued, he finally recalled what XX mountain was.

Bailu Mountain!

Bailu Forest on Bailu Mountain!

Shen Qingqiu looked the man up and down. So this was Luo Binghe's father's "trusted general and confidant!"

Looking at him now, he already could see no trace of his snake-like deformities. Shen Qingqiu swallowed and said, "May I venture to ask you, sire... what is your distinguished name?"

The man said, courteously, "Tianlang-Jun's second-in-command, Zhuzhi-Lang."⁴

His words had only just left his mouth when the System gave a notification:
【Repaired completeness of storyline and unlocked secret character, B points +300. Activated plot hole filling event, B points + 100!】

A burst of uncontrollable excitement suddenly welled up in Shen Qingqiu.

"Plot hole filling" definitely referred to those behind-the-scenes deceitful massacres and assassinations with unclear explanations or setup bugs in the original work. This was the number one reason for Shen Yuan's disdain for 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》. It was also a big reason for him beating his chest and stomping his feet, gnashing his teeth in anger and resentment after finishing the novel.

Now, he had drawn out a character that had never directly appeared on stage, and the System had opened a plot hole filling event. Could it be that, next, he would finally uncover the truth behind those giant plot holes ripping through the sky?!

Shen Qingqiu said, “I saved you once, you also saved me once—we’re even now.”

The “saved you once” he spoke of was referring to that time he kept Gongyi Xiao from killing the snake man. But Zhu Zhilang shook his head and said, “More than that. If not for Master Shen, I’m afraid my humble self would not have been able to approach the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed for many more years. How could you say we’re even already?”

Shen Qingqiu understood his reasoning. “Okay, we can discuss this. Can’t you immediately extract these two things from my blood? Do you have to keep them in?”

This was like if you had a parasite in your body and the doctor’s treatment method was to put in another parasite to fight it. No matter how you think about it, the situation is even more terrible!

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “En... this was the first time my humble self utilized Heavenly Demon’s Blood. Before this I really have never heard of any means of dispelling it.”

Though the answer dampened his spirits, Shen Qingqiu still expressed his understanding. After the blood entered the body and dissolved without a trace, it truly would not be reasonable to separate it again. Zhuzhi-Lang said, “Though it cannot be dispelled, so long as my blood is also in Master Shen’s body, that person’s Heavenly Demon’s Blood cannot be activated. After going to the Demon Realm, there will be no trail to follow and there will be no way he can torment you any more.”

Wait.

Shen Qingqiu said, “Hold on. When did I say that I wanted to go to the Demon Realm?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “We’re going very soon.”

Shen Qingqiu examined his expression and said, “The ‘repayment’ you spoke of—it wouldn’t happen to be taking me to the Demon Realm?”

What were they going to do in the Demon Realm? It was short in supplies and natural resources, the culture and custom were incompatible, and he would not be acclimatized to the environment. In addition, there was a whole pile of more urgent worries right under his eyes. Before, while his brain was scared into meltdown by Luo Binghe’s near-necrophiliac behavior, he had let Liu Qingge get away with his original body. Would Luo Binghe clear out Cang Qiong Mountain in anger?!⁵

He had to return and clear the air between everyone involved. Shen Qingqiu immediately tossed the quilt aside, planning to run away. Who knew that just as he started to move, he would feel something both smooth and sticky, soft and ice cold crawl up his leg?

A jade-green snake slowly stretched its head out from the quilt, flicking a scarlet tongue towards Shen Qingqiu with a hiss.

This snake was three fingers thick and, at first glance, was similar to the venomous Chinese green tree viper of the Human Realm.⁶ The eye sockets were extremely large and the pupils were extremely small, and the contrast shocked the eye and astonished the heart. But Shen Qingqiu did not fear this type of soft-bodied animal. Looking at it with a cool glance, he stealthily collected spiritual power in the palm of his hand, planning on catching it off guard and snapping off seven inches. Suddenly, the jade-green snake reared back, red mouth gaping open.

To the eye it was merely a snake, but from its mouth it issued an ear-piercing shriek that could have come from a human throat. At the same time, thickly packed green darts exploded from behind its head like a blossoming flower. The sharp tips were suffused with scarlet red; it was obvious to see that they were extremely poisonous. The snake's body inflated several times like it had been pumped up with air. Just a moment ago it could have been said to be a dainty and cute ornamental snake, but now it was some sort of f***ing monster.

The Demon Realm variety was certainly savage. Shen Qingqiu immediately dispelled any intention of touching it with his bare hands.

Zhuzhi-Lang poured out a cup of tea. Placing it on the table, he said cordially, “Master Shen, why do you try to leave as soon as I finish my explanation? I sincerely wish to repay your kind assistance from Bailu Forest.”

Shen Qingqiu bit at his lip. “You want me to go to the Demon Realm, and if I don’t go you’ll put this kind of thing in my bed. Is this your ‘repayment’?”

Zhuzhi-Lang smiled and said, “Not only in your bed.”

Another small snake that was as thick as a thumb slid out from Shen Qingqiu’s clothes.

This snake had been coiled in his clothes all along, and having been warmed by his body temperature was nesting comfortably, not moving a bit. Shen Qingqiu didn’t even notice its presence. With an unceasing hiss, a flood of countless green snakes, some thick some thin, crawled out from under the bed, carpeting the whole floor.

Shen Qingqiu stayed taciturn for a while, then said, “The Snake Race?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said calmly, “My father was from the southern border.”

No wonder he was called this name.

The Demon Race attached very much importance to social class and lineage. Common demons or demons with lowly lineages could not take the title “Jun.” Shen Qingqiu thought it over—this part of his name was a suffix representing his social status, like how one must not encroach upon the taboo name of the emperor.

Luo Binghe’s time occupying the top seat had not gone smoothly, and this was because the demon Juns had much to say about the human portion of his mixed blood. As for the characters with the kind of name “XX-Lang,” Luo Binghe had killed more than a few in the early stages of the Demon Realm plotline. So, Shen Qingqiu concluded, those with this character weren’t all slumming it in caves, but at least were not of extraordinary origin.

Zhuzhi-Lang undoubtedly belonged to the Heavenly Demon bloodline, but couldn’t take the title of Jun. The issue was definitely mixed blood.

The Snake Race lived in a community on the southern border of the Demon Realm. Strictly speaking, they still counted as part of the Demon Race, but their bodies took the form of giant snakes. They were born like this, and with increasing age and cultivation very few transformed to take a human appearance, shedding their scales. Most of them stayed in snake form their entire lives.

Shen Qingqiu said, “Who is your honored mother?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “Tianlang-Jun’s younger sister.”

In any case, Tianlang-Jun's younger sister counted as something like a princess of the Demon Realm. How much can you fret over it, that out of everyone, she had to have a child with a snake—this kink is too f**king hardcore!

Shen Qingqiu endured those two snakes dawdling on his leg and stomach and said, "So, you are technically Luo Binghe's cousin? ... I say, can't you tell them not to... crawl into my clothes?"

Zhuzhi-Lang said, "Only speaking of seniority, that certainly can be said. They seem to be very fond of Master Shen; there's nothing my humble self can do."

Who would believe there's nothing you can do!

Shen Qingqiu endured it and asked, "Why would you go to Huan Hua Temple?"

Zhuzhi-Lang said with much patience, "I originally went to take care of official business. I never thought I'd see Master Shen."

Shen Qingqiu's heart gave a jump. "Official business? This official business you speak of, does it have to do with Luo Binghe?"

Linking hands to declare themselves tyrant? Conflicts within the Demon Realm? Or was it a situation of “moving the sky and the ground, a deeply emotional demon family reunion after many years of separation, crying on each other’s shoulders”?

This time, Zhuzhi-Lang smiled and did not answer. Shen Qingqiu said, “I’m afraid it wasn’t a touching situation of visiting new in-laws after a marriage kind of official business.”

Zhuzhi-Lang said, unhurriedly, “I was only obeying my lord’s orders.”

Shen Qingqiu asked, “This body, was it molded from the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed?”

If he had used it for himself, that was not a problem. But if he had not used the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed on himself, then it was probable that he used it to create a body for Tianlang-Jun. Tianlang-Jun had been suppressed under the mountain, propping himself up on a single breath for this many years. His original body was likely long ruined. But, if he could make like a cicada shedding its carapace, Shen Qingqiu really didn’t know what wind and waves would arrive. Shen Qingqiu had a not-entirely-wonderful premonition, that this careless flap of a butterfly’s wings had released an impressive monster. Not having received a reply, his mind could not be put to rest. He continued, “Taking me to the Demon Realm, was that another one of your lord’s orders?”

Whenever his questions touched upon the topic of Tianlang-Jun, Zhuzhi-Lang clammed up and refused to answer, only giving a polite smile which

made others choke with resentment. Only when Shen Qingqiu finally withdrew in defeat, he opened his mouth, still with his typical refined and courteous manner. “Rest well, Master Shen. If you have any needs please say and I will definitely handle them for you. We can depart for the borderlands tomorrow at the latest.”

Shen Qingqiu said with a dry mouth and tongue, “Do you have money?”

Zhuzhi-Lang responded, “I do.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Can I use it?”

Zhuzhi-Lang: “As you wish.”

Shen Qingqiu: “I want women.”

Zhuzhi-Lang stared blankly.

Shen Qingqiu repeated, “Wasn’t it you who said if I had a need I should bring it up, feel free to do as I wish? I want women. Get rid of the snakes.”

A slight crack finally split open Zhuzhi-Lang’s smiling expression. After quite a while, he did as instructed. Shen Qingqiu hummed a laugh and

turned to get off the bed. Putting on his outer jacket, his outfit was complete. Zhuzhi-Lang seemed to hesitate for some time, considering whether to follow. In the next moment, Shen Qingqiu strode out the door and he followed behind like his back leg.

Before, as Qing Jing Peak's Peak Lord, he had to be mindful of his image, and though a thousand curiosities grabbed at his mind and itched his liver, he had persevered in that brothels were not to be entered. But now, he had the opportunity. Shen Qingqiu treated Zhuzhi-Lang, following behind, as if he were nothing. Strolling a lap around the town, he picked the intimate-looking "Warm Red Pavilion" and stepped in, completely at ease.⁷

Before long, Shen Qingqiu was beside brightly colored decorations as his nostrils were assailed by the scent of talcum powder. Zhuzhi-Lang took a seat beside the round table, unmoving like Mt. Tai.

Shen Qingqiu said, "What's that look on your face?"

Zhuzhi-Lang averted his eyes and said, "It's just... I'm rather astonished. Master Shen would even have an interest in this place of prostitution."

Shen Qingqiu said, "In a moment you'll see what I have an interest in."

Just as he was speaking, a new songstress leisurely approached. She was slightly older and the cosmetics she wore were somewhat colorful. Hugging a pipa to her bosom, she sat on the floral bench. Meeting eyes with Shen Qingqiu, she seemed startled.

Shen Qingqiu didn't know the reason, and nodded at her. "Young lady?"

The songstress snapped out of it and said with an easy smile, "Don't be apprehensive, mister, you have a very good appearance and it reminded this servant of an old acquaintance—my eyes were deceived."

After speaking, she lowered her head and did not bring it up again. After a few clangs and skritches, she started to sing.

Shen Qingqiu was originally whispering in the ears of the girls next to him, not caring to listen to the music. But, after hearing two phrases, he suddenly felt that he had heard two very unbelievable things. Calling for the songstress to stop, he said, "Young lady, what is this you're singing?"

The woman said with a tender voice, "This servant is singing the new popular ballad《Resentment of Chunshan》."

Shen Qingqiu said, face full of black lines, "That's strange—just now I seem to have heard you singing of two names? Could you repeat those?"

The pipa player smiled behind her sleeve and said, "What's strange about it? Could it be that Mister never heard? The leading roles of《Resentment of Chunshan》, it goes without saying, are those two Shen Qingqiu and Luo Binghe, ah."

.....

.....

.....

When did they f***ing get made into a popular ballad?!

Zhuzhi-Lang was declining all service, quietly sitting to the side and pretending to be empty air. What a pity that he exposed himself when his shoulders faintly shook. Shen Qingqiu said, “Uh... could I ask, this... resentment of whatever mountain, what story does it tell?”

The women next to him said in a chorus of chirping voices, “Mister, you don’t even know this? The Resentment of Chunshan tells of the lingering sorrow of unspoken desire between Shen Qingqiu and his beloved disciple Luo Binghe, the forbidden and taboo...”

Shen Qingqiu persevered and listened to the story in a petrified state from head to tail.

To clear up the plot, in short, this was a shameless master-disciple couple, spending all day on some nameless mountain ignoring their duties to

papapa, going down the mountain to fight monsters and papapa, using papapa to settle misunderstandings, still needing a round of papapa before dying, continuing to papapa after death, continuing to papapa as before after resurrection..... story.

The pipa player sighed faintly, plucking a string with her fingertip. “Never having understood the affection in the other’s heart in life and laying with the body after death, this level of deep love is truly matchless in this age.”

All the women followed with incessant sighs and sobs, not to mention, had already begun to shed tears of emotion.

Shen Qingqiu buried his head deeply in his hands.

How damnable, is this some f***ing por*?

Reika’s notes:

- This chapter is by Lily.
- Regarding the title, spring is the time for romance. For example, 春宵 chūnxiāo means “spring night” but it’s also used to refer to a night of papapa. In the title, it’s a “spring mountain.”
- Papapa – the onomatopoeia of flesh on flesh.
- “...the title of Jun.” 君 (jūn) means monarch; lord; gentleman; ruler.
- It seems like 天琅君 Tianlang-Jun is a title given to the lords or kings of the demon realm with ancient/heavenly demon blood. Tian –

heavenly. Lang – onomatopoeia of jade, meaning some precious. Jun – lord.

- “Junshang” – 君上 – same as the Jun above and shang means “high” or “exalted.” So it’s something like “the great lord.”

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 53: Master and Disciple Meet Again

Who wrote this ballad? What mountain was Chunshan referring to?

Qing Jing Peak?

Cang Qiong Mountain?

The Cang Qiong Mountain sect can wipe out your entire family, okay?!

Just why did the gossip spread everywhere, including the border territory, to the point that even the flowery love songs on the streets used them as material? It was as if he and Luo Binghe had been caught having sex in front of everyone in the entire world!

Zhuzhi-Lang burst out laughing. He turned around and said, “Is Master Shen ... very interested ... in this ballad?”

Shen Qingqiu looked at him coldly. Zhuzhi-Lang hastily adjusted his expression, but it was still hard for him to hold back. “It... it’s best if my humble self withdraws for a moment...”

However, he was just about to stand up when his body suddenly stalled, and he stiffened on his stool.

Shen Qingqiu snuck a look at his expression before laughing a bit. He asked, “What? Does your body finally feel out of sorts?”

He stood up and shook out his clothes. The green snakes that were lounging in his lap fell onto the floor with a patter, tumbling around and revealing their yellow underbellies. The women in the hall started to shriek out of fear, and the woman playing the pipa immediately threw it down.

Zhuzhi-Lang placed a hand on his forehead and stood up using the support of the table, swaying. He stared at Shen Qingqiu and lifted his right hand, grabbing a handful of small snakes which slipped out of his sleeve, but they all just wound themselves around his fingers, no strength to attack whatsoever. Zhuzhi-Lang shook his head and said weakly, “...realgar.”

Somehow, the entire extravagant building had long since been soaked in the scent of realgar wine.

(TN: Realgar wine is wine mixed with powdered realgar, a yellow-orange arsenic sulfide mineral that is supposed to be effective against disease, snakes, and evil spirits.)

Shen Qingqiu praised, “Top-quality realgar wine. Also, might I mention that it was all bought with your money.”

Nothing came for free. Looking for women was fake, looking for assistants was real. The assistants didn't necessarily need to know how to fly or burrow into the ground; with a whisper in their ears, the girls in the building took the money and secretly bought all the realgar wine in the town. They surrounded the Warm Red Pavilion and fanned the wine as they boiled it for an entire night. If Zhuzhi-Lang didn't faint from the fragrance, then he wouldn't be part of the Snake Race. It wasn't that Zhuzhi-Lang wasn't on guard; it was only that he was on guard against Shen Qingqiu contacting other cultivators, not the girls in the building. In the end, he had been careless.

Zhuzhi-Lang lifted his head. The whites of his eyes had already turned gold, and his pupils were lengthening and sharpening at a speed visible to the naked eye. His face was also starting to change shape. Shen Qingqiu quickly opened the door, and he asked the maidens squeezed next to the door, "Are you going or not?"

The girls immediately scrambled to get outside, the woman playing the pipa at the very end. Shen Qingqiu adeptly stuffed a bag of coins into her pocket; it could be considered compensation for her pipa. He closed the door with a flip of his hand, and when he looked back again, an enormous, jade green snake whose width was so large that three people wouldn't be able to encircle it with their arms, was now coiled where Zhuzhi-Lang had been standing. This enormous snake's head was huge and triangular, its eyes bronze-yellow, its pupils an extremely thin line. It seemed to be dizzy, as if its slender neck couldn't support its heavy head, which drooped from time to time.

The effect of the realgar wine was beyond expectations. It actually made Zhuzhi-Lang reveal his original shape, which made Shen Qingqiu's head

hurt a little. He picked up a folding fan from nearby that somebody had left behind before opening it and fanning it. The enormous snake slunk towards him and wound two circles around him, as if it wanted to bind him in place. Shen Qingqiu leaped out easily.

The snake rolled over and twisted together before breaking out of the building, as if it were drunk. It crashed into the middle of the street, causing the passersby to shriek and flee in all directions. Shen Qingqiu also followed after him and jumped down from the building, shouting, "It's no use if you come outside either. This entire town is full of the scent of realgar wine!"

A sharp hiss came from the enormous snake's mouth, and it shook its head and thrashed its tail in the street. Shen Qingqiu decided to draw him away from places where there were a lot of people, and he quickly leaped lightly onto its head. As long as the snake went in the wrong direction or was about to crash into pedestrians or houses, Shen Qingqiu would jab the fan into the side of its head. The snake's scales were like armor, creating an enormous rumbling noise as it crawled along the floor. Shen Qingqiu often had to pour large amounts of spiritual energy into the fan to make it change direction, and so he forcefully drove the snake outside of the town.

After the girls in the building received the money, they went all out. He didn't know how much realgar wine they boiled, but the scent was scattered far away by the wind. With great difficulty, they arrived at the foot of a mountain, and the scent was still floating steadily down from uphill. The enormous snake was overwhelmed with discomfort from the smell, and it had also been prodded and stabbed by Shen Qingqiu the entire way here. It was extremely exhausted, and it couldn't crawl any further.

Shen Qingqiu saw that they were already far away from the town, and he finally jumped down. The enormous snake was weak and powerless, its head drooping down as it curled up across the mountain path several times. Shen Qingqiu said, “Even though I’m very interested in filling plot holes, I’m not interested in immigrating to the Demon Realm. Also, I’m under a lot of pressure right now. Since you can’t remove the ancient demon blood either, there’s no need to repay the debt of gratitude. Xizhi-Lang,¹ goodbye!”

He was afraid that after the aroma of the wine wore off, Zhuzhi-Lang would return to his original shape and release another pile of snakes to annoy him, so he ran away extremely quickly. At the next slightly larger city, he found a very reliable chain store and rented a flying sword.

No, you didn’t read that wrong. He indeed rented it. Just like renting a car, flying swords could be rented as well. Moreover, the price was extremely fair and cost-effective!

In the end, he still used Zhuzhi-Lang’s money. Shen Qingqiu placed his palms together and thanked his dear friend before he sped off on the flying sword towards Cang Qiong Mountain.

About half a day later, twelve verdant green mountain peaks of varying heights appeared from the sea of clouds and mist, rising and falling along the mountain range.

It had been a long time. Cang Qiong Mountain.

Shen Qingqiu silently crossed out the word 'Chunshan' that had just appeared in his mind.

There was an air defense formation set up outside of the Cang Qiong Mountain sect, and flying swords that weren't from the sect couldn't enter without advance notice. If one entered without permission, they would be knocked off course, so Shen Qingqiu stopped at the bottom of the mountain and sent the flying sword back. Along the way, he changed into a different outfit and found a bamboo hat to wear.

There were often cultivators passing through the small town at the bottom of the mountain, but today he didn't see very many. Shen Qingqiu was just thinking that it was a little strange when somebody asked, "This Immortal Master, do you... want to go up to the Cang Qiong Mountain sect?"

Shen Qingqiu nodded. The person spoke again. "It's probably not very good to go now, right?"

Shen Qingqiu's heart tightened, and he asked, "Why is it not very good?"

The person shared a glance with the others around him. "Do you not know? This mountain has already been surrounded for two days."

After passing through the sect gate and climbing the stairs up the mountain, Shen Qingqiu unexpectedly didn't see a single disciple guarding the Peak.

The ominous feeling in Shen Qingqiu's mind grew stronger and stronger, and he leaped up several stairs at once, rushing up the mountain. The further up he went, the more clearly he could see that much of the sky around Qiong Ding Peak was covered with thick, roiling smoke, mixed with flashes of lightning and the sound of rolling thunder.

At the summit of Qiong Ding Peak, everything was a mess. Fire burned through the forest, and ice was scattered all over the floor, the edges of the roof collapsed and destroyed; it seemed like several fierce battles had occurred here. Outside of Qiong Ding Hall, the two factions were clearly facing off against each other. One side consisted of cultivators from the Human Realm, some standing and some lying down, as Mu Qingfang bustled among them. The other side consisted of soldiers from the demon race, draped in black armor, dark and intimidating. Even though it seemed like they had ceased fire temporarily, as long as somebody's sword left its sheath by an inch, it would undoubtedly reignite the spark in the air.

It seemed like Luo Binghe already felt that it wasn't worth hiding his identity anymore. Shen Qingqiu wasn't surprised. The original Luo Binghe had exposed his own lineage at around the same time. His influence as the one at the top of the demon race was already solidified, and he had also brainwashed Huan Hua Palace from the inside out, so it was docile and obedient under his control. With a solid foothold, he naturally wouldn't need to continue concealing his identity. The only thing was that the general summary of the scene where he revealed himself was different, that's all.

Even though the disciples of the Peak all had to wear uniforms, there were also quite a few famous cultivators who weren't subject to this restriction. Shen Qingqiu's unsuitable attire didn't really attract that much attention, and he squeezed to the front of the hall, peering in.

Yue Qingyuan sat with his eyes closed, Liu Qingge behind him with his hand on Yue Qingyuan's back. The spiritual energy fluctuating around their bodies seemed to be somewhat unsteady; most likely, both of their situations weren't too good. When he looked at his Sect Master senior apprentice brother and unlucky junior apprentice brother and saw how it seemed like they had reached this point only because he had screwed them over, Shen Qingqiu felt a twinge of guilt. He turned his head away once more, and his breathing stilled.

Luo Binghe stood darkly at the other side of the hall.

He wore all black, which contrasted against his skin, making it seem so pale that it glowed. His eyes were extremely black, but also extremely bright. His expression was cold, and the aura around him made people feel anxious and uneasy. Mobei-Jun stood behind him, and although it was the position of a deputy, he still held his head slightly higher, just like an arrogant ice sculpture who naturally belonged there.

Yue Qingyuan suddenly opened his eyes. Qi Qingqi said hastily, "Sect Master senior apprentice brother, are you... well?"

Yue Qingyuan shook his head and looked at Luo Binghe. "In the past, when the demon race attacked the Cang Qiong Mountain sect, Your Excellency served as part of the resistance force that met the demon race head on. Your Shizun even more so protected the entire Qiong Ding Peak with his entire being. Unexpectedly, today, you're also the one leading the demon race, forcing Qiong Ding Peak to this state."

Luo Binghe said indifferently, “If it wasn’t for your sect going too far, I wouldn’t want to do this either.”

Qi Qingqi burst out laughing from rage. “Ha, ha! ‘The Cang Qiong Mountain sect going too far’ is really something that everyone should hear. You’re an ungrateful traitor who betrayed your master. It’s one thing if you bite the hand that fed you, but you forced your own Shizun to self-destruct in front of you, and afterwards, you wouldn’t let him go even though he died. Who knows what secret, shameful things you did with his corpse? Now you’re making a false accusation? Just who is going too far?!”

Luo Binghe acted as if he couldn’t hear her sneering. He said apathetically, “Who’s next? I’m going to remove this engraved sign.”

Shen Qingqiu was startled, and he lifted his head up to look. The engraved sign Luo Binghe was referring to was the one currently in the middle of Qiong Ding Palace, suspended high in the air on a horizontal board. The two words on it, ‘Cang Qiong,’ were personally handwritten by one of the Cang Qiong Mountain sect founders. It was extremely old and unusually significant, and it was equivalent to being part of Cang Qiong Mountain’s face. If somebody removed this sign, it would be the same thing as slapping Cang Qiong Mountain right in the face. Back then, when Sha Hualing rashly led a bunch of warriors to surround Qiong Ding Peak, her idea was precisely to remove the engraved sign and take it back to the Demon Realm to show off.

Qi Qingqi said, “If you’re going to fight, then fight. First you burn a cave here, then you destroy a gate there, and now you want to remove this engraved sign—what’s the meaning of that? Torturing us in bits and pieces, unwilling to be straightforward about it?”

Yue Qingyuan said, “Junior apprentice sister Qi, stay calm.” He stood up. Even though they were at a disadvantage, his expression was extremely steady, so it wouldn’t ruin their morale. “Junior apprentice brother Qingqiu’s immortal body has already been settled inside the palace. He’s someone from my Cang Qiong Mountain sect’s Qing Jing Peak. After he passed, he inevitably must be buried in the Qing Jing Peak tomb with the other past Peak Lords, so he may be at peace. Unless Your Excellency completely obliterates Cang Qiong Mountain, no matter how much time you waste, junior apprentice brother Qingqiu’s body will never be handed over to you, as long as someone from my sect still has breath remaining in them.”

Numerous people at the scene chorused together, “That’s exactly how it is!”

Shen Qingqiu just knew that they would have this attitude. It was precisely because Cang Qiong Mountain would definitely do all that it could to protect his body that Shen Qingqiu had to come back.

The corner of Luo Binghe’s mouth tugged, his smile ice-cold. He lowered his head and said unhurriedly, “I will not personally act against Cang Qiong Mountain. Nor will I kill a single member from the Cang Qiong Mountain sect. But what I do have is time that I can slowly waste.”

Those two words, ‘slowly waste,’ smashed crisply into Shen Qingqiu’s ears. Suddenly, his entire heart sunk.

Luo Binghe absolutely wasn't somebody who would fight a battle of words with you this politely. With the pressure of unconditional strength, he had no inclination of feigning civility. If he wanted something from a particular sect, he would use the most direct and effective method to do so: bloodbath, massacre, and then take it away. But for Luo Binghe to actually waste two entire days so patiently like this—it didn't seem like he was in a leisurely and carefree mood, but rather as if he was waiting for something.

Such as, waiting for Shen Qingqiu himself to come out.

Shen Qingqiu's fists tightened.

Luo Binghe: "Go."

Mobei-Jun made an 'oh' noise and took a step forward before he suddenly said, "I already went many times."

The piles of exploded ice shards, and the floor and walls filled with holes outside of the hall, were all part of his masterpiece. Luo Binghe said, "Then pick someone to fight on your behalf."

Mobei-Jun nodded. He stuck his hand out behind him and fished out a quaking person.

He lifted this person out like he was carrying a baby chick before he threw him with a thud onto the stretch of empty ground between the two sides. Shang Qinghua climbed up, terror-stricken. When the Cang Qiong Mountain sect's people saw him, their eyes looked like they were about to shoot out fire.

It wasn't just them, Shen Qingqiu was also about to spew raging fire from his own eyes and mouth: the deceptive Great God Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky ah fck fck f*ck!

Qi Qingqi drew her sword at once and shouted, "Traitor!"

Shang Qinghua smiled apologetically. "Junior apprentice sister Qi, if you have something to say, then say it nicely. Don't dance around with your sword. You're so beautiful, if you just act a little gentler then..." Qi Qingqi had already long since struck out with her sword, and she said furiously, "Who's your junior apprentice sister!" Shang Qinghua hastily evaded her and went to hide behind Mobei-Jun. Mobei-Jun ruthlessly kicked him back. Shang Qinghua said bitterly, "I didn't have any other choices either, don't be like this. It'll make other people laugh at us if they see fellow disciples fighting each other."

Shen Qingqiu was stupefied. Shang Qinghua was really even more lacking in morals than he had imagined. He could still say something like that at this kind of moment—this... was indeed a little shameless...

Qi Qingqi cursed, "Who's your fellow disciple? At the Immortal Alliance Conference, when you let demons in, did you think of the Cang Qiong

Mountain sect disciples who died or were injured as your fellow disciples? As a traitor who was reduced to the demon race's lackey, did you think of us as your fellow disciples? Today you fight your way up the mountain with this world-wrecking demon king, and you still have the face to call yourself our fellow disciple?!"

The two of them chased each other around the palace, and it was truly a chaotic scene. Shen Qingqiu watched from the side, emotions surging through his mind: "Cut him, cut him, cut him... f*ck, just off by a bit! Qi Qingqi, cut off his [BEEP]! Use effort!"

Liu Qingge removed the hand that was on Yue Qingyuan's back sending him spiritual energy. He had finished calming down, and he stood up. Cheng Luan shuddered incessantly in its sheath, continuously buzzing and ringing. Yang Yixuan clenched his fists and said, "Shizun, you fought that demon for a whole day already!"

Liu Qingge lowered his voice. "Step back."

Luo Binghe glanced at him and chuckled before he said quietly, "My defeated opponent."

He didn't speak very loudly, but his enunciation was clear and melodious. The end of his sentence tilted upwards, and everyone in the entire palace could hear it. The hand that Liu Qingge used to hold his sword tightened, lightning flashing through his eyes. There was nothing that could make Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord feel more humiliated than the words 'my defeated

opponent.' Yang Yixuan's temper spiked, and he immediately counterattacked, "Demon Realm bast***!"

Luo Binghe was unconcerned. "Yes. I'm a bast***.² The entire Cang Qiong Mountain was stirred up by a bast***, isn't that glorious? Not just Qiong Ding Peak, I can stir up each and every one of the other Peaks as well and let the whole world know that the eminent Cang Qiong Mountain sect of the Righteous path was attacked by a bast*** to the point that they didn't have the ability to fight back. How's that?"

Ning Yingying said, distressed, "Luo... Luo Binghe, will you only be happy if you burn down Qing Jing Peak as well?"

Luo Binghe didn't even think before he replied instantly, "Of course not." He frowned. "If anybody dares to destroy a plant or tree, bamboo or house, on Qing Jing Peak, I will not let them off lightly."

Liu Qingge snorted through his nose. "What a pretense."

Cheng Luan surged out, and the sword energy swept past Luo Binghe's cheek, sending his hair flying. Luo Binghe placed his hand on the sword hanging from his waist, and he said in retaliation, "You're overestimating yourself."

However, in the end, the two swords did not cross blades again.

Shen Qingqiu stood in between the two of them. Both of their sword energies swept up and collided, instantly slicing the bamboo hat that he was originally wearing just for show into two halves. He caught Cheng Luan's sword edge between two fingertips of his left hand, not allowing Liu Qingge to advance a single inch; his right hand firmly restrained the hand that Luo Binghe had already placed on the Heart Devil sword's hilt, not allowing him to draw the sword.

"It's only a corpse, everyone, it's only a corpse. There's no need to be like this, is there!"

Shen Qingqiu looked to the left before he looked to the right. He didn't have a chance to say that line yet when Luo Binghe suddenly flipped over his hand and grabbed Shen Qingqiu's wrist, and it felt as if an icy band was wrapped sturdily around his wrist. The smile on his face was near distorted, and he said, one word at a time, "Caught you. Shizun."

Even though Shen Qingqiu had long since mentally prepared himself, he still couldn't resist feeling his blood run cold when he saw this face up close.

After a beat of dead silence, a huge racket surged up in the hall immediately. Yue Qingyuan was extremely astonished, and his voice shook slightly. "But... junior apprentice brother Qingqiu?"

Qi Qingqi even forgot to hack at Shang Qinghua, and he hastily seized the chance to roll back behind Mobei-Jun. Ning Yingying grabbed Ming Fan, who had a bloody nose and a swollen face, and muttered, "Senior

apprentice brother, did you hear that? A-Luo and Sect Master senior apprentice brother said that person is... Shizun?"

Ming Fan: "How come he seems like he is... but he also seems like he isn't?"

Yang Yixuan had an extremely different point of view. He said in shock, "Isn't this Peerless Huang... Elder Huang?! Huang... Elder Huang is Shen Shibo?"

(TN: 绝世黄瓜 – Peerless Cucumber. Huáng guā means cucumber but he only used "Huang" which is a common surname. Shibo is a respectful way of calling your teacher's senior brother.)

Thank you for not saying the entire ID out loud!

Liu Qingge's eyes suddenly widened, and his usual unruffled calm was so disturbed that it spilled over onto his face. He said, "...you didn't die?"

Shen Qingqiu's originally guilty but grateful emotions were smashed into pieces. He couldn't accept it, and said, "Junior apprentice brother Liu, what kind of expression is this? You're not happy that your senior apprentice brother didn't die?"

The color of Liu Qingge's face first went green and then black, black and then white, all sorts of colors, very unimpressive. Quite a few people were more or less the same as him. Shen Qingqiu didn't get to continue speaking before a hand turned his face away.

Luo Binghe said, "You're finally willing to come out now?"

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)

Report chapter Comments

Chapter 54 – Unhappy Reunion

Shen Qingqiu was grabbed so hard that his bones were almost broken. Now only his legs could move but he didn't want to publicly knee Luo Binghe in the groin.

Shen Qingqiu said: "You did this on purpose."

Luo Binghe asked, "What does Shizun mean?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "You didn't immediately slaughter everyone in the sect. Instead, you delayed matters for a long time just to draw me out."

Luo Binghe smiled bitterly: "It seems that Shizun can occasionally guess his disciple's thoughts correctly. This disciple is truly wild with joy. I wish I could beat my chest and stamp my feet to engrave this moment in my memory forever."

Liu Qingge withdrew his sword. He swayed and seemed to be somewhat dizzy. Pointing at Luo Binghe, he said, "You, let him go."

Luo Binghe dragged Shen Qingqiu into his arms and said impatiently, "What did you say?"

His attitude as he did this was unyielding, causing Shen Qingqiu's depression, which he had been suppressing, to shoot three feet high.

Shen Qingqiu silently took a deep breath and said: "When did you realize that it was me in your dreams?"

If Luo Binghe hadn't discovered that Shen Qingqiu hadn't died, would Luo Binghe have waited at Cang Qiong Mountain sect like a hunter trying to flush out his prey?¹

Luo Binghe said, "Shizun looks down on me too much. Even if I didn't notice the first time, I would be really stupid if I didn't notice it the second time."

Shen Qingqiu suddenly felt a pain in his knee. Silently, he thought: You're not stupid; I'm the one who's stupid.

It was only Shen Qingqiu who knew how Luo Binghe cultivated and manipulated his dream abilities to superb effect but Shen Qingqiu thought he was really out of his mind and wouldn't be able to differentiate between hallucinations and people who invaded his dreamland.

Shen Qingqiu asked, "Why didn't you end the dream when you discovered an anomaly?" Is it fun to act out a "teacher's devoted and obedient disciple" play?

Luo Binghe looked at him. Unexpectedly, he said: “Why would I want to do that? Was Shizun not happy to be coaxed by me?”

... Happy?

At that time Shen Qingqiu wasn't happy at all because he was worried about Luo Binghe's psychological state. However, the facts have proved that everything, including his worries, was under Luo Binghe's control. After all, this was Luo Binghe, the protagonist. How could he have made such a big mistake,² thinking that Luo Binghe had turned over a new leaf and mended his ways, becoming just a lovely, pitiful little white flower?

Shen Qingqiu was the type of person who was amenable to coaxing but not to coercion.³ However, now he felt as though his face had been slapped twice when he realized that Luo Binghe had only been pretending.⁴

Qi Qingqi involuntarily cried out: “Slow down, what's going on?” She pointed inside the

Qiong Ding's palace hall: “The one lying inside... Isn't that Shen Qingqiu? Why is there another one?”

Luo Binghe seemed to be in a good mood as he said: “Why don't you ask the former An Ding Peak Lord?”

Shen Qingqiu: ...****! He knew that the only thing Shang Qinghua could be given credit for was having no backbone or moral integrity.

Shang Qinghua chuckled but immediately stepped forward when Mobei Jun gave him a sidelong look. Head high, chest puffed out, he gathered his wits,⁵ and said clearly: “A few years ago senior apprentice brother Shen accidentally found a place that held a treasure, the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed. This spirit plant can be molded into the shape of a body. It was with the help of this treasure that senior apprentice brother Shen was able to shed his mortal body at Huayue City. The corpse inside is his but it’s only an empty shell. The one here outside is him, too. Both are him!”

This was a succinct summary, very concise and understandable. Several pairs of eyes suddenly turned towards Shen Qingqiu. Liu Qingge immediately pointed Cheng Luan at Shen Qingqiu. The murderous look on Liu Qingge’s face was worse than when he was looking at Luo Binghe earlier.

Yue Qingyuan whispered, “In that case, why has there been absolutely no news of you for the past five years? Why did you sever all connections with the Twelve Peaks? Is it because, in your heart, your fellow sect members are unworthy of your trust?”

Shen Qingqiu felt guilty at his lack of confidence: “That, senior apprentice brother, listen to me...”

Qi Qingqi sighed: “Shen Qingqiu, you... you’re actually that kind of person! Do you know how badly they were hurt by you, senior apprentice brother? Do you know how much your disciples cried? All day long Qing Jing Peak was filled with the sound of weeping! For one entire year, no one wanted to visit the Peak because it was shrouded in gloom, with everyone wearing mourning clothes! The position of Peak Lord was left vacant while you were happily playing outside, free and unfettered!”

The thing Shen Qingqiu was most afraid of was the shrewish Qi Qingqi pointing a finger at him and giving him a scolding. Shen Qingqiu hurriedly said: “I really didn’t mean to do that. I wasn’t happily playing freely outside at all. I’ve been buried in the soil for five years. I just woke up a few days ago. That person who was running around outside free and unfettered, it was all his doing!”

When Shang Qinghua saw that the spearhead was pointing at him again, he felt even more wronged: “Why blame me again? Didn’t you say you wanted it to mature as soon as possible?”

Liu Qingge pressed his fingers against his temple: “Shut up!”

Shang Qinghua shut up. They were a noisy group. In fact, if you looked at this scene a certain way, it probably looked quite funny but Shen Qingqiu thought that the entertainment factor was lost because of the timing.

Fires had sprung up all over Qiong Ding Peak and its buildings were scorched black. After two days of fighting and siege, it no longer had its usual majestic and dignified look. Inside and outside the palace hall, there

were people with bloodstained faces holding on to another disciple's hand to stand. The disciples of the younger generation around him seemed panic-stricken. They were exhausted, like an arrow at the end of its flight. On the other hand, the black-armored demon generals and fighters that had half-surrounded the Cang Qiong Mountain sect disciples looked like newly sharpened swords. The demons' bright eyes were staring at the disciples like tigers watching their prey.

Shen Qingqiu turned around to look at the person behind him and said, "Luo Binghe, you said you came to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect to catch me."

Luo Binghe said: "Correct."

Shen Qingqiu said, "You've caught me." Your goal has been achieved. It's time to withdraw.

Luo Binghe looked at him and said, "You won't run away?"

"..." Shen Qingqiu nodded slowly: "I won't run away."

The corners of Luo Binghe's mouth turned up in a humorless⁶ smile. For the first time, his face showed an expression that was devoid of mockery. He whispered: "So many times, I've believed in Shizun so much."

Liu Qingge suddenly said, “Shen Qingqiu, what do you mean?”

He looked at Shen Qingqiu as though Shen Qingqiu’s words had just subjected him to extraordinary shame and humiliation: “Bai Zhan Peak’s Lord is here. You’re right in front of me but you intend to sacrifice yourself by surrendering your body to him?”

Junior apprentice brother, I can understand that as Bai Zhan Peak’s Lord, you feel that your dignity has been violated, but could you change the words you use? What the devil do you mean by “surrendering your body”? Please change this way of referring to it, thank you!

Liu Qingge said: “You’re afraid of being a burden on Cang Qiong Mountain sect but Cang Qiong Mountain sect isn’t necessarily afraid of this burden.”

Luo Binghe sneered: “How many unbroken ribs do you have left?”

When Yue Qingyuan’s hand grasped Xuan Su’s hilt, Mu Qingfang, who was beside him, said nervously: “Senior apprentice brother Zhangmen, you broke through the demon’s barrier and sustained grievous injuries at the hands of the enemy. Now you’re barely able to draw your sword. I’m afraid that it will really harm your body...”

A burst of black qi suddenly rose to Yue Qingyuan’s face but was forced down again. His voice was strained when he said: “No, impossible. Junior apprentice brother already died once. We weren’t able to protect him then. Do I really have to watch him die again?”

Shen Qingqiu's mind was in turmoil when he heard those words. If one were to list all of the people Shen Qingqiu admired and respected most in the world, Yue Qingyuan would rank first. Not only did he have a powerful, sincere, and earnest desire to protect, but he always did his utmost for the sect as a whole. Shen Qingqiu found it too embarrassing to ask the Cang Qiong Mountain's sect master to clear up Shen Qingqiu's mess⁷ and pay the bill for him. The one who had courted death was him alone, therefore he should take on this burden alone. Shen Qingqiu said: "I've taught my disciples that it's enough for one person to take responsibility. Senior apprentice brother, as the sect master, the well-being of all the disciples of the sect rests on your shoulders. You should know what choice to make."

The hall was silent. Yue Qingyuan's face was stiff and his knuckles were white. Shen Qingqiu was reminding him that, as the leader of a sect that was in a very perilous situation, the proper choice was easy to see.

As every Peak Lord was considering this, Ning Yingying rushed forward, grabbed Shen Qingqiu's arm, and shouted: "I disagree!"

Shen Qingqiu said: "Ming Fan, take care of your junior apprentice sister."⁸

Ning Yingying said: "I'm not a child anymore! I don't need someone to take care of me. During the altercation at Jinlan City and Huan Hua Palace, Shizun, you came forward to solve the problem. Why does it have to be you again this time? Why does it have to be Shizun who suffers each time?"

Because I'm the one courting disaster. But at least he managed to raise a normal and filial girl. Shen Qingqiu had been very worried but now he felt somewhat relieved: "It's not seemly for an adult to weep endlessly like this. Your teacher isn't going to die." In his heart, he added the word: Probably...

The next moment, Ming Fan, with a face full of grief and indignation, said: "Shizun, wouldn't death be better than giving yourself to this devil⁹ for Cang Qiong Mountain sect's sake? Who has ever heard of a gentleman who gives his own life to feed a devil?"

What are you saying? Ming Fan, you little brat, can you speak human?!

This long delay made Luo Binghe impatient. He grabbed Shen Qingqiu's hand, put his other hand on the Heart Devil's hilt, and said: "I'll also be taking Shizun's immortal body, too."

Another Peak Lord said indignantly: "That's going too far! Isn't it enough for you to take one person away? What are you going to do with a corpse?"

Luo Binghe didn't answer. Instead, he gestured to Mobei Jun then gave him instructions. Seeing this, with great reluctance, Shen Qingqiu decided to compromise. One wrong word and another dispute could arise. To prevent this, Shen Qingqiu wanted to pull on Luo Binghe's arm but felt too embarrassed to do that. Instead, he pulled on Luo Binghe's sleeve. He hesitated for a while then summoned up all his courage and said: "I'm going to accompany you so why do you have to do this?"

When he said that, Shen Qingqiu felt extremely humiliated.

He was a man but in front of so many other people, he had to whisper “accompany you” in a conciliatory tone.¹⁰ The fact that this person was once his disciple made him feel that the situation was even more resentful. It was disgraceful.

However, showing one’s weak side had a certain effect on men. The expression on Luo Binghe’s face visibly became sunny and cloudless. Not only did his grip on Shen Qingqiu loosen, but even his tone of voice also softened. Nonetheless, even though his tone was soft, his words were still as harsh as before: “Shizun’s original body is still very important. After all, if Shizun’s soul leaves his current body again like a cicada casting off its skin, this disciple wouldn’t know what to do.”

As soon as Luo Binghe turned his head away from Shen Qingqiu, his voice became cold: “Take it away.”

Before Mobei Jun could move, Qi Qingqi, who had been listening to Liu Mingyan quietly whispering to her in the upper hall, first looked surprised then became calm and said: “Stop arguing!”

She raised her head and said: “Luo Binghe, there’s no need to argue over this now. Even if we were to allow you to take it away, your wish can’t be fulfilled.”

Shen Qingqiu knew she was hot-tempered and didn't know if she might say something extremely infuriating to provoke Luo Binghe. Shen Qingqiu had a bad feeling about this but, unexpectedly, she motioned Liu Mingyan to forward: "Mingyan, tell them."

Liu Mingyan: "Shen Shishu's¹¹ immortal body is missing."

She stepped aside after she finished speaking and from behind her a few disciples were carried out. These were the disciples who had been at the ceremonial¹² platform guarding the corpse. The disciples were all unconscious and their bodies from their faces to their fingertips were a strange bluish black color.

There was an uproar in the hall. Yue Qingyuan's facial expression changed and Luo Binghe raised his eyebrows. Qi Qingqi said calmly, "Luo Binghe, you needn't give me that look. I really wanted to hide it but, unfortunately, I had just told Mingyan to go to the hall, only to find that the platform was empty. The corpse that we placed on it and preserved, as was appropriate, has disappeared."

She seemed delighted and spoke cheerfully. Unexpectedly, the corpse would rather sprout wings and fly away than be carried off by Luo Binghe. Mu Qingfang examined the disciples and said: "They are unconscious but their lives are not in danger. It's poison."

Yue Qingyuan said: "Which poison is it?"

Mu Qingfang said: “I can’t tell right now. They have no wounds. Let me take a sample of their blood to test.”

Qi Qingqi said: “If this was poison from the human world, junior apprentice brother Mu would be able to identify it with a glance. Since he is unable to, is this something you did?”

Luo Binghe said indifferently: “I don’t like to use poison.”

It’s true, Luo Binghe rarely uses poison to kill people. Moreover, he had no need to lie since he was currently in an overwhelmingly superior position.

This meant that while the two sides were gathered in the hall, bickering with each other, some unknown person or persons had secretly sneaked inside past all of their defenses, and stolen Shen Qingqi’s corpse right from under the noses of the leaders of the human cultivators and demons. What a scary thought!

Shen Qingqiu wondered: What’s up with people trying to steal his corpse? How come when he was alive no one wanted him but when he was dead he was in high demand?¹³

Luo Binghe saw that it would do no good to stay here and talk about it. Frowning, he said: “Never mind, no matter who took it, I will always be able to find it.”

Black qi rose up in the air when Luo Binghe drew the Heart Devil sword. A slash of his sword cleaved space and a portal opened. Shen Qingqiu reminded him: “Remove the encirclement.”

Luo Binghe looked at him then said brusquely: “As Shizun wishes.”

The tip of Liu Qingge’s sword Cheng Luan was pointed down. Liu Qingge looked up and his hand clenched so tightly on the sword’s hilt that his palm¹⁴ was cut and blood dripped down the blade.

He stood there frozen for a long time but could only spit out a single word: “Wait!”

This word was thrown out like an icy dart yet full of fury and an overpowering desire to fight.

Luo Binghe sheathed the Heart Devil sword and smiled grimly: “Let’s go!”

Reika’s Notes:

- This chapter is by Reika (me).
- To be honest, the dialogue is quite funny but I like that Shen Qingqiu makes the point that it’s actually very *unfunny* given the state that the sect is in.
- Please let me know if there are any errors.

You don't really need to read this stuff but if you're interested, here are some notes about the translation:

- The dialogue throughout this chapter is actually full of innuendo that's super hard to translate but I did my best to make it sound full of double meanings in English. 😊
- "...he didn't want to publicly knee Luo Binghe in the groin." – Because it would ruin his "cold and elegant" image.
- "This disciple is truly wild with joy." – Pfft, Luo Binghe seems to be pretending this is sarcastic but I'm pretty sure he truly is ecstatic that his Shizun is alive.
- "...you intend to sacrifice yourself by surrendering your body to him." – Everyone seems to think that Peak Lord Shen is going to have to let the Demon Lord burst his chrysanthemum. Shen Qingqiu complains about Liu Qingge's word choice because this phrase "surrendering your body" is 委身 wěi shēn which means "give oneself wholly to" or "give one's body to; marry." These days it's just a thinly veiled phrase for "doing it." Some people seem to think that Shen Qingqiu is sacrificing his chastity for the sect.
- "A burst of black qi..." – I think is 100% literal. I imagine black energy rising up. This should be the sign of a backlash if you are a righteous cultivator, right? But for demons, black qi should be normal.

Thanks for reading!

1. 守株待兔 (shǒu zhū dài tù) lit. "to guard a tree-stump, waiting for rabbits"
2. 乌龙 – "own goal" i.e. a player accidentally hitting the ball into his own team's goal but in context means either an accident or a mistake.
3. 吃软不吃硬 (chī ruǎn bù chī yìng) literally "eats soft food, but refuses hard food"

4. A literal translation of this would be “Shen Qingqiu was truly the type of person who eats soft food but refuses hard food but you can’t slap him the face after eating and say: pretend.” I changed it quite a bit to try to make it more understandable.
5. 气沉丹田 – literally “qi sinks into dantian.”
6. 无力 (wú lì) powerless or lacking strength
7. 擦屁股 (cā pì gu) “wipe his (Shen Qingqiu’s) bottom
8. 师妹 (shī mèi) junior female student or apprentice; daughter (younger than oneself) of one’s teacher
9. Both times he uses 魔头 mó tóu – monster; devil
10. 跟 gēn – means to follow behind, go with, or marry someone. It’s hard to translate but I think Shen Qingqiu deliberately used a more submissive phrase than normal to try to coax Luo Binghe to back off and leave.
11. 师叔 shī shū – this is what disciples call their master’s fellow disciples
12. 坐化 zuò huà – literally a “to die in a seated posture.” This is a phrase used to say that a Buddhist monk has died.
13. 香饽饽 xiāng bō bo – literally “delicious cakes” meaning a popular person or something that is in high demand
14. 虎口 hǔ kǒu – the place between the thumb and forefinger.
Metaphorically – the tiger’s den; a dangerous place

Chapter 55 – Life Under House Arrest

Linking the rift between the two realms was a wide stone corridor. Pairs of torches marched endlessly into the distance, and the depths were as dark as a dense forest at night. Looking at the style of murals to the sides of the corridor, there was a strong yin ambiance, and it was clear to see this was Luo Binghe's headquarters in the Demon Realm.

After the breach sealed, Luo Binghe didn't continue to restrain Shen Qingqiu, slowly releasing his hands. Shen Qingqiu stood up straight and dusted off his sleeves, not saying a word.

The two both had nothing to say, not giving each other a sideways glance. One in front and one behind, their footsteps made no breath of sound. The atmosphere was stiff and cold.

The forks in the corridor of the underground palace did not make Luo Binghe slow by a hairsbreadth. After strolling a twisted path through the complex for some time, the scene suddenly opened up before their eyes. Architecture in the Demon Realm was mostly entrenched underground in excavated subterranean caves, not seeing sun or moon throughout the year, but this part pierced through the ground at the top, allowing sunlight to shoot in and add more than a little bit of human character.

Pushing open the door and entering, the furnishings and arrangement of the room were quite familiar-looking. In fact, it was quite similar to the bamboo

house on Qing Jing Peak.

Shen Qingqiu felt a mysterious sense of resentment.

He really wanted to ask Luo Binghe, “What is the meaning of this?”

Arranging up the scene and props like we’re on a theater set, rounding up the players, pretending like nothing ever happened—do you want to continue that daily little play of a loving master and disciple relationship from your dreamscape?

Now acting like a miserable child and throwing tantrums, making his heart overflow with sympathy. Now again hitting his face and telling him it was all an act. Real or fake, his eyes weren’t sharp enough to clearly see autumn feathers¹ and see through Luo Binghe’s heart to understand what he was really thinking, some parts truth and some parts hypocrisy.

While he was still brooding over these thoughts, Luo Binghe walked a step closer to him.

If it were a few days earlier, Shen Qingqiu definitely wouldn’t have hesitated to flee, retreating three steps for every one step closer. But now, he obviously didn’t want to make this kind of move. That would look too much like he was a woman from a good family kidnapped by bandits, way too unnatural. Even as a dragon swimming shallow waters or a tiger dropped into the plains,² he could still scrounge up his last drop of courage

to maintain graceful and prudent affectation. By no means would he sink to a thoroughly unsightly appearance.

But he was still inevitably tense, his heart stretched taut as a bowstring, his eyelids jumping and fingertips curled.

How was Luo Binghe so perceptive? He advanced another step.

“Shizun, what do you think I’m going to do to you?”

Shen Qingqiu said sincerely, “I cannot guess.”

He would never again dare to wantonly guess Luo Binghe’s intentions. The facts were clear, each time he was light-years off the mark!

Luo Binghe reached out his right hand. Shen Qingqiu didn’t make a sound or movement, but his gaze couldn’t help but stick to his fingertips, following them as they reached out.

That hand was neat and slender. It didn’t look like the hand of a Demon Race young master who had already taken countless lives, but rather one which was born to pluck strings, a hand to burn incense and bathe in snow. It slid shyly over his cheek, faintly brushing his skin.

And then it landed on his throat.

He didn't know whether or not it was on accident, but this hand had landed exactly on one of the major arteries of his neck. Shen Qingqiu's throat bobbed imperceptibly.

Luo Binghe retracted his hand. The next time he opened his mouth, it was impossible to tell if he was happy, angry, sorrowful, or joyful. "My blood, it's not responding to my beckoning."

So when he had touched his skin just now, it was to probe the suppressed Heavenly Demon's blood in Shen Qingqiu's body.

Luo Binghe said, "It looks like in these short few days, Shizun has had another fortuitous meeting."

Shen Qingqiu said, "Well, what can you do about it? Make me drink it again?"

Luo Binghe said, "You'll run if you drink it, you'll run if you don't, both options are the same. I had better not make Shizun add another layer of loathing for me in his heart."

In front of others, he had left not a bit of face for Shen Qingqiu, but in private, he suddenly became polite and courteous. Shen Qingqiu felt a bit

conflicted.

“Shizun, please stay here for the time being. If you would like, the inside of the underground palace is free for you to wander.” Luo Binghe continued, “I have left servants outside, they will not enter the room. If you need anything, simply send a summons.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “How thoughtful.”

Luo Binghe fixed his gaze on him for a time, then said, “Is there anything you desire?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Anything is acceptable?”

Luo Binghe nodded. A sudden malicious sentiment arising from his gut, Shen Qingqiu bluntly said, “I want to see you as little as possible. Best if I never see you at all.”

Luo Binghe looked like he never expected Shen Qingqiu to make this sort of request, his face paling.

Seeing this, Shen Qingqiu felt a flash of schadenfreude but also felt like he had been pricked by a needle, maybe because he had never said anything so vitriolic and merciless to anyone in the past.

The blood slowly returned to Luo Binghe's face. He said, "Shizun once asked me if I wanted to become strong."

Shen Qingqiu said, "That time I asked you that question, I seem to remember I also told you that the purpose of becoming strong is protecting people, not plundering and slaughtering them."

Luo Binghe said coldly, "No. You had it wrong. What Shizun taught, not necessarily every point was correct. Only after becoming the strongest can one keep the people they want to have securely in their palms. I finally understand—it wouldn't do to wait for Shizun to come over himself."

He clenched his fist, forcefully ripping a vicious smile onto his face. "So, now that I've captured you this time, Shizun had better not think of escaping ever again!"

After the devil incarnate had exited the scene, Shen Qingqiu knocked on the System. "2.0, are you there?"

The System responded: 【The System provides comprehensive 24-hour support and lifelike online support.】

Shen Qingqiu said, "Uh, comprehensive is enough, forget about the lifelike. What are my current point values?"

The System: 【B points 1330, 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》successfully removed “Landmines Raining Down Like Lightning” tag, reached “Rather Many Tsukkomi Points” stage, encouraging you to continue connecting and striving, looking forward to your next mystery achievement unlock. Coolness points 3840, Anger points 1500, Heartbreak points 4500. Great effort still needed to improve.】

Very good. Through his great effort (looking for death), this rotten stallion novel finally saw some improvement in B points. Though “Rather Many Tsukkomi Points” wasn’t any favorable evaluation, it was certainly a few points stronger than “Landmines Raining Down Like Lightning.” The anger points weren’t as heaven-defying as he had thought, but instead, the heartbreak points were high enough that he felt he had been pricked by another needle.

Diverting his gaze, Shen Qingqiu said, “With this many coolness points, can I exchange them for something?”

The System: 【You can exchange for a System feature upgrade.】

Shen Qingqiu said cheerfully, “Okay. Do the upgrade.”

With a ringing notification sound, the System quietly began to download the upgrade package. Shen Qingqiu had a sudden thought and asked, “Right, what is the name of this feature upgrade?”

The System: 【Small Scenario Pusher Luxury Edition.】

Shen Qingqiu decisively jabbed at the cancel button on the download window.

****, it's already done downloading, and it took ****ing 3000 coolness points. Zero-star rating!

Aggrievedly spamming the System with a pile of complaints, Shen Qingqiu started his life under house arrest.

Luo Binghe was busy uniting the Northern Border tribes on Mobei-Jun's territory and Sha Hualing seemed to be officially starting her great cheating undertaking—in the literal sense. In short, in the near future, Luo Binghe had many targets to obliterate or rope in. With many official duties to attend to, perhaps unable to extricate himself, all along he had not shown his face.

...or maybe that day, his glass heart had been shattered by Shen Qingqiu's harsh words, and he didn't dare to appear.

Shen Qingqiu tore his thoughts away from that latter path with great difficulty.

In short, if Luo Binghe continues to leave him alone, this sort of lifestyle, isn't it his long-awaited goal of days spent "muddling around, eating food, awaiting death, and enjoying one's later years?"

Furthermore, Luo Binghe didn't act like the characters in the books his younger sister liked to read in his previous life and shackle him with chains, blindfolded and gagged, stripped and beaten. He might as well be content with whatever he has and make himself at home wherever he is.

Bullshit!

For Shen Qingqiu to attempt to comfort himself with these words, there must be shit in his brains! He wasn't some sort of Stockholm syndrome patient, feeling deep gratitude for being fattened in captivity. Don't you understand, you need to bring about a fortunate lifestyle yourself, not by relying on others' charity?!

Having defeated his own brainwashing, Shen Qingqiu exerted his strength, a page from a book splitting open in his hands. At the same time, a loud sound of bamboo cracking resounded from outside the window. He lifted the curtain, seeing a group of young Demon Realm servants hurrying about. Poking his head outside, he asked, "What are you doing?"

"Master Shen, why did you come out?"

The servant had an extremely enthusiastic and deferential attitude, completely unlike someone speaking to a person under house arrest. He

smiled and said, “We’re planting bamboo over here.”

Shen Qingqiu stared. “Bamboo?”

“En. You should recognize this Human Realm plant. It’s hard to plant here in the Demon Realm and won’t mature properly, but Junshang is determined to get it planted here, so everyone just has to figure out a way.”

Seeing his strength and the way he moved, Shen Qingqiu knew this definitely was not an ordinary manual laborer. He was afraid that all the demons Luo Binghe had found were all the cream of the crop. To make these experts do odd jobs for him—what a waste of resources!

And that wasn’t the end of it. For the first two days, Shen Qingqiu had been apathetic and had no appetite, but on the third day he abandoned his interest in fasting and said a few aloof words to (flirted with) the pale-skinned and busty pretty maid, calling for a meal to be delivered. Before he even picked up his chopsticks twice, he didn’t have the stomach to continue.

The maid tilted her head, asking in a laughing voice, “What is it, Master Shen, is the flavor not good?”

The taste is good, very good. It’s just that it’s too good, a very familiar good taste, it’s been many years since Shen Qingqiu had tasted this, and that’s why he could not continue.

He put down his chopsticks and probed, “Was it you who made this?”

The maid chuckled, “How could that be? I only know how to kill and eat fresh or wait for the meat to rot before eating. I don’t know these human recipes, with all the fire and a ton of rice and condiments—it would trouble me to death.”

...****, turns out this clear-voiced beautiful demon with breath like orchids was a rotten flesh lover. Shen Qingqiu had long been able to see, making this girl clean tables and sweep the floor every day was debasing her too much. Considering her strength, she was more suited to wielding a pair of broad axes into battle to cut up enemies rather than chopping melons and slicing vegetables, and it was very likely she used to have this exact job.

Shen Qingqiu said with a suppressed tone and no change of expression, “Then who made it?”

The maid said, “Aiyo, this I dare not say. Junshang would definitely kill me if I did.”

Dare not say? Would he not be able to taste it if she just didn’t say?

Shen Qingqiu wavered between putting down and picking up that pair of chopsticks. What was that saying? The hand that has received is hesitant, the mouth that been fed is soft.³ Shen Qingqiu very much worried if, after finishing this meal, he could still forcefully take a righteous stance against Luo Binghe. But, in the end, the cook was too familiar with his taste and

eating habits, and while he was worrying he had unconsciously cleaned his plate...

The maid cleared the dishes and left with a swing of her hips, covering a smirk with her hand. Not long after she left, the curtain lifted and a person wobbled their way in. Seeing this face, a vicious feeling sprang from Shen Qingqiu's gut. Meeting him with a violent strike, he yelled, "Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky, I—"

Shang Qinghua frantically raised his hands to block, a sword shooting out of its scabbard to slash across the space between them, taking an offensive stance. He said, "Ai ai ai, don't, please don't. Shen-dada, you really can't **** with people as you please. If you mess with me, admittedly I don't have any impressive skills, but don't think that this one will let you get off easy."

Shen Qingqiu roared, "You sold me out. What about fellowship? Camaraderie from having a common origin?!"

Shang Qinghua retorted, "What fellowship is there between us unless it was truly love disguised as hate all along? Ah, don't treat me like this, that really hurts... what could I have done other than selling you out? It was Great God Luo, even if I didn't sell you out he had pretty much figured you out already. Why would I look for a beating for no reason? This doesn't mean anything, I just chose to confess and take the easy path."

This reply was so textbook shameless, Shen Qingqiu was a little astonished. After letting his guard down for a moment, Shang Qinghua had already

stepped over and sat down beside the table. He set the sword in his hand on the table with a bang and said, “Let’s not talk about this anymore. I was ordered to deliver something to you.”

Taking a better look at that sword, Shen Qingqiu’s hand already reached out to caress the blade. It was the very sword which had been shattered into many broken pieces by his destroyed spiritual energy when he had self-destructed. The unfortunate Xiu Ya Sword.

Shen Qingqiu still had an emotional attachment to Xiu Ya, and as soon as he had the sword in hand, he had no more attention to devote to beating up Shang Qinghua. Drawing the blade from its sheath, it was as pure white and snow-bright as it had ever been, slender and elegant. Its broken pieces were reconnected as seamlessly as heavenly clothes, overflowing with spiritual energy, not a hairline split to be seen.

On the other side, Shang Qinghua laughed nervously and rubbed his hands, clicking his tongue and saying, “Aiyah, I really, really never thought... the storyline would bend so far out of shape. Remarkable, really remarkable.”

Shen Qingqiu: “The stallion novel protagonist you wrote turned into a cut-sleeve, shouldn’t you be angry?”

Shang Qinghua said sincerely, “It doesn’t matter. Either way, the one he fell for wasn’t me.”

Shen Qingqiu gave him a cordial middle finger, lowering his head to polish his sword. Shang Qinghua gave him a thumbs-up. “Really, you don’t need to be so pessimistic. You have good prospects for the future, quite good prospects. These golden thighs,⁴ they’re strong, reliable!”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Take your ****ing golden thighs. If I have to hug those thighs, where do you think they’ll take me? Between the legs!”

Shang Qinghua: “Between the legs is even better, ah. Between the legs is a man’s most important place.”

If not for the fact that Xiu Ya had only just returned to his hands and he couldn’t bear to use it for filthy things, Shen Qingqiu really had a mind to slice off a chunk of that place between his legs. Not in the mood for this buffoonery, he straightened his expression and asked, “Since we’re being frank with each other, I’ll ask you: did you ever make any plans for Tianlang-Jun?”

Shang Qinghua: “What are you going to do with information about Bingge’s dad?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “It’s not that I want to do something with the information, I just thought it was strange how you didn’t make a fuss about the protagonist’s dad. I know for a fact that you can write a million words just to add a wife; you could definitely go on for three years to add a father.”

Shang Qinghua started. “You really have some good eyes, truly a faithful reader of mine. I’ll tell you, originally, I planned on unfolding the framework of the plot to set Bing-ge’s dad as the BOSS, but as I was writing, my computer died and I lost my outline, and a ton of the details were lost. And at the time the reviews section all wanted a different plotline, the battle of Bing-ge invading a hundred flowers, you understand. A whole hundred sacred flower spirits who had never seen a man since birth, and he dealt with all of them. Cucumber bro, you know how much I suffered to write the hundred flower buds blooming in concert section, but you still roast me...”

“...” At long last Shen Qingqiu knew the true origin of all those plot holes. “So you just went to write the harem plotline, and might as well leave the more serious Bing-ge’s dad plotline full of holes?”

Shang Qinghua said, “Actually leaving it full of holes is no big deal. The main issue is making it cool for the readers. All the sisters who should have been pushed down were pushed down, all the cannon fodder that should have been killed were killed. Writing a plotline everyone might not be interested in is just spending extra effort for no reward. I just wanted to scrape up a living. If all the subscribers jump ship, I won’t have any food to eat, Cucumber bro.”

Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky, you’re really having too much fun chopping down those outlines, but the System’s strict requirements are making me fill all the holes you dug with your malpractice!

Shang Qinghua continued, “In fact, I wasn’t completely unwilling to part with it. In my original plans, TianLang-Jun had purer blood than Bing-ge, his martial power was stronger, he earned his fame earlier—his character

was just more decked out than Bing-ge. Rising far above the filth of the ordinary world to laugh arrogantly over the Three Realms, and he even had a deeply moving tragic backstory to make one sing or cry, very Jack Sue,⁵ right? What would I do if by any chance the readers think he's stealing Bing-ge's spotlight and start to protest? You know Bing-ge has to be fierce in appearance, fierce in combat, and fierce in giving rewards."

Shen Qingqiu let his head drop to his hands. Hearing this confession from Boss Airplane, he was starting to worry. If TianLang-Jun really had been released, would Luo Binghe even be able to defeat him?

But, looking at it from another angle, maybe it's possible to curb the son by using the father? Shen Qingqiu immediately snuffed out that dangerous line of thought. Regarding a completely unknown opponent who could be righteous or nefarious, a vain attempt to use them might lead to you not even knowing how you're going to die in the end. So, the conclusion still will never change in ten thousand years: Boss Airplane Flying Toward the Sky really is a genius, setting the standards of literature for the generation!

Shen Qingqiu slapped the table. "You better be straight with me, list out everything you had planned but didn't write when you changed the outline. The important things first!"

Shang Qinghua stammered, "Important or not I don't know, but there is a segment to do with you... or more precisely it has to do with Shen Jiu. Before I was always too ashamed to say..."

Hearing this, the hair on the back of his neck stood up in anticipation. Knowing Airplane Flying Toward the Sky's tendencies, it'd be a wonder if he had given him some normal backstory!

Shen Qingqiu said, holding his head in his hands, "Just tell me. I can bear it."

Shang Qinghua started an impassioned explanation of his writing process. "I had a lot of ideas for this character Shen Qingqiu. I had hoped to mold him into a well rounded, three-dimensional character; he's scum, he's wretched, but he had reason to be scum and a not scummy side. But, the readers didn't really buy into it, as soon as I started showing signs of this development they started griping in the reviews. So, I saw the winds weren't blowing the right way and immediately turned him into a one-dimensional wretched villain. But really he..."

Shen Qingqiu had turned his full attention to the explanation when suddenly, the maids outside the room chorused in a respectful tone, "Junshang."

This is really the worst time you could have come!

Hearing this, Shang Qinghua's expression transformed and he jumped a meter off the ground like his butt had been lit on fire. Rushing towards the back door, he shouted over his shoulder, "That man of yours is here. I'll tell you later, no, in the future!"

Don't go! Shen Qingqiu stretched out an Erkang hand.⁶ Take your "I'll tell you in the future"! Cutting it off at this point is harder to bear than that mushy cliché scene of "witnessing with your own eyes someone on death's door saying 'my killer was... was...' and then spitting out a mouthful of blood and dying"!

The green curtain lifted, and Luo Binghe stooped to enter the room. Shen Qingqiu immediately put on an unruffled expression. Because his very important discussion had been cut off, he didn't have a good look on his face. Luo Binghe's gaze first alighted on Xiu Ya in his hand before shifting upwards.

After a brief silence, it was Luo Binghe who took the initiative and opened his mouth. "These past few days, it seems that Shizun hasn't taken a moment to rest."

Speaking of rest, Shen Qingqiu immediately thought of dreams; and speaking of dreams, he couldn't help but remember all the embarrassing moves he made in the dream realm to console Luo Binghe. Shen Qingqiu rubbed his forehead and said, "If I could do it without dreaming, I'd be happy to rest."

Luo Binghe's eyelashes drooped. After standing for a bit, it seemed he had come to a major decision. He said stiffly, "Even though those earlier events happened in a dream realm, I took advantage of Shizun. But the feelings I revealed to you then, those were not false."

Shen Qingqiu sighed and said truthfully, “Luo Binghe, right now I really don’t know which of your words are true and which are false. Therefore, don’t bother saying things like this.”

The Luo Binghe in that dream was truly much cuter. Even though the male protagonist was still the male protagonist, he was wretched and miserable, making one’s guts twist a hundred times, and his face was not bad. Even a straight guy like Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help but take pity on him. It’s just that the more pity he felt at the time, the more pain his face was in after the fact. Luo Binghe had said that the events in Jinlan City were not his doing, and at the time Shen Qingqiu believed him about nine-tenths of the way, but now he didn’t dare put in even a tenth of rash hope.

The blood rushed back into Luo Binghe’s face, pinkening his cheeks. Lifting his eyelids, he said coldly, “Shizun is concerned only with my trickery, but if I hadn’t done so I’m afraid I still wouldn’t be able to speak a word to you.”

His fingers unconsciously clenched tighter and tighter on Xin Mo’s hilt until his knuckles went white with the strain. Not only his pupils, but his eye sockets themselves began to glow faintly red. “Since when did Shizun never deceive me? You said you did not approve of attaching too much importance to the difference between races, but in the blink of an eye, you refuse to admit it. After your bodily death at Huayue City, I called for your soul hundreds of thousands of times, trying then failing then trying then failing again, never letting my heart fall to ash and my thoughts grow cold.⁷ Despite this, I never suspected that Shizun would scorn me to this extent, looking at me with a detached gaze and madly playing dumb after returning to stand before my eyes.”

At the end of his tirade, his final syllables were somewhat unsteady, the tones rising in both fury and exasperation. “Now Shizun certainly has abundant reason to denounce me as a devil incarnate, I bring disaster wherever I go. But this time I haven’t done anything at all, but you still scorn me like snakes and scorpions? You’ve tricked me twice, I’ve tricked you twice, aren’t we enough?”

Even though he felt this one is one, two is two logic was not a fraction off the mark, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help revealing his true feelings. “You really hold your grudges.”

Luo Binghe sneered, “I’m afraid Shizun has never seen what I’m like when I really hold a grudge against someone.”

His face gradually settled into a gloomy expression from his sneer. Drawing closer the distance between the two, he said, “But what if I said, that towards Shizun, I only remember, not hate.⁸ Most likely I wouldn’t be believed.”

Seeing the shadow his figure cast increasing in size, Shen Qingqiu hurriedly said, “Compose yourself.” If you want to talk then talk properly, don’t suddenly change your face, don’t get this close!

Luo Binghe said in a low voice, “Shizun you could always compose yourself, but I can’t compose myself any longer.”

Shen Qingqiu hadn't fully processed this when with a clunk, his back began to hurt. The next thing he knew, the two of them had already rolled onto the bed.

...It's been so long since I've slept on this bamboo bed, why is it so bumpy! Shen Qingqiu yelled, "What's wrong with you!"

Luo Binghe pursed his lips and refused to answer. Just as Shen Qingqiu thought to kick him away, goosebumps erupted over him from head to foot. A hand suddenly reached into his inner robe from the hem.

You've got to be kidding me!

He violently heaved up a knee, but Luo Binghe caught it with a single hand, pressing it down to the side of his body.

Shen Qingqiu internally yelled "*****" a hundred times, he didn't want to be forced into this position with his legs spread wide open, lying under another person! He immediately rushed up with his upper body, and with a well-timed burst of energy and a twist of his waist reversed their positions like a shift of the stars in the sky, pinning Luo Binghe under him. He unsheathed three inches of Xiu Ya, coldly pressing it against Luo Binghe's throat. This was the first time in his life Shen Qingqiu had been pushed over by someone, and he had been pushed into a rage. With a violent grin, he sneered, "So you're playing at forcing yourself upon your Shizun? En? How filial!" The accusations that had been turned upon him were true, but don't think he would just quietly submit!

Luo Binghe's escape routes and the vital point of his neck had all been blocked off, but he had a dazzling light in his eyes. Not fearing the sharp blade at his neck in the slightest, he grabbed Shen Qingqiu's wrist with one hand, the other propping himself up on the ground. With a vigorous attack, he reversed their positions again. Of course, Shen Qingqiu wouldn't let him do as he wishes, jabbing towards a vulnerable point with Xiu Ya's hilt.

After a few such exchanges, the two were tangled in a lump. They rolled off the bed, turning the whole way, white flashes and sparks exploding every which way, spiritual energy and demonic energy mixing into a confused fog, violent attacks flying at random. After so long spent hiding behind a mask, Shen Qingqiu didn't know how long it had been since he had fought in such a crude manner. After the battle had reached this level of intensity, Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized.

That's not right, this is a cultivation novel, why the **** should I be fighting with my bare hands? What sort of dumbass has a cannon and doesn't use it!?

He immediately raised his hand, pumping it full of spiritual energy, sending an earth-shattering punch towards Luo Binghe's lower abdomen.

Chapter 56: The Person in the Coffin

Luo Binghe withstood it completely without making a single sound.

“...” Honestly speaking, Shen Qingqiu didn’t think that he would actually hit him. But that didn’t stop him from punching him extremely hard as if he was slamming all the suppressed anger from these past few days with it. Suddenly, the System beeped and announced:

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

Luo Binghe truly... fully deserved to be called a masochist! If he wasn’t being abused, he wasn’t happy. Hitting him one time actually gave 500 cool points, and the System’s announcement even changed into flashy, youthful emoticons. It also used a tilde (~) for the first time ever. In all his years of living, he had never seen something so bizarre, especially since this bizarre thing was raised by him!

Shen Qingqiu was just lamenting over the failed results of his teaching method when Luo Binghe stopped playing along with him. With a push of his right hand, Shen Qingqiu accidentally released a burst of spiritual energy that he was suppressing in his palm, and the ceiling shook as he smashed a uniformly shaped dent into it. The dust pattered down, and Luo Binghe covered him with his body, both of his hands grabbing onto Shen Qingqiu’s outer robe. He easily ripped it and laughed loudly. “Go ahead and

hit me, in any case, I won't die! This disciple will gladly endure Shizun's teachings!"

His smile seemed to conceal a trace of faint misery. Shen Qingqiu even forgot about his clothes being ripped as his heart twinged, and he couldn't help but stop moving. But Luo Binghe didn't give him any more time to consider tender affection; instead, he suddenly ripped apart Shen Qingqiu's inner robe with one hand before he groped his waist, skin against skin.

Shen Qingqiu melted for a moment on the spot, before he immediately knocked Luo Binghe on the head with the hilt of his sword. He scolded, "You animal!"

Luo Binghe said with resignation, "In any case, I'm not even as good as an animal in Shizun's eyes, so I might as well act like one."

Shen Qingqiu was so angry that he wanted to laugh, but his vision blurred abruptly, and his body tilted as the Xiu Ya sword clattered onto the ground.

A kind of pulling force so strong that it felt as if his entire soul was about to be dragged out of his body attacked him. He could only stiffen his body, and Luo Binghe also stopped moving, somewhat bewildered. In the blink of an eye, Shen Qingqiu's head was already hurting so much that it felt like it was about to explode.

Countless fragments of scenes flashed swiftly before his eyes. Sometimes it was a white expanse of blank space, sometimes it was pitch black darkness,

and sometimes he seemed to see indistinct human figures. There was a sharp ringing that painfully pierced his eardrums.

Luo Binghe couldn't afford to be wary any longer and hastily sat up before reaching out a hand to hold him down. Unexpectedly, he couldn't restrain Shen Qingqiu. Shen Qingqiu hugged his head as he rolled around on the floor, struggling, feeling as if there was a pair of huge hands roughly dragging his soul and mind out of his body.

There was something screaming, and as it shrieked, it felt like hands were reaching out at him from all directions, tearing at his soul.

Luo Binghe said in a panic, "Shizun, I... I was only trying to scare you just then. Don't take it seriously! What's wrong?"

Shen Qingqiu's body thrashed and flipped around in his arms. Luo Binghe half-held him as he quickly used his spiritual energy to sweep through the inside of Shen Qingqiu's body. There were clearly no abnormalities, but the sound of Shen Qingqiu's screaming was indescribably mournful and terrifying, as if burning red brand had been shoved deep inside his brain. Luo Binghe used every method he knew, but still, nothing worked.

As Shen Qingqiu's pulse grew weaker and weaker, Luo Binghe started to shake slightly before his trembling grew stronger and stronger. Finally, he couldn't prop himself up any longer, and he half-kneeled and half-fell onto his knees.

He roared, “Everyone! Everyone get in here!”

Shen Qingqiu suddenly opened his eyes.

Everything was pitch-black.

His heart was thumping wildly, and his eardrums seemed to be throbbing in time with it. In order to see whether or not it was just too dark, or whether he had gone blind, Shen Qingqiu really did reach out his hand.

He hadn’t extended it fully yet before his fingers bumped into a solid barrier. Shen Qingqiu slowly started to fumble around.

After feeling about for a while, he had a guess in mind. He was currently inside something narrow, as if he was placed inside a long stone box. He patted the stone wall lightly, and it was ice cold, the texture fine and smooth; he estimated that it was made of something like marble. The walls didn’t feel thick, and they should be about four inches wide, he found after using his spiritual energy to probe around.

He fumbled around for a bit before he held his breath and suddenly used force. His spiritual energy spiked, and he slammed a palm with a bang against the middle of the stone lid. He hit it three times in a row before the darkness fell apart, along with the enormous sound of stone crumbling.

Large amounts of fresh oxygen poured in, and Shen Qingqiu sat up abruptly, forcefully sucking in a few breaths. Only then did he discover that it wasn't actually that fresh and felt more like the air hadn't circulated underground for many years. Furthermore, it was extremely thin. When he lowered his head to take another look, he saw that he was actually lying inside of a coffin.

This long, stone box was unexpectedly a delicately carved stone coffin, its entire body glistening white like jade.

He pushed down lightly against the edge of the coffin and leaped out. When he looked around, he saw that he was currently standing in a weakly lit stone room. The coffin, which had its lid blown off, was lying on the altar in the middle of the room. Dusty objects were piled irregularly in the corners; there was everything from weapons and gems to scrolls, bottles, and jars. The cold light of swords and spears, along with the luster of gems and jewels, glimmered faintly beneath a layer of thick dust. After looking around in a circle, he saw that the walls were covered with paintings of demons dancing wildly, encircling him heavily in all directions.

The demon race's Holy Mausoleum. Shen Qingqiu arrived at this conclusion.

He hadn't digested this information yet when he unconsciously lowered his head and was hit by another piece of news.

His body was no longer the corporeal body molded from the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed. This was Shen Qingqiu's original body!

The Holy Mausoleum had a way to call back those from the dead; this truly wasn't something said to deceive others. Judging from the circumstances, it seemed like someone had smuggled Shen Qingqiu's corpse into the Holy Mausoleum before activating the soul recall array. It had dragged him completely out of his new body and back into this one.

The Holy Mausoleum was the demon race's forbidden area, and it was also the place where the past supreme rulers rested peacefully after death. If one didn't reach this high of a position, they would die upon entering. But when Shen Qingqiu was sent in, he was a dead person, and his soul had repossessed his body afterward. He slipped in through a loophole, which gave him this chance to sightsee.

Shen Qingqiu tested out his spiritual energy, and it flowed smoothly and easily. Luo Binghe said that he spent five years restoring this body's meridian system, which had actually been the truth. As for the toxicity of "Without A Cure," he didn't feel like his spiritual energy was sluggish for the time being, but he didn't know if the poison had been dissolved or not.

Once a soul occupied and was removed from the corporeal body molded from the Dew Flower Seed, it would swiftly wither and necrotize. He didn't know what kind of expression Luo Binghe had right now while facing that withered, wilted body of his...

His train of thought didn't wander very far before the System issued information with a 'trill':

【Please note : You have now entered the high level instance “Holy Mausoleum.” The “Plot Hole Filling” mission has already been assigned. Please attack it eagerly and take initiative of your own accord.】

Shen Qingqiu made an ‘oh’ noise and continued to squat on the ground.

The System: 【Please attack it eagerly and take initiative of your own accord.】

Shen Qingqiu didn’t move. The System: 【Warning: Please att...】

Shen Qingqiu: “I get it, I get it! I’m going!”

Shen Qingqiu felt his balls hurt incessantly¹ as he walked outside of the tomb room. As he walked, he recalled the original version of the Holy Mausoleum. The houses in the Demon Realm were sheltered underground, but the Mausoleum was built above ground. In short, its customs were the complete opposite of the Human Realm’s. Not only were there many traps inside the Mausoleum, but it was also treacherous and full of countless demonic creatures that guarded the tombs, hidden in the darkness.

If it weren’t for the System’s evil voice passing through his mind, he would have to be dragged before he would run out into the tomb passageway and wander around blindly!

The tomb passageway was overwhelmingly dark, but Shen Qingqiu didn't make a snap of fire. He held his breath and walked forward in absolute silence.

Not long after, the sound of rough, prolonged breathing emerged next to his ear.

It could be called breathing, but in reality, it was more like someone's dying gasps. Shen Qingqiu stood firmly.

Didn't they come much too fast?

A thin and weak figure slowly appeared from the darkness. It was closely followed by a second and third figure, floating closer very sluggishly like wandering souls.

These figures swayed with each step they took, and they walked nearer and nearer. Shen Qingqiu's expression didn't change as he slanted his body and adjusted the frequency of his breathing to the absolute slowest it could go.

This was the lowest-level demonic creature, and one of the guards most likely met in the Mausoleum: the Blind Corpse.

The Blind Corpse's name had the word "blind" in it, but it wasn't actually lacking any eyes. In fact, it had several more pairs than other monsters, grotesquely squeezed onto its face. Those with trypophobia would definitely detest it.

However, even though it had many eyes, they were essentially useless. Most of the time, the Blind Corpse's eyes were pointless, and it roamed about the Holy Mausoleum patrolling all day, its efficiency unusually low. Its eyes were both numerous and large, but they degenerated to a terrible state. However, its ability to perceive light was very strong, and even if the light was merely a weak reflection, it could quickly seize it.

Once it caught something, it would unexpectedly change and instinctively attack the origin of the light ferociously. When that time came, it no longer moved at this speed where it wandered slowly through the tomb passageways in a line. This kind of monster wasn't scary on its own; what was scary was what often appeared with it.

As Shen Qingqiu thought, a Blind Corpse stumbled closer, and he slipped to the side. Unexpectedly, a faint flame ignited in the darkness.

This flame was dark green and grew brighter and brighter, illuminating the tomb passageway into a bright green. Those Blind Corpses, which were about to brush past him, all abruptly turned their heads. Each and every face was embedded with four or five pairs of enormous, bloodshot eyeballs as they stared straight at Shen Qingqiu, who was in close proximity.

Last Breath Candle!

Shen Qingqiu was extremely fast, and in the next second, he had flashed to the end of the passageway. But no matter where he dodged, a stretch of faint green light would ignite with him so that there was no way to hide his figure. He was fast, but the Blind Corpses that had been provoked by the light were even faster!

Shen Qingqiu sent several Blind Corpses that had thrown themselves over flying. The Last Breath Candles used a living person's breaths as fuel, and as long as something or someone alive went near it, it would light up by itself. It sounded like a toy that could be used to avoid the swindlers and cheaters that roamed about the streets, but when it was paired with the Blind Corpses, the results were simply unimaginably savage. Just imagine: if an intruder slipped inside the Holy Mausoleum, no matter where he went, he would still have to breathe. When he breathed, the Last Breath Candle would ignite, unable to be extinguished or pinched out. The Last Breath Candle array could be set up in any corner of the Holy Mausoleum. A large horde of Blind Corpses would all throw themselves over, and only when the intruder died would the candle flame gradually dim. Last breath, last breath, the Last Breath Candle was really a great name for it!

For example, right now, more and more light-sensitive Blind Corpses had arrived, and they had already stuffed the entire tomb passageway full!

Shen Qingqiu rushed out of the tomb passageway and scrambled inside of a room. It was very spacious and imposing, and there was a coffin sitting in the middle of it. He vaulted up to it and tried to lift the lid, but it didn't move. He then hit it, which created a heavy noise, but it still didn't budge a single inch. The material this coffin was made of was actually much more solid than the one that he was just lying in. Shen Qingqiu thought, Could

there be someone inside? He knocked against the lid of the coffin. “May I borrow this to hide in temporarily?”

He was originally just blurting something out, but unexpectedly, after he knocked twice, a voice actually responded from inside.

The voice was clearly coming from inside the coffin, but it was as crisp as if it was right next to his ears, not muffled in the slightest. It seemed to carry the hint of a laugh. “Please help yourself.”

Holy ****. A real reanimated corpse!!!

Shen Qingqiu was terrified. With a sweep of his leg, he swept off several Blind Corpses that threw themselves onto the stone coffin. He leaped off of the stone coffin with two steps before sending several explosive attacks towards the ceiling. Crushed rock crumbled down. Shen Qingqiu saw that it was softening as he hit it, so he continued to attack it furiously. It would be best if he could make the ceiling collapse so he could take advantage of the chaos to run away, burying all the Blind Corpses and the reanimated corpse underneath the rubble. But amidst the melee, the sound of dark hissing suddenly came from outside of the mausoleum hall.

Chapter 57 — Holy Mausoleum

Shen Qingqiu raised his head. It was as if two bright yellow lanterns had appeared outside the palace hall, the pair of piercing golden eyes staring wide-eyed at the scene. In the middle of each eye was a vertical pupil, which appeared to be unusually sinister.

The crowd of blind corpses, upon hearing this sound, seemed to be intimidated by some invisible force. They no longer resumed with their tearing and pouncing; instead, they withdrew into themselves, lowering their heads and shrinking back their shoulders. Eventually, they retreated into a tight huddle, trembling.

That pair of large lantern-like eyes stared straight at Shen Qingqiu for a moment, until they suddenly looked away. After a while, a figure emerged outside of the palace hall. Shen Qingqiu, identifying the new visitor, wasn't surprised.

He called out pleasantly, "Xizhi-Lang.¹"

Zhuzhi-Lang slipped mid-step.

He rubbed his nose. Although he was depressed, he wasn't one to be rude. Smiling, he said, "Since Master Shen is willing to address me like this, then

please feel free to continue to do so.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “The person who stole the corpse from the Palace Hall vault really was you.”

The bluish-black poison that covered the entire body was most likely the venom of the jade serpent. The reason why Mu Qingfan’s cursory inspection had been unable to find a wound was probably because the snake’s fangs were too small to leave a visible mark. If one were to examine the bodies more closely, they would find small tooth marks on the fingertips or the bottom of the heels.

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “The situation happened too quickly. I had no choice but to continue on to the next stage of the plan. I hope Master Shen will be magnanimous enough to forgive me.”

Shen Qingqiu coughed dryly. “The situation happened too quickly”; no matter how you considered it, this “situation” was caused entirely by him when he had fumigated realgar wine to subdue Zhuzhi-Lang, turning the other party back into their original form. Not only that but adding insult to injury, he had furthermore ridden Zhuzhi-Lang’s snake form for an entire stretch of the road.

He said, “You summoned me from the Holy Mausoleum, which can be said to have solved one of my... difficulties. Before, you wanted me to go to the Demon Realm. Now that I’m here, can you finally tell me your purpose?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “Reason number one, I’ve already explained to Master Shen. Since you’ve helped me, I will repay the favor many times over.² As for the second reason, Master Shen wasn’t exactly summoned by the humble me... it’s better to ask Junshang directly.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Alright. Where is Tianlang-Jun, then?”

Zhuzhi-Lang stared blankly, before saying, “I thought that Master Shen and Junshang had already met.”

Already met?

Shen Qingqiu lowered his head and stared at the stone sarcophagus.

Could it be that the corpse inside... was Tianlang-Jun?

Strictly speaking, this couldn’t even be called “meeting,” okay?!

The coffin lid that he had just spent some time on trying to open without budging suddenly began to shake, opening by itself. Inside, a person slowly sat up.

This person set an elbow against the edge of the coffin, a faint smile appearing on his face. He said, “Qing Jing Peak Lord, I’ve looked forward to meeting you for a long time.”

Shen Qingqiu was stunned.

.....This whole family’s interests were wide and extensive, but it seemed eventually all of their hobbies were the same kind of eccentric. The son enjoyed hugging corpses, the father enjoyed lying inside a coffin.

If one were to look at Luo Binghe’s overall appearance, he resembled his mother, Su Xiyan. However, it was still possible to see some of his father’s genes. For example, his eyes.

Tianlang-Jun’s eyes were large and profound, his tapered eyebrows emphasizing his brave and outstanding appearance. His black pupils were like two impossibly deep voids, a feature that Luo Binghe shared identically.

The original Luo Binghe was a pretty boy. If he had received his mother’s eyes, his appearance would be considered excessively feminine and soft, which wasn’t good.

Another similarity could be seen in their smiles. The smiling expressions of this father and son pair made Shen Qingqiu feel a hard-to-describe emotion... it was a feeling that was anything but reassuring.

Shen Qingqiu cautiously said, “I haven’t been a Peak Lord for many years.”

Tianlang-Jun crinkled his eyes as he smiled. “But I’ve been fascinated with the Peak Lord for quite a while.”

Shen Qingqiu knew profoundly from experience that presence was something taught from childhood and family background.

Not accounting for anything else, if someone were to sit this pair of father and son inside a coffin and have them strike the exact same pose, Tianlang-Jun’s regal presence could transform sitting in a coffin into sitting on the Dragon Throne. On the other hand, though Luo Binghe was undoubtedly handsome... eh, it would probably still look like he was sitting in a coffin.

No wonder Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky had felt that Tianlang-Jun was a threat, and decisively cut him out of the plot.

To be sitting in the presence of two Heavenly Demons, and in a space where he was surrounded by the decomposing bodies of the demon race’s elders, Shen Qingqiu felt that the pressure on him was extremely huge.

He put on a fake smile, saying, “I don’t dare to accept this praise. And since your honor has been observing me for so long, why haven’t you come out... come out to meet me?”

No matter how much Tianlang-Jun put up a front, spending all of his time inside a coffin was really too outrageous. Unless—

He couldn't stand up.

Tianlang-Jun's finger slowly tapped against the edge of the coffin, his pupils reflecting the throbbing green flames within the mausoleum. He cheerfully said, "Alright. Is it possible to ask Peak Lord to assist me, then?"

Being scammed really made one reluctant. Shen Qingqiu slowly sighed, and then reached out to him. "Please."

Tianlang-Jun gladly took hold of his hand and stood up. So sitting in a coffin wasn't because he was concealing some kind of weakness. Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but feel some disappointment.

And then, he was pulling at nothing.

But he was still clearly grabbing Tianlang-Jun's wrist. Shen Qingqiu glanced downwards, lowering his head. He indeed was still holding onto it, except all that remained was an arm.

Shen Qingqiu's face lost all expression.

Tianlang-Jun, having lost an arm, his sleeve half-empty, was still very polite. “Ah. It broke again. Can I inconvenience Peak Lord to pick it up for me again?”

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

Despite how violent a shock his soul had suffered, Shen Qingqiu still managed to calmly pass that arm back to Tianlang-Jun. Behind them, Zhuzhi-Lang, wearing an expression of having seen this scene many times, with a ka-cha sound (really, a ka-cha sound!) reattached the hand.

Reattached it!

Are you a d*mned doll? Can your joints be attached and detached at will?!

After careful scrutiny, Shen Qingqiu realized that there were many scars on Tianlang-Jun’s arm. All over, the muscles, tendons, and arteries had turned black, a sight made especially shocking when contrasted against Tianlang-Jun’s stark white skin. Even below the collars of his robes, small black scars could be seen snaking out.

Shen Qingqiu decided resolutely not to say anything.

This was like the flap of a butterfly's wings causing a tsunami. He had guessed earlier that Zhuzhi-Lang had taken the Sun and Moon Flower Seed to create a new body for Tianlang-Jun, a conjecture that now appeared to be correct. It was just that Tianlang-Jun did not seem to be very compatible with this new body.

The reason why Shen Qingqiu's soul and the flower seed body had good synchronization was because, one, the flower seed was something that was born out of his own blood and vital breath; and two, the flower seed was a plant made of spiritual energy, something Shen Qingqiu also used to advance his own cultivation. Therefore, with these two reasons, it was no wonder they had fit so well with each other.

However, Tianlang-Jun's situation was different.

He was a demon, and thus his foundation was built on demonic energy. Naturally, the seed would attempt to reject him. As a result, the quality of the body wasn't guaranteed, and it was even possible to have circumstances when the body began to corrode.

Tianlang-Jun moved his reattached parts, smiling as he said, "I've incurred ridicule. Speaking of it, it's possible for us to leave Bailu Mountain. That's how we were able to witness Peak Lord Shen's merit."

Shen Qingqiu cast a glance at Zhuzhi-Lang, who was standing to the side. Originally, when they had first met in the Bailu Forest, that human-snake form was really... too horrible to look at. But even so, through all the years when Tianlang-Jun had been suppressed in the mountains, he had never left

Bailu Forest. Afterward, when he received the Lotus seed, he did not use it on himself but rather without hesitation used it to mold a body for his master.

What a loyal subordinate!

Shen Qingqiu's eyes swept across the murals on the Palace Hall, perfunctorily saying, "Much merit to Xi... to Zhuzhi-Lang. To live in seclusion in Bailu Mountain and wait for so many years for an opportunity; having such a capable subordinate, Tianlang-Jun really causes others to feel envy."

Tianlang-Jun said, "Have you not heard of my nephew's motto?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "I've heard it. A favor given is paid back many times over."

Zhuzhi-Lang's red face looked extremely weird underneath the mossy green candlelight. He said, "Lord and Master Shen are teasing me."

Shen Qingqiu did not intend to tease him; he was exerting all of his attention on studying a mural instead.

This mural's colors were bright and gaudy, and the brush strokes mad and frenzied. Still, it was possible to discern that the image directly facing the

Mausoleum's entrance way was the large face of a woman. Her eyes were crinkled into crescents and the corners of her lips pointed upwards as if she was unable to suppress her joy. This section of the mausoleum was definitely the "Hall of Delight" of the Holy Mausoleum's three "Delight, Fury, and Sorrow" temples.

Tianlang-Jun had not sensed anything strange yet. He said, "He's just like this. His mind can only think straight-forwardly. That's why he's always begged me to take you to the Demon World."

Shen Qingqiu had never understood this kind of reasoning. Turning around slightly, he looked at Zhuzhi-Lang. "What does bringing me to the Demon World and returning a favor have to do with each other?"

Tianlang-Jun calmly said, "Of course it's connected. The four great sects cannot be allowed to remain. As Peak Lord Shen is still with the Cang Qiong Sect and thus falls into this scope, Zhuzhi-Lang naturally doesn't want you to stay in that place."

Shen Qingqiu didn't know how to respond.

He had initially thought that Tianlang-Jun was relatively reasonable. However, after conversing with him, he now discovered that this man was virtually indistinguishable from any of those ambitious "destroy the world, kill the good" kind of BOSSes!

But if one were to consider it, an idealistic, expectant youth of a noble bloodline had been suppressed by members of a different race under a mountain for so many years. A deep-rooted resentment was entirely to be expected.

Shen Qingqiu paused, then asked, “Is the next step extinguishing all of humanity?”

Tianlang-Jun seemed confused. “Why would you think like that? Of course not. I like humans, just not the four great sects.”

He smiled, then continued: “In contrary, I have a gift to give to the human race.”

Although he didn’t know what this so-called gift was, it definitely wasn’t some ribbon-wrapped object that would bring humanity great joy! Shen Qingqiu had just begun to spit out a rather out-of-practice “f**k” when suddenly, the mausoleum began to shake.

The gravel on the ground quaked. Shen Qingqiu’s two feet were steady against the ground, but his body couldn’t help but sway wildly. In the distance, he could even faintly hear an earth-shaking yelling noise.

Cautiously, he asked, “What is it?”

Tianlang-Jun listened carefully for a moment. “They’ve arrived a lot faster than I thought.” He turned towards Zhuzhi-Lang. “How many?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “At least two hundred.”

Tianlang-Jun smiled: “Just catching ten is extremely difficult, this must hard for him.”

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t understand what they were talking about, but it seemed that they had no intention of enlightening him. Tianlang-Jun brushed off a wisp of sand from his shoulder then said: “Peak Lord Shen, since five years ago my nephew has been trying force you to make a clean break with Cang Qiong Mountain sect. What do you think of this? Would you like to go with him?”

You’ve practically already brought the person into ancestral tombs and you’re still asking this useless question—wait a second... five years ago? Making a clean break?

Shen Qingqiu’s heart lurched. He blurted out: “The Jinlan City sowers. Was that part of your plan to make me leave Cang Qiong Mountain sect?”

Now that he thought about it, the reason that he couldn’t return to the sect was because of everything that had started in Jinlan City.

Shen Qingqiu asked: “The sower who pointed his finger at me, that was your doing?”

Zhuzhi-Lang lowered his head. Tianlang-Jun patted his shoulder as if encouraging him. “Originally, that was just an experiment to solve the southern devil tribes’ food deficiency problems. It just happened that Peak Lord Shen was present. Zhuzhi-Lang only wanted Peak Lord Shen to sever any desire to return to humanity, that’s all.”

Shen Qingqiu immediately glared at Zhuzhi-Lang. So this so-called repayment was getting a sower to defame him, wasn’t this too fraudulent?! A snake’s favor really wasn’t reliable!

Zhuzhi-Lang said softly, “Master Shen, Junshang said that he wanted to eliminate all of the four great sects, without leaving a single person alive... this humble person sincerely didn’t want, at that time...”

Shen Qingqiu suppressed his anger, saying: “Qiu Haitang was also your doing?”

Tianlang-Jun said, “I don’t recognize the name.” He looked at Zhuzhi-Lang, who turned to look at Shen Qingqiu.

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “That woman really isn’t someone that I found.”

The suddenly-appearing Qiu Haitang and sower people attacking Shen Qingqiu left-right in a pincer attack, forcing him to surrender to the Huan Hua Palace and become imprisoned in the water prison, really was just a coincidence? Forget it. Now that things had come to this, it no longer mattered.

Shen Qingqiu said, “What’s the other reason?”

Tianlang-Jun calmly replied, “Summoning Peak Lord Shen here was also because of my own selfishness.”

He sighed. “That son of mine, to raise him for so many years really has been an inconvenience for Peak Lord Shen.”

Although he had long suspected that this matter had to do with Luo Binghe, hearing his name still made Shen Qingqiu’s heart tremble. He begrudgingly tried to pump himself up, before asking: “Luo Binghe? What does this have to do with him?”

Tianlang-Jun snorted, lowering his head. “How do I say this? I’ve noticed that towards Peak Lord Shen, he’s extremely...”

Although his words were vague and unclear, dodging the question entirely, Shen Qingqiu still did not have any difficulty stringing together a theory.

As the time Tianlang-Jun possessed this body for increased, as his demonic energy became more vigorous and his cultivation began to recover, the body he used would begin to fall apart more and more, requiring touch-ups all over. Sooner or later, he would require a new body. This body would work best if it was someone related to him, a similar heavenly demon. If this body happened to be a hybrid and was capable of using two separate cultivation systems, it would only be even better.

Whose body was more suitable than Luo Binghe's?

Shen Qingqiu narrowed his eyes. "So the reason why you called back my soul was to draw him to the Holy Mausoleum?"

Tianlang-Jun said, "Peak Lord Shen is a perceptive person."

Shen Qingqiu warned him, "Luo Binghe hasn't taken over your original position yet. He can't enter the Holy Mausoleum, even if he wanted to."

Tianlang-Jun looked at him confidently. "As long as he wants to, he'll definitely be able to come."

Shen Qingqiu slowly said, "No matter what you want to do, this is your son."

Tianlang-Jun said, "Indeed."

“Yours and Su Xiyan’s son.”

Tianlang-Jun said, “So?”

Hearing these words, Shen Qingqiu was finally convinced.

In the few sentences that Tianlang-Jun mentioned Luo Binghe, although his smiling expression remained the same, his words and expressions were all cold.

That image of a loving and fair Tianlang-Jun in Shen Qingqiu’s mind immediately disappeared. Now, he realized that whenever Tianlang-Jun spoke about Su Xiyan, his tone never wavered. He fondly referred to Luo Binghe as “this son of mine,” but one would hardly think that they shared any father-son relationship.

Not only was Tianlang-Jun not a pacifist, but he was no romantic either. This completely subverted Shen Qingqiu’s long-held (and perhaps wishful) thinking.

Actually, this was normal. The demon clan looked at emotions with cold contempt, much preferring good food, influence, and power. It was just that seeing this “couldn’t care less” attitude in person, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t but feel uncomfortable.

Luo Binghe really was... an unloved child.

Shen Qingqiu had always used that blackened pot of Jinlan City to smash against Luo Binghe's head. This child, wearing such a face of aggrievement for so long, had tried to defend himself for so many times, but to no avail. Not long ago when they separated, Shen Qingqiu had even used harsh words to rebuke him.

He was extremely resentful against Tianlang-Jun. However, if one were to consider it, he himself was not much better. He had hurt Luo Binghe deeply.

The tomb had just fallen into a deathly silence when the second wave of animals roaring and battle descended. This time it was even more vicious, the sounds of upheaval drawing closer by the moment.

At this point, Shen Qingqiu was unable to stand for any longer. Gripping onto the coffin, he asked, "Can someone explain to me what exactly is going on?"

Before he could finish the "what," all of the precious stones embedded on the mausoleum began to drop off. All three of the people inside the palace hall had quick reactions, quickly stepping far out of the way. With a sudden crash, an extremely heavy object smashed through the roof of the palace hall, landing in the middle of the room. The smoke and dust intermingled with the rays of light from above, revealing a black figure.

Luo Binghe stood on the head of a pitch-black giant beast, his black robes billowing wildly in the dust. The Xin Mo sword lay unsheathed on his back. A pair of eyes glinted red in the light, overlooking the scene with ferocious killing intent.

Chapter 58 -Hall of Delight, Hall of Fury, Hall of Sorrow

At first glance, the great beast appeared to be some sort of rhinoceros, a single horn curved like the crescent moon atop its head. But, opening its mouth and trumpeting, it spat out a giant scarlet python from its blood-red maw. The rhinoceros' call mingled with the snake's hissing cry, creating an especially shocking clamor.

Really? Black! Moon! Rhinoceros! Python¹!

Black + Moon + Rhinoceros + Python. Turns out the Black Moon Rhinoceros Python was really just the simple combination of these four elements. Great God Airplane Shooting Toward the Sky, your naming style is as dependable as always!

Zhuzhi-Lang diligently moved to stand in front of Tianlang-Jun, conveniently covering Shen Qingqiu as well. Upon seeing Luo Binghe, Shen Qingqiu had subconsciously moved closer to Zhuzhi-Lang's back. It wasn't that he was still fleeing Luo Binghe at every opportunity, but that he had a guilty conscience and no face to see him. He didn't dare think what sort of mood Luo Binghe would be in after seeing him breathe his last breath before his eyes for the second time. He could only subconsciously act like the bell thief who plugged his ears up,² pretending that if the eyes could not see, the heart would not be disturbed.

Tianlang-Jun raised an eyebrow, this expression also bearing a remarkable resemblance to Luo Binghe. “And he wouldn’t hesitate to capture two hundred Black Moon Rhinoceros Pythons to break the wards around the Holy Mausoleum. Peak Lord Shen, this son of mine really does hold some extraordinary feelings towards you.”

Shen Qingqiu had no retort to that. This was the demonic beast which, in the original work, could render even the Endless Abyss with its call. And for breaking into the Holy Mausoleum, Luo Binghe had captured two hundred of them for a single-time use.

After the dust settled, Shen Qingqiu could finally see clearly—Luo Binghe had indeed single-handedly broken into the Holy Mausoleum. The Holy Mausoleum was both sacred land for the Demon Race and a forbidden area. Any native of the Demon Race would cherish and revere it, not daring to violate the grounds. This was a question of faith—no one would dare come with him, so of course, he would be alone.

Tianlang-Jun closed his eyes for a spell. Opening them again, he said, “Your courage is commendable. It’s just that while you yourself coming here is no big deal, you should not have brought along these two strays.”

Luo Binghe calmly leaped from the Rhinoceros Python’s head. The great beast had exhausted the last of its energy and, unable to continue any longer, fell to the ground with a loud bang. He fixed an unwavering glare on Shen Qingqiu, sparks bursting in his eyes, looking like he was both boiling with anger and about to cry. Shen Qingqiu suddenly had a delayed reaction. Just now he had dodged behind Zhuzhi-Lang—it looked too much like he was avoiding Luo Binghe again!

But now it was too late for any explanation. The one standing here was the male protagonist's dad, the one the author stamped with the all-around strength to crush the protagonist into a paste! Shen Qingqiu finally found his voice to yell, "Go back!"

Luo Binghe didn't reply. He raised his hand, tossing over Xiu Ya. Only after seeing Shen Qingqiu catch the sword did he turn towards the other two people standing in the mausoleum hall. Collecting two fiercely roiling balls of demonic energy in his palms, he shot straight over, not bothering to dodge.

You're starting to trade blows already?

Luo Binghe's left hand smashed into Zhuzhi-Lang's abdomen, sending him flying without the least concern for his welfare. His right hand flew out to hit Tianlang-Jun. Shen Qingqiu was tense from head to toe, watching from the sidelines with rapt attention.

And Tianlang-Jun caught the blow! Not retreating a single step, he smoothly turned his hand, sliding through Luo Binghe's defenses to brush against his shoulder.

Shen Qingqiu swore, at that moment he heard Luo Binghe's bones cracking inside his body.

As if to validate this point, Luo Binghe blinked, and without warning, spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

The entirety of his chin, neck, and chest was dyed a field of red, and the blood was still dripping down. Luo Binghe wiped the corner of his mouth, looking like he was still at a loss.

To speak the truth, it had already been very long since he had experienced a physical injury serious enough to make him spit blood.

Wasn't! The! Protagonist's! Halo! An! Unbreakable! Golden! Body! Laid! Down! In! Law!?

Are you just picking on the son now that you're not picking on the dad!

Tianlang-Jun had only given Luo Binghe a light pat on the shoulder, but that arm broke off again. Tianlang-Jun wrinkled his brows, and Zhuzhi-Lang immediately picked it up for him, presenting it with both hands. Luo Binghe didn't bother to wipe off all of the blood. An ominous glint flashing through his eyes, he reached to grab Xin Mo from its place on his back. Tianlang-Jun said, "The sword is a good sword. It's a pity your technique is a hideous mess."

Luo Binghe called to Shen Qingqiu in a low voice, "Come with me!"

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “It’s too late, two hundred Black Moon Rhinoceros Pythons are only enough to hold open the Holy Mausoleum’s wards for an instant, just enough to let you in.”

Luo Binghe growled, “Then I’ll use you two as blood sacrifices and open it one more time!”

Who could have expected, before Xin Mo completely left the sheath, it was suddenly pushed back in. He didn’t know when Tianlang-Jun had moved to stand behind Luo Binghe, pressing the sword back into the sheath with one hand, actually keeping him from drawing the sword and causing trouble. Luo Binghe reacted in a flash, turning to face the attack. Who would have thought that, no matter how fast he was, the Heart Devil sword could only be drawn three inches at the most before it was immediately pressed back down? After a few rounds of this back and forth exchange, Tianlang-Jun seemed to have lost interest in playing with him. With a flick of his wrist, he stopped minding the Heart Devil sword and went to directly push down the top of his head.

Luo Binghe’s eyes snapped open. A rich cloud of purple-black energy spun around the top of his head. Tianlang-Jun lifted his hand. Giving a look at Luo Binghe’s snow-pale face, he commented impartially, “Looks like his mother.”

A cold voice came from one side, “The eyes look like yours.”

Tianlang-Jun slowly turned his head. Xiu Ya, glittering like frost and snow, was pressed across Zhuzhi-Lang’s neck.

Shen Qingqiu smiled faintly. “This good a subordinate, this close a nephew—there’s nothing that’s not worthwhile. Tianlang-Jun, shouldn’t you reconsider your choices?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said in a low voice, “Junshang, this subordinate had a moment of carelessness.”

This ‘moment of carelessness’ was hard enough to get, Shen Qingqiu had to spend a good amount of effort just to restrain him. Even when he wasn’t in snake form, this man was just as slippery!

Tianlang-Jun said faintly, “Zhuzhi-Lang is a bit foolish, his character is very weak. If you do this to him, he’ll be broken-hearted.”

Zhuzhi-lang said weakly, “Junshang, I... I didn’t...”

Shen Qingqiu said, half-sincerely, “My heart is not weak at all, but I’m broken-hearted that you’re doing this to my disciple. You release my disciple, I’ll release your nephew. How about that?”

Tianlang-Jun spread out his hand. “I’m just afraid I won’t be given the opportunity.”

In fact, Shen Qingqiu's palm was clammy with cold sweat, only his voice was cool and collected when he said, "I'm giving you the opportunity right now."

Tianlang-Jun said, "I mean, Zhuzhi-Lang won't give me the opportunity."

Before his words had fallen, Zhuzhi-Lang suddenly threw himself at the point of Shen Qingqiu's sword!

He had put extraordinary strength into this movement, really going all out with no regard for his life. Shen Qingqiu never suspected it could be a temporary feint. Startling, he subconsciously withdrew his sword. Just as he pulled back the tip of his sword, Zhuzhi-Lang seized the opportunity to escape, flashing back to Tianlang-Jun's side.

Tianlang-Jun made a "see" gesture, smiling, "I told you, Zhuzhi-Lang is a bit foolish. If someone tries to blackmail me by threatening him, he'll seek death himself. Peak Lord Shen must never underestimate him by all means."

Shen Qingqiu almost spat blood. As a hostage, Zhuzhi-Lang really had no value to speak of. Not only was he hard to pin down, after he had been seized with great difficulty there was no sense of achievement at all!

Tianlang-Jun said, "Since my nephew has suffered this little grievance, it's only fair to recoup it on Peak Lord Shen's disciple."

While speaking, his five fingers subtly curled. Luo Binghe gave a stifled groan, fresh blood flowing from the corners of his eyes, but he still turned his gaze towards Shen Qingqiu with great difficulty. Clenching his teeth against the blood foaming from his mouth, he gritted out, "...Go... anywhere is fine... just don't stay here!"

Shen Qingqiu snapped up his head, Xiu Ya flying out to the front. Like white lightning streaking across the room, it stabbed towards Tianlang-Jun. He barely tilted his head and the blade brushed past his cheek, pinning itself into a mural far behind him with a clank.

Tianlang-Jun said, "Your aim isn't very good."

Shen Qingqiu slowly retracted his hand, a corner of his mouth curling up. "It's accurate. I hit the bull's eye."

Tianlang-Jun startled slightly, turning his head at once only to see Xiu Ya neatly pierced through the eye of a smiling woman in the mural. The gem which had been inlaid in her pupil shattered, falling from the stone wall in numerous twinkling pieces.

That woman was undoubtedly just a face painted on the wall, but the corner of her mouth curved higher and higher like she was breaking into a happier smile. A corner of the grin slashed into her face split up to her ear, her bloody mouth wide open like a sacrificial bowl.

Suddenly, an incomparably piercing sound of laughter erupted in the middle of the mausoleum hall.

And this laughter, it was coming from the mouth of the woman painted on the wall!

The Hall of Delight had anti-theft measures. The wall was full of inlaid gems, but if you try to pry one out for yourself, just wait to be laughed to death by the auditory weapon of its demon sorceress!

It was clear that this laughter was especially effective against the Demon Race. After all, its main purpose was, of course, to guard against wandering tomb raiders within the Demon Race. It's not like there were any humans who were bored enough or courageous enough to go tomb raiding in the Demon Realm. After the sound entered your ears, the heart and brains would madly pulse without end, there would be a wave of acute pain, the sky and earth spinning around you, flowers bursting in your eyes. Zhuzhi-Lang couldn't help but cover his ears, and Tianlang-Jun also pulled away one hand to press against his temple. Shen Qingqiu was long prepared for this turn of events. Taking advantage of this split second of opportunity, he swiftly flitted across the hall. Raising his left hand, Xiu Ya responded and jumped back to its scabbard. His right hand grabbed Luo Binghe and he ran!

Charging into another hall of the mausoleum, the first thing Shen Qingqiu did was to lower the sluice gate, and shut it tight! The heavy stone door crashed to the ground, stirring up a cloud of dust. He could only find the mechanism to close the door, not the one to open it. Either way, it's best if he can't open the door, but just as he was thinking this, finally able to relax

after all this struggle, he turned his head to look and fell to his knees on the spot.

Zhuzhi-Lang, one hand held tightly in his, blinked his eyes.

What sort of disaster has he set up this time—he managed to leave that father-son pair currently engaged in one-sided domestic violence in the Hall of Delight. This is too big an offense; there’s going to be a criminal investigation, ah! Shen Qingqiu shook off his hand, turning to strike at the stone door, when Zhuzhi-Lang grabbed on to him again. “Master Shen, don’t bother going back. Facing Junshang, he has no chance of succeeding.”

Shen Qingqiu was going to fall apart. He was that close. How could he have gotten the wrong person? It’s all because the laughing attack of the mural woman in the Hall of Delight was too strong, and in the faint twilight of flickering green candles, all three of them looked about the same at first glance in their black clothes. Was it because they were related that they all had the same sense of style?

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “It’s not that you grabbed the wrong person, Master Shen, it’s that I swapped the hand you grabbed.”

This was the last straw for Shen Qingqiu, and he smashed a fist into the stone door. “I wanted to be together with Luo Binghe in the first place!”

Zhuzhi-Lang started, then said, “Master Shen, weren’t you and he... already together long before?”

“...” With these people, it’s really hard to say!

Shen Qingqiu raised a hand to signal him to shut up. Turning and walking a few steps, he suddenly felt that the floor under his feet was not entirely flat. Zhuzhi-Lang had followed him over, and he hurriedly made a gesture for him to stop. “Don’t move!”

A huge woman’s face was spread across the floor of the grand hall. Right now, they were standing on its ear.

It was not the same woman as the one in the Hall of Delight. This face had none of that flirtatious beauty. Instead, it was fierce and fiendish, eye sockets split in greed, with thin eyes and a broad nose. It seemed that being ugly to the point of repulsion was its forte, looking like an ugly witch.

Shen Qingqiu cautioned, “Don’t step on the face.”

Zhuzhi-Lang: “...”

This whole floor was its face, if you can’t step on the face where would you step...

Delight, Fury, Sorrow—these three halls were layered one after another. After passing through the first layer of the Hall of Delight, the one immediately following should be the “Hall of Fury.”

When the original Luo Binghe had visited (plundered) the Holy Mausoleum and cleared this level, he had used a special step pattern to cross. Unfortunately, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t clearly remember which steps he had taken. If they carelessly misstepped, the anti-theft measures in the Hall of Fury would launch. They couldn’t get around the puzzle by flying on their swords, since passing directly above the floor would count as a step.

That said, of course having your face stepped on would make you angry—no wonder this was the Hall of Fury!

He dared to rush in here because he thought the one he had grabbed was Luo Binghe, who must have known the step pattern. But, who knew that this snake would be slippery enough to swap out people in a split second!

The ground underneath their feet grew hotter and hotter. At first, the woman’s face on the ground had been scarlet, but as the temperature rose it gradually deepened to crimson. Shen Qingqiu squatted to test the temperature and immediately withdrew his hand as soon as it brushed the ground. It was hot, as if there was a fire blazing under the floor; as if even just standing on the floor would roast you like meat on a hot plate. It seems that he had already unwittingly stepped on the face a few times just now. Shen Qingqiu retreated a few steps, drawing as close to the side of the room as possible.

Suddenly, a boiling-bright golden-red liquid burst from the ground like a fountain.

Zhuzhi-Lang transformed into his original form in an instant, a yellow-eyed green snake coiled on the ground with scales flashing in the light. Rearing his upper body and letting out a hissing cry, he was as tall as four men. He rolled Shen Qingqiu into a ball, securely wrapped inside a layer of scaly armor. His thick forest of white fangs pressed close to Shen Qingqiu's head. Looking at the huge golden eyes from up close, they were even more fierce and strange.

Tianlang-Jun was certainly right, Zhuzhi-Lang was indeed a bit foolish. Didn't he remember that time he was fumed up by realgar wine until he was shedding tears into the wind? And just now, didn't he remember being held at swordpoint? In this sort of situation, he still put his heart into shielding him like this—it was simply making Shen Qingqiu feel sorry for picking on him.

Suddenly, with a huge rumbling sound, one of the side walls of the Hall of Fury toppled over in one piece.

Through the cloud of smoke pervading the air, Tianlang-Jun worked his wrist while walking down the pile of rubble from the overturned wall. Stepping into the Hall of Fury, he said, "I don't know if this is just my misperception, but it seems Peak Lord Shen is more familiar with the Holy Mausoleum than even me."

Zhuzhi-Lang changed back to human form, crying out, “Junshang, don’t come in!”

Before Tianlang-Jun had shown a questioning expression, he had already walked six or seven steps across the woman’s face on the ground.

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

Zhuzhi-Lang: “...”

A pillar of magma thick enough to enclose four men shot towards the sky, instantly engulfing Tianlang-Jun in a raging blaze.

Hahahahahahahahahahaha!

Shen Qingqiu was internally howling with laughter. See what happens when you don’t let people finish talking! Let you beat up your dear son! Go ahead and show off, even if you pretend, pride comes before the fall³!

But soon, he couldn’t laugh anymore. Luo Binghe staggered along close behind him, also rushing into the hall. One of his arms hung slack at his side like it had been completely broken, blood poured from his head without end, and one of his eyes wouldn’t open anymore.

How cruel. This wretched a state, Luo Binghe had been beaten into an even worse state by the original goods since the last time he saw him. What is up with Luo Binghe's constitution? Why is this elder so fond of using force to educate him? This isn't Bai Zhan Peak!

Zhuzhi-Lang ran frantic circles around that fiery pillar, too busy to care about the others. Luo Binghe carefully took in the scene in the hall and, lowering his head again to look, jumped off the pile of rubble, taking a few steps to arrive at Shen Qingqiu's side in a flash.

This isn't scientific at all! How did he manage to know where to step to avoid triggering the mechanism at first glance?

Luo Binghe seemed to have guessed what he was thinking, explaining concisely, "Step on the acupuncture points."

While speaking, the two had already crossed through the Hall of Fury, entering the next level. After the stone door was locked down, Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but take two more looks at Luo Binghe to make sure he hadn't gotten the wrong person this time.

Shen Qingqiu stood at the periphery of the mausoleum hall, not daring to make a hasty move. The demon sorceress presiding over the "Hall of Sorrow" perched at the zenith of the hall. Raising his head to look, sure enough, a woman's face was painted on the ceiling, eyebrows drawn high and tight-knit, mellow and in deep lamentation. Sensing the presence of intruders, the face's eyes opened. Its features twisting into motion, the expression grew increasingly miserable. First, a few drops of water seeped

from its eyes and pattered to the ground, and before long, a thick drizzle floated down from the high ceiling.

He was just going to call a warning not to let this ghostly rain touch their bodies when Luo Binghe raised an arm to cover him, rushing directly across with the two of them shielded that way. In one moment of inattention, Shen Qingqiu had already been dragged through this level at top speed.

The original Luo Binghe walked the path of exacting technique, but this matter right now, this method is really too simple and crude!

Delight, Fury, and Sorrow, these three-layered halls were a side story that dragged out for two hundred thousand words, but counting up the events just now, it wasn't even enough for one chapter?! At least the Hall of Sorrow should have been dragged out for ten chapters before it finished, but now? Was it even enough for three lines?!

The System chirped out a notification: 【Cut down on filler plot, refined storyline, B Points + 100 ! 】

But this is really too much cutting!

After exiting the three holy halls, there was a dark and still tomb passage. As soon as the two left the Hall of Sorrow, the green firelight gradually brightened, row after row stretching endlessly out into the distance.

The anti-theft measures of the Holy Mausoleum were thorough to an insane degree, and Last Breath candles were piled up everywhere like they grew on trees. Blind drooling corpses, which had been wandering mindlessly in the tomb passage, shuffled over as they entered. With a cold and impatient look, Luo Binghe raised one hand, and they unwittingly let out a low chorus of hisses, a wheezing puff of breath filling their throats, before they retreated back into the shadows with lowered heads.

Without sparing a glance at Shen Qingqiu, Luo Binghe retracted his hand and said, "Let's go."

Shen Qingqiu noticed a fierce redness on Luo Binghe's face, glaringly obvious under the dark green candlelight. It seemed that it was definitely not out of embarrassment. Before, every time Luo Binghe caught Shen Qingqiu, he would fix a fierce and rigid glare on him, but this time he didn't even look. Seeing Shen Qingqiu's gaze, he even avoided his eyes, subconsciously using his unbroken left hand to wipe away the bloodstains by his eyes.

Shen Qingqiu suspected that he had been poisoned, or that he had suffered too serious a knock on the head, but Luo Binghe's gait was still steady so it didn't seem to be that sort of issue.

He was just planning to open his mouth and ask about the situation when Luo Binghe rushed to get in his words first. "This body, are the spiritual veins working well?"

Shen Qingqiu never would have anticipated this to be the first thing he said. Startling, he replied, “They’re normal.”

It seemed that every time they sunk into silence, the one to take initiative and break it was Luo Binghe. He recalled that Luo Binghe had spent five years’ time restoring this body’s spiritual veins bit by bit.

Luo Binghe nodded and said, “That’s good. The other body, I preserved it for a few days, but it still withered in the end. If there were also problems with this body, that would not have been good.”

As soon as the soul left a body created by the Sun and Moon Dew Flower Seed, it would die at once, withering and disappearing in a moment. For Luo Binghe to have sustained it for several days, he didn’t know how much spiritual energy he had wasted on this meaningless endeavor, and he still dared to storm the Holy Mausoleum alone right afterward. Shen Qingqiu’s chest felt a bit stuffy, and he scrambled to find a topic of conversation with his thoughts in a scattered mess. Just now, Tianlang-Jun seemed to have said that Luo Binghe “brought along these two strays.” Shen Qingqiu asked, “Who else did you bring?”

Luo Binghe finally gave him a glance and said, “I came alone.”

Chapter 59: Ice Disappears, Snow Melts

After a pause, he continued, “Those two people from just then aren’t easy to deal with. Even if Shizun doesn’t want to stay at my place, I still hope that you will not go with them.”

It sounded as if this wasn’t the first time Luo Binghe had run into the two of them. Shen Qingqiu said, “Have you met them before?”

Luo Binghe said indifferently, “I’ve met that snake at Nan Jiang before. We exchanged a few blows and I almost lost. I’ve never seen the other one before, but I cannot defeat him.”

Zhuzhi-Lang was born in Nan Jiang, so if someone ran around over there, they would naturally have to be a little more diligent. Tianlang-Jun also said before that the original purpose of the plague at Jinlan City was to resolve the food shortage at Nan Jiang. It was to be expected that Luo Binghe got in a few fights with Zhuzhi-Lang at Nan Jiang.

But Zhuzhi-Lang didn’t seem to have told Luo Binghe what his identity was and didn’t treat Luo Binghe as his young master. It didn’t look like Tianlang-Jun had any intention of telling him either.

Judging from this, neither father nor cousin had any intent to acknowledge him.

Even though Luo Binghe's pace was steady, he was still limping very faintly. However, he continued to walk with a straight back, not even supporting himself with the wall. When Shen Qingqiu saw this, he was full of mixed feelings, and he awkwardly hesitated for a moment before he suddenly hardened his resolve and took a step forward. He was about to go support Luo Binghe when the candlelight suddenly flickered.

The tomb passage dimmed a little, and Luo Binghe's body pressed towards him.

But this time, Luo Binghe didn't forcefully hug him, nor did he grope around. Instead, he completely toppled onto Shen Qingqiu before he stopped moving at all.

After being tossed around for half a day, Shen Qingqiu was also feeling extremely exhausted. He couldn't bear the weight of two people, and he fell against the wall with a thud. Luo Binghe was slumped on top of him, soft and boneless, and his head knocked against the wall, creating a resounding noise upon impact. When Shen Qingqiu heard that, his heart also jumped along with it, his teeth aching.

He hastily stood up straight and held Luo Binghe. After fumbling around for a bit, he managed to reach behind him. The clothes on Luo Binghe's back, which had been drenched by the ghostly rain in the Hall of Sorrow, were tattered. He probed inside of his clothing. The skin underneath his

fingers felt strange as if there were marks of festering. It had also already started to emit a fishy scent.

After all, the ghostly rain wasn't anything good.

If nobody else was present, the way Shen Qingqiu liked to wake other people up was to first go up and give them a small slap on either side of their face. But now, he hadn't even reached out a hand yet when he felt like he couldn't do it, so as a result, he changed it to lightly patting Luo Binghe's cheek a few times. His voice also involuntarily softened. "Luo Binghe? Luo Binghe?"

Luo Binghe's eyes were closed heavily. His eyelashes didn't even flutter, and the color of his face grew increasingly and abnormally red.

Shen Qingqiu reached out a hand and touched him. His forehead and cheeks were both scalding hot like he had a fever. But there was no way that the concept of a 'fever' would exist in Luo Binghe's body. Even if there were times when he would occasionally find himself in tough situations, it wouldn't last for very long, and it especially wouldn't reach the point where he lost consciousness. Shen Qingqiu touched his hands, but they were ice cold. It was as if Luo Binghe's head was in the microwave and his body was in the freezer.

Shen Qingqiu placed a hand behind Luo Binghe's head and massaged the area that had just knocked against the wall.

“Binghe, can you hear me?”

No response.

Shen Qingqiu calculated a little. In order to protect his flesh body and not let it rot, Luo Binghe had used up several days' worth of spiritual energy, and in the end he still hadn't been able to protect it; he went through great pains running around blindly to catch Black Moon Rhinoceros Pythons; after arriving at the Holy Mausoleum, he was first beaten up by Tianlang-Jun, then attacked head-on by the sound waves in the Hall of Delight, continued to be beaten up by Tianlang-Jun, before he was finally drenched by the ghostly rain.

No matter how you thought about it, it should be much more serious than getting a fever.

After Luo Binghe passed out, his oppressive aura lost its ability to intimidate. The Blind Corpses that had shrunk into the darkness just then started to stir restlessly again, hissing as they surrounded them.

Shen Qingqiu held Luo Binghe, who had toppled over, with one hand, while he gripped the Xiu Ya sword with the other. With a violent shake, the sword flew out from its sheath like a flying arrow and immediately pierced through more than a dozen of them. However, the dazzling blade of the sword reflected light extremely intensely. When the green light from the Last Breath Candles reflected against the sword, it grew even harsher. The Blind Corpses were very skilled at chasing after the light and also dodged quickly, so if he tried the same thing again, it wouldn't work. Shen Qingqiu

had just sheathed his sword and returned it to his waist when several withered hands already reached near him. There was even one that stretched straight for Luo Binghe's eyes. Shen Qingqiu sent out an explosive blow with his palm, making the insolent Blind Corpse's head explode.

However, even though explosive blows were easy to use, he couldn't use them constantly. It used up too much spiritual energy, and he would run out after a while. Moreover, Shen Qingqiu was back in the mode where he only had two bars' worth of spiritual energy so he couldn't be worry-free like he had been before. After sending out twenty or so blows, he started to feel weaker than he would've liked. The Blind Corpses pushed and shoved in the tomb passage, and he had no choice but to kick each one away as they came. Even though these monsters were low level, there was never an end to them, and he still had to hold onto an unconscious Luo Binghe. He stumbled once and momentarily failed to hold him steady, causing Luo Binghe's head to knock against the wall once more.

The 'bang' sounded extremely painful. Troubled, Shen Qingqiu used his hand to cushion Luo Binghe's head. He felt around again, and he couldn't help but feel as if a large bump had swollen up. Shen Qingqiu better not knock this child's head so hard that he ends up with brain problems, with this fever and being thrown around!

Small demons were troublesome. If they continued to stay in this tomb passage that was full of Last Breath Candles, they would only attract an unending stream of Blind Corpses. He changed positions and lifted one of Luo Binghe's arms over his shoulder, hauling him forward with large strides. The Blind Corpses were flung several meters behind, but the Last Breath Candles continued to light up with his urgent breaths, illuminating their shadows so that there was nowhere to hide. Even though the Blind Corpses couldn't catch up, he couldn't shake them off either as they

continued to pursue him and Luo Binghe relentlessly, all the way up until he turned a corner and passed a small tomb room.

This was most likely also a preparation room. The coffins inside were strewn about extremely messily, and the covers on some of them were even overturned onto the ground. It didn't seem dignified or noble at all. Shen Qingqiu hastily dragged Luo Binghe inside, checking each one in turn. Some had dried corpses lying in strange positions inside, but there were also some that were completely empty.

The wheezing noises from outside the tomb room grew closer and closer, and the elongated and messy shadows on the floor intertwined chaotically. Shen Qingqiu saw that the situation was desperate and jumped inside a stone coffin. He originally wanted to stuff Luo Binghe inside a different coffin, but he didn't have time for that anymore. Hugging Luo Binghe tightly, Shen Qingqiu flipped the two of them over and they tumbled simultaneously into a stone coffin.

Even though there was something soft cushioning the bottom, Shen Qingqiu still landed so hard that he saw stars. Luo Binghe was on top, Shen Qingqiu on the bottom. He was squashed heavily, and he nearly couldn't catch his breath.

What did this child eat while growing up! He looked fairly skinny, so why was he so heavy!

Half of the coffin lid wasn't sealed properly. Shen Qingqiu was about to reach out a hand to close it when the faint green light from outside swayed

and numerous crooked shadows reflected against the ceiling.

The Blind Corpses had come inside.

They walked slowly into the tomb room. The occasional sound of light knocking floated over, as well as the noise made from sharp fingernails scratching across the surface of the stone coffins, making Shen Qingqiu's blood run cold.

But if there was one place that Last Breath Candles absolutely wouldn't be hidden in, it was in a coffin. As long as there wasn't a source of light, these blind creatures wouldn't be able to catch them.

Shen Qingqiu remained calm, lying on his back. Luo Binghe pressed down on top of him, face-down, his head buried in the hollow of Shen Qingqiu's shoulder. The heat spread onto Shen Qingqiu's neck, so hot that it was uncomfortable. Even he felt uncomfortable, so Luo Binghe must naturally be even more uncomfortable.

Luckily Luo Binghe's hands were cold and his head was hot. He might as well use his own hand to lower the temperature of his forehead. Shen Qingqiu thought that this was a good idea, and he was about to grab Luo Binghe's wrist and lift it up when his body suddenly stiffened.

Five withered, bony fingers with oddly long fingernails appeared above the coffin.

Why did they have to search so carefully and thoroughly! Weren't the Blind Corpses supposed to have very low IQs! Didn't they simply ignore everything that didn't emit light!!!

Shen Qingqiu suddenly discovered that there actually was something emitting a faint red light next to his cheek.

He glanced to the side. Even though Luo Binghe's eyes were closed, the Demonic Mark on his forehead had already materialized. The scarlet pattern on his forehead was currently brightening and fading in time with his breathing. The red light subsequently dimmed and glowed.

Even though he knew that this mark was the symbol of Luo Binghe's bloodline, it didn't have to shine so conspicuously, did it! Why did it look so similar to how Ultraman¹ would start to flash light every time he reached the last critical moment while fighting a monster and didn't have enough energy left!

He couldn't free his hand to cover that disastrous mark. He subconsciously turned his head abruptly and pressed his lips against Luo Binghe's bright and clean forehead.

It actually looked sort of like he was kissing Luo Binghe's forehead. However, there was no need to care about such trivial details during unusual circumstances like this! Their lives were more important!

That withered and dried hand, with fingernails full of filth and several strands of hair wrapped around it, trembled as it slowly reached into the stone coffin, groping around. The space inside the coffin was narrow, but it was very deep. As long as the Blind Corpse continued to maintain this range while fumbling around, it still wouldn't be able to touch the two people at the bottom.

But this hand didn't retreat in the slightest. As its hand moved lower and lower, Shen Qingqiu grew tenser and tenser. It was about to touch Luo Binghe's back when Shen Qingqiu gritted his teeth and extracted his right hand, which had almost gone numb, and pressed down on an area of Luo Binghe's back that was still fairly intact.

With this push, Luo Binghe's upper half pressed completely against him. Originally, there was still a small space between them, but now the two of them were basically one person, chest against chest, stomach against stomach.

The stomach should naturally be the human body's softest area, but Luo Binghe's abdomen jabbed terribly hard into Shen Qingqiu's. The more he pressed down, the more he was convinced that Luo Binghe definitely had an eight pack. It was hard enough to kill someone.

Even though the hand stopped a hair away from Luo Binghe's back, it changed direction instead and started moving to the side.

When Shen Qingqiu saw that it was about to touch Luo Binghe's calf, he hardened his heart and parted his legs, allowing Luo Binghe's left leg to

land between his.

He had already compressed the space that they took up to its absolute minimum, he really couldn't compress it any further!

The Blind Corpse shakily felt around for a long while. It didn't touch anything, and it withdrew very slowly.

Shen Qingqiu only released a breath of relief when the Blind Corpses left the tomb room, grumbling with dissatisfaction, and the entire crowd wandered away.

Their position right now was truly too unseemly. If someone poked their head over and saw them, they would think that Shen Qingqiu was someone burning with desire for sure, holding onto Luo Binghe firmly without any intention of letting go like he was doing all he could to squeeze him into his embrace. He was about to support Luo Binghe and sit up when a voice suddenly resounded inside the tomb room.

“Relaxing so early, isn't this really much too soon.”

The voice was elderly, its tone sneering. Shen Qingqiu immediately picked up the Xiu Ya sword and flipped over, pressing Luo Binghe beneath him. He sat up, holding his sword in front of him, full of wariness. “Who!”

The Blind Corpses had already long since gone far away. The tomb room was completely empty, full of nothing but ice cold stone coffins.

... don't tell him it was another reanimated corpse from some coffin. He just checked—they were basically all dried corpses!

The voice spoke again. “If I don't want you to see me, then you don't have any hope of seeing me even if you overturn the entire Holy Mausoleum.”

When Shen Qingqiu heard that, he felt that this voice was very familiar. He had definitely heard it somewhere before, and not just once. With a flash of spiritual light, he sheathed his sword and said, “Since it's just the Dream Demon Elder, there's no need to put on a show.”

He had just finished speaking when an old man suddenly appeared in the middle of the room in luxurious clothing, his eyes like that of a hawk. He sat cross-legged on top of a coffin and looked down loftily at Shen Qingqiu. “You actually still remember me.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Since the Dream Demon Elder has appeared in front of me, then I must be dreaming right now.”

Before, the Dream Demon could only appear as a ball of black fog in the dreamscape, but now, he could transform into a human shape. It seemed like he had recovered quite well after borrowing Luo Binghe's body. When Shen Qingqiu saw that the newcomer was an old gramps who would definitely stand on Luo Binghe's side, he actually relaxed.

The Dream Demon sniffed. “However, the predicament that you two are in right now isn’t a dream.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Is it possible to request the Dream Demon Elder’s assistance in entering Luo Binghe’s dreamscape and waking him?”

The Dream Demon said, “I cannot wake him.”

“Ah?” Shen Qingqiu grew a little panicked and he nearly blurted out, “Why not!” Was Luo Binghe’s brain already damaged from the fever?

The Dream Demon said indifferently, “I can’t enter. This brat’s primordial spirit is currently in chaos. It’s completely blank with layers of heavy fog, and he’s fallen into a dream that he cannot wake from. I’ve only ever encountered this kind of situation in two types of people’s dreams before. One of them were those who were on the brink of death from serious illness.”

It seemed like he wasn’t about to say something good. But if the first kind was already on the brink of death from serious illness, the second kind couldn’t be even worse. Shen Qingqiu asked patiently, “Then the other type?”

“The intellectually disabled.”

“.....”

The Dream Demon rambled, “Serves this brat right. In the past five years, he wastes his energy summoning the soul all day long and recklessly slaughters his own creations in his dreamscape at night. I’ve long since instructed him that doing so would be the same thing as destroying his own primordial spirit. Sooner or later, this day would come. In order to preserve your flesh Seed body during these past few days, he wasted his spiritual energy, and that demon sword was just waiting for an opportunity to revolt. What’s more, he forcefully broke into the Holy Mausoleum, and faced off directly against the most gifted descendant that the demon race has seen for generations.”

Shen Qingqiu gripped Xiu Ya sword so tightly that it hurt. He looked back at Luo Binghe, who was lying unconscious in the coffin, and said, “... Elder has no way of awakening him either?”

“I cannot do anything.”

Shen Qingqiu cupped his hands in respect towards him and laid silently back down in the coffin.

The Dream Demon lifted an eyebrow. “What are you doing?”

Shen Qingqiu answered, “Sleeping. Until I wake up.”

The veins in the Dream Demon's head bulged. "You dare to ignore me?"

Shen Qingqiu closed his eyes. "Since Elder already said that he cannot do anything, of course, I can only wait until I can wake up and safely send him out."

The Dream Demon snorted. "My clan's forbidden area, the Holy Mausoleum, is extremely dangerous. There are also two troublesome characters waiting for you. You alone cannot protect him."

That was true, very true.

Shen Qingqiu opened his eyes and sighed. "But right now, besides me, his Shizun, who else can protect—or should I say, will protect Luo Binghe?"

Chaotic emotions came thick and fast. Shen Qingqiu's thoughts were in turmoil, but he was very clear about one thing: no matter what, he couldn't leave Luo Binghe to die here.

The Dream Demon said coldly, "After so many years, you're finally willing to acknowledge once more that this brat is your disciple and that you are his Shizun?"

Shen Qingqiu: "It has indeed been a very long time."

He was still waiting for the Dream Demon to continue ridiculing him mysteriously, but that old man suddenly gave a sigh. He said, "If this brat could wake up and hear what you just said, I wonder how happy he would be."

Gramps, can you not talk so gloomily with every sentence!

Shen Qingqiu's face was full of black lines. What did he mean, "if he could wake up"? This kind of uncertain-about-life-or-death tone just made him even more uneasy, okay!

The Dream Demon's anger suddenly surged up, and he shouted loudly, "I'm clearly this brat's Shifu, how many things have I taught him?! Ah?! The ability to know everything under the sky, the method to control people's hearts! But he refuses to call me Shifu; all he ever says is 'Elder,' 'Elder'! You're just some average cultivator that taught him a few superficial fighting moves and one or two coarse mental cultivation methods, yet he chases after you crying and calling for Shizun! It's infuriating!"

He had long since suppressed his anger, and now when he saw the two of them lying in the same coffin, he found the scene more and more offensive. His old eyes were about to go blind from it, and he was extremely unhappy, so he was very grouchy. Shen Qingqiu wasn't happy either. He was irritated just from the Dream Demon calling Cang Qiong Mountain's sword techniques superficial fighting moves. He was about to fight back when the Dream Demon started to walk back and forth across the coffin, hands

behind his back, saying with agitation, “If I had secretly eliminated you back then in the dreamscape, this kind of incident wouldn’t have happened today. This brat was originally a talent with great prospects ahead of him, but the moment he met you he became this good-for-nothing that only makes people angry. He stubbornly continues to put on an act in front of you too, pretending not to feel anything! If it were up to me, he should either just kill you or do you. Putting up such a fuss, wavering in between—it really makes someone mad when they see it!!”

Shen Qingqiu really wanted to just cover his ears and seal the other’s mouth. He glanced at Luo Binghe’s peacefully sleeping face, and an image of Luo Binghe crying flashed across his mind briefly before he immediately looked away. He couldn’t help but say, “It isn’t very good to say this kind of thing in front of me, Elder, is it? Are you done scolding now? If you are, can you let me wake up?”

The Dream Demon still had grievances. “Wake up? Even if you wake up you don’t know how to get out. The entrance that he opened has already closed.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Why can’t I just open it again? May I please request that Elder tells me what direction to go in to get to where Luo Binghe broke through the barrier using the Black Moon Rhinoceros Pythons.”

His gaze landed on the Heart Devil sword at Luo Binghe’s waist. The entrance that had just been opened up would inevitably still be weak. If he used the Xin Mo sword to slice through it again, perhaps he could open it again once more. The Dream Demon followed his gaze. He clearly understood but wasn’t convinced. “This sword may not necessarily allow you to use it.”

Of course, Shen Qingqiu also knew this. He silently clenched his teeth and said heavily, “There’s no other choice. I still have to try.”

When he woke up, he was still lying in the stone coffin, and Luo Binghe was also still lying obediently on top of him, held tightly against him.

Thank heavens, that bothersome old Dream Demon spirit finally agreed to let him go. Shen Qingqiu was about to sit up in a single movement when his right leg suddenly seemed to brush against something that poked stiffly into his inner thigh.

Shen Qingqiu thought it was a sword hilt at first and absent-mindedly stretched out a hand to go push it aside. He had just touched it when the System’s announcement suddenly exploded:

【YOOOOOOO~~Cool points +1000 ୮(୮^q^)! ~ Congratulations for obtaining the achievement “Physical Relationship Development”!!!】

Immediately, Shen Qingqiu’s body also stiffened into a dried corpse.

“Physical Relationship Development”? The hell was that?

He looked down again. Only then did he find out that this “sword hilt” was truly something remarkable.

Sky pillar² ah!!!!!!!!!!!!!! It was the sky pillar ah!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Shen Qingqiu wanted to kill somebody and then kill himself!

After flailing around in confusion for a while, he slapped a hand against his face, comforting himself in his mind: there was no distinguishing between day or night in the Holy Mausoleum, so maybe it was morning outside right now?! It was a regular phenomenon, a regular physiological phenomenon!

It would go away on its own right?! Generally speaking, that’s how things worked!

But ignoring it like this also seemed too pitiful!!!

Even if it was pitiful, nothing could be done. It’s not like he could help him rub it in this kind of circumstance, right?!?!

If he pretended like he didn’t see it, he should be forgiven, right?!?!?!

Chapter 60 – Huan Hua Palace Master

Ah, that's right! After all, at the end of the day, a master is not obligated to help his disciple quench his fire.¹ Even if he was the one who accidentally rubbed against it and stoked the fire, it's all the same!!!

Shen Qingqiu pushed Luo Binghe up abruptly, placed a palm on his chest, and sent in a few waves of spiritual energy. Although it didn't amount to much, it was all he could afford to give. Everything else can be ignored! Ignored!

Exiting the stone sarcophagus and following Dream Demon's directions, he dragged and pulled Luo Binghe all the way to "The East End." After a while, the walls of the tomb gradually grew damp, the soles of his feet became slippery, and the moss was thicker. It was not easy to keep steady. Shen Qingqiu slowed down to avoid slipping.

As they continued, weeds and wildflowers bloomed among the moss as the tomb gradually widened. Trees of varied heights rose on both sides. Not only was the ground slippery, but the gnarled and twisted old tree roots also threatened to trip them from time to time. Insects flew by, and the chirping calls of birds could be heard. A blue-and-black zenith suddenly rose up high above them. Inlaid with flashing white crystals, it resembled a curtain of a starlit night.

Despite the illusion of being in a jungle, they have not left the Holy Mausoleum but only arrived at one of the special crypts within it.

Each crypt in the Holy Mausoleum was designed by the nobles of the past generations for their own use. Its designs were strange and varied. Similar to an apartment, the tenants move in bringing only what they have, and decorate the rest of the house in accordance to their preferences. Experts in the field of mechanisms unduly favor the Qimen Dunjia ancient divination tradition.² Demon beast tamers prefer to use guardian beasts. Herbalists cultivate poisonous flowers and grasses.

The owner of this tomb was obviously the last type. The trees and flowers here seemed ordinary, but Shen Qingqiu was determined not to touch them. He removed his robe and covered both their heads. Pressing his hand against Luo Binghe's waist, he took a cautious step forward.

The grass and leaves rustled.

Suddenly, a piercing sound accompanied by a flash of cold white light shattered the stillness of the air.

Shen Qingqiu's hand snapped down sharply, the Xiu Ya sword at his waist flew out and slammed in a cross to block the sudden attack. The force of strength from both sides did not relent.

This obstacle had not been resolved before a second flash of white light struck. This time, it directly stabbed at Luo Binghe's throat. The Xiu Ya

sword was blocking the first sword and couldn't be recalled; neither could he throw Luo Binghe aside. If he fell amongst those treacherous flowers and plants, he would be done for!

He raised his arm and seized the edge of the sword with his bare hand.

The blade cut deeply into his palm, but he could still hold it firmly, and it did not advance another half inch. Blood did not drip—it poured out. It spilled over Shen Qingqiu's clothes and dyed the grass on the ground bright red.

He finally realized how painful it must have been when Luo Binghe had previously grabbed at his blade.

Shen Qingqiu's eyes reddened. He jerked his head and his pupils shrank.

I never imagined that the “strays”³ Tianlang-Jun spoke of was actually referring to these two people.

Two people emerged from within the shadows of the gnarled old trees.

To be precise, only one person stepped out; the other one was pushed on a wheelchair-like contraption.

The one standing was a beautiful woman with a slender waist and full bosom. The one being wheeled forward was wrapped in a rough felt blanket from the neck down, but the exposed head was not unfamiliar to Shen Qingqiu.

The flying sword still strove to move forward. Shen Qingqiu could not loosen his grip. The force was strong, and the blade was close to slicing his palm in half.

His expression did not change except for the addition of a fake smile: “Lady Qiu, Old Palace Master, I trust you’ve been well.”

Qiu Haitang’s eyes were filled with resentment. The Old Palace Master’s head moved agitatedly, and his voice was hoarse: “Peak Lord Shen, look at me. Do I look well?”

The word “well”—it’s just used as a casual greeting and not meant to be taken literally. Shen Qingqiu gave a dry laugh.

Upon careful observation, he found that the use of the word “well” was indeed greatly ironic at this point. In the past, the Old Palace Master was a prominent figure in the cultivation world. During their first meeting at the Immortal Alliance Conference and during the unrest at Jinlan City, his bearing and appearance were faultless. But now, the previously meticulously kept snow white beard had become dirty and tangled, his face was so lined that soil filled the creases, and the wrinkles piled up were denser than the aged trees behind him.

The Old Palace Master said darkly: “You must find my current appearance strange.”

Shen Qingqiu thought, would you let us go if I say I don’t find it strange at all? What his mouth said: “I heard that the Old Palace Master had retired from general affairs to go back to his native place and live in seclusion⁴ or was roaming⁵ around without a care in the world.”

The Old Palace Master sneered: “Retired or roaming the world? Did you really believe that? In the entire Huan Hua Palace, the entire world, how many people actually believe it? If you want the truth, ask your good disciple.”

He didn’t know what was going on, but they seemed to be looking to settle a score with Luo Binghe. Shen Qingqiu did not bat an eyelid. He shifted Luo Binghe to his back and shielded him.

Qiu Haitang seethed with hatred: “Shen Jiu, I have said before that I would recognize you even if you have turned to ashes. I have long known your act of self-destruction at Huayue City was fake. Committing suicide as a form of atonement? Hehe, you’re not that kind of person. In the Demon Realm, I caught sight of you. You really were still alive!”

You recognized only my body, but not my soul. What’s the use of it... Shen Qingqiu lamented helplessly.

On the day he was captured by Sha Hualing at the Chi Yun cave, Shen Qingqiu rescued the various factions and she caught a glimpse of him. It roused her doubts, and from thereon she became suspicious. Unfortunately, after he returned to Cang Qiong Mountain sect and was subsequently snatched away by Luo Binghe, Qiu Haitang also crossed the border and followed them into the Demon Realm. Luo Binghe had been busy rounding up a large number of Black Moon Rhinoceros Pythons to break the sacred enchantment. He was bound to be overwhelmed and distracted, and so did not notice that someone had secretly snuck in.

To summarise: A woman's hatred cannot be underestimated. It's just that, for these two people to be allied, it had never occurred to Shen Qingqiu. Nor does he know when they had started conspiring together.

Thinking of this, a thought occurred to Shen Qingqiu: "Back when Lady Qiu suddenly appeared in Jinlan City, was it thanks to the Old Palace Master?"

Since Zhuzhi-Lang has denied involvement in this, it stands to reason that others had a hand in it. How else could Qiu Haitang, who had no standing to speak of, have obtained the chance to come forward and denounce him?

The Old Palace Master smiled coldly, neither confirming nor denying.

Fluffy white dandelion seeds swayed and drifted in the air before them. Shen Qingqiu said: "I wonder if I have ever offended the Old Palace Master..."

The Old Palace Master: “Since it has come to this, there is no need to hide it from you.”

His voice rasped as if there was something lodged in his throat: “When Luo Binghe first came to my Huan Hua Palace, I nurtured him carefully and gave him all my support. But he refused to acknowledge me as his master and wouldn’t hear of marrying my daughter. It was clear he still had you on his mind. Naturally, I wanted to know what kind of excellent person Peak Lord Shen was. Who would have guessed the type of history that would be revealed to me instead? Regarding your background, I know everything. Who you were apprenticed with, the things you did, how you managed to enter Cang Qiong Mountain sect—it really was extraordinary. Even if there had been no sowers on the scene, you would have been guaranteed a spot in the water dungeon. Although it wasn’t part of the plan, it mattered not to me.”

It would seem that back then, the Huan Hua Palace disciples’ antagonism towards him was not instigated by Luo Binghe, but rather the deliberate influence of the Old Palace Master. Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help shooting a glance at Luo Binghe. This child, if he had been less pig-headed and accepted other people as his master, a lot of grief could have been avoided. But Shen Qingqiu could not begrudge him his brainless willfulness.

He had to sigh: “This youngster was truly cherished by Old Palace Master. But pardon my skepticism, trying to skewer him with two swords is very much at odds with your words.”

The Old Palace Master: “That was then, this is now. Peak Lord Shen, please step aside. Where you want to go, what you wish to do, I no longer care. I just want to settle things with this brat.”

Shen Qingqiu: “If I step aside, the Palace Master will kill him and let me off?”

Qiu Haitang sneered: “He may let you off, but I am still here!”

Originally, her weak fighting prowess meant she can be overlooked, but now this situation was truly getting out of hand.

The Old Palace Master: “This thankless wretch, ruining me to this extent—I won’t rest till he’s dead.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “If he really was as ungrateful as you say, he would not have left you and your daughter alive. To completely destroy something, one must destroy root and branch.⁶ This, I’m sure, you understand better than I do.”

He never thought there would come a day when he had to speak up in Luo Binghe’s defense. Hearing this, the Old Palace Master gave a peculiar laugh. Qiu Haitang jerked off the rough felt blanket covering his body, and Shen Qingqiu forgot to breathe.

Beneath the blanket lay a strangely square torso. All four limbs were missing.

The Old Palace Master was actually sliced into a human stick! A great leader of his generation reduced to such a miserable state, barely considered human and more miserable than a ghost. Bedraggled and filthy, with only the head being able to turn about. The original Shen Qingqiu's fate has been transferred to the Old Palace Master!

This grudge was too heavy, it definitely can't be placated with just a few quotes about enlightenment and compassion from Chicken Soup for the Soul!

The Old Palace Master sneered: "Your good disciple's handiwork. Seen enough? He might as well have destroyed root and branch."

Shen Qingqiu gravely agreed. Why didn't you destroy root and branch!

These two little fish, one wants to kill Luo Binghe, one wants to kill Shen Qingqiu. Qiu Haitang isn't skilled enough to take him down by herself; the Old Palace Master may have been crippled but he was much more powerful than her. The body of a starved camel is still bigger than a horse.⁷ In spite of everything, he had once been the great leader of a sect. He may no longer have the use of his four limbs, but his spiritual power remains undiminished. Men and women who work side by side will not tire.⁸ This pair complement each other's strengths and weaknesses, like a blind man carrying a cripple.

Shen Qingqiu snapped the blade with his bare hands and threw it into the grass, staring at the two people facing him.

Actually, he could take a gamble.

When facing Tianlang-Jun, a character whose data had not existed previously, Luo Binghe's plot armor was useless. But the Old Palace Master did play a role in the original work, and hence should be subjected to the same laws dictating the protagonist's golden undying body. This effect should still be in place. He could try standing back, let the Old Palace Master hack at Luo Binghe, and like back at Shuang Hu City, see who ends up dead instead.

The Old Palace Master slowly said: "I will ask once more, will you stand aside, or not?"

Shen Qingqiu lowered his arm, the blood flowing from his palm had slowed to a trickle. He formed his reply.

He looked up and said coldly: "Just like the Old Palace Master has said, he is my good disciple. You tell me, would I stand aside?"

Can't be helped, things have changed. Now it's no longer the same as it was back then.

In any case, he couldn't bring himself to do it, to spectate from the sidelines as others chopped at Luo Binghe while he speculated on who would be the winner.

At this stage, if he could still gamble with Luo Binghe's life, he would be no different from the original scum villain!

The Old Palace Master's pupils suddenly narrowed and seemed to flee from the expanding whites of his eyes. He gave an earth-shaking roar.

His four limbs were gone, so he poured his spiritual power into his roar instead. With every bellow, Shen Qingqiu felt a powerful stream of spiritual energy condensed into sharp blades sweep at him, and the attacks were not trifling. The grass swayed and leaves were sent flying. Shen Qingqiu gripped the scabbard with his still bleeding right hand and blocked a few times. The excruciating pain on his right palm made him tremble, but he did not dare switch to his other hand. Without the use of his left hand to hold onto Luo Binghe, he was afraid he would lose his grip!

Despite having been sliced into a human stick, the Old Palace Master still retained his powerful spiritual force. It is no wonder Qiu Haitang still stuck with him. He had just thought of this when the Old Palace Master suddenly gave a drawn-out roar. A faint crack sounded from the scabbard of the Xiu Ya sword—it could not block the attack. The violent strike came, and Shen Qingqiu fell over backward. On the way down, he twisted around and used himself as a meat shield, not letting Luo Binghe hit the ground. He ended up squashed by the full weight of his body and saw stars.

The Old Palace Master finally stopped howling, and Qiu Haitang wheeled him over slowly. He seemed to calm down for a while as he stared down at Shen Qingqiu holding onto Luo Binghe: “Even while falling, you would still protect him.”

Qiu Haitang ground her teeth: “Fake, it’s all fake. This man.... at this time, just who are you putting on this show for!”

The Old Palace Master: “Why didn’t you use spiritual force to fight back?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Naturally, it’s because I’m exhausted.”

Fine wispy threads of white floated over, about to land on Luo Binghe’s pale cheeks. Shen Qingqiu gently puffed at it, and the white fluff scattered away. The Old Palace Master assumed he had resigned himself to his fate, and stopped paying attention to him. He turned to focus his stare on Luo Binghe’s quietly sleeping face.

The madness he had displayed earlier while bellowing his attacks was wiped clean from his face, replaced with unnerving intensity.

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

This expression..... doesn’t seem right.

The Old Palace Master gazed at him for a long while then sighed: “When you close your eyes, you resemble her the most. And also when you’re being cold.”

His eyes traveled over Luo Binghe's face greedily. If he still had hands, he would have reached out to fondle as well. Shen Qingqiu felt ill. He couldn't help clasping Luo Binghe's head and pulling him closer into his arms.

The two were now in a position where Luo Binghe was cozily snuggled against him with his head resting on Shen Qingqiu's chest. Shen Qingqiu's voice was low: "Open your eyes, he isn't Su Xiyan."

The name roused the Old Palace Master from his daze, and he began swearing in rage: "Why didn't you heed my orders? Why won't you obey! Did I not treat you well? Didn't you want the Huan Hua Palace and my position? I know you've always wanted it! If you had been loyal to me, there's nothing I would not have given to you! But first her, then you—both of you are ingrates! Ingrates!"

He raved and ranted, pouring his malice into a vicious diatribe against Tianlang-Jun and Shen Qingqiu, before continuing to snarl about ungratefulness. Suddenly, he turned his head, his twisted expression softening. He spoke in a coaxing manner: "Xiyan.... come over here.... Shizun has something nice for you, drink this...."

The Old Palace Master sank into a confused state again, saliva dribbling from the corners of his mouth. Qiu Haitang backed away slowly, disgust brimming in her eyes. Shen Qingqiu's heart felt frozen in his chest as his nausea grew.

Unable to tolerate the Old Palace Master leering at him, Shen Qingqiu lifted the back of Luo Binghe's head with his hand and pressed his face to his chest. Fed up, he snapped: "That's enough!"

With Luo Binghe's face hidden from sight, the Old Palace Master's features went slack, the facial muscles twitching for a bit. Eyes filling with resentment, he opened his mouth.

Chapter 61 – Bachelor

But he did not make a sound. With his two eyeballs protruding out, his whole body was frozen like a stone statue.

Shen Qingqiu held his breath. Gurgling sounds could be heard from the Old Palace Master's throat and bloodshot veins crawled up his eyes.

But he could not move a single step.

Finally!

Hahahahahahaha!

Was he so stupid and saintly that when beaten he would not fight back?!

Treating him like he's so weak he can't slap you back in the face while dragging another person?!

Qiu Haitang exclaimed, "What's wrong?"

She moved to draw her sword but Shen Qingqiu interrupted, “Lady Qiu, I advise that you do not draw your sword in vain—unless, of course, you want to end up like him.”

Suspicious, Qiu Haitang spun around to face the Old Master and screamed.

Between the deep folds of his wrinkles, the Old Master’s face was mottled with green pustules and contorted in unbearable pain.

Qiu Haitang trembled. “Shen Jiu.. you... what have you done?”

“I didn’t do anything,” Shen Qingqiu said. “Did you forget that we are in someone else’s tomb? Do you think the Demons will not have any protection?”

In fact, floating in the air like a blown dandelion were the spores of a demonic plant, ‘QingSi.’ This plant uses the bodies of living beings to germinate and is attracted to people who radiate Qi, be it spiritual energy or demonic energy. This was also why Shen Qingqiu used martial arts instead of his Qi techniques earlier.

QingSi embeds itself into the bodies of its victims without any pain—except just maybe a slight itch. However, once it sprouts, it tears the flesh and digs into the blood vessels. The faster the Qi circulates, the faster it

grows. If a cultivator unleashes his peak energy, it could germinate in an instant.

The Old Palace Master had been attacking with his roars, focusing his Qi around his head and throat. Not just his face, it was likely that the insides of his mouth and throat passages were choked with the sprouts of this demonic plant, with its fur-like surface tendrils and the roots sinking under the skin, reaching down deep into the nerves.

Shen Qingqiu tutted, “The Old Palace Master must not yell again. Otherwise, it will grow without stopping until it reaches your brain; then truly, you will be dead.”

Facing this terrifying and disgusting scene, Qiu Haitang clamped down on her mouth and tried to resist her dizziness but failed. Her eyes rolled into her skull and she fell into a dead faint.

With one person immobilized and the other knocked unconscious, this was truly a victory!

Shen Qingqiu sighed in relief and struggled to stand up with Luo Binghe in his arms. Muscles straining and through clenched teeth, the Old Palace Master vaguely said, “Don’t rejoice too early, you are no better off.” His face twisted in pain and the sprouts on his face trembled as he said these few words.

Shen Qingqiu just huffed in reply.

From his right arm to right across his shoulders, a deep hysterical pain mercilessly stabbed his flesh and nerves. To block the two swords earlier, he was forced to use his Qi cultivation and now the spores were germinating.

But fortunately, and at the very least, Luo Binghe was safe.

Seeing Shen Qingqiu half dragging half carrying Luo Binghe away, the Old Palace Master choked out his cries and toppled down from the wheelchair in his urgency, dragging his limbless body through the flowers and grasses on the ground—a piteous and terrifying scene.

The Old Palace Master wheezed: “Don’t go.... Don’t go..... Don’t leave.”

Shen Qingqiu hastened his steps but who knew that the Old Palace Master’s face would suddenly turn violent and open his mouth to let out a roar?

He wanted to bring them down together with him to the grave!

Shen Qingqiu could not figure out if the Old Palace Master was unwilling to let them leave or if he just refused to let Luo Binghe live. Shen Qingqiu used the old scabbard to barely block the blow. His right hand trembled as pain ripped through his body from this movement which aggravated the blistering pustules, all the while shielding Luo Binghe protectively. In the

agonizing haze, he turned towards the Old Palace Master and his blood surged, killing intention blazing in his eyes.

With just that one roar, even more pustules started to sprout from the Old Palace Master's skin, extending even to the corners of his eyes. However, he no longer seemed to feel pain as he laughed wildly, rolling on the ground like a pork sausage until he reached Qiu Haitang. Shouting loudly into her ear like a mad man, he said, "Don't you want to kill Shen Qingqiu? He is right in front of your eyes! Quick, get up! Kill him! Kill them all!"

Qiu Haitang groggily awoke after the Old Palace Master shouted at her. Opening her eyes to a face like a withered orange peel mottled with an unknown monstrosity, her blood drained. Screaming hysterically, she slashed down with her sword. Shen Qingqiu, afraid that she might agitate her Qi further, thus attracting the lingering spores, yelled: "Calm down!"

Undeterred, the Old Palace Master shouted, "Quickly! Quickly! Did you not ask me to help? He is unable to hold on any longer—do it now!"

Qiu Haitang met Shen Qingqiu's eyes, their gaze steady and unwavering. All in all, Shen Qingqiu did not hold any enmity for Qiu Haitang. She was after all the original Shen Qingqiu's victim. But if she insisted on blocking his way, he would not hesitate to retaliate.

Surprisingly, Qiu Haitang was not the indiscriminate killing machine of the past. Glancing between Shen Qingqiu and Luo Binghe who was held in his arms, she not only did not advance but retreated a few steps.

Her lips quivering, she said, “It is not possible..... it is impossible....This is fake! It is all fake! This is not my brother. My brother is never wrong, it’s not big brother. You lied to me!”

What’s going on?

She cried and screamed, “I don’t know. I didn’t know it was like this. I didn’t do anything, so just why did I have to endure so many years of suffering?!”

Shen Qingqiu was astonished. Qiu Haitang had only fainted for a short while, so why was it that when she woke up, it was almost as if she was a different person?

Or maybe, it was because she saw something she couldn’t accept and was terrified to the point where she went crazy.

Shen Qingqiu thought that there was something amiss and sternly said, “Don’t move.”

Old Palace Master shouted, “What are you waiting for?!”

Qiu Haitang, having lost her sanity, held her head as she screamed at Shen Qingqiu, “Exactly how do you feel when you look at me? Do you hate me?”

Pity me? Why do you want to torture me by keeping me in this world? Why didn't you kill me? Why don't you kill me?!"

After being randomly screamed at, Shen Qingqiu was confused enough that Qiu Haitang seized the chance to run away. He called out at her back, "Come back! If you run about in the Holy Mausoleum, you will definitely die!"

But she had already run off into the distance and he did not have the time to chase after her. Shen Qingqiu inexplicably felt a sense of loss. In his heart, he lit a candlelight vigil for her and continued forward.

The Old Palace Master could only watch as she ran off into the distance. As Shen Qingqiu started to walk away too, the Old Palace Master's last shred of hope disappeared without a trace. He was on the ground, dazed, before he suddenly buried his head into the grass surrounding him and tore off a mouthful of vegetation.

The Old Palace Master continued to laugh uncontrollably. As he laughed, the sprouts on top of his head started to grow faster, longer, and denser. In an instant, his whole head looked as if it was wrapped up with vines. Not long afterward, he wasn't able to laugh anymore. Shen Qingqiu could almost hear the sounds of his skull being squeezed.

The Old Palace Master exhaled a few shaky breaths before his head crashed heavily onto the ground. He wouldn't ever lift it again.

Even though he was the head of a clan, he died in such a gruesome, horrifying way. It was enough to make people sigh with pity.

Before Shen Qingqiu was able to take more than a few steps, an echoing voice sounded next to his ear. It seemed to come from every direction. Tianlang-Jun's voice held traces of amusement: "Peak Master Shen was able to play such a great game of hide-and-seek. Why don't you guess how long it would take until we meet again?"

Shen Qingqiu broke out in cold sweat as he reached down to run his hand against his leg and encountered a foreign object. The QingSi had already followed the blood vessels to grow on his legs.

Tianlang-Jun's voice was sent over again: "You have been heading east the whole time. Is it because you want to go back to the hole in the protective barrier to escape the Holy Mausoleum?"

This bastard actually knows where he's heading. Shen Qingqiu tried to suppress his shock before lowering his head to look at his leg. If he let the QingSi on his legs take root, when the time came, he wouldn't be able to leave even if he wanted to. Shen Qingqiu gritted his teeth and took a glance at Luo Binghe. Then he hardened his heart, ripped open the helm on his robes, grabbed a handful of sprouts, and viciously yanked.

His brain seemed to have conjured up several dozens of seconds of blankness. The pain felt like he was tearing out a part of his flesh.

Shen Qingqiu gave a series of labored pants and slowly came back to himself before he realized that the sounds that he made as he panted was like he was trying to choke down sobs.

At the moment, he wasn't able to even reach up to wipe his face. There was just no way. This really...hurt way too fucking much!

Although his blood was flowing like a river, at least he could finally walk again. Before, he thought that Luo Binghe looked to be in a pitiful state. Now, who could have thought that his appearance at the moment is what really should be considered 120% miserable?

Since Tianlang-Jun knew where he was, he would definitely go where Shen Qingqiu was. If he continued to bring Luo Binghe with him and head east, they would definitely directly meet Luo Binghe's 'nice relatives.' Shen Qingqiu left the ancient forest-esque tomb and went past a couple of other rooms in the tombs. Swiftly, he picked a stone coffin that could be considered clean and comfortable and, protecting Luo Binghe's head, carefully placed his unconscious disciple inside. He reached up and placed the back of his hand against Luo Binghe's forehead. It was still hot enough to burn his hand. At the center of Luo Binghe's forehead, the Demon Mark emitted a bright red light.

Shen Qingqiu placed the Heart Devil sword under Luo Binghe's hands. He gathered his composure before finally sealing the coffin.

Tianlang-Jun walked unhurriedly in the front while Zhuzhi-Lang followed closely behind. As the stone road turned, they saw Shen Qingqiu standing

in the middle of a tomb with the Xiu Ya sword in his hand. He was watching them coldly, looking as if he had been waiting for their arrival for a while.

Half of his light green robes was dyed scarlet. Blood flowed over the dried blood tracks on his left hand and dripped onto the floor. His lips seemed as pale as his face. Tianlang-Jun was astonished. “It has only been a short while since our previous interaction. How is it that Peak Master Shen is this battered?”

Shen Qingqiu looked back at him. He was clearly swallowed whole by a flaming magma pillar in that Anger Tomb. But now, you couldn’t even smell the scent of roasted mushrooms from Tianlang-Jun’s body. The only sign of the adversity was the burned crisp at the edge of his black clothes. Where was the logic?

Tianlang-Jun asked, “Where is Peak Master Shen’s beloved disciple?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “He left.”

Tianlang-Jun laughed, “If Peak Master Shen is still here, how is it possible that he would leave?”

Shen Qingqiu also started to laugh with him. As they continued to laugh with one another, Tianlang-Jun suddenly wasn’t able to laugh anymore.

Because he realized that he wasn't able to take another step forward.

He lowered his head to see the obstacle. He hadn't noticed that he was frozen by a thick, solid layer of crystalline ice from the soles of his feet to his waist. The area that it was covering continued to climb up his body. Zhuzhi-Lang was in a worse condition than him. Both of his legs and one of his arms was already frozen in place.

Tianlang-Jun finally noticed that the tomb he was in was extremely cold. He sullenly said, "Mobei-Jun."

This tomb hall really was created by Mobei-Jun's ancestors. They have a natural, unique affinity towards controlling ice in the demon race. Therefore, the tomb hall behind them was also inextricably linked to ice.

In the Holy Mausoleum, there were arenas and props everywhere to be used. Even if he didn't personally engage in conflict, there were other things that could be used to contain the opponent. Shen Qingqiu remembered that in the original novel, as soon as there was something with a temperature higher than the air in the tomb hall, it would immediately be frozen into an ice sculpture. After 2-3 days, it would then shatter into ice shards. So, before he went inside, he circulated his spiritual energy to decrease his own body temperature as low as possible. That was why he appeared to be so pale.

In the effort it took to say a single sentence, the solid ice had already climbed up to Tianlang-Jun's chest. His expression didn't change. Even with his hand covered in demonic energy, he still wasn't able to break the

ice crystal that covered his fist. The effect that it had was minimal. Even if the ice was not able to freeze him in place forever, it could at least buy around an hour's worth of time.

Tianlang-Jun said, "It looks like it wasn't my misperception. Peak Master Shen really does seem to know the demon's forbidden area like the back of his hands."

Shen Qingqiu didn't reply. He gave them a wave before he turned and walked away. Tianlang-Jun gave Zhuzhi-Lang a glance and calmly said, "I told you before, if you really intend to bring Peak Master Shen to the Demon Realm, you have to promise that he won't cause any problems. You know what you should do.

Zhuzhi-Lang quietly said, "This subordinate understands."

After listening to their interaction, Shen Qingqiu suddenly felt as if he forgot or didn't take something very important into account.

Chapter 62 – For the Single People (Part 1)

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “Master Shen, please pardon me.”

Don’t! A thousand times don’t! I got into this miserable state when you wanted to thank me, now that you’re apologizing, can I even hope to live!?

Shen Qingqiu had just been walking perfectly fine, but suddenly his whole body tilted, holding on to the stone wall for support.

It seemed that something was struggling to escape from his stomach, squirming towards the countless veins running through his body. Feeling this familiar awful sensation, Shen Qingqiu nearly busted out a “motherf***er” on the spot.

Luo Binghe was still sleeping in that coffin, so the blood wreaking havoc in his body could only belong to someone else. Tianlang-Jun said, “Peak Lord, this shouldn’t be the first time you’ve drank Heavenly Demon’s blood, how come you’re still not used to it?”

Shen Qingqiu suppressed the urge to retch. “...When did you make me drink it.”

Tianlang-Jun said in a vaguely mocking tone, “Peak Lord Shen, don’t forget, your immortal body was in our hands for more than a brief period of time. There really are too many things we could have done.”

No wonder it was so easy for them to determine where he was heading. Shen Qingqiu paused, then continued walking forward. The more he walked the sharper the pain in his stomach grew, but he walked faster instead of slowing down. It was partly because he had an increased pain tolerance, but more importantly, he knew he absolutely could not collapse now.

While these two were frozen, there was still the opportunity to escape. If he dawdled until they thawed, don’t think of stalling them again!

The faster he walked, the more fiercely Zhuzhi-Lang urged the blood into action. Though he clearly knew the risks, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t resist turning to shoot a fierce glare at Zhuzhi-Lang. Is this how you’re repaying a kindness, by making these blood parasites lay eggs, nest, and have a family reunion in his stomach?

Tianlang-Jun sighed, “Even in this state you can walk so many steps, Peak Lord Shen is willful and resolute, truly an extraordinary person. I should say, you’re even willing to throw away your own life for my son?”

Suddenly, Zhuzhi-Lang said, “My lord, I... this subordinate can’t keep holding on.”

Before his words had fallen, Shen Qingqiu felt the pain suddenly dissolve, his whole body lightening. Right away, he broke into a frantic run. Seeing that he was suddenly able to run away, Tianlang-Jun said, astonished, “Isn’t your blood able to restrain him?”

Tianlang-Jun was also at a loss. “Before, I was able to restrain him. But this time I can’t, I don’t know the reason!”

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t hear clearly through the buzzing in his ears and his sight was blurred, but he knew he had to drag Luo Binghe to the entrance and throw him through. Supporting himself on the wall, he continued to jog forwards. He tripped over something under his feet, making his whole body sway. After carrying on for this long, he was already approaching his body’s limits, lingering on the fringe of collapse, his knees turning to jelly. However, he didn’t fall to his knees but was firmly supported by a hand, half carried and half held up.

His head dizzy and his eyes blurred, his gaze focused upwards.

In the murky darkness of the stone corridor, it was impossible to see the face, but a pair of eyes burning with fury and a shining scarlet demon mark shone clearly through the gloom.

Tianlang-Jun and Zhuzhi-Lang were already frozen from ankle to neck, posed standing in the center of two ice sculptures coiled with black energy. After Luo Binghe strode into the hall, threads of ice-cold white energy crawled up along his black boots, but were mercilessly trodden into pieces.

He rushed those two ice structures, giving each a strike. Cracks snaked along the surface of the solid ice.

Half-leaning on the stone wall, Shen Qingqiu said, “It’s no use, it’s not an easy task to break crystal ice after it’s already formed. Also, you won’t be able to harm the people inside by hitting it this way. We better take advantage of this opportunity and escape the Holy Mausoleum while they’re sealed up.”

Luo Binghe suddenly turned, walking towards him again.

Suddenly seeing Luo Binghe again, Shen Qingqiu was both alarmed and happy. He was planning on going back to the stone coffin to fetch him, but he never thought he’d already be awake. He was just going to blurt out a “How are you feeling”, when he discovered that Luo Binghe seemed to be in quite a fit of anger.

Luo Binghe said in a stern voice, “Didn’t I tell you not to associate with them?!”

This sentence was spoken in almost a roar. Shen Qingqiu was already dizzy, and being yelled at until his eardrums ached was like a basin of cold water to the face. After standing there dumbly for a moment, he suddenly felt a mysterious wisp of fire erupt in his heart.

He said, blandly, “Are you alright?”

Luo Binghe's tone was still somewhat uncharitable. "Alright? What alright?"

Seeing him full of vitality, he was most likely fine.¹ This being the case, he'd, at last, managed to repay a little favor to Luo Binghe.² Shen Qingqiu nodded. "Then that's good."

Turning around, he picked a random direction and walked off.

Actually, he didn't know where he was going either. To exit the Holy Mausoleum, the Xin Mo sword and Luo Binghe were both indispensable, without either one you could only randomly wander around the inside. But, he had risked his life to drag him this far and got a faceful of yelling as a result. It would be pointless to stay there and sulk.

He hadn't walked a few steps when the energy-draining candles suddenly lit up. The faint candlelight illuminated his side profile. Luo Binghe suddenly reached out to pull on him. "Are you crying?"

Shen Qingqiu stared blankly.

Is he crying?

Is he crying?

How is that possible!!!

Shen Qingqiu raised his left hand to check his face. Earlier on, this one intact hand was occupied keeping a firm hold on Luo Binghe, and only now did was there an opportunity to use it for something else. Upon feeling his face, at some time he really had unknowingly begun to cry, his cheeks streaming with tears.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized, these were the tears of pain he cried when he had pulled the QingSi from his leg.

How unsightly.

The anger that had just been in Luo Binghe's voice disappeared without a trace. He said tensely, "So to say, when I heard Shizun crying earlier, it wasn't fake?"

Shen Qingqiu flew into a rage out of humiliation. "Crying, what crying, I don't know!"

He shook him off and walked away right after he finished speaking. Luo Binghe hurriedly grabbed him from behind. D*mn it, he just happened to grab the right arm where the QingSi had taken root. Shen Qingqiu managed

to keep himself from shrieking, but still let out a stifled groan. Luo Binghe let go immediately, only leading him by his left hand and inspecting him under the candlelight.

The more he looked, the more apprehensive his expression grew. Right now there wasn't any place on Shen Qingqiu's body that was safe to look at. He was nothing but a lump of wounds and blood, seriously a spectacle too horrible to endure. Luo Binghe remembered that before he lost consciousness, Shen Qingqiu was clearly in perfect condition. His voice shook. "This... was all for... me?"

Shen Qingqiu was going to start spitting blood. If not him, then who?

He couldn't say this sort of thing, and he always disliked making a big deal of bestowing affection and showing scars in the past, so he could only spit out four words: "Your hand, let go."

Luo Binghe changed his face in the blink of an eye, softening. "I won't let go. Shizun, don't be mad, I was wrong."

How many times has he said this!

Shen Qingqiu waved him aside. Hurry up and go go go, the blind corpses are already encircling us, what are we doing here blocking the path. Having been sent off, Luo Binghe once again latched on to him like sticky candy,³ you couldn't even pry him off. "Shizun, why don't you hit me. You can beat me up to vent your anger, how about that?"

Someone come help me, there's an M here, who can come lock him up—

They flew across the ground, but Luo Binghe was wrapped around him the whole way. Shen Qingqiu was already familiar with Luo Binghe's set of moves, he knew he was open to coaxing but not coercion.⁴ After wearing him down for quite a while, Shen Qingqiu said helplessly, "...You've always been like this, crying and admitting your faults but you'll die before you change your ways. What use is it?"

At this point, Luo Binghe was almost sobbing. "Changing my ways won't be enough. Shizun, don't abandon me."

Seeing him in this good-for-nothing state, if not for the fact that he was still worrying about the bumps he left earlier Shen Qingqiu really wanted to give him a few smacks on the head. Was there something wrong with his teaching methods? How did he raise a crybaby? Luo Binghe, the demon king incarnate, likes to hang on to his Shizun's clothes and wail when there's no one around – if he were to tell about this who would f***ing believe it!?

Ning Yingying wasn't even this much of a crybaby!

Shen Qingqiu almost couldn't bear it. "Who's abandoning you? Ah?"

Luo Binghe said, “After I lost consciousness, I still had a remnant of awareness left, I was fighting with all my might to wake up. But just when I managed to wake, I found myself lying in a coffin, and Shizun had run off to who knows where. I lost myself to anger for a while and I thought I had been abandoned, Shizun I thought you would rather go with them and didn’t want to pay attention to me...”

Waking up to find you’d been “abandoned” in a coffin, this feeling indeed would not be very good. Shen Qingqiu sighed, weighing his guilty conscience.

Luo Binghe continued, “Just now, I didn’t do it on purpose. I don’t know why, obviously I didn’t actually believe it, I didn’t want to say that sort of thing, but in front of Shizun, I never could control myself. I know I’m being embarrassing and losing face, but knowing that Shizun never threw me away but was protecting me all along, that I wasn’t just dreaming this whole time, I’m so happy...”

Who is it that’s being embarrassing and losing face?

Two grown men, rolled into a ball wiping snot and drying tears, both are being embarrassing, both are losing face, don’t you know!?

Likely because he was too happy and couldn’t get out any more flowery language, Luo Binghe could only keep repeating “happy”, “glad”, these two simple words. Shen Qingqiu’s face twitched a couple of times. Rubbing his temples, he heaved a long deep sigh.

Whatever. This wouldn't be the first time. The Dream Demon even said that this kid would pull exactly this sort of disgusting behavior, acting like a cool blackened demon lord in front of your face then twisting handkerchiefs and crying behind your back, even arguing with him over things.

That said, he himself was also senseless enough, just then he inexplicably got angry over this small a misunderstanding. There's not much of a difference between him and this mental case of an unfortunate child, how unlike a proper elder.

He slowed down and said, "Then, you really are alright now?"

Luo Binghe promptly nodded. "I'm alright."

Just then you were burned so severely, but now you're completely fine? Shen Qingqiu was quite skeptical and pressed his hand to his forehead, turns out it really was cool and smooth. Shen Qingqiu wanted to retract his hand, but Luo Binghe covered his hand with his own, refusing to let him pull away. His eyes gleamed below their folded palms.

This expression was too familiar. This was precisely that look he saw on that perfect little sheep following him around and eating grass every day on Qing Jing Peak, the young ray of sunlight Luo Binghe⁵.

Shen Qingqiu's face was going to turn red under his stare, but he couldn't bear to tear his hand away by force. Doing such a thing when the other was

so happy and colored in excitement would really be giving him a slap on the face.

He said, “You’re really completely fine? No dizziness? Your spiritual energy and demonic energy are circulating effectively?”

Luo Binghe said, “Quite effective. Very effective. Even more effective than before?”

While they were talking, they had already reached a room on the east side of the mausoleum. Luo Binghe pulled his sword and slashed across the screen wall, cutting open a pitch-black rift in space. His broken arm had miraculously healed, his leg was no longer lame, the blood on his face had been wiped neat and clean, the always disobedient Xin Mo sword had been tamed into docile submission. The protagonist’s halo was still that protagonist’s halo, the male protagonist was still that male protagonist. Shen Qingqiu didn’t want to say another word and took the lead through the rift with a “let’s go let’s go” type of gesture.

Outside of the Mausoleum, the scene was bathed in light. Without prompting, Luo Binghe reached out a hand to support Shen Qingqiu.

As a matter of fact, it really had been a long time since they had had this sort of normal interaction.

After this sigh of regret in the bottom of his heart, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t resist shooting a glance at Luo Binghe. He looked very satisfied with

himself, looks like he really is “very well”. Fancy that he staked his old life to protect him from everything, but in the end not a trifle of it stuck to Luo Binghe. Turns out the whole time he spent sleeping was to recharge his cheat halo [Wave Bye-Bye].

Luo Binghe suddenly said, “But, other than hearing Shizun cry...”

Shen Qingqiu smiled faintly. “En? Who was crying?”

Luo Binghe immediately changed his tune. “Other than hearing someone cry, there was also this strange feeling.”

Hearing this, Shen Qingqiu began to feel a bit worried again. Turns out there really were some lingering repercussions? He said quietly, “What sort of feeling?”

Luo Binghe shook his head. “... I can’t say.”

“Does it hurt?”

“It doesn’t hurt, it’s very...”

He hadn't finished speaking, his face showing a bewildered expression, looking down at himself.

Shen Qingqiu: "..."

Sky pillar hello, sky pillar goodbye!

This topic couldn't continue anymore, and they let it drop. TianLang-Jun's voice drifted up like a deceased soul refusing to disperse. "Peak Lord Shen, why are you so eager to leave? You two nearly overturned this race's holy land, isn't leaving like this without leaving anything behind really inexcusable?"

With every word, his voice got quite a bit closer. Before long, his figure appeared over the horizon. Shen Qingqiu rolled his eyes. But, it was fortunate enough that the Mo Bei clan's hundred thousand-year-old ice enchantment would be able to delay those two until they exited the Holy Mausoleum.

Earlier, Luo Binghe was not quite pleased when he was not able to shatter them into pieces, but now that they had delivered themselves on a silver platter he was quite satisfied. His knuckles cracking, he fixed a glare on Zhuzhi-Lang, growling, "You dare feed my Shizun your blood."

Zhuzhi-Lang peeked at Shen Qingqiu, an embarrassed look on his face. Tianlang-Jun looked at him and said, "Hey, you really can't say these words with that sort of expression on your face. Didn't you also feed Peak Lord

Shen your blood? Otherwise, who's the master of the other set of blood parasites in Peak Lord Shen's body?"

Hearing this, Luo Binghe stiffened, clenching his fists. Shen Qingqiu had just raised the hand holding the Xiu Ya sword when Luo Binghe said softly, "Shizun you don't need to fight, I'm enough by myself."

And the battle begins!

Three pillars of black energy soared churning into the sky like storm winds. Watching the battle as a spectator, Shen Qingqiu was ever more deeply appreciative of the difference between demons and humans.

The difference in destructive ability is really too big!

In addition, Luo Binghe had not only refilled his cheat halo but also leveled up. A couple of hours ago, he had been viciously beaten up, powerless to return a blow, but now it seems the protagonist's halo is still securely affixed to his head!

As he was watching, a scarlet red bone eagle began to circle the battlefield, lowering its wings, looking for an opportunity to rush into the battle. Luo Binghe, fighting one on two, seemed to not have noticed this newcomer obviously harboring malicious intentions, but Shen Qingqiu could see everything clearly. Just as he was going to call out a warning, the bone eagle suddenly swooped down, charging towards the top of Luo Binghe's head.

A sneak attack?

Shen Qingqiu held Xiu Ya backward in his hand, and, squinting to take aim, fiercely threw it at his target. The snow-white blade shot out like an arrow, piercing lightning-fast towards the bone eagle.

Who would have thought that before he could heave a sigh of relief, the bone eagle's body didn't drop, but instead dispersed into a thousand pearls and ten thousand drops, flying towards Shen Qingqiu.

On that side, Tianlang-Jun suddenly pulled back, jumping out of the battle with a laugh. Luo Binghe, seeing the bloody pearls scattering through the air, let a panic-stricken expression flash across his face.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized, Tianlang-Jun had used his own blood to create this bone eagle. He had intentionally sent it to sneak attack Luo Binghe, but the real intent was to draw Shen Qingqiu into playing his hand and shooting it down!

Just when he discovered this, he got a faceful of bloody rain. Tianlang-Jun smiled faintly, raising his hand to make a sigil in the air. Shen Qingqiu felt his heart slow, like he really had been grabbed in the palm of a giant hand and maliciously squeezed.

There was just too much blood, even though he had shut his lips tight a faint taste of rust still appeared on his tongue.

Who else but him would be drinking Heavenly Demon's blood like Red Bull. Who else but him would have drunk three different Heavenly Demons' blood?

Luo Binghe's eyes were already red with tension, but TianLang-Jun's blood was already in Shen Qingqiu's body. He didn't dare make a rash move, fearing that he would activate the blood parasites. He could only clench his teeth and yell, "Stop!"

Zhuzhi-Lang, seeing Shen Qingqiu's face turn green and then white in succession, couldn't help but start, "My lord, please forgive this subordinate..."

Tianlang-Jun shrugged his shoulders. "Then we'll have to see what our other young friend will do next."

Chapter 63: A Trip to the South

The three different types of ancient demon blood were storms colliding within Shen Qingqiu's body, locked together in a tangled web that was impossible to separate. Among them, Luo Binghe's blood was holding together Shen Qingqiu's five organs¹ and protecting the veins connecting them. It suppressed Zhuzhi-Lang's blood, while just barely managing to contend with Tianlang-Jun's. Alone, it tried to cover all three duties, facing off against its two enemies. This all inevitably took a great toll upon it. It would actually be best to let go of Tianlang-Jun's poisonous blood, for there was absolutely nothing he could do.

He turned to Luo Binghe and spoke. "Think carefully about this. If it continues like this, who do you think is going to fall first?"

Luo Binghe's eyes shone with a deep set worry, but a sense of helplessness began growing more and more. Finally, he backed off and replied, "You leave first!"

Tianlang-Jun didn't have the slightest intention of graciously stepping aside for the younger man before him and said instead, "You first."

Luo Binghe instantly replied. "Fine."

Tianlang-Jun wore an inscrutable smile as he spoke. "Sure enough..." He turned towards Zhuzhi-Lang and said, "What to do...I don't know why whenever I see them, there's always this extremely unpleasant feeling that fills my heart."

Zhuzhi-Lang nodded silently.

Shen Qingqiu knew this wouldn't end well for him, but he didn't want to drag anyone else down with him. His whole life, he'd always hated the kind of characters that just ended up becoming bargaining chips for others. If that was the kind of flimsy, delicate character role he was forced to play, he'd rather die.

He clutched his hand over his heart and forced his face to remain neutral as he spoke. "Whatever Your Excellency would like to do to me, please, feel free. As you've said, after being forced to drink so many times, I should be getting used to it. But don't even think about seeking the flesh of Luo Binghe. Luo Binghe, if you agree to him, I will strike you down myself with the force of the heavens."

Luo Binghe protested, angrily but helplessly. "Shizun..."

"You shut up," Shen Qingqiu said.

Tianlang-Jun stared at him strangely. "Who said I wanted his flesh?"

Shen Qingqiu was left speechless.

Tianlang-Jun continued. “He can’t compare to my own noble, handsome figure, so why would I want his flesh?”

.....

.....

Who said you were more handsome than him?

Who put their seal of approval on this?

As penned by Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky himself, from heaven to hell, throughout every age known to man, there was none that could ever compare to Luo Binghe. Whether young or old, everyone universally agreed on this number one most handsome man, okay!?

Shen Qingqiu’s entire expression sunk in exasperation. “Then what exactly do you want?²”

Zhuzhi-Lang replied, “Junshang desires that sword.”

Tianlang-Jun confirmed, “That’s correct. I would like to present a gift to the human world, but I won’t be able to without that sword.”

Heh, so you want the protagonist’s golden finger? Shen Qingqiu’s entire mind was filled with thoughts of “keep dreaming” and “you overestimate your own strength.” He could only watch on as Luo Binghe raised his hand and Zhuzhi-Lang lifted his arm in response. In that instant, the exchange was complete. It passed over like a storm, swiftly and decisively, without the slightest hesitation!

Luo Binghe demanded. “Now hand him over!”

Zhuzhi-Lang immediately transformed into a serpent and caught Shen Qingqiu in his massive mouth. Tianlang-Jun leaped up gracefully, laughing loudly as he rose. “You really believed that? Hahahahahaha.”

The way he was acting right now was truly shameless. It was like an adult making a promise to trade with a child, taking away their toys, then turning around and pretending no such thing happened. Shen Qingqiu suddenly felt quite indignant on behalf of Luo Binghe, who was clearly being bullied. Even with the threat of a sharp fang right next to him, he couldn’t help but ask pointedly, “You do know you’re the adult here, right?”

Tianlang-Jun sat straight on Zhuzhi-Lang’s head and replied in that refined tone. “I know that I am a demon. I’m afraid that Peak Lord Shen’s disciple tarried far too long in the human realm and forgot that we demons have

never committed to keeping our promises. Of course, most of the time you guys don't do much more than pay some lip service to it either."

With that final sentence, Tianlang-Jun's smile vanished from his lips. Shen Qingqiu's vision went dark. Something hot and red pulsed about, pressing in on him from all sides, as if trapping him inside a tiny pocket.

He was swallowed by Zhuzhi-Lang.

When he woke, the air around him was dry and his throat felt scratchy.

As Shen Qingqiu rolled and sat up, he saw a dark-skinned demon girl next to him. When she noticed him waking, she shouted loudly in a heavily accented voice, "He's awake!"

Tianlang-Jun lifted the curtains with one hand and peered in. He lifted his eyebrows. "Peak Lord Shen has certainly slept long enough."

Shen Qingqiu kept his expression carefully blank as he wiped his face, making sure that there was no trace of reptile stomach juices remaining on him. The dry wind blowing outside made the curtains wave about wildly, allowing glimpses of the scenery outside of the carriage.

He was now lying on top of a massive, black-scaled snake. This massive snake was carrying a pavilion on its back as it slithered smoothly across the

ground. Surrounding them were many beasts, large and small, as well as many demons with half-beastly forms. Together, these creatures merged into a chaotic but grand-scale army as they marched forwards.

Shen Qingqiu determined this was most likely the southern part of the demon world.

The north once belonged to Mobei-Jun but was now Luo Binghe's territory. There, most of the demons had humanoid forms. The most beastly demons and half-beast hybrids were only common in the south, like some kind of animal kingdom. He didn't know where Tianlang-Jun was planning to lead this group of demons. Or what he was planning to do.

After he finished observing his surroundings, Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized that the right side of his chest and his entire arm were still throbbing painfully and seemed to be moving rather sluggishly.

He took a deep breath and mentally prepared himself so that he was 120% ready for whatever he might see. Then he looked down.

.....The problem was even more serious than he thought.

Like a prosthetic limb made of leaves and branches, every inch of his right arm was covered in green, fleshy leaves and sprouts, trembling slightly along the limb with every motion. All five fingers were completely numb, and he couldn't even curl them.

After only a glance, he couldn't bear to look at it any longer. The Xiu Ya sword was right beside him, and he was sorely tempted to just pick it up and hack the arm off entirely. Just then, Zhuzhi-Lang approached, holding a small, steaming gold stove. Shen Qingqiu jumped as if he'd seen a ghost, instantly on high alert. "What are you doing!?"

Zhuzhi-Lang froze in place. "This subordinate just wanted to help Master Shen....."

Shen Qingqiu immediately began pointing towards his own mouth. This was the type of thing he was most scared of hearing from Zhuzhi-Lang. He'd already had his taste of a snake's gratitude—he was so grateful that he swallowed him whole in the end. Zhuzhi-Lang raised his trailing sleeves towards his face in a rather embarrassed gesture, as if trying to cover his own mouth.

He then quickly put them down and tried to persuade Shen Qingqiu in the most heartfelt manner. "Master Shen, you have to believe me. If the QingSi is not removed at least seven times a day, the roots will be buried deep inside your flesh. But they've only been plucked three times today. It's the most critical moment right now. If we do not remove them now, then I'm afraid we will not be able to save Master Shen's arm."

When he heard that he'd be in danger of losing a limb, Shen Qingqiu couldn't hesitate any longer no matter what shadows of reservation he was still holding in his heart. He immediately placed his arm out. Zhuzhi-Lang took out a burning red lump of coal from the stove. Then, holding it in his bare hands, he pressed it right up against Shen Qingqiu's chest.

“.....” Shen Qingqiu was silent.

He knew he shouldn't have expected Zhuzhi-Lang's "help" to be anything normal or sensible.

The piece of coal pressed against the QingSi sprouts on his chest, causing them to wither and curl as they burned to their roots. It was so horrifying Shen Qingqiu had to resist the urge to grimace at the sight. Only when Zhuzhi-Lang finally managed to burn off all the green shoots, one by one, could he finally stand to look at his arm again.

Zhuzhi-Lang withdrew the piece of coal and said. "In the afternoon and evening, they'll need to be burned three more times."

Shen Qingqiu pulled his robes back over his shoulders. Zhuzhi-Lang unconsciously glanced up, then quickly turned his gaze down again. Outside, Tianlang-Jun laughed. "Silly child, what are you embarrassed about?"

He's right, Shen Qingqiu thought to himself. What do you have to be embarrassed about? Seeing this chest that was just covered in fleshy sprouts all over? Seeing this being that you just swallowed whole? What is there left to be embarrassed about?

Zhuzhi-Lang answered completely seriously. “My lord, please don’t mock this subordinate. I do not have the slightest of intentions towards Master Shen.”

He looked towards Shen Qingqiu and re-emphasized, “Absolutely none of Luo Binghe’s intentions.”

Why are you emphasizing that at me!?

Zhuzhi-Lang quickly took his stove and leaped off the snake’s back, returning down below to direct the troops marching about. Shen Qingqiu’s mind was a mess, his eyes beginning to dart quickly about, searching desperately. The Heart Devil sword...where was it...where was the Heart Devil sword?

Oh, it was outside, lying next to Tianlang-Jun’s seat. Thrown right down next to his feet.

Shen Qingqiu was about to roll over in laughter.

This was the number one, most infamous sword of the “Proud Immortal Demon Way,” the ultimate trump weapon on both heaven and earth. Was it something that should be thrown about so carelessly like this!?

Tianlang-Jun was resting his chin in his hand, observing the scene in the distance. When he noticed Shen Qingqiu's expression, he asked, "Peak Lord Shen, what are you looking at?" He followed his gaze downwards. "At this sword of mine?"

Shen Qingqiu answered calmly, "That is Luo Binghe's sword."

Tianlang-Jun laughed it away easily and said, "Peak Lord Shen, there's something I've always wanted to ask you."

Shen Qingqiu replied, "Please."

You can ask whatever you want, and I'll just answer randomly.

Tianlang-Jun asked, "You and my son, have the two of you cultivated as partners³?"

Shen Qingqiu was sure he heard wrong. "What did you say?"

Tianlang-Jun patiently repeated himself, "I was asking Peak Lord Shen whether you and Luo Binghe....."

Shen Qingqiu's face twitched several times and he immediately put up his hand in a gesture to "stop." Tianlang-Jun continued. "Or perhaps Peak Lord Shen doesn't understand what I mean by cultivating as partners? It means that..."

Shen Qingqiu interrupted. "That's enough."

Could you have some sense of shame at least!?

Shen Qingqiu forced himself to remain calm. "Why would you believe that he and I have...cultivated together?"

Tianlang-Jun replied. "To be honest, I've always yearned to know more about the culture and customs of the human world."

"So?"

How did yearning for human culture have anything to do with the question?

Tianlang-Jun held out a finger and shook it a few times to silence him. Then he hummed out a soft, charming little melody.

Shen Qingqiu was proud to hold himself as a proper gentleman, always in total control of his expressions. But the longer Tianlang-Jun continued humming, the harder it became to maintain his cold, dignified front.

God! D**n! Resentment! Of! Chunshan!

How did it become popular even in the Demon Realm!!!

Tianlang-Jun hummed a full two verses before he was finally satisfied but still seemed to want to continue. “Only the illustrious spirit of the human world could produce such a stunning masterpiece. The boldly audacious plotline, the deep romanticism in each phrase, these are truly worthy of the highest praise. Especially at the end of every verse—it leaves you with a teaser, making it impossible for you to put down and leaving you eagerly awaiting more.”

Oh wow, the d*mn thing was still being serialized!

Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized, “.....Wait. Back when we first met in the Holy Mausoleum, you said ‘I have long awaited the honor of meeting you.’” Could it be that this was the “long awaited honor” he was referring to? It was a reference to this bawdy love song?

Tianlang-Jun replied with joy, “Indeed, that’s exactly what I was referring to.”

System: [Chatting with the BOSS about interests and hobbies, increasing the villain's depth of character, B-points +150!]

This was the most f**king absurd excuse for interests and hobbies!

While the two of them continued to stare at each other, the young dark-skinned demon girl that had been looking after Shen Qingqiu suddenly leaped up cheerfully like an antelope. Shen Qingqiu turned to her and found that she really did have a pair of antelope legs. The girl jumped about, looked up and shouted cheerfully. "My lord! Is the new place we're going to very nice?"

Tianlang-Jun smiled and waved back at her. "Naturally, it will be the best place."

The young girl asked rather innocently, "Is there a lot of water there?"

Tianlang-Jun replied. "The rivers flow freely across every plain and mountain, covering all the lands beneath the open sky."

The girl cheered and leaped off into the distance. Shen Qingqiu watched as she left, contemplating the rather uneasy feeling he was getting. "Where are you taking them to?"

Tianlang-Jun replied in his unhurried manner, “Peak Lord Shen has already drawn his own conclusions, no? Why ask for what you already know?”

Rivers through plains and mountains...these clearly weren't landforms belonging to the Demon Realm. This “nice place” was undoubtedly the human world. Shen Qingqiu spoke, “Judging by the numbers alone, at least 20% of the demons of the south must be traveling in this group right now. Your Excellency, do you think such a group of such massive size will be able to simply cross the border without the cultivators noticing?”

Tianlang-Jun replied, “Who said I was planning to cross over the border?”

He straightened up and gave him a disdainful laugh. “What do you think I wanted this sword for?”

Shen Qingqiu replied, “You're planning to use the Heart Devil sword to open a crack between the two worlds?”

Tianlang-Jun corrected him. “To be accurate, it will be a merging of the two worlds.”

Merging the Human and Demon Realms!

Chapter 64 – Rendezvous in Enemy Camp

Wasn't this the same as crushing all the alternate dimensions together into one giant mass?

Shen Qingqiu didn't think such an idea was inconceivable. On the contrary, he was certain that, so long as one held the Heart Devil sword, this seemingly preposterous notion was absolutely possible. Because this was the basis of the original work!

In the finale, the merging of two worlds was exactly what Luo Binghe achieved, as a way to finally unify the realm of demons and cultivation by his own demented design. Before, Shen Qingqiu had always believed that this original "Luo Binghe" was the one he was most familiar with.

But thinking on it now, somehow that character seemed very strange and distant. That "Luo Binghe" cared not of the devastation such a plan would leave in its wake. His only reasoning was that two separate realms were rather unfavorable to his regime. Furthermore, the resources were rather unevenly distributed which caused all the demon wives and kids to make such a ruckus every day, annoying him to no end. Finally, he decided he was done with it and just merged everything to make managing it all more convenient.

Shen Qingqiu's voice dropped low. "So this was the 'present' you wanted to send? Don't you think it's a bit too malicious on your part?"

Tianlang-Jun rubbed his chin in contemplation, then spoke in that cultured tone of his. “I really harbor no ill will towards them at all—I love the human world very much, and it’s long been a long-cherished wish of mine for deeper communication between the two races.”

Shen Qingqiu raised an eyebrow. “Has Tianlang-Jun truly never considered the consequences? Or perhaps you simply don’t care? Even if the demons can adapt to living in the human world, how many non-cultivating humans do you think can adapt to living among demons? Or, in other words,” he chose his next words carefully, “even if you ‘love’ humankind, can you guarantee that all demons agree? The two worlds have been separated since ancient times, but even so, we have had countless disputes. If they were to suddenly merge, I’m afraid that there will not be a single day of peace ahead.”

Tianlang-Jun answered rather grudgingly, “Peak Lord Shen is truly one from the Four Great Sects—all of you sing along to the same tune. Perhaps it seems a bit rash, but that is not at all my intention. With failure so close at hand, I must see this through until the end. We will merge first and deal with the aftermath slowly as it comes. In the face of unchangeable circumstances, even those that cannot adapt will eventually learn to accept it.”

There really was some kind of law that every BOSS needed to have a bad case of chuunibyou syndrome. But Tianlang-Jun was a bit of a special case. Perhaps he was once the young, naive type of chuuni who imagined himself to be the savior of the world, the one destined to forge love and peace between the two races. But after being crushed beneath Bailu Peak for so many years, he was now the type of chuuni that carried a deep, undying

resentment in his heart. Actions that could break heaven and earth were merely “a bit rash.”

And that last bit was exactly the kind of logic rapists use: assuming that your partner will relent in the end so you might as well force yourself on them, take what you want, and deal with the consequences later.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but ask, “You and Su Xiyan...could it be that the two of you were just another part of this ‘deeper communication between races’?”

When he heard this name, the smooth, easy smile on Tianlang-Jun's face began sliding off.

He turned so that Shen Qingqiu could no longer see his expression. He could only hear him sigh quietly. “Ah Xiyan, she really was...”

She really was...what?

Shen Qingqiu pondered over that subtle tone of his. Sweet and gentle? Pure and kind?

Tianlang-Jun continued, “Cold and ruthless. That was what I loved about her.”

Shen Qingqiu was about to roll over with laughter. Tianlang-Jun waved his hand and said, “But it doesn’t matter now—she’s already dead.”

So he didn’t miss her even a bit?

Unfortunately, it seemed that a demon’s “love” was rather shallow and cold.

Shen Qingqiu remained silent for a moment, then asked, “How do you really feel about Luo Binghe?”

Tianlang-Jun glanced over at him. “I...feel rather sorry for him?”

Shen Qingqiu could only smile back emptily, unable to reply.

Although Luo Binghe had never mentioned a word, Shen Qingqiu knew that deep inside, he often dreamed about what his birth parents would be like. He knew that he was born of a distinguished young woman and a powerful demon noble, but he could never put names or faces to them. So he always secretly imagined how it would be if they were still there...how tender and warm they would be, and how they would protect him from anyone that looked down on him.

If Luo Binghe knew that his birth father was this type of man...one who, on account of his human blood, might not even bother to spare him a glance... then those dreams of his would truly become just laughable figments of his imagination.

As night fell, the troops and the billows of smoke surrounding them came to a halt. Upon a wide expanse of grassland, they began setting up camp.

The only ones that really needed to set up camp were the few humanoid demons. The beastly ones could get by just fine in the wild. They could sleep in a ditch, in the treetops, on the grass...anywhere at all.

Shen Qingqiu had a white tent that was quite spacious and comfortable. Though it looked rather simple from the outside, it had everything he could need within. Zhuzhi-Lang came by personally to make sure all was arranged accordingly and led Shen Qingqiu into the tent. As soon as that demon girl that had been following him the entire time left, Shen Qingqiu immediately collapsed onto his bed in relief. He closed his eyes and waited for the dreamscape to descend.

He didn't know how much time had passed before he suddenly felt the moonlight quiver. Shen Qingqiu opened his eyes and saw Luo Binghe half-kneeling before his bed.

“Luo Binghe, listen to me, there's something very important here—” Shen Qingqiu had just begun speaking when Luo Binghe immediately tackled him.

He threw himself over Shen Qingqiu, who fell back onto the bed, his mouth sealed shut by a soft warmth on top of him. He couldn't make the slightest sound and was forced to stare helplessly as his face grew furiously more red by the moment. Luo Binghe had no sense of restraint, and his kisses grew deeper and deeper like he was a small beast trying to devour his prey.

Shen Qingqiu finally managed to catch his breath and commanded, ".....Luo Binghe, kneel properly now!"

Luo Binghe lifted the hems of his robes and immediately fell into a perfect kneeling posture.

"Do you know why you're kneeling right now?" Shen Qingqiu asked.

Luo Binghe's back was as straight as a board as he replied. "This one is but a lowly disciple, and yet assaulted Shizun....."

Shen Qingqiu chastised him. "Who told you to say that! This master will settle the matter with you later. Tianlang-Jun told you to hand over the Heart Devil sword and you just went ahead and gave it to him? I don't remember teaching you to be such a....." Such a naive little girl¹!

Luo Binghe replied, "I had no choice. Besides, it wasn't anything particularly important, so why not hand it over?"

Wasn't anything particularly important? This all-powerful treasure that most could cry and sob for but never even glimpse at! Even a mountain of riches couldn't stand up to the prodigal son.

Shen Qingqiu spoke, "Did you stop to think about what he might want the Heart Devil sword for? From the northern reaches of the country to the southern borders, for Cang Qiong Peak and Huan Hua Palace alike, did you consider the type of threat he could pose?"

Luo Binghe replied, "Is Shizun is angry at me for handing over the Heart Devil sword out of concern for all these places? Or perhaps it's just because you're afraid of involving Cang Qiong Peak?"

His tone was rather like that of a petulant young woman, one who was always clinging onto her partner asking, "Do you really love me? Do you love your career more than you love me?" Shen Qingqiu was just about to scold him again on the degree of danger at hand and force him back onto the main topic, but he quickly choked down his words.

Through the screen, they could see flickers of torchlight as a patrol of demon guards passed by. And they could hear the howling of the wolves, the rustling of cattle, and the low, angry murmurs of voices.

Somehow it seemed like.....this wasn't a dream?

That meant...Luo Binghe was standing in his tent, and not just in his dreamscapes.

The one in front of him was the man himself!

He no longer held the Heart Devil sword that could open a door to anywhere. Crossing the entire northern country to arrive here had to be well over a thousand miles. Even if Shen Qingqiu wanted to give him a good strike to the back of the head with his fan, the mere thought of his journey here was enough to make him hesitate.

Luo Binghe took advantage of his hesitation to press one leg up onto his bedside². Shen Qingqiu could almost taste the blood rising into his mouth, but he needed to maintain his dignity as Shizun. “Luo Binghe, ah Luo Binghe. Don’t you think you’re being too arrogant, far too conceited in your audacity? You’ve served yourself up on a silver platter. At least twenty percent of demons of the South are here, not to mention two powerful elders of your bloodline. If you’re discovered, you’re as good as dead!”

Luo Binghe replied, “Shizun, I couldn’t bear to stand by as you were stolen away. I was afraid he would activate the demonic blood within you. You can’t tell me to just sit there and wait. Shizun, please stop scolding me for this; I truly couldn’t hold back any longer.”

Shen Qingqiu kept pushing his head away, trying his best to maintain a serious composure. “When you came in, did you run into anyone?”

Luo Binghe replied, “How would that be possible? If I want to get inside, there’s no one that could catch sight of me. There’s just one thing that I’m

worried about...”

He hadn't said exactly what he meant when suddenly a cough sounded from outside the tent.

Zhuzhi-Lang's voice carried in. “Master Shen³? Have you turned in already?”

As soon as he heard this, Luo Binghe's eyes suddenly took on a murderous light as he turned towards the sound with an ice-cold glare. Shen Qingqiu was busy holding him down, giving him a stern look that told him not to be rash.

He didn't know what was happening, but Luo Binghe's face blushed quite red under that look, sending a shiver down his spine. Outside the tent, the demon army was patrolling, and inside the tent, there was nowhere to hide. With little other choice, he lifted the covers and Luo Binghe readily slid in.

Outside, Zhuzhi-Lang murmured to himself, “Turning in so early?”

There was a moment of silence outside, and Shen Qingqiu, thinking he had left, was about to let out a sigh of relief. Then Zhuzhi-Lang spoke, “Then... this servant will have to disturb your rest.”

So regardless of whether I was sleeping or not you were going to come in anyway?

Why even bother asking!

Luo Binghe peeked out and asked suspiciously, “Why is that snake coming inside while Shizun is sleeping?”

Just hide yourself, you little brat! Shen Qingqiu shoved his head back under the covers, leaped out of bed, and called out, “Don’t come in!”

Zhuzhi-Lang indeed stopped before coming in and sounded rather perplexed. “So you weren’t sleeping after all? Why did Master Shen not answer before?”

Shen Qingqiu replied, “I was sleepy, and didn’t want to reply. Xizhi-Lang, you should go now.”

Zhuzhi-Lang was taken aback. “Didn’t we already agree during the day?”

Shit. Shit, shit, shit. They had indeed agreed earlier in the day that Zhuzhi-Lang would come by in the evening to help him burn out any remaining trace of QingSi on him!

Luo Binghe poked his head out again and questioned him quietly, “What did you agree to?”

Shen Qingqiu just managed to stack a second blanket on top of him and drop the drapes around the bed when Zhuzhi-Lang’s foot stepped into the tent. He said, “I apologize for disturbing you so late at night, but please understand. It’s just that if these QingSi are not removed, I fear they may only give rise to greater incidents in the future.”

Letting him in or kicking him out were both equally troublesome. Besides, for some reason, Zhuzhi-Lang didn’t dare to meet his eyes for long so he would have to just tread carefully. Shen Qingqiu stepped in front of the drapes, blocking it off from view, then smiled. “Alright, then I’m afraid I’ll have to trouble you.”

Zhuzhi-Lang responded politely, “It is only right that I do so. Master Shen, why not use the bed.....” He hadn’t even taken a single step forward before Shen Qingqiu moved in front of him, caught his hand, and turned him around.

Only after Zhuzhi-Lang’s back had been turned towards the drapes did Shen Qingqiu finally speak. “Not on the bed. Right here is fine.”

Having been spun around by the hand for no apparent reason, Zhuzhi-Lang found that he had no good way of asking. After he had recovered his senses, he asked good-naturedly, “Standing up?”

Shen Qingqiu replied decisively, "I'll stand."

Zhuzhi-Lang asked, "Master Shen, will you be okay?"

Behind him, Luo Binghe suddenly tore off the blankets, his entire face full of rage. Shen Qingqiu expression didn't change the slightest. "I'm used to it."

Zhuzhi-Lang nodded, then turned and placed a golden stove on the small table beside them. Taking advantage of the moment, Shen Qingqiu waved a hand and forced Luo Binghe back under the blankets, covering him in an instant. By the time Zhuzhi-Lang turned back around, he was already back to standing as usual, not a single hair out of place. Zhuzhi-Lang took one of the burning red coals out and said, "Master Shen, please remove your overclothes."

Shen Qingqiu lowered his head and began slowly untying his waist sash. He was afraid of moving too quickly. If he actually took it all off, Luo Binghe would likely tear down the bed and Zhuzhi-Lang along with it. He moved slow enough to drive even the most patient man to frustration. After waiting for a long while, Zhuzhi-Lang finally couldn't help but glance towards him. "Perhaps Master Shen's fingers are having trouble? Would this one be able to help?"

Shen Qingqiu saw his gaze lifting towards him, and hurriedly pulled at the lapels of his robes, the outermost garment sliding easily off his shoulders.

By pulling like this, the garment slid down to his feet. He then moved his arm under Zhuzhi-Lang's gaze, and the man immediately focused all his attention on it, studying it carefully. After an entire day of trying to remove the QingSi, it finally began showing signs of receding. It was no longer covering half of Shen Qingqiu's chest and arm in thick leaves like it was when he first woke this morning. Now only a few small sprouts remained.

Luo Binghe silently threw his palm forwards, sending a massive wave of black Qi towards Zhuzhi-Lang's back. Shen Qingqiu suddenly waved his hand and smacked the piece of coal right out of Zhuzhi-Lang's grasp.

The coal rolled across the ground and out of the tent. Zhuzhi-Lang, who was smacked for absolutely no reason, was left at a complete loss. Shen Qingqiu explained apologetically, "My hand slipped."

Zhuzhi-Lang accepted this explanation with little inner turmoil and left the tent to go pick it up. He walked about for quite a while, wondering, "Where did it roll to?"

Shen Qingqiu immediately leaped onto the bed. Luo Binghe whispered, "Shizun, what kind of life have you been living under them!?"

The kind where you have nothing to do but wait around helplessly until you die!

Shen Qingqiu whispered back, "Don't mess around. If you're discovered, we'll both be in trouble." After saying that, his hand rose and fell, shoving

Luo Binghe back under the blankets.

Luo Binghe was not at all placated by this and stewed sullenly. He thought that he could probably put up a fight against Tianlang-Jun now, but each day the demonic blood remained within Shizun was another day he was forced to hold back. He beckoned with his finger and the fallen garment flew into his hand. He threw it onto Shen Qingqiu's shoulders. "Put it on!"

Outside, it seemed that another lowly patrolling demon passed by the tent and greeted Zhuzhi-Lang. "General!"

Zhuzhi-Lang hummed in acknowledgment, then said, "Just in time. Help me find something." His tone and stature were completely different compared to how he held himself in front of Tianlang-Jun and Shen Qingqiu. It was truly befitting of an army general.

Shen Qingqiu spoke, "Why? I'm going to need to take it off anyway."

Luo Binghe replied angrily, "...Why is it that Shizun has to take off your clothes and let him stare at you?"

No matter how much he was pressed or scolded, he just wouldn't stay down. It was a waste of energy for Shen Qingqiu. Just then, Zhuzhi-Lang suddenly returned. It was too late to get back into place, so he immediately turned and sat upright in the center of the bed. Zhuzhi-Lang asked, "Master Shen, didn't you just say 'not on the bed'?"

Shen Qingqiu smiled a little. “Oh? Really? Did I say that?”

Having to cover it up in a rush, he had accidentally sat right on top of Luo Binghe.....

But sitting like this was actually not bad—Luo Binghe finally obediently stopped moving. Zhuzhi-Lang walked over and, seeing the mess of blankets, asked casually, “Is Master Shen not hot?”

Shen Qingqiu just wanted to get this over with as soon as possible. He grabbed Zhuzhi-Lang’s hand and pressed the bright red coal right up against his chest. In the midst of the hissing sound, he calmly stated, “It’s not hot.”

Zhuzhi-Lang replied, “Then, Master Shen, doesn’t it...hurt?”

“It doesn’t hurt,” Shen Qingqiu replied.

Zhuzhi-Lang’s voice was gratified. “Several times before, Master Shen always seemed extremely reluctant. Tonight you’ve finally taken the initiative, as it should be.”

Shen Qingqiu wasn’t really listening to what he was saying at all, his entire mind focused solely on getting this over with as soon as possible so he

could chase him out. He asked, “Is this enough?”

Zhuzhi-Lang took back the piece of coal and replied, “Yes, this is fine.”

Shen Qingqiu was overjoyed. Luo Binghe was probably approaching his limit too. But who knew that Zhuzhi-Lang wasn’t quite done speaking yet. “Junshang has just said that tonight, he too wanted to stop by...”

He hadn’t even finished his sentence when Luo Binghe finally couldn’t take it anymore and stood up violently.

Chapter 65: This Friend Circle is Really a Mess

Without clearly seeing how he was attacked, Zhuzhi-Lang knelt onto the ground on one knee and coughed out a mouthful of blood. When he lifted his head again, there was another person on the bed. Luo Binghe had one arm wrapped around Shen Qingqiu and was currently glaring at him. First Zhuzhi-Lang was shocked, but then it quickly changed into a flash of realization. “You? Master Shen? You two!”

Shen Qingqiu buried his forehead into his palms. He didn’t want to talk. Luo Binghe raised his other hand and made a clenching movement in the air. Several dark fingerprints appeared on Zhuzhi-Lang’s throat as his body was abruptly hoisted up into the air.

Shen Qingqiu said, “Don’t kill him. It’ll cause no end of trouble. Moreover, things aren’t what you’re imagining...”

Luo Binghe’s mouth was shut tightly, and the veins on the back of his hand bulged as his hand folded closed. Zhuzhi-Lang’s face slowly turned blue, but he still stubbornly didn’t reveal any trace of pain.

At that moment, another voice came from outside.

“Peak Lord Shen, can I come in?”

Why was it so lively tonight?! Speak of the devil indeed, so many visitors!

The faces of the three people in the tent, with one person being choked while the others watched on, all darkened. Shen Qingqiu first pointed at Zhuzhi-Lang, who was being choked as he dangled in the air, before pointing at Luo Binghe. He made a slicing motion at his throat before crossing his arms into an 'X' shape, everything a complete mess. He didn't know if Luo Binghe understood or not because he shook his head before shaking it again. Under this kind of circumstance, of course, nobody would answer the person outside the door. After a second of silence, Tianlang-Jun said, "I'm coming in."

Just like his nephew—both were the type to ask before coming in anyway just for appearances!

As a result, when Tianlang-Jun came inside, what he saw was exactly this scene.

Zhuzhi-Lang and Shen Qingqiu tussled and rolled around on the bed, while the pile of blankets behind them was piled both high and messily. When they saw him come in, they both suddenly turned their heads, two pairs of eyes and two faces holding the same expression of fear, their paling skin intermingled with red blushes. Shen Qingqiu's upper half of his robe was still hooked around his elbows, leaving him half-undressed.

Even though Tianlang-Jun was a weirdo, when he saw this scene, his smile also froze for a while.

After a long pause, he finally said softly, "... I really didn't expect this."

Zhuzhi-Lang blushed with shame. "My lord, things are a little complicated, but in any case, it's not what you're imagining..."

His body was blocking the blankets that Luo Binghe was hiding in, and Shen Qingqiu was half on top of him, completely covering Luo Binghe's hand, which was gripping Zhuzhi-Lang's vital gate¹ tightly. Such a chaotic position, coupled with the floating curtains around the bed, really made it difficult to tell that there was a third person there, at least for a short while.

Tianlang-Jun nodded his head and said, "No need to explain, I understand. I understand everything."

With his love for listening to Resentment of Chunshan and his slow way of thinking about things, when he said he "understood," that meant that Shen Qingqiu definitely had to explain!

Shen Qingqiu said, "For what reason did Your Excellency come to pay a visit so late at night? If something is the matter, please say it clearly, or else I will go rest, thank you."

Tianlang-Jun said, "Actually, it's not anything serious. A small disturbance happened over on my end, that's all. I didn't know where Zhuzhi-Lang disappeared off to either, so I first came over here to take a look. However, I

seem to have come at the wrong time. No matter, please continue. I don't care."

Zhuzhi-Lang, "My lord..."

If he said one word too much, Luo Binghe added pressure;

If he moved his leg slightly, Luo Binghe added pressure;

If he adjusted his position, Luo Binghe added pressure;

Adding pressure and adding pressure as the surging demonic energy poured scathingly straight into Zhuzhi-Lang's vital gate to the point that Shen Qingqiu's mouth tasted bitter.

Zhuzhi-Lang didn't know what was suffocating him, only that he was indeed experiencing a stifling feeling in his chest.

Shen Qingqiu: "Okay, many thanks for your kindness. In that case, we'll continue. Please do as you wish."

But Tianlang-Jun didn't seem to have any intention of leaving. Instead, he found a stool and sat down.

He said leisurely, "Why does Peak Lord Shen not pursue the matter and ask me what exactly that 'small disturbance' is? This is vastly different from your previous curious and passionate attitude."

It seemed like he wouldn't be sent away so easily. Shen Qingqiu felt as if his troubles were never-ending, but instead, he calmed down and smiled. "If Tianlang-Jun likes to observe, there's no harm in talking and spicing things up. Please go ahead."

Tianlang-Jun then "spiced things up." "Not long before this, the Heart Devil sword that was settled at my side suddenly flew up and suspended itself in the air, vibrating ceaselessly. Clearly, nobody was controlling it, but this kind of phenomenon truly is a little hard to miss."

Shen Qingqiu immediately understood. Just then, when Luo Binghe didn't finish his sentence about how there was "only one thing to be worried about," he was referring to the Heart Devil sword. After all, it was his sword that had been at his side for many years. If the original owner appeared nearby, it would have some response.

Shen Qingqiu said, "That is indeed strange. However, I'm afraid it doesn't make much sense for Tianlang-Jun to come find me to talk about that."

Tianlang-Jun stood up slowly. "Of course it doesn't make much sense to talk with Peak Lord Shen about this. But if a naughty child came over to find Peak Lord Shen, then it would make a lot of sense."

He split a short two sentences into quite a few segments. Every half a sentence, he took another step closer to the bed.

Zhuzhi-Lang was clearly being restrained by Shen Qingqiu, while Luo Binghe secretly clamped down on his vital gate. As Tianlang-Jun came closer and closer, step by step, this pair of disciple and master clenched tighter and tighter. Zhuzhi-Lang was truly... extremely innocent, and very unlucky.

Just when Tianlang-Jun raised his hand and was about to brush aside the curtain, the sound of wild beasts howling shrilly suddenly resounded from outside the tent. He abruptly withdrew his hand and turned to look.

Outside of the white tent, flames shot towards the sky. Flitting black shadows threw themselves over from all directions as the long howls of wild beasts mixed with hoarse and exhausted shouts.

“There’s an invader!”

“Surround him! Surround him! Everyone surround him!”

“Don’t let him get away!”

“—he killed someone—!”

Blades struck each other as arrows ripped through the sky, blending with the sound of teeth and claws ripping into flesh. Tianlang-Jun didn't have time to say a single word before he flashed outside of the tent. Shen Qingqiu's tense and anxious mood settled again. This invader came at such an appropriate time!

Luo Binghe flipped off the bed and steadied Shen Qingqiu, while Zhuzhi-Lang was tossed onto the floor and was still temporarily unable to move. Shen Qingqiu lowered his head and said, “Many thanks for just then.”

With his degree of loyalty, for Zhuzhi-Lang not to have pointed at them and shouted, “My lord! It's them! It's those two!” without any regard for his personal safety, it could be taken as him deliberately helping Shen Qingqiu. When Zhuzhi-Lang heard this, he sighed and said, “This subordinate can understand.”

Shen Qingqiu, “Understand what?”

Luo Binghe said impatiently, “Why are you wasting time talking to him?”

Zhuzhi-Lang lifted his head and said sincerely, “In order for Master Shen to lessen the pain of lovesickness, you two had to meet secretly in the middle of the night. Even though it would inevitably tarnish your reputation, it is still excusable.”

Shen Qingqiu: “...”

Sure enough, he shouldn't have wasted time talking to him!

The disciple and master slipped out from the tent only to see a dense and dark mass of Nan Jiang demon race troops surrounding something nearby in the wilderness. Two snow-white, glowing figures seemed especially dazzling among the crowd. One was the figure of a sword, chilly and relentless; the other was the figure of a human, and they wiped out and demolished everything they passed. The encirclement was continuously attacked, but it was also continuously refilled by new demon race soldiers.

Tianlang-Jun's heartfelt exclamations of admiration floated over with the night wind. “Great sword technique. Great spiritual energy!”

The newcomer stood on an enormous wolf head that was draped in armor, one that he had beheaded with his bare hands. His white clothes were pristine with only a single bloodstain that seemed to have splashed onto his cheek.

This kind of showy, simple, rough, attack-when-I-say-to-attack fighting style, as if afraid that nobody in the enemy camp would know that he had graciously arrived, really lived up to Bai Zhan Peak's aggressive and warlike famous reputation.

It was Liu Qingge.

Two snow-white wargs flashed through the crowd of beasts and crouched at Tianlang-Jun's feet. One of them lifted its head, and a human voice came out from its mouth. "My lord, it's Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord Liu Qingge from Cang Qiong Mountain!"

Tianlang-Jun nodded. "I see. No wonder the sword technique and spiritual energy were so stunning. Only, I'm not sure why Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord would suddenly honor Nan Jiang with his presence?"

Liu Qingge moved to the side slightly and the Cheng Luan sword flew back to his hand. He flicked off a drop of blood from the sword tip and said coldly, "Is Shen Qingqiu here?"

Shen Qingqiu felt extremely flattered. What, did Renowned Master Liu come to save him?

Luo Binghe shot a glance at the expression on his face and pressed his lips together.

Tianlang-Jun suddenly saw the light. "So you came to find Peak Lord Shen. He is indeed here with me."

Liu Qingge said, "Tell him to come out."

Tianlang-Jun said with an ambiguous tone, “I’m afraid that it’s not very convenient for him to see you right now. Even if you saw him, he most likely won’t want to go back to Cang Qiong Mountain with you anyway.”

Shen Qingqiu actually didn’t know what he should complain about. Liu Qingge narrowed his eyes. One of the wargs at Tianlang-Jun’s feet said, “What Bai Zhan Peak? From what I can see, that’s not necessarily true. I heard that this Liu Qingge fought with that brat Luo Binghe before and lost countless times; he’s long since been undeserving of this name. It should be called ‘Ninety-Nine Battle Peak’ at this rate.”

(T/N: 百战峰 Bai Zhan Peak is literally “100 Battle Peak” but is in reference to an idiom 百战百胜 meaning “always victorious” but here the warg is saying that it should be called 99 battle peak (九十九战峰) not 100 because he’s been losing so much to LBH)

Another warg continued, “No, he should be called Peak Lord of ‘Ninety-Eight Battle Peak.’ If he faces our lord, he will undoubtedly be defeated as well!”

These two beasts were so sarcastic. Both flattering and sarcastic!

Whenever they disagreed with each other, just fight instead.

With a light tap of his foot, Liu Qingge's figure shot out like white lightning. Tianlang-Jun was in no hurry to meet him in battle. He carelessly flicked his hand, and fresh blood flew out from his fingers. When the blood droplets landed on the ground, they didn't seep into the dirt. Instead, they condensed into solid shapes and immediately transformed into six blood wolves with scarlet fur, completely surrounding Liu Qingge, biting and attacking him as they circled around him just like rings of fire.

Liu Qingge was more than up for the challenge. Cheng Luan swept out, and all of the six wolves' heads flew off as they transformed back into liquid. But when the sword spun around, the blood wolves quickly congealed once again and continued to bare their fangs and claw at him. Even though his attacks were precise and powerful to a fault, they didn't produce any real results. Tianlang-Jun didn't withdraw his hand either, which was still leaking blood. As he extended it lazily, the blood drops fell, and new wild beasts emerged endlessly.

After losing so much blood, Tianlang-Jun's face didn't grow paler in the slightest. Was he a portable blood bank?!

For better or worse, Liu Qingge had come to save him so Shen Qingqiu couldn't continue watching indifferently. He was about to move when Luo Binghe flashed out, one step ahead of him.

Tianlang-Jun stared at him. "As expected, you came."

Luo Binghe said coldly, "Shizun is here, how could I not?"

Tianlang-Jun laughed. “Zhuzhi-Lang, look at his face. Looking at his cold scowling expression really makes me happy... hm? Zhuzhi-Lang?” Only then did he discover that Zhuzhi-Lang still hadn’t come out yet, and he revealed a disappointed expression. When enemies met face to face, they would inevitably be extremely furious. Liu Qingge was about to speak from the side when he suddenly spotted Shen Qingqiu. He forgot everything he was about to criticize and was frozen on the spot. He shouted, “Hey!”

Shen Qingqiu waved at him. Tianlang-Jun’s astounded expression didn’t recede; on the contrary, it grew even stronger. He said to Luo Binghe, “So... just then... you guys... inside... three people?”

Just one sentence, eight words, but Shen Qingqiu still understood clearly what he was trying to imply.

Chapter 66 – Circle of Nobles, Wanton Disorder

He didn't know if Luo Binghe understood, but he forged ahead, his face darkening.

This wilderness battlefield amidst the crowd of beasts immediately became a three-way brawl. Tianlang-Jun was fighting two, Liu Qingge was also fighting two, Luo Binghe was fighting one and ignoring one, while still bearing two people's worth of attacks. Black energy and white light exploded across the scene, sword shrieks and beast hisses rushing into the sky.

Liu Qingge came to rescue Shen Qingqiu, but the ring encircling him grew thicker and thicker. Cheng Luan whirled like a miniature tornado, and the dozen blood beasts mixed in the crowd splattered into thousands of droplets of blood. Shen Qingqiu yelled, "Close your mouth! Don't swallow them!"

Liu Qingge didn't need to close his mouth at all—those droplets couldn't even moisten his sleeves. Tianlang-Jun, however, smiled. "I seem to have forgotten that Peak Lord Shen is still here."

He wished he had been forgotten... once Tianlang-Jun remembered he was here, life would get much more difficult for him. A griping pain crawled up thickly in his stomach. At first, Luo Binghe was the fiercest of the three fighters, each strike directed precisely at Tianlang-Jun, but now his offense

suddenly slowed, his heart divided. Shen Qingqiu yelled, “Keep fighting. Don’t mind me!”

He didn’t shout or cry out, pretending he couldn’t feel anything at all. Returning to the tent, he dragged out Zhuzhi-Lang, his smile twisted into a sneer. “You won’t be able to throw yourself under my sword this time, right?”

Zhuzhi-Lang said helplessly, “I owe a heavy debt of kindness to both Peak Lord Shen and my lord. Why must you always make things difficult for me?”

A cold sweat broke out on Shen Qingqiu’s pained back. He idly threw back a response to distract himself. “You really keep a clear record of your gratitudes and grudges.”

The demon race’s officials were truly each as dedicated to their profession as Sha Hualing, preaching their grand mission at every possible opportunity. Zhuzhi-Lang, under the point of his sword, continued to admonish him. “That’s right. So, because the four great sects overpowered my lord with base tricks many years ago, one day, they will pay. Cang Qiong Mountain, Zhao Hua Temple, Huan Hua Palace, Tian Yi Overlook—my lord said not one will be left behind, so it’s certain that not one will be left behind.”

Hearing him bring up Huan Hua Palace, Shen Qingqiu’s heartstrings tightened.

After he had escaped from Huan Hua Palace's water prison into Hua Yue City, he had heard that the disciples guarding the water prison had all been killed. Even Gongyi Xiao was not lucky enough to escape. This black pot had been thrown on his head at the time, and he had pressed it on Luo Binghe's head in turn. But, while rushing about until today, he never had the chance to determine who had actually killed them.

Zhuzhi-Lang was good to him now because he had stopped Gongyi Xiao from killing him that time, becoming a benefactor in his eyes. Then, accordingly, Gongyi Xiao should be an enemy. Shen Qingqiu said, "Do you remember Gongyi Xiao?"

Zhuzhi-Lang thought for a while and said, "That disciple from Hua Hua Palace?"

Sure enough, he remembered.

"That time when I went to the water prison to meet Master Shen, at first I mistook him for Luo Binghe."

Shen Qingqiu could understand. From the back, Gongyi Xiao really did resemble Luo Binghe. If someone only took a quick look, their features also had some subtle similarities. So for a time, he felt especially attached to Gongyi Xiao.

Zhuzhi-Lang continued, “Afterwards, I found out he was precisely that Huan Hua Palace senior disciple who entered the dew cave in Bai Lu Forest with Master Shen. So, I killed him in passing.”

Killed him in passing.

Zhuzhi-Lang really was a very simple demon. As his uncle said, he was “a little foolish.” Tianlang-Jun had supported him so he would follow him until death. Shen Qingqiu had inadvertently saved him, so he was paying him back in his own way all along.

For the same reason, every small grievance must be avenged¹.

It’s just that Gongyi Xiao’s death was rather too unjust. He had only moved to kill, but he didn’t actually kill him!

Shen Qingqiu heard Gongyi Xiao’s parting words, “If we meet again, Elder Shen must fulfill his promise to take me to visit Qing Jing Peak. I’ll always be waiting...” as if he was speaking right beside Shen Qingqiu’s ear. Shen Qingqiu simply didn’t know what to say.

He watched Zhuzhi-Lang’s gaze grow more and more complicated, but his former effortless ease was already long gone. Just as the latter noticed this change, Shen Qingqiu stood up, walking forwards.

Zhuzhi-Lang started. “Where are you going?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Anywhere is fine, as long as it’s far away.”

These Heavenly Demons were all mental cases. Going with one mental case would at least be better than going with two. At worst, that one would still listen to him!

Zhuzhi-Lang looked like he had been stung. In a flash, he said, “I only wanted to be good to the people who helped me. Is there anything wrong with that?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “The problem is, you think the things you do are good for me, but I don’t feel the same.”

With every step, he felt his veins twist, like thousands of worms were squirming and chewing his insides. Luo Binghe repeatedly turned his head to look at him, many times narrowly avoiding an attack.

Zhuzhi-Lang couldn’t understand. “Even if Master Shen couldn’t achieve a peaceful end, why are you determined on staying with him all the way?”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t answer, continuing to walk forward.

Zhuzhi-Lang said in a low voice, "I understand."

Before his words had fallen, the stagnant pain in Shen Qingqiu's body completely disappeared. Tianlang-Jun's voice entered the scene, with a tone of slight indignation. "What are you doing?"

Of the people on the scene, only those of the Heavenly Demon lineage knew what was happening. At first, there were three sets of blood parasites in Shen Qingqiu's body. Luo Binghe fought one on two, so he was at a slight disadvantage. But, just now, Zhuzhi-Lang stopped urging his blood parasites against Luo Binghe but turned sides to join with Luo Binghe in suppressing Tianlang-Jun's blood.

Without the pain, what was there to fear? Shen Qingqiu drew Xiu Ya, vaulting onto the sword. "Liu Shidi, let's go!"

Seeing him fly over on his sword, Liu Qingge also flipped onto Cheng Luan. Tianlang-Jun finally stopped playing with his blood, a palm full of demonic energy sweeping over to attack, but was blocked by Luo Binghe. Shen Qingqiu passed by, reaching down as Luo Binghe raised his arm. Their movements strung together like seamless heavenly clothes, two hands joining right on target. With a pull, he took Luo Binghe along on Xiu Ya. The two sword glares disappeared into the sky in a flash.

The sky above the wilderness filled with howls. Tianlang-Jun snapped his fingers, and the remaining dozen blood beasts lost their vigor, fur and fangs rapidly melting. Before long, they transformed into a spatter of blood droplets, quickly dissolving into the ground.

He looked at Zhuzhi-Lang. “You’re letting them go just like that?”

Zhuzhi-Lang didn’t say a word in reply, going down on one knee.

Tianlang-Jun had excellent self-restraint. His anger would only persist for a moment, and he had long gone over to say, “Ah you, think it through carefully. He doesn’t appreciate your kindness at all, he’s just wholeheartedly rushing down the road to disaster. Zhuzhi-Lang, you’re already this old. How do you not know your head’s turned around a bend?”

He gestured for Zhuzhi-Lang to get up and said off-handedly, “But you don’t need to be so sad. Peak Lord Shen will understand you’re acting for his own good one day. It’s not far off.”

Zhuzhi-Lang knew in his heart that that would be the day the four great sects were extinguished.

Tianlang-Jun sent another glance to the sky, muttering, “But, I truly never would have thought. Peak Lord Shen likes there to be more people. Does there have to be at least three people every time?”

“...”

The changing fields of Zhuzhi-Lang's mind grew barren in a flash, as if a sudden gale had blown through².

His lord had probably been reading those strange illustrated pamphlets spread from the human realm again.

The three had flown several kilometers on their swords, heading straight for the borderlands.

Liu Qingge didn't think Shen Qingqiu would bring Luo Binghe with them. "What are you dragging him along for? Why are you together with him?!"

Liu Qingge and Luo Binghe held a deeply ingrained resentment towards each other, and Shen Qingqiu couldn't explain on the spot. He said vaguely, "This, I have a reason for..."

Hearing that he didn't refute the word "together," Luo Binghe's eyes curved, the corner of his mouth also curling up. Liu Qingge, seeing him break out into a full smile for no reason, formed a seal in his hand, spiritual energy sizzling between his fingers. He warned, "Shen Qingqiu, you come over here."

Luo Binghe changed faces faster than flipping the pages of a book. He was warm and tender one moment but full of mockery the next, holding onto Shen Qingqiu's waist tighter. He was already holding on tight, and with this extra force Shen Qingqiu nearly couldn't breathe. Slapping his hand away,

he said, "Liu Shidi, this explanation is a bit complicated. Let's escape first, then I can tell you slowly later. Just trust me for now."

Liu Qingge said, "I trust you. But I don't trust him."

Shen Qingqiu said without thinking, "I trust him."

Liu Qingge's expression hardened. He said solemnly, "You trusted him before, and what was the result?"

Luo Binghe's smile was like a needle concealed in silk floss. His tone was neither hostile nor friendly as he said, "Shizun already said he trusts me. Why are you still wasting your words?"

Are you not done fighting yet?!

Shen Qingqiu said, "How are you speaking to your Shishu?"

Liu Qingge was already so short-spoken, so where were these wasted words? Indeed, he didn't have any more to say and threw out a ball of explosive power.

We're traveling at high altitudes—is it that fun to fight while riding swords?!
Be careful, safety is number one!

Shen Qingqiu tilted his course for a bit. He should have dodged the attack, but he heard a smothered groan from Luo Binghe behind him.

Shen Qingqiu turned his head to ask, “What is it?”

Was he really hit?

Luo Binghe shook his head and said, “It's nothing. It doesn't hurt.”

Usually, even if he was hit, he's fine, right? Shen Qingqiu looked him over carefully and saw a wisp of dark energy between his eyebrows. He muttered, “Your face doesn't look very good.”

Luo Binghe's voice softened, saying warmly, “When I was fighting that old demon, my head was a bit dizzy. Just now, it was dizzier. But it's nothing, just an explosive attack, that's all.”

Each of Liu Qingge's bloody battles with him was more violent than the last. How many times had they fought? Now he's dizzy from one explosive attack?

He said, “Shen Qingqiu, you get out of the way.”

Shen Qingqiu hurriedly gave an apologetic smile. “Liu Shidi, he was injured before and just recovered. By all means, don’t lower yourself to his level. He isn’t sensible; if he offended you, I’ll apologize in his place.”

Liu Qingge’s expression didn’t improve, but Shen Qingqiu continued. “He has made many mistakes before, but he won’t from now on. I’ll definitely discipline him well...”

Liu Qingge’s face finally cleared. “You really trust him?”

Shen Qingqiu wasn’t as confident as he sounded. Luo Binghe was still holding his waist, with that look of anxious anticipation on his face again, like he was waiting for his reply. To speak the truth, he had never truly trusted Luo Binghe before, and he was unintentionally hurting him all along. Things having reached this stage...

Shen Qingqiu forced a smile. “It’s better to believe than not.³”

In a home, if the kids weren’t sensible, the adults don’t have it easy. Shen Qingqiu finished his apology and gave some kind words. “It’s been some time since we’ve seen each other, and Liu Shidi’s cultivation has advanced even more.”

Liu Qingge raised his chin. “I just exited seclusion.”

When Luo Binghe surrounded Cang Qiong Mountain, Liu Qingge said to “Wait!” Turns out he really did enter seclusion to cultivate. He had come to save him right after exiting seclusion; Shen Qingqiu felt that a simple word of thanks wouldn’t be enough. He rubbed his nose and said off-handedly, “How did you know to look for me in the Southern border?”

After Liu Qingge first exited seclusion, he had rushed to Luo Binghe’s territory in the Northern border at top speed, storming his way in and almost upturning the whole area. But, in the end, Shen Qingqiu wasn’t there. Luo Binghe wasn’t there either and had reportedly retreated like he was running back for a confession. He first captured that demon woman Sha whatever to interrogate her. However, Bai Zhan Peak’s preferred interrogation method was beating up the suspect. At best, it was beating up the suspect to different levels of severity. Liu-juju⁴ certainly couldn’t beat up a woman, and since Sha Hualing was especially hard to deal with, he didn’t get anything out of her.

Luckily, he had run into that eating-his-fill-all-day, wandering-idly-with-nothing-to-do Shang Qinghua.

Liu Qingge couldn’t tolerate these goods in the least. But, just as he had raised his fist, Shang Qinghua started confessing everything in an unceasing torrent of chatter, including how Shen Qingqiu’s meals were in the demon realm, his daily activities to amuse himself and pass the time, as well as the important news about how he had been taken away to the Southern border.

After getting the information out of him, Liu Qingge planned to execute this traitor on the spot, but Shang Qinghua started to hug his thighs and wail to wake the dead, promising over and over that he didn't want to do it and he would turn over a new leaf.⁵ His howls had drawn out Mobei-Jun. The two fought, toppling much of Luo Binghe's underground palace, which had delayed him for some time.

These rhythmical ups and downs, this thing full of scenes of violence, was precisely the story of Liu-juju's journey these last few days.

Troubling his heart and strength like this... Liu Qingge is truly a man more reliable than a blood brother⁶!

After reservedly expressing his tears of gratitude, he changed the topic and said firmly, "Liu Shidi, I have official business I need to tell you."

Liu Qingge said, "Go on."

Shen Qingqiu said, "Do you know of Tianlang-Jun?"

Of the famous figures in the cultivation world, this name could be described as legendary.

Many years ago, in the battle where Tianlang-Jun had been suppressed under Bai Lu Mountain, the four great sects had turned out in full strength.⁷

Though Cang Qiong Mountain was the main force, those that had fought in the war were all the former generation of Peak Lords. Of the current Peak Lords of Cang Qiong Mountain, only Yue Qingyuan had gone to war as Qiong Ding Peak's head disciple. Furthermore, he had shown his brilliance using Xuan Su and took on a crucial role. Liu Qingge naturally wouldn't be unaware of these things. "The demon race's last demon saint? His corporeal body has been destroyed for some years."

Shen Qingqiu said, "The destruction of a corporeal body doesn't necessarily mean death. He might have shed his shell."

Liu Qingge raised one eyebrow. "Like you?"

Shen Qingqiu sighed in shame. "Exactly."

Liu Qingge didn't chase that line of conversation. "He escaped, then what?"

Shen Qingqiu said, "Tianlang-Jun has plans of merging the demon realm and the human realm."

"Does that mean he plans to attack the human realm?"

Shen Qingqiu knew it would be very easy for a normal person to confuse these two concepts. This "merging" he spoke of, many people would take it

as just “unification.” In fact, it was not so. What Tianlang-Jun planned to do with the Heart Devil sword was indeed a “merging” in the literal sense.

1. 睚眦必报, lit. every angry stare must be recompensed.
2. Original line: 竹枝郎原本沧桑的心境瞬间犹如狂风过境寸草不生。 This was translated somewhat non-literally because there are two different chengyu (idioms) and a metaphor playing off each other here. 沧桑 is used to describe Zhuzhi-Lang’s mind/mental state, which is a shortened version of 沧海桑田, literally meaning “blue sea turned into mulberry fields”. The full idiom refers to great transformations of the world, and the shortened version can mean “great changes”. Riffing off the first idiom, next there is a metaphor “as if violent winds passed through” [his mind, which at this point is described as a mulberry field re: the first idiom, and his mind is left 寸草不生, lit. “not an inch of grass grows” or fig. barren. Basically, this means that his mind was already in turmoil and this new line from TLJ added fuel to the fire (or wind to the storm, as it were) and he’s sorta blanking in shock.
3. 宁可信其有，不可信其无, a literary quote from the Yuan dynasty play 盆儿鬼 (Pen Er Gui). Translated literally.
4. The “juju” seems to be Shen Qingqiu’s way of calling him. It’s like the –sama in Japanese
5. 鬼哭狼嚎, lit. “to wail like ghosts and howl like wolves”, felt a bit awkward translated literally in English.
6. There is a pun on 清歌 (Qīnggē) / 亲哥 (Qīn gē, blood brother) here.
7. 倾巢而出, lit. “the full nest came out”.

Chapter 67—A Three-Man Journey

The demon world and the human world were like two sides of a sheet of paper, existing in two different dimensions. If someone were to draw a line on one side of the paper, no matter how long they extended that line, it would never reach the other side.

However, the Heart Devil sword was able to meld these two different sides of paper into one surface.

For example, the human continent had the Luochuan River, while the demon world had the Maigu Mountains. These two locations existed in completely different spaces. However, the original Luo Binghe had used the Heart Devil sword to connect these two worlds together. Afterward, the Maigu Mountains had been “pierced” into the middle of the Luochuan River, forming an island.

He explained a simplified version of the story to Liu Qingge. Liu Qingge furrowed his brows. “These things can really be done?”

Of course, it could be done. After all, the original Luo Binghe had succeeded! Shen Qingqiu solemnly nodded.

Liu Qingge thought for a while before finally saying, “This is no small matter. You still need evidence before you can convince everyone else.”

If he wanted proof, then there really wasn’t any. Shen Qingqiu felt his head begin to ache.

At this time, the previously silent Luo Binghe asked: “Shizun, why didn’t you ask me?”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t have a chance to respond when Liu Qingge suddenly stepped forwards, giving a cold snort.

The reasoning behind the snort was obvious. Luo Binghe was of demon blood, and had fallen out with the other sects long ago; his evil reputation spread far and wide. Under his hands, Huan Hua Palace had been transformed into an evil organization. Although the Palace was strong and flourishing under his leadership, the four great sects had long refused to acknowledge him as an ally. It had turned into a “the name remained, but the prestige had long disappeared” kind of situation.

Therefore, it was natural that he would be unable to help.

Asking him would probably make no difference...

Shen Qingqiu was naturally aware of this, but he didn't linger on the subject. Otherwise, Luo Binghe's fragile glass heart would probably shatter. He forced a laugh, but before he could finish, he was aware of a new weight on his shoulder.

Luo Binghe's head lightly rested against his left shoulder.

Shen Qingqiu thought that this was another tantrum, and shook his shoulder. However, after careful observation, he realized that Luo Binghe's eyes were tightly closed, the perfect image of peaceful sleep.

He could even sleep while standing. Wasn't he awake and talking a moment ago?!

Shen Qingqiu reached out a hand to grasp his arm, preventing him from falling off the flying sword. Quietly, he asked: "Luo Binghe?"

There was no reaction. Pausing, Shen Qingqiu changed his voice into a lower and more gentle sound: "...Binghe?"

It was only after his name was called two times did Luo Binghe slowly open his eyes. Shen Qingqiu stared at his dazed eyes, unable to stop himself from asking, "Are you tired?"

It had only been a few days since they left the Holy Mausoleum. During that time, Luo Binghe had suffered a great number of wounds. Although he had recovered quickly, it was possible that there were side-effects. Dizziness was perhaps one of them.

Luo Binghe shook his head. “No.”

Shen Qingqiu thought for a moment before turning around to face Liu Qingge, who was holding his hands together and coldly watching the scene. “Liu-shidi, when we pass the border, how about you first go ahead and return to Cang Qiong Sect? Go with our shixions and call together all of the other sects for a discussion.”

Liu Qingge’s two eyes opened slightly. “What about you.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “I may return a little later. Luo... Binghe, in his current state, may need a few days to recuperate to return safely.”

Liu Qingge inhaled. “I came to bring you back.”

Shen Qingqiu hesitated, while Luo Binghe remained silent. He lowered his head, looking extremely lovable and obedient.

Shen Qingqiu spoke again. “Just one night.”

Liu Qingqiu stared at Luo Binghe, who had nested himself behind Shen Qingqiu. Strictly, he said, “One night is also not allowed.”

Then what are we supposed to do?

One shichen¹ later, the three of them passed the border and stopped in front of the doors of the largest tavern in the city.

This tavern was far from the central plains, with many people originating from a miscellaneous mix of small sects. It was rare for them to see one graceful, god-like cultivator, much less three at once who were each as handsome as the next.

Liu Qingge, grasping onto Cheng Luan, took the initiative to strut confidently through the doorstep.

The lobby was extremely beautiful, its spacious walls gleaming with light. As they entered, there was a man who immediately arrived to greet them.

Shen Qingqiu asked, “Liu-shidi, are you sure you want to accompany us?”

He had always thought of Liu Qingge as someone who placed himself above all others, who didn’t need sleep to function. Even if he were to

sleep, it would be curled up within the clouds while cultivating.

Liu Qingge grasped onto his sword, coldly saying: “I wouldn’t feel at ease otherwise.”²”

He looked up just in time to meet eyes with Luo Binghe, who was standing behind Shen Qingqiu. Silently Luo Binghe snorted twice, his eyes looking away and his lips twisting into a smile of contempt. Liu Qingge immediately became enraged, his grip tightening on Cheng Luan until his veins turned blue.

Seeing this, Shen Qingqiu hurriedly said, “If there’s anything you have to say, say it. Don’t be angry.”

He turned around. Luo Binghe innocently blinked at him, his lips still starkly pale.

The tavern assistant smiled. “How many customers are looking for accommodation here?”

Liu Qingge ignored him and Luo Binghe looked like he would collapse at any moment. Shen Qingqiu could only step out by himself. “Yes.”

The assistant: “How many rooms are you looking for?”

Shen Qingqiu: “Three...”

Luo Binghe: “Two rooms.”

Liu Qingge’s expression was that of seeing a vicious criminal, hateful and deserving to be put to death.

Luo Binghe amicably said, “I’ll trouble you to prepare two rooms, thank you.”

Liu Qingge said, “Three rooms.”

Luo Binghe smiled, replying, “Excuse me, but who is paying?”

Shen Qingqiu and Liu Qingge both froze.

Shen Qingqiu’s position was obvious; he had just escaped from the heart of the demon world, so why would he carry such unnecessary items with him? Liu Qingge was even more out of the question. Someone as removed from the mortal world as him, who had only fought and killed the entire journey, would not be the kind to remember to bring money.

Luo Binghe leisurely said, “It’s me. I didn’t bring enough money. Therefore, two rooms.”

Shen Qingqiu: “...Liu-shidi, don’t argue with him.”

This kind of problem really didn’t have any other solutions. If they didn’t have enough money, it wasn’t like they could sell off Xiu Ya or Cheng Luan...

One did not know if Luo Binghe was doing this on purpose. Right now, Shen Qingqiu didn’t dare to find out the truth. With the room tablets in hand, they ascended the stairs, with Liu Qingge at the forefront and Shen Qingqiu in the middle.

Shen Qingqiu turned around, helplessly saying, “The next time you anger your shishu like this, I’ll sell you off to recompense the debt.”

Luo Binghe raised his head. “Shizun, you always treat me so heartlessly.”

In front of them, Liu Qingge glanced back to look at them. He wrinkled his nose, feeling the growing urge to hack them both to death. One to bury on the mountain summit and one to scatter at the bottom of the ocean.

The two rooms were adjacent to each other. The room distribution was the solemn question at hand.

Liu Qingge was having a serious dilemma. This Luo Binghe's conduct was unimaginably freakish and his evil influence was extremely strong to the point of hugging a corpse for five years straight. Right now, the man himself was in front of his eyes. Could he let him have his way?

It was as if sparks were colliding in the air.

Shen Qingqiu calmly opened the door, turned around, and shut the door.

After the door was closed, he suddenly opened it again a fraction. His tone was dignified. "Then, you two have a good rest."

The sparks suddenly froze over.

Liu Qingge: "...Hey!"

A black cloud seemed to form over Luo Binghe. "Shizun, he's going to kill me."

Shen Qingqiu pointed at Liu Qingge. "You can fight. Just don't beat him to death."

What a joke. He didn't dare to share a room with Luo Binghe. A straight and a gay man sharing a room at night—wouldn't that be the same as seeking death?

That's right, Shen Qingqiu still considered himself to be straight! To read a stallion novel like Proud Immortal Demon Way was the very proof of his sexuality!

He also didn't dare to share a room with Liu Qingge. It was true that Liu Qingge was, since the beginning of time, the world's first straight man, as straight as the reflection of the sun and moon or the day and night. However, if Luo Binghe, this demon Vinegar King³ were to flip over his jar, the situation would be even harder to handle.

Shen Qingqiu cheerfully said, "It's been decided like this then."

Luo Binghe wept and sobbed as he accused Shen Qingqiu: "Shizun, you really have a heart of steel."

Shen Qingqiu laughed, but firmly closed the door. The two people outside were left petrified. The outside was burnt, but the inside was tender.

They had only stopped over here to rest because of Luo Binghe's poor health. But now, looking at it, didn't his complexion look perfectly healthy?

So he had worried all for nothing!

After he took a bath, Shen Qingqiu changed into clean clothing. At leisure with nothing to do, he found a few thin booklets stacked by the window. While the cover was extremely gaudy—he was unable to make out the large characters in its title—he recognized the “One,” “Two,” “Three,” and so on. Grabbing a booklet, Shen Qingqiu leaned against the headboard to read.

From a cursory glance at a few lines, he found that this booklet was filled with numerous words. The rhetoric was beautifully written, the narrative touching, all of which were accompanied by extremely beautiful illustrations. Shen Qingqiu wanted to read the book more carefully when suddenly, the semi-forgotten sound of the system popped up.

System: 【Hello. Notice 1: Coolness level exceeds the set value, the key item drop prerequisite has been met. Please prepare to receive the item; if the host cannot collect the item when it drops, then the item will become invalid.】

A key item. Was it that fake Guanyin jade that was capable of nullifying 5000 points of anger?

Shen Qingqiu threw the booklet in his hands to the side. “Wait a minute. ‘Coolness level exceeds the set value, the key item drop prerequisite has been met’—does that mean that before my Coolness level met the required value, that key item wasn’t able to be used?”

System: 【That is correct.】

But before, when he was having a crisis, didn't the System ask him if he wanted to use the item or not? To be able to use it before meeting the prerequisites, wasn't this the same as using a scenario advancer?

Furthermore, this crucial item wasn't that useful to him. Shen Qingqiu believed that right now, even if he didn't "get involved" with Luo Binghe, the male lead's anger would not rise as long as he didn't "get involved" with anyone else. Even if he pressed Luo Binghe to the ground and beat him half to death, the only thing that would go up would be his Coolness level.

System: 【Notice 2: Action scene ahead. An important assignment is about to occur at Zhao Hua Temple. Please prepare to receive the assignment. Wishing you a pleasant day.】

2.0 even had the ability to warn about action scenes ahead!

To tell the truth, recently some of Luo Binghe's actions had been overly intimate, but the Coolness level hadn't increased. Shen Qingqiu held some doubt towards this. He wasn't being narcissistic, but hitting, scolding, or even looking at Luo Binghe that masochist had always caused his Coolness level to go up. Now, hearing no reaction, it was really too unscientific. Could it be that he hadn't heard the notification, missing the System announcements altogether?

But opening the database, he found that his Coolness level really hadn't increased that much.

He asked the question to the System. The System replied: 【Because the host's Coolness level has increased too much recently, in order to save the System's resources, all Coolness increases have been converted into monthly payments.⁴Wishing you a pleasant day.】

Monthly payments?

Shen Qingqiu had a premonition that it would be an extremely frightening number...

He was just about to try to remember what the original plot of Zhao Hua Temple was when, suddenly, several loud knocks sounded on the wooden door of his room.

Shen Qingqiu's initial thoughts were that it was definitely Luo Binghe. But when he went to open the door, he realized that the face he was looking at was slightly bigger.

The person who walked inside was Liu Qingge.

But wasn't Liu Qingge the type to kick down a door and barge into a room? Since when did he learn to knock?

A straight man could be let inside! Shen Qingqiu moved aside to let him in before closing the door. Without thinking, he asked, "Liu-shidi, why are you here so late? Where's Luo Binghe?"

Liu Qingge's face was wooden. "I don't know!"

His expression was clearly written on his face: he would rather sleep on the roof than share a room with that bastard.

Inwardly, Shen Qingqiu laughed a little desperately. Liu Qingge glanced at him before reaching inside his robes and pulling out an object, which he threw towards Shen Qingqiu. Catching it, Shen Qingqiu realized that it was one of the folding fans he had left behind in Qing Jing Peak.

Shen Qingqiu was unable to restrain his emotions. Unfolding it, he allowed the cool air to blow against his face, creating the cool and noble image of a deity. The folding fan really was the most powerful bullsh***ing weapon. He could already feel his bulls**t level increasing!

He felt a bit emotional. "Shidi... you remembered to bring this for me."

Liu Qingge obviously did not come just to give him the folding fan. Pulling out a chair, he sat down upright and still with only an arm resting against the table. Solemnly, he said, “I need to talk to you.”

Shen Qingqiu was affected by this mood. He corrected his posture, straightening his back stiffly. Just as solemnly, he replied, “Alright, speak.”

Liu Qingge said, “You and Luo Binghe, what happened between you two?”

The Peak Leader of Bai Zhan Peak would definitely not ask this question out of a need for gossip. Shen Qingqiu pondered for a moment, before sincerely saying, “I... also do not understand what happened. The situation had already turned into this before I could react.”

Liu Qingge said, “Do you really believe that he turned over a new leaf?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “It isn’t that he’s turned over a new leaf. It’s that I’ve always misunderstood him.”

Liu Qingge laughed coldly. “Misunderstood? He forced you to self detonate, tormented Huan Hua Palace, besieged Cang Qiong Mountain, smashed the roof of the Palace Hall, injured our Shixiong, the Sect Master—are these all misunderstandings?”

Hearing the last phrase, Shen Qingqiu asked, “Is the Sect Master⁵ alright? He suffered injuries last time. Did Mu-shidi heal them? Was it really Luo Binghe who injured him?”

Liu Qingge indignantly said, “Who else could it be? You’re still looking for excuses for him? You really are stupid.”

No. He wasn’t looking for an excuse for Luo Binghe. He was just unable to believe that it really was Luo Binghe who had injured Yue Qingyuan.

In the original 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》, Luo Binghe and Yue Qingyuan had fought against each other multiple times, but Luo Binghe had never tried to gain an unfair advantage. It was only to exploit the original goods Shen Qingqiu that he killed this Sect Leader in such a brutal manner, with ten thousand arrows to the heart.

Speaking of which, no matter if it was the original world or this world, Yue Qingyuan’s treatment of Shen Qingqiu was really too generous. Back when Shen Qingqiu was reading 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》, he had been upset how such an upright and morally righteous sect leader had treated a trash villain in such a kind manner. Could it be that these two had some kind of hidden relationship?

Would it fill in one of the novel’s plot holes?

Chapter 68 – In Zhao Hua Temple

He had lowered his head in contemplation, but Liu Qingge thought he was ashamed after the scolding. His expression relaxed and his tone became less severe. “All our comrades don’t understand why you insist on being so good to him.”

Liu Qingge leaned slightly forwards and the bright candlelight painted a layer of warmth onto his snow-pale face. He asked tightly, “Or to say, those rumors, are they all true?”

He really had been too naive and innocent to believe that Liu-juju would turn up his nose to that gossip. Shen Qingqiu’s grip tightened on his fan. “So even Liu-shidi would believe those nonsense rumors.”

Liu Qingge sat straight again. “I don’t believe them. But you have been wholeheartedly shielding that thankless wretch.”

Shen Qingqiu said helplessly, “I haven’t been shielding him. I just don’t want to misunderstand him again.”

Liu Qingge said coldly, “I don’t understand the things between you two. It’s easier to shift the mountains and rivers than to change one’s essential

character.¹ Luo Binghe is absolutely not the benevolent type, you take good care.”

He finished, rose, and walked out. Naturally, Shen Qingqiu also knew Luo Binghe was absolutely not the benevolent type. But, up until now he still could not determine whether or not he was the wicked type—still such a headache. Liu Qingge was almost out the door when he gave the small table a glimpse as he passed by and seemed to have seen something unbelievable, his foot stepping on air.

Raising his head, Shen Qingqiu saw that Liu Qingge still had not left the room. He sensed that something was off. “What?”

Liu Qingge stiffly turned his head, looking him up and down with the complex gaze of someone regarding something they had never seen before. After a while, he shook his head and finally opened the door to leave. In those short few steps, he seemed to have tripped over the door sill.

What is it?!

Shen Qingqiu slept soundly that night.

Early in the morning the next day, when he was still half in a dream, he sensed someone else in the room.

This person was quiet and light-footed, moving about every corner of the room. Shen Qingqiu lifted an eyelid to look and froze, staring on spot.

The only one who'd be interested in slipping into his room first thing in the morning, of course, it would be Luo Binghe.

But, this was a very different Luo Binghe.

He had changed into a set of white clothes, black hair also bound up in an orderly fashion with a light-colored ribbon. He hurried about the room with a relaxed and contented expression.

This attire and this look were entirely identical to the Luo Binghe from before the Immortal Alliance Conference. A model of a pure and busy disciple from a major sect (cross that out), the image of a diligent and competent young charming maiden (cross that out), it's really... it really is...

Luo Binghe turned his head. Seeing him propping himself up on one arm, he reached out a hand and said, all smiles, "Shizun is awake? The morning meal is on the table."

Shen Qingqiu propped up his forehead on one hand, but his body responded on its own and took Luo Binghe's hand, getting off the bed.

The strange thing was, this sort of morning ritual was the exact same type of service he received every morning long ago on Qing Jing Peak. Getting up, getting dressed, washing up, sitting down, eating breakfast—the whole set was done automatically under Luo Binghe's careful service.

If the setting was swapped for the bamboo house on Qing Jing Peak, there really would be a frightful illusion of time flowing backward!

Luo Binghe said, "This guest house's breakfast really is unpalatable. I've wronged Shizun."

If the object of comparison was Luo Binghe's handiwork, this evaluation was very polite. Shen Qingqiu sighed deeply and asked, "Where is your shishu?"

Luo Binghe said with a smile, "I don't know."

Whenever one mentioned one of those two to the other, it would always be those simple and rough three words. Shen Qingqiu figured he had gone as far down that path of inquiry as he could; asking him would be wasting his words. In a lively flash, Luo Binghe had gone to make his bed.

This devil incarnate was making his bed! This scene was too satisfying, but Shen Qingqiu didn't dare to look. Suddenly, Luo Binghe's voice rose again. "But, since Shizun is willing to let me call Liu Qingge Shishu, this is to say, you still acknowledge me as a disciple of Qing Jing Peak."

No kidding?

How many times have you chased me yelling Shizun this, Shizun that?

Shen Qingqiu said, “When has this teacher said you’re not my disciple?”

Luo Binghe said in a low voice, “I always thought Shizun had long tacitly driven me from his door. I always chased you yelling Shizun, but in fact, I was very much afraid it was just my one-sided wishful thinking.”

... He couldn’t take it.

Shen Qingqiu facepalmed. Have some backbone, won’t you? Bing-ge!

You’re the one who stood up in front of the harem and said, “I have this many women and there’s only going to be more and more—take it or get lost.” This type of tyrannical and callous declaration was from a peerless stallion protagonist.

This pure-hearted young man, bringing tea, fetching water, washing clothes, and making beds while bashfully only speaking when his back is turned—who is he?

Ah?

Who's possessing your body?

Shen Qingqiu finally had another opportunity to instruct his disciple. He drank a mouthful of tea and said, "It's very good that you think this way. Since you know you are still a disciple of Qing Jing Peak, then from now on you cannot be this rude to your shishu and shibo.² Especially when we return to Cang Qiong Mountain today, you must obediently apologize for the last time you encircled the mountain and smashed their halls."

Of course, the apology would not only be a verbal apology. You have to compensate for the original cost of construction of every building you broke. This was the minimum amount of good faith you could afford.

While efficiently storing away the breakfast dishes, Luo Binghe said carelessly, "We don't need to return to Cang Qiong Mountain today."

Shen Qingqiu: "En. En? What are you talking about?"

Luo Binghe said, "I'm saying, if Shizun really wants to see all... my shishu and shibo, we need not return to Cang Qiong Mountain. We can just make a turn and proceed directly towards Zhao Hua Temple.

As soon as those three words “Zhao Hua Temple” left his mouth, the System sent a notification:

【The “Zhao Hua Temple” mission has been officially assigned! Assigner: Luo Binghe. Please select whether or not to accept!】

【Accept Gladly】 【Accept reluctantly】 【Refuse】

Luo Binghe himself initiated this mission. Shen Qingqiu squinted. “How did you know?”

Luo Binghe said, “Won’t Shizun know if he goes? Let’s go while Liu... Liu-shishu hasn’t returned.”

Before his words had fallen, Liu Qingge returned, kicking the door open with a bang. Though the door had been kicked over, Shen Qingqiu felt that this was the style and entrance method the normal Liu Qingge should have, so his expression did not change. Liu Qingge didn’t spare Luo Binghe a glance as he said to Shen Qingqiu, “Change of plans. We’re not returning to Cang Qiong Mountain today; we’re going to Zhao Hua Temple.”

Shen Qingqiu stood up. “Did something happen?”

Liu Qingge said severely, “Something happened. The news came midnight last night. Today, many sects are going to discuss at Zhao Hua Temple on the head cultivator’s invitation. Cang Qiong Mountain Sect is included. This city’s cultivator clan just got ready to set off.”

On the way to Zhao Hua Temple, they passed through Jinlan City.

In those few years, this formerly flourishing merchant capital had undergone some unknown calamity to be the way it was today. If they weren’t hurrying on an urgent journey, Shen Qingqiu would definitely fly that thick layer of cloud to go take a look.

Not long after they passed Jinlan City, they reached Zhao Hua Temple.

The treasured temple was dignified and stately, nestled at the waist of an ancient verdant mountain. It was usually a quiet and secluded temple, but now it was a boiling cauldron of voices, silhouettes darting back and forth, an unceasing parade of troops on flying swords sailing in and out of the mountain’s waist.

The three stopped at the foot of the layers upon layers of stone steps to the Hall of Great Strength. Liu Qingge said to Shen Qingqiu, “Come with me to go see Zhangmen Shixiong.”

Shen Qingqiu was just about to nod when Luo Binghe followed behind. His status was unusual and his appearance in this context would cause a

sensitive situation. Shen Qingqiu said, “You go hide first; don’t let all the sect heads point their spears at you.”

Luo Binghe said indifferently, “If they want to point then let them point. Of course, I have to go with Shizun.”

This one really wouldn’t listen to advice. If he actually followed and someone recognized him, it would add a lot of unnecessary annoyances. Shen Qingqiu said, “Liu-shidi, you go ahead. I’ll come soon after.”

Liu Qingge shot them a cold glance and flew up the steps, going to rendezvous with Cang Qiong Mountain.

As long as he meticulously curbed his energy and adjusted his expression, Luo Binghe could make himself look like a harmless stock character and slip into the bustling crowd. He really did look like a fine youth from a normal sect—it’s just that his face was a bit excessively good-looking and it was hard to avoid drawing people’s attention. As for Shen Qingqiu, aside from that one not-quite-splendid time he showed his face in Jinlan City, he had been buried in the dirt, not showing his face for many years. The chance of being recognized was even lower.

Spectators, packed into layers, encircled the temple hall and plaza in a wall of humanity. In the past, the most numerous and the most high and mighty definitely would have been Huan Hua Palace’s disciples. But, now that Huan Hua Palace had become a demonic cult, they were naturally excluded. They had not even received an invitation, and not one of them was in sight.

Several Zhao Hua Temple abbots presided over the conference in the center of the Hall of Great Strength. Even Great Master Wu Chen was standing among them.³ Only after looking closer was Shen Qingqiu able to discover that both his lower legs were wooden prosthetics. With these, he would be able to stand and walk as normal.

Cang Qiong Mountain, with Yue Qingyuan as head, sat at the side of the hall, holding a solemn and respectful gaze. Liu Qingge had just arrived behind, stooping over to mutter a few words. Yue Qingyuan's expression stirred. Slightly inclining his head, he cast his gaze around to all sides.

Beside Great Master Wu Chen was Zhao Hua Temple's host, abbot Wu Wang.⁴ This grizzled old monk held his palms together, his deep and low voice resounding through the great hall loud and clear.

“This old monk will ask directly.”

“Everyone present, how many of you had that same dream last night?”

Dream?

Needless to say, this was Luo Binghe's doing!

The latter said softly by Shen Qingqiu's ear, "Shizun, weren't you stressing about not having 'evidence'? This way, won't you not have to go to the trouble?"

No wonder he had slept for a while on Xiu Ya. Shen Qingqiu had thought he had run out of strength but turns out he had been activating his dream abilities at that time.

Luo Binghe's gaze was brimming with "Praise me!" and "Pat my head!", but his head began to hurt. What sort of dreamland had Luo Binghe constructed for them to make the state of affairs so serious that this many people would hastily converge at Zhao Hua Temple for a serious discussion...

He didn't need to ask before someone else said irritably, "Has anyone said a word about what type of dream this was?"

This person looked very familiar. After pondering for a while, Shen Qingqiu suddenly realized. Wasn't this that... from Hua Yue City, what sect was it—oh, the Ba Qi Sect, the head disciple ⁵from Ba Qi Sect!

Great Master Wu Chen said politely, "If I may ask this sect master, what is your cultivation level?"

The person replied, "Late-stage core formation!"

The two abbots sent each other a glance, and many people began to cough lightly.

Mysteriously, Great Master Wu Chen seemed to have come to a small realization. “That... this is quite strange. In this temple, everyone above the core formation stage all had the same dream...”

The meaning behind his words was that if he really was in late-stage core formation, he should also have had the dream...

The people below voiced their agreements one after another. “That’s right, all of us below core formation were perfectly fine last night.”

To have lied about one’s cultivation status under everyone’s eyes, and to have been exposed on the spot, this really was lifting up a stone and dropping it on your own foot.⁶ Shen Qingqiu inwardly lit a candle for this dear friend who spent so long without a bit of progress.

Though that shixiong’s cultivation hadn’t grown too much in these years, his face had gotten quite a bit thicker. He still didn’t act ashamed and said in a loud voice, “There are exceptions for everything! What’s more important to discuss—what type of dream was it?”

Ba Qi Sect, with this name leaking hegemonic spirit, didn’t even have a single cultivator who had achieved core formation.⁷ Or else, he wouldn’t have needed to chase this line of inquiry in this plaza full of people. Looks

like this one hadn't received an invitation to the discussion, but purely came to get in on the action, slipping in with a familiar face.

Wu Wang wrinkled his brow. However, Great Master Wu Chen had a good temperament and patiently began to give him an outline: "The contents of the dream were that Tianlang-Jun, who had been suppressed under Bailu Mountain, had regained a flesh body, beginning to raise foul winds and bloody rain...⁸"

Though Great Master Wu Chen's phrasing was elegant and full of hidden meaning, the contents were somewhat abridged. Going by Luo Binghe's taste, those "foul winds and bloody rain" on his tongue definitely were not simple beatings and killings, they definitely left out many more heavy plays...

Chapter 69 – In Zhao Hua Temple 2

Wu Wang said, “When one or two people have the same dream, it can already be considered to be peculiar. However, if several hundred people have the same dream at the same time, even the word ‘fantastical’ wouldn’t be able to explain this phenomenon. And this dream is completely out of the ordinary. It was too realistic. When you wake up, you would feel as if reality isn’t even as vivid as the sceneries from the dream.”

The cultivators that were at core formation stage were all in agreement with the experience from the dream, and each of them nodded their heads at each other confusedly, hearts filled of terror. Someone questioned, “This Tianlang-Jun, why exactly was he sealed? If he really is this scary, in the past, how was he sealed?”

Master Wu Chen sighed. “This is another enmity caused by sin. If the Palace Master of Huan Hua Palace was here today, there is no estimate to how much he would sigh with pity.”

There was a woman’s voice full of astonishment. “Huan Hua Palace’s Palace Master? What does this have to do with Luo Binghe?”

The voice was sweet and clear, like the song of a golden oriole. Shen Qingqiu’s gaze followed the sound of the voice.

The one that was speaking was a slender, beautiful nun from the Tianyi Sect.

As for which one, Shen Qingqiu was not able to say, because there were three nuns with the same face and outfit, like they came out of the same mold. When they stood next to one another, they looked like three astonishingly beautiful blue flowers. Even the feeling that they expressed was the same indescribable, peculiar feeling.....of excitement. Yes, it really was the feeling of excitement.

It was the three identical sisters in Luo Binghe's Inner Palace. Long time no see, Inner Palace!

If it was the past, Shen Qingqiu would definitely be overwhelmed with joy. He would then, on one hand, happily push for the scene where the protagonist would chase after a woman while on the other hand, aim a mouthful of complaints towards Airplane Shooting Toward the Sky. But now.....

Luo Binghe's voice was very deep and quiet, but the smell of vinegar has already drifted for over ten miles.¹ "Shizun, are they pretty?"

Ai, fine, they don't need to bring this up. Shen Qingqiu brought his gaze back. The plot has been changed into a jumbled mess and the three nuns weren't made into containers for Luo Binghe so they shouldn't be close to Luo Binghe. However, they still expressed concern when faced with information related to him. Shen Qingqiu automatically explained the

excitement on their face as the blossoming affection of a young woman. Luo Binghe's stallion power was still very powerful!

Master Wu Wang said, "Amitabha. The Palace Master that we are speaking of is the Old Palace Master of the last generation. That Luo Binghe has utilized sinister means to obtain the title. How can he have the ability to serve as the Palace Master?"

Luo Binghe lifted an eyebrow and unhappily slanted his mouth. Master Wu Wang continued speaking.

"However, this situation is inseparable from the Huan Hua Palace. A few decades ago, the Old Palace Master had a chief disciple called Su Xiyan."

Shen Qingqiu's spirit was trembling in excitement. Following this development, they are going to unravel the mystery surrounding the birth of Luo Binghe.

"That woman had shocking talent, was intelligent and sensitive when making decisions, and she had the aura of a tyrant. The Old Palace Master loved and cared for this private disciple. He thought of her as a pearl that should be protected in his hands and trained her to be the next Palace Master of Huan Hua Palace. No matter where he went, he would bring Su Xiyan along with him. The importance that he placed in her was abnormal."

Shen Qingqiu thought back to the Old Palace Master in the Holy Mausoleum with his dull eyes and saliva flowing down his chin. He thought

to himself that the Old Palace Master most likely did not think of Su Xiyan as a pearl that needed to be protected. The meat that was exclusively devoured by himself should be more accurate.

In the Great Hall, no one made a sound. There was only the voice of Master Wu Wang.

“On one occasion, the Old Palace Master and Su Xiyan followed the requests of a village and went to exterminate demonic creatures. When they were returning back to the Palace, they encountered an old city downstream from Luo Chuan. In that city, demons and other evil beings were running rampant. There was not many left of the city’s original population. However, Su Xiyan was able to meet a young man that was out alone in a tea house.”

“That young man had an extraordinary aura coupled with a top grade appearance. Sitting under a weeping willow, he was singing poetry overlapped by music. This type of character should not have appeared at such a place at such a time. At that time, Su Xiyan thought that it was strange. She had a brief conversation with that stranger and immediately deduced that this person had a goal and was definitely not ordinary.”

Shen Qingqiu listened eagerly.

Tianlang-Jun really was an artistic youth who loved the literary arts in the realms of humans since childhood. And what kind of artistic youth is the scariest? One that looks handsome who is also intelligent. If it was like this, then what happens next can be easily determined. As long as his singing

didn't make people feel too sorry for their ears, then the possibility of love at first sight was definitely possible.

Who would have known that the plot would take a sharp turn for the worst?

Su Xiyan immediately reported back to her shifu. As the Old Palace Master thought more on the subject, he also became more wary. When he noticed that the young man was affectionate towards Su Xiyan and that they were friendly enough to enjoy a conversation, the Old Palace Master decided to use this. He ordered her to get close to the other to get more information. Su Xiyan had quite a set of skills—she easily discovered that the young man wasn't an ordinary person. He was the current ruler of the great demons that dominated the north and the south, Tianlang-Jun.

Originally, many would think that in the meeting, the man had feelings while the woman had intentions; however, it actually pertained the internal affairs between the righteous and demonic sects.

This wasn't the common dramatic story of a nefarious Sacred Ruler of the demonic sect meeting a pure white flower. Instead, it was a story of an innocent king who didn't know that human hearts were filled with evil intentions that met with a tyrannic flower with a heart that was both cold and dark.

Shen Qingqiu finally understood the meaning behind the smile-yet-not-quite-a-smile that gave off the impression of being “cold and ruthless,” along with the odd tone of voice that Tianlang-Jun had when Shen Qingqiu mentioned Su Xiyan.

“The Old Palace Master continued to let Su Xiyan pretend to get closer to Tianlang-Jun while he sent out other people to monitor the situation in the dark. Who would have known that the disciples that he sent out would all be avoided? The Old Palace Master had to personally head out. Finally, all the efforts had not been wasted—they finally discovered the reason Tianlang-Jun was staying in the Human realm. One day, Su Xiyan and Tianlang-Jun had a meeting on Bailu Mountain. They sat together on the head of a gigantic green snake as they talked quietly.”

That giant green snake, if he didn't guess wrong, was probably Zhuzhi-Lang. No matter how he thought of it, only Zhuzhi-Lang came to mind. Either as a nephew or as a subordinate, to be brought out on a date to be a seat cushion—no matter how you hear it, it sounded like Zhuzhi-Lang was way too pitiful!

“The Old Palace Master, for fear of being discovered by Tianlang-Jun, hid nearby without daring to get too close and listened to their barely audible conversation. Su Xiyan patiently guided their conversation and took an indirect approach, coaxing Tianlang-Jun until he temporarily forgot himself enough to reveal his true purpose for sneaking into the human world: a massacre of the cultivation world in which every sect and faction's treasures will be looted to strengthen the demon race's power!”

At the last sentence, there was the sound of the crowd gasping as one while Shen Qingqiu sighed.

Frankly speaking, this type of typical and cliché BOSS-like reasoning wasn't Tianlang-Jun's style. He wasn't the type of person who would come

up with that kind of grandiose plan. Furthermore, as the Supreme Ruler, Tianlang-Jun could enter the demon race's Mausoleum, a source of inexhaustible treasures, whenever he wished. This was a person who could arrange vendors' stalls that were full of treasures in a circle on the ground to play with when he had nothing to do.² Would such a person really bother with the four sect's few treasures?

Shen Qingqiu had a lot of doubts about this story but Great Master Wu Wang continued: "The Old Palace Master immediately informed the sect master of every great sect about this matter. Tianlang-Jun met Su Xiyao twice a month at Bailu Mountain. All the sects agreed on a plan: on their next meeting, the sects would all join forces to encircle and suppress³ Tianlang-Jun."

"As for what happened then, regarding the Battle of Bailu Mountain, it would be better for Sect Master Yue, who was present at the battle, to narrate the events of that day."

Yue Qingyuan said: "There's not much to say about the situation on the battlefield that day. Tianlang-Jun didn't expect that instead of Su Xiyao, he would encounter an attack from all sides.⁴ There was only one demon general, Zhuzhi-Lang, with him who also got caught in the encirclement.

Thus, in a manner of speaking, it could be said that their side won the battle. He spoke calmly, not making the slightest effort to whitewash the truth. There were many who had heard their seniors in the sect boasting about the Battle of Bailu Mountain since their childhood. When they heard the real story of the battle for the first time, they felt somewhat embarrassed.

Yue Qingyuan said: “Because Zhuzhi-Lang protected his master, he was struck head-on by my master’s ‘Heaven’s Wrath’⁵ technique. The spell wrapped around him and turned him back to his original, half-serpent form. He then fled. Tianlang-Jun was suppressed under Bailu Mountain.”

So it turned out that the reason why Zhuzhi-Lang was in his half-serpent form at Luzhi Cave was because of the previous generation’s Qiong Ding Peak master’s heavenly thunderbolts. Based on Zhuzhi-Lang’s logic in which gratitude and grudges are clearly distinguished and the smallest grievance must be avenged... Shen Qingqiu didn’t have enough time to think about it because the System’s notification sound blared in his mind:

[Mission Released: Please help “Luo Binghe” complete the Zhao Hua Temple secondary story arc. Objective: The increase in reputation points⁶ must not be less than 200 points!]

Reputation points?

Shen Qingqiu suddenly remembered what the secondary story arc of Zhao Hua Temple was.

At this point, Shen Qingqiu remembered Sha Hualing’s father Jiuzhong-Jun. This unfortunate demon noble had fallen on hard times when his selfish daughter, who didn’t know right from wrong and harmed her own family,⁷ lost his territory. He spent some time roaming the southern lands gathering a motley crew, hoping to stage a comeback and take revenge on

Luo Binghe. However, when he encountered the protagonist's unbreakable halo (plot armor), he couldn't make either of his two glorious wishes come true...

Since Jiuzhong-Jun's plans were repeatedly foiled, he was nursing many grievances in his heart. What could he do about it?

Of course, it was to vent his anger on someone else!

And that "someone else" was none other than Zhao Hua Temple...

This behavior was similar to Sha Hualing's attack on Qiong Ding Peak. Having an exaggerated opinion of one's abilities, not knowing the immensity of heaven and earth, they courted death. When Shen Yuan read that part of the novel, he mentally scoffed at this pair of father and daughter whose brain circuits seemed to be wired in the same way.

In the original novel, thanks to Jiuzhong-Jun sending a motley group of demon soldiers in the vicinity of Zhao Hua Temple to disturb the people and monks there, Zhao Hua Temple held a meeting, not to discuss the problem of Tianlang-Jun, but to sort out this troubled and depressed group of demons who were looking for others to notice their existence.

However, the exact purpose for this meeting wasn't important. What was more important was that this secondary story arc was indeed a way for Luo Binghe to improve his reputation.

Jiuzhong-Jun's tribe of demons mixed in with the crowd waiting for a chance to "teach those Buddhist monks⁸ a lesson" (in the original novel's words). Just a few seconds after they attacked, they were beautifully overwhelmed by Luo Binghe's domineering pressure. Like this, his reputation was somewhat raised from "absolute evil" to "neither good nor evil."

Shen Qingqiu remained silent and looked around. Sure enough, among the crowd were some "people" who had a sinister look. Very well, the stage was set⁹!

Three beautiful Taoist nuns had an important role in this part of the original plot. These harem members were supposed act together¹⁰ so that the efficiency of increasing reputation points was higher but now they have been relegated to the role of onlookers.

Conclusion: The female lead's roles were once again given to him, right?

Wu Wang solemnly said: "In that dream, Tianlang-Jun rebuilt his body and bathed the human world in blood until the humans were in a terrible situation. This old monk thinks that this was his way of demonstrating his strength to us and a forewarning of his revenge for the Battle of Bailu Mountain."

Someone asked: "Since Tianlang-Jun's original body has been damaged, even if he wants revenge, there's nothing to be afraid of, right?"

Wu Wang said: “You mustn’t underestimate Tianlang-Jun. He’s known as the Ancient Demon race’s most powerful heir, without equal among all the previous members of the past ruling dynasties. Moreover, in addition to his loyal and capable general Zhuzhi-Lang who has been restored to his original condition, he also has a son.”

Chapter 70 – In Zhao Hua Temple 3

Everyone was stunned and began whispering amongst themselves: “Su Xiyan actually had a child with that person?”

“Who was it?”

“Wasn’t she just instructed to deceive Tianlang-Jun? How is it possible.....”

Some were more interested in the aspect of reproductive compatibility: “Can humans and demons really produce offspring?”

“Physically, it’s not that big of a difference. It’s probably feasible.”

Wu Wang said: “Su Xiyan may have approached Tianlang-Jun on her master’s orders, but if she had not been tempted to begin with, how could she have been swayed? My humble self believes she was initially able to restrain herself, but demons have always excelled at deception. Without constant vigilance, a single misstep will cause you to fall under the demon’s wiles and lead to a lifetime of regret. She was already pregnant around the time of the siege. As for the child born from the two of them, you are all here well acquainted with him. It is no other than the one you were just

discussing —the Luo Binghe who has seized and taken over Huan Hua Palace!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the muted whispers in the temple suddenly rose to a roar.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but quietly observe Luo Binghe.

In the beginning, Luo Binghe only listened and even had the mood to chuckle. But the more he heard, the more serious he grew. Right now, his smile had completely faded and his face was pale. Only his eyes were dark and wintry.

Yue Qingyuan's knuckles slowly brushed against the hilt of the Xuan Su sword as he spoke: “I have met senior¹ Su Xiyan once a few years ago during the Immortal Alliance Conference. Luo Binghe certainly bears a strong resemblance to his mother. Initially, I put it off as mere coincidence. After all, in this whole wide world, there are many who share similar features. But for him to carry half of the blood of a demon, it can no longer be a coincidence.”

The man from BaQi Sect butted in again: “If she had been forced, then it's not her fault. But why, knowing that she was carrying the child of that demon, did she give birth to it?”

Someone else agreed immediately: “That's right, if she hadn't given birth, we wouldn't be plagued by this Luo Binghe. Why didn't Su Xiyan

terminate the pregnancy?”

“Tis a shame, really a shame! It’s no wonder I have never heard of this person called Su Xiyan. It’s only natural to hide such a scandal. Having a traitor within your midst—if they didn’t settle the matter themselves, how can they still face their sect master?”

Hearing this, Great Master Wu Chen seemed to have something to say but hesitated. He shook his head slightly and finally said: “Originally, this matter involves a lady’s reputation; moreover, benefactor² Su has passed away. However, this matter is not simple. It should not remain hidden, else this issue will remain unresolved. The blood of the demon race is strong, and the fetus the mother carries is tied to her lifeline. At that time, attempting to abort the fetus would have carried a very high risk.....

Benefactor Su had a proud heart; this was unacceptable to her. In her state, she wouldn’t tolerate the stares of strangers. The Old Palace Master gave her a drug that was harmful to the demon race. After she took it, she left Huan Hua Palace and disappeared. Buddha is merciful. May the rest of you be mindful of your words.”

Luo Binghe remained expressionless, but his fingers flexed and clenched unconsciously.

Near where they both stood, some people whispered furtively: “A child spurned by his own mother even before birth—not an ounce of mercy spared for her own flesh and blood. It’s amazing how women can be so cold-blooded.”

“That’s right, if she hadn’t been so ill-fated as to fall for Tianlang-Jun’s wiles, she would have had such a bright and promising future and be a person of great renown today.”

“I don’t care what fantastic rewards are promised to me—having an affair with a demon and getting knocked up with a monster child is just plain disgusting. This kind of merit, I wouldn’t accept even if it was served to me on a silver platter.”

“Su Xiyan was probably too ashamed to remain, and thus ran away from the sect master.”

The man from BaQi Sect suddenly said: “So from the beginning till the end, there are no facts or evidence pertaining to Tianlang-Jun, and this all rests solely on what the Old Palace Master has told us about Tianlang-Jun?”

The hall fell silent.

The man was oblivious and continued: “I’m just airing my thoughts; you guys can just listen. But, are you really going to launch an offensive just based on the Old Palace Master’s side of the story? Why do I get the feeling that, from the beginning till the end, these are the actions of a jilted lover? Moreover, letting a girl approach a dangerous demon, teaching her to be deceitful, and giving her poison for the abortion, and in the end causing her to leave with grievances—I feel it’s rather despicable. Us from the BaQi Sect would have never done that.”

His words surprised Shen Qingqiu somewhat. Really couldn't tell that this dear fellow, who seemed to be perpetually ky³, could still sometimes talk sense even while he was being ky. It seemed that his IQ was not at the same level as that of the normal supporting characters.

In the end, it was Wu Wang who broke the stilted silence. His white brows bristled disapprovingly as he rebuked: "Foolishness! From time immemorial, demons have been attacking the human world. Would you have us regret our inaction only after Tianlang-Jun has bathed the earth in blood? Moreover, as the head of one of the four major sects⁴, how would it benefit the Old Palace Master of the Huan Hua Palace to deceive everyone so maliciously? As for the bastard born of this illicit affair with the demon, we definitely cannot allow him to live! It is regrettable that the demon was able to survive the poison and was not aborted as a fetus!"

This statement was delivered with a strong sense of righteousness and was immediately greeted with claps and cheers. Great Master Wu Chen clasped his hands together as he recited a prayer, disapproval writ large on his face.

It wasn't that no one felt such a pitiless act wasn't particularly cruel, but having heard Wu Wang's stirring speech, as well as influenced by the mood of the gathering, their thoughts had shifted. The fetus was Luo Binghe, after all,—why should they spare it any sympathy? And so, they also cheered along.

Luo Binghe's eyelids were lowered, his gaze hooded. He seemed to be listening still, but his mind had already drifted elsewhere. His features, which had been gradually softening in these past few days, were now glacial again.

The people gathered in the Hall of Great Strength⁵ were now gnashing their teeth over his escape from death, and exclaiming over how good it would have been if he had died in the womb. All this fell on deaf ears.

According to the ideal flow of the script, in this location, the plot should have developed thus: the leaders gather to seriously discuss how to coordinate and deal with Tianlang-Jun → the sudden appearance of demons hellbent on wreaking havoc → Luo Binghe single-handedly defeat the demons in the ambush, and brush up on the feelings of goodwill. But because of this group of gossipy hens who brought up Luo Binghe's background story, the focus has shifted.

Eyeing Luo Binghe who remained mute, Shen Qingqiu suddenly regretted his decision.

He should not have accepted the mission of Zhao Hua Temple.

Great Master Wu Chen sighed: "Why are such words necessary? Benefactor Su, ai, benefactor Su was a single lady who lived on her own outside. The Old Palace Master sent out people to search for her for years in vain—who knows how much she had suffered before her death? The blood flowing in Luo Binghe's veins may be half demon, but Luo Binghe has never caused any grievous harm...."

Wu Wang rebuked him: "Shidi should not be so carelessly merciful. You almost lost your life back in Jinlan City. You should well understand the

sinister hearts of demons. Against them, it is always best to take the pre-emptive course of action. This father and son duo have been planning for a long time—they will join hands and make a comeback to wreak destruction on us. Tolerating their existence is not an act of mercy, but a show of womanly weakness. The final outcome will be worse than anything you can dream of!”

Although this monk Wu Wang’s cultivation was decent, he was too bellicose. Aside from not having hair, he did not radiate the sense of enlightenment that marked those who practiced Buddhist ethics. An ax would suit his temperament better than the abbot’s staff.⁶ Unlike Wu Chen, whose skills were average but has a kind and peaceful heart, he was more worthy of bearing the title of “Great Master.” Even in the face of such harsh criticism, he remained serene, and did not back down: “Joining hands against us, this.... is mere conjecture, no?”

It was unclear how long the two abbots of Zhao Hua Temple intended to continue wrangling. Yue Qingyuan suddenly spoke up: “Whether they join forces or not is up for debate, but one thing is certain: Luo Binghe is not a good person.”

He raised his voice: “Qingqiu, still not coming out?”

Shen Qingqiu’s hair stood on end.⁷ He dawdled for a bit, before slowly standing up.

There was the sensation of being a primary school student who has been singled out by the class teacher for a scolding. His face felt hot, but he was

fortunately thick-skinned enough to maintain a calm and unruffled appearance. He bowed in greeting: “Zhangmen-shixiong.”

Since he has been called out, attention would also be drawn to the one next to him. Sure enough, someone immediately exclaimed: “Luo Binghe! It’s Luo Binghe!”

“It really is him! When did he enter?!”

“Shen Qingqiu is here too. Isn’t he supposed to be dead?!”

“But I saw him self destruct at Huayue City with my own eyes.....”

The hubbub was as noisy as all hell, but mixed in it were the soft and delicate voices of women. They were the three beautiful Taoist priestesses from Tian Yi Monastery. The three women clasped at each other’s arms, their faces strangely flushed. Stranger still was that their maidenly shyness seemed to be directed at Shen Qingqiu.....

Yue Qingyuan gazed at him while seated, and asked bluntly: “Are you done with this buffoonery⁸?”

Yue Qingyuan has never spoken to him so harshly before. For him to use the word “buffoonery” was on the same level as administering a heavy

beating⁹. It seems like Liu Qingge had been very enthusiastic while bad-mouthing him.

Shen Qingqiu vowed to one day steal Cheng Luan and use it to slice all the pork legs in the Twelve Peaks' kitchens until the sword's bright gleam was smothered under layers of grease.

Follow the script, follow the script, okay? I'm begging you to please turn all your attention to the demons who have already broken into the temple, alright! How am I supposed to increase the values of goodwill!

He was about to make a move to draw their notice to the suspicious figures who had infiltrated the ranks of the various sects disguised as their disciples, when Wu Wang slammed the butt of his staff on the ground, sneering: "Luo Binghe, you've saved us quite some trouble by delivering yourself to our doorsteps. Why not just tell us what Tianlang-Jun has dreamt up for us this time?"

Luo Binghe replied icily: "That is his business, not mine."

Someone spoke up: "He is your father—dare you say it's not your business as well?"

Luo Binghe remained indifferent: "He's not my father."

Wu Wang said: “In the face of overwhelming truth, you’re still trying to evade. Do you think all of us here are gullible children?”

Luo Binghe shook his head stubbornly as he repeated: “He’s not my father.”

Wu Wang snorted: “You really are the scourge of the century. If Su Xiyan had gotten rid of you back then, it would have saved everyone a lot of grief!”

The vicious words struck a nerve. Luo Binghe’s breath caught in his throat for a moment, his eyes reddening. Without a second thought, Shen Qingqiu caught hold of his hand.

Liu Qingge had been standing behind Yue Qingyuan with his arms crossed. Seeing him openly move to Luo Binghe’s side under everyone’s watchful gaze, a vein jumped on his forehead: “Hey!”

Liu Qingge was too irritated to say more and only barked out sharply once. However, it didn’t deter Shen Qingqiu, who willfully ignored it. It definitely wouldn’t be fun if Luo Binghe flew into a rage here and now. It’s not just a question of whether the feelings of goodwill can be increased. The crux was, in the novel’s Zhao Hua Temple chapter¹⁰, they had to tread carefully.

If spiritual power was used, the hundreds of people present could pulp them with one collective blow; using demonic power, there were countless masters of spell arrays from Zhao Hua Temple who were most skilled in

sealing away demon magic.[enf_note]硬打 yìngdǎ – not sure what this means in this context. Suggestions?[/efn_note] It's not like his IQ has fallen to the level of the Sha Hualing father and daughter pair.

Luo Binghe said freezingly: “Who is Su Xiyan? My mother is just a laundry woman.”

Shen Qingqiu said softly: “Wu Wang’s words are without basis. You should know by now what kind of person the Old Palace Master was. The credibility of these people’s stories about what happened in the past is debatable. Just forget about it!”

He used the tone of a master instructing his disciple, striving to appear calm and objective. Luo Binghe tugged at his arm, as if seeking proof and validation: “Shizun, Tianlang-Jun is not my father. I don’t need a father.”

Shen Qingqiu didn’t know what to say. He could only grip his hand and motion for him to calm down first.

Originally, Luo Binghe’s past was not sketched out in such detail. Shen Qingqiu really couldn’t predict how big of an impact it would be on Luo Binghe, but it was unlikely to be something that could be resolved with a few comforting words and pats on the head.

The faint dreams and fantasies he had long held have been mercilessly crushed to powder. Father and son refuse to recognize each other. Tianlang-

Jun, as a pure-blooded demon, has never had any concept of familial ties. Add to the fact that he has suffered at the hands of humans and Su Xiyan, that hatred has been spread to Luo Binghe. There was no mention of the relationship between the two in the Holy Mausoleum and no tenderness either. And towards this father and son pair, Su Xiyan had also long made her choices clear through her actions: deceiving, exploiting, loathing, rejecting, viewing them as disgraceful, and abandoning them.

Luo Binghe was not a wanted child.

Wu Wang frowned: “As expected of a demon, to be able to utter such words.”

Luo Binghe turned a deaf ear to him: “If he is my father, why didn’t he mention it?”

At most, when he had been beating up Luo Binghe, he had said off-handedly: “Looks like his mother.” And? What else?

There had been nothing else.

Shen Qingqiu was silent. Personally, he thought that it was most likely because.... Tianlang-Jun was truly a nutcase?

This was all wrong. Shen Qingqiu hurriedly turned around, saying: “Everyone, please don’t be hasty. Luo Binghe is not here at Zhao Hua Temple today to cause trouble, nor does he have any ill intent....”

Great Master Wu Chen echoed: “That’s right, Shixiong may wish to listen to Peak Lord Shen.”

Shen Qingqiu threw him a grateful look, but Wu Wang sneered: “No ill intent? How do you explain this then?”

His voice rose to a shout on the last word. Dozens of warrior monks in red gold robes suddenly popped up within the crowd, seizing and twisting several people to the ground. From the bodies of the people who were pinned down, black qi slowly swirled out. Naturally, the scene was thus:

“There are demons rushing in!”

“Luo Binghe, you’ve really come well prepared!”

This development was FUBAR!

These disorderly lackeys of Jiuzhong-Jun were originally supposed to be used to brush up the goodwill towards Luo Binghe, but has now been turned around to implicate him instead, with Luo Binghe deemed as the mastermind of this ambush!

With great foresight, he whipped out his folding fan and, sure enough, Wu Wang's staff came crashing heavily against it. Shen Qingqiu lifted the fan a little, unyieldingly holding it against the staff in mid-air.

Syeki's Notes:

“An ax would suit his temperament better than the abbot's staff.” 不该拿支法杖做方丈，应该抄对板斧做李逵 Bit of a pun here. Basically saying instead of carrying a fǎzhàng (staff) like a fāngzhàng (Buddhist abbot), Wu Wang should copy Li Kui (a rather berserk character who wields his axes indiscriminately) and carry an ax instead.

法杖 (Fǎ zhàng) – staff (like what the monk Tang Sanzang in Journey to the West carries, probably)

方丈 (Fāngzhàng) – abbot

李逵 (Lǐkuí) – Li Kui is a fictional character in Water Margin, one of the Four Great Classical Novels in Chinese literature. The character is a tough melee fighter who uses a pair of axes in battle and often charges ahead of his men. Can be somewhat indiscriminate when he goes on a rampage, with innocents sometimes getting killed.

Chapter 71 – The System’s Penalty

The power he expended was controlled, just enough to cause a stalemate with Wu Wang. He even had time to look back and hastily say a few words to Luo Binghe: “Leave it to Master.” Wu Wang was about to continue mouthing some empty words, but he unexpectedly went straight to the point instead, scolding: “Shen Qingqiu, don’t be like Su Xiyao—losing her mind to the demon race in a moment of carelessness and regretting it for life. As a Peak Lord, you must at least have some sense of honor!”

Shen Qingqiu’s feet slipped, and he almost failed to prevent himself from losing his bearings. How could these matters be the same?!

He managed to rearrange the distorted expression on his face with much difficulty. Who knew that Luo Binghe facing off against Wu Wang was a slap to the face?

Shen Qingqiu poured spiritual energy into the tip of his fan, shaking off the attacker’s staff: “Didn’t I say to let me handle this?” Luo Binghe’s face was covered in gloom: “He can say things about me, but he’s not allowed to badmouth you!”

In the time it took him to say these words, the two of them had already been surrounded by the cultivators from various sects who were present at the Hall of Great Strength. As expected, the demonic aura easily aroused hostility once it was used. Wu Wang waved his staff: “Lord Yue, this devil

continues to call Shen Qingqiu master. Shen Qingqiu also does not deny it. What do you think? Do you also still recognize Luo Binghe as a disciple of the Cang Qiong Mountain Sect?”

Yue Qingyuan did not answer. His face did not reveal any emotions, and his voice remained steady. He remained seated: “Shidi, come back.”

Shen Qingqiu subconsciously stepped toward him, thinking that it would be better to own up to his mistakes and let his senior put out the fire. If Yue Qingyuan could stand on his side, it would definitely be a strategic location. But before he could come over, Luo Binghe grabbed him and entreated: “Don’t go!”

He repeated himself: “Don’t go.” There was an imploring note to his words.

Just as Shen Qingqiu was about to speak, hundreds of streams of sword energy rushed to surround and attack the two men.

Liu Qingge’s eyes glared, and he drew Cheng Luan from its sheath in response. Suddenly, the whole of the Hall of Great Strength shook. A current of black and white electricity crisscrossed and expanded, and the encompassing light detonated.

After the tremors passed, the ground still heaved and lurched, and only a quarter of the people present were left standing. Luo Binghe’s eyes were so red that they glowed in the daylight, as if they could leak hot magma or

dark red blood. His clothes were wrapped in an endlessly churning dark aura.

A member of the demon clan who had been pressed to the ground burst out laughing: “It seems it’s true that the cultivation world has no shame. When you dealt with Tianlang-Jun in the past, you used underhanded methods to surround and besiege him. You’re still using them today!”

“Go ahead and use them. You don’t seem to fear death. Huh!”

Luo Binghe held Shen Qingqiu against him with one arm and said: “I’m from the demon clan. You can attack me at will. But what did my shizun do to have you besiege him as well?”

Shen Qingqiu was actually unharmed. The tremors earlier had been quite strong. He’d stumbled, only to have Luo Binghe draw him into his arms to protect him. Wu Wang wanted to continue intervening, so he said: “You call him shizun. He doesn’t deny it. Isn’t that enough?”

This stubborn ass! Shen Qingqiu flipped the fan in his hands until it flew up, and the swords that swept in to attack from all angles were continuously beaten back by the fan. He put on a fake smile and said: “Whether this Shen denies it or not, what does it have to do with you?”

The sounds of clashing weapons were endless. Shen Qingqiu turned around. Suddenly, he saw Yue Qingyuan place his hand on Xuan Su’s hilt. With an imposing air, he drew closer until they came face to face.

His hand went limp on the spot, and he almost hurled the fan away.

Fight with Yue Qingyuan? Nonsense!

Who would have expected that when Yue Qingyuan raised Xuan Su in his hand, it was not aimed at Shen Qingqiu at all? Instead, it was pointed several inches away. A loud noise rang in his ears, and Shen Qingqiu turned his head. Xuan Su's hilt and Wu Wang's staff blocked and circled each other head-to-head.

Wu Wang couldn't beat Luo Binghe, so he changed tactics and tried to hit him from behind instead!

Although Yue Qingyuan had entered the melee, he did not attack the two targets who were at the heart of the battle. Instead, he idly assisted She Qingqiu and shielded him from attacks. Launching himself into the fray, Liu Qingge also followed into battle. The two men struck indiscriminately, almost of the same mind. Hit anyone, as long as it wasn't Shen Qingqiu. It was pure chaos. What was even worse was that the people wreaking havoc were two masters, and their attacks were both precise and ruthless. Wu Wang had finally reached the end of his patience, and he called angrily: "Peak Lord Liu!"

With his sword, Liu Qingge whittled all the horsetail whisks of the Tianyi Monastery's Taoists into bald stumps. "My hand slipped," he said with a poker face.

Wu Wang was angered until his beard curled: “Master Yue!”

After Yue Qingyuan had deflected the staff that was aiming for Shen Qingqiu three times, Master Yue also said serenely: “My eyes are bad.”

Everyone inside the hall silently agreed: The rumors about Cang Qiong Mountain Sect protecting its own—it’s definitely a well-deserved reputation!”

One hand making a mistake could be explained, but how could both hands slip? One instance of mistaken identity is understandable. But acting willfully blind ever since you joined the battle, can this still be called a fair fight? Which side are you supposed to be standing on?! (ノ□)ノ ㄣ

You two are showing us with your actions: “Fighting is allowed. Fighting against the Qing Jing Peak’s Peak Lord is not!”

Shen Qingqiu pushed Luo Binghe back: “Want to die? Go ahead!”

Luo Binghe couldn’t be pushed aside. He caught him by the wrist instead, saying: “Shizun, let’s go. Follow me!”

Shen Qingqiu didn't turn around to look at his expression. First of all, he didn't have the time for it. Second of all, he didn't have enough patience to do so. He waved his hand, urging: "Still not moving! I'm telling you to go, so go! Listen to me¹!"

He didn't know how long he could hold back the men surrounding them, so it was even more unlikely for him to abandon such a chaotic situation and run off with Luo Binghe first. Yue Qingyuan and Liu Qingge's method of distraction was too obvious. Wu Wang was already enraged. Either him or Luo Binghe—one of them should remain here, otherwise, a feud would arise between the Zhao Hua Temple and the Cang Qiong Mountain Sect.

After a moment of silence, Luo Binghe whispered: "...Very well."

"Since it's Shizun who says so."

The next moment, he landed on the square outside the Hall of Great Strength.

His speed was so fast that it was terrifying. At that moment, people actually forgot to retrieve their swords and chase after them. Wu Wang screamed: "Bujie²!"

Several monks rushed to the square. Shen Qingqiu swiftly drew Xiu Ya in one smooth motion. He snapped a finger, and the sword ran amok, ruining their formation and messing up their steps. He shouted out: "Your master

will return to Cang Qiong Mountain first. I'll find you later." Luo Binghe had the ability to enter the dreamscape. Any time he wanted to meet, there wouldn't be any issues at all. Just nod your head and fall asleep, and when the time came, Shen Qingqiu can comfort his hurt feelings. But once these words were spoken out in public, Shen Qingqiu inevitably felt a bit guilty. He couldn't resist sneaking a peek at the two men from the Cang Qiong Mountain Sect.

When he noticed this, the corners of Luo Binghe's mouth lifted, revealing a strange smile.

Quite a few people saw his smile and shivered, their hearts swallowed by irrational fear.

Luo Binghe said slowly: "I will come back and get you."

Before his voice had even died away, he had already disappeared from the hall.

Wu Wang let out a chagrined huff when he realized that he had gone missing. Shen Qingqiu breathed a sigh of relief and immediately summoned Xiu Ya back into its sheath.

He unclasped his sword and held it horizontally, both hands extended in front of Yue Qingyuan in entreaty: "It was an emergency just now. Qingqiu had no choice but to act. I have offended you all. Please, allow my master and my martial brothers to pronounce their punishment on me."

Yue Qingyuan said “hmmm” and put away his sword: “Since you’ve already returned, let’s just discuss the matter of your punishment after we return to Cang Qiong Mountain.”

Shen Qingqiu peeked at his face. Although Yue Qingyuan looked very serious, from his actions during the battle earlier... It should only be a front that he put on for outsiders.

According to his past experiences, Yue Qingyuan’s “let’s just discuss after we return to Cang Qiong Mountain” was basically equivalent to “let’s just forget about this matter and go back home for dinner instead.”

It was true that his own sect’s master was easygoing, but there was no way that Wu Wang would be so easily sent off. Luo Binghe had been allowed to escape in full view of everyone. Although the blame could mostly be laid on the three peak lords who stirred up the waters, any way you looked at it, Zhao Hua Temple had also suffered a bit of embarrassment. He clapped his hands and said: “I’m afraid we can’t let it go just like this. Peak Lord Shen must at least give an accounting. Otherwise, Cang Qiong Mountain Sect must explain in his stead!”

Someone shrieked from a corner: “Just now he said that Su Xiyan was being silly. It seems that a brother’s kindness cannot compare to one man’s flowery words. This Shen Qingqiu is even more silly. There’s no need to speak flowery words to Luo Binghe. He has no sense of what’s important at all.”

Shen Qingqiu pretended not to have heard anything. Yue Qingyuan politely said: “I can discipline someone from the Cang Qiong Mountain Sect myself. Trust that I will give you all a proper accounting.”

Abbot Wu Chen said agreeably: “Amitabha, that would be for the best. I believe that Master Yue and Peak Lord Shen will most definitely handle this matter both fairly and properly.”

Wu Wang humped and continued his accusations: “That’s not necessarily true. Have you all forgotten how Peak Lord Shen promised to give an explanation about the sowers at Jinlan City? But actually, he hasn’t said anything about it to this day. He escaped not long after being imprisoned inside Huan Hua Palace’s water prison. Then he faked his own death and hid himself away at Hua Yue City for five years. Cang Qiong Mountain Sect hasn’t even given a detailed statement about this matter yet. If this is Peak Lord Shen’s “confession” to your sects, then this old monk really doesn’t dare compliment anyone.”

He brought up old news again. But Shen Qingqiu’s mind had already wandered off, and he wasn’t listening at all.

The system kept sending out red alerts—who still had the heart to listen to an old monk stir-frying cold rice and turning over old scores!

System: [“Zhao Hua Monastery” branching plotline cut off. Mission Stats: Reputation Value -200. Mission Accomplishment Status: Total Failure!]

He finally hit 200, but it wasn't +200, it was -200!

This would be the first time he's failed a task in all the time he's been dealing with the system.

His brain was suddenly assailed with sensations of sharp pain and severe vertigo. System: [Mission failed! May host please get ready. You will be sent back to your original world within 60 seconds.]

Any value below zero meant being sent back to one's original world!

Shen Qingqiu roared: "Quit f**king with me! This means being directly sent back to my original world?! Don't you know that my original account has already been canceled?! It's only one failure. My coolness value is so high, can't I use that to offset a bit? How about B Points? My B Points are also very high! Such high values should be of some use, right?!"

His mind was spinning, and the color on his face kept changing—from blue to white to red to green. He looked like he was about to vomit or faint at any time. Liu Qingge noticed that something was off with his expression and asked: "What's wrong with you?"

System: [Do you want to use all your coolness points to buy a different penalty?]

Shen Qingqiu answered: “Buy, buy, buy! No matter how much it costs!”

Ding! System: [Purchase successful. Coolness points zeroed out. Please note your balance. Penalty is loading.]

The pink coolness points bar really turned into zero. This was his second time zeroing out. “Adios, wave bye-bye” The second time!

Shen Qingqiu’s head no longer hurt, but he still felt dizzy. Yue Qingyuan also noticed that something was wrong with him: “Were you hit earlier?”

Liu Qingge supported Shen Qingqiu with one hand and until he had steadied himself. Looking up, Liu Qingge asked: “Who did it?”

Bai Zhan Peak’s Peak Lord asked a question, and everyone hurriedly shook their heads in succession.

Was he joking?! Who could manage to land a blow on Shen Qingqiu?! Considering the scenario earlier, even if someone had managed to hit Shen Qingqiu, it probably wouldn’t have landed cleanly anyway. Who was it that the three masters had been secretly protecting earlier?! Yet he still had the nerve to sling accusations when it was obviously only him who had the opportunity to beat up others!

The sounds of arguments coming from outside were getting louder and louder. Shen Qingqiu was woozy, and his eyes were going dark. He was wedged between Yue Qingyuan and Liu Qingge when a loud boom sounded.

Looks like he made the wrong decision.

When he opened his eyes again, he was no longer at Zhao Hua Temple. Shen Qingqiu looked in all directions, but there wasn't a single soul to be found.

It looked like he was inside a dream. But if that was the case, and he was dreaming right now, then the location should be Qing Jing Peak. Because his dreamscape and Luo Binghe's were connected, and the latter's favorite dreaming location was Qing Jing Peak.

Shen Qingqiu walked around aimlessly for a while. After careful observation, he eventually confirmed that this place was indeed Qing Jing Peak.

However, it was Qing Jing Peak after it burned down.

The bamboo grove and bamboo house had been burned to the ground. Only blackened ruins and withered roots remained. Everything had collapsed helter-skelter, as wisps of white smoke carrying a burnt smell drifted away.

The more Shen Qingqiu saw this desolate and miserable scene, the more uncertain he became.

The burning was done too thoroughly. Such terrible vengeance!

Shen Qingqiu alerted the system: “Can you report our location?”

System: [Greetings. While the penalty is in progress, the system’s other functions cannot be accessed. Hoping for your understanding and wishing you the best of luck.]

So the penalty had already begun. Shen Qingqiu thumped on a nonexistent wall. Suddenly, the sound of footsteps on gravel reached his ears.

The steps sounded out—walk a pace, stop a pace, slow but not sluggish. They gave off a feeling of strength and readiness.

A figure appeared in the middle of the expanse of scorched earth and rubble.

The man’s black robes and wide sleeves fluttered gently as the cold wind swept by. His face and his collar were the same flawless and snowy white. His arms were crossed as he slowly walked closer. There was a supercilious expression on his face, and from time to time he would kick away the charred gravel at his feet with a disinterested look.

Shen Qingqiu unconsciously cried out: “Luo Binghe!”

Luo Binghe blinked. Head turned at a slight angle, he shot a frosty, piercing gaze in his direction.

For Shen Qingqiu, being speared by such a gaze was like being nailed in place by two knives. His heart jumped. All of a sudden, he felt that the wind was too strong, and his clothes were too thin. Otherwise, why would his brow and his spine both feel a chill?

Luo Binghe raised a brow. He flicked some nonexistent ash off his sleeve and breathed a slightly doubtful “hmmm” through his nose.

Shen Qingqiu stopped in his tracks.

This feeling, it’s wrong.

Luo Binghe cocked his head: “Shen Qingqiu?”

Even more wrong.

That tone, that expression, that temperament. They were not like Luo Binghe, but they were indeed also like Luo Binghe.

What needed to be clarified was that the one who stood in front of Shen Qingqiu... seemed to be the “Luo Binghe” from the original novel.

Shen Qingqiu froze in place. When “Luo Binghe” saw that he didn’t answer, he took a step towards his side.

Shen Qingqiu subconsciously sought to wield a sword in defense, but both his waistband and his hands were empty.

He knocked at the system: “System, what the hell kind of joke is this penalty supposed to be? Where did you even drag this out from? Are you asking me to fight the BOSS with my bare hands?!”

System: [Greetings. While the penalty is in progress, the system’s other functions cannot be accessed, including consultation. Hoping for your understanding and wishing you the best of luck.]

F*** f*** f***! He had no idea what to do in this kind of situation!

Luo Binghe tucked his hands inside his sleeves and smiled as he remarked: “Shen Qingqiu, why are you here? I don’t seem to remember letting you in?”

Shen Qingqiu was 10,000% certain that the man in front of him was definitely not this world's Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe treated his shizun as the beginning and end of his world, always addressing him in the sweetest and most affectionate manner. He would never dare to call him by name so directly, let alone use such a provocative tone of voice with him.

Anyway, this was just part of the penalty procedure. He probably wouldn't die. Thinking like this, Shen Qingqiu relaxed a little and calmly mentioned: "This is Qing Jing Peak."

Luo Binghe looked around: "If you hadn't said so, I never would have thought it."

How could he not remember? If this really was the original Luo Binghe, then wasn't it him who set fire to Qing Jing Peak?

Chapter 72: The Person Named Shen Jiu

Luo Binghe said, “You’re not afraid of me anymore?”

Not of the one outside. But the one in here, yes!

Luo Binghe raised a hand towards him. “Come here.”

If this was the original Luo Binghe after being blackened, no matter how he beckoned him, Shen Qingqiu definitely would have been so afraid that he would’ve just obediently gone over. But Shen Qingqiu still had the courage to fight to the death. However, the moment he turned around, that black-robed figure appeared in front of him, blocking his path. Shen Qingqiu was only a scant few inches away from knocking into him.

Shen Qingqiu violently backpedaled and narrowly avoided tripping. Luo Binghe reached out two fingers, tugging on his sleeve and pulling him back. He said gently, “Why are you running?”

Facing this face, right now Shen Qingqiu couldn’t even hit him, nor could he be completely afraid of him. He still didn’t give up and continued to knock on the System. “This is really the original Luo Binghe, right? It’s not this world’s Luo Binghe? What should I do to get through the punishment?

Do I have to beat him? This isn't much different from you just sending me back to my original world, is it!"

The System: 【Hello, while the punishment program is running...】

Shen Qingqiu closed the dialogue box.

Luo Binghe stared at his face for a while before he frowned and said, "I keep feeling as if... it seems like there's something different about you. You're really Shen Qingqiu?"

Shen Qingqiu blinked, maintaining his vigilance. Luo Binghe gazed at his face, looking a little perplexed before he slowly reached out and held Shen Qingqiu's right hand.

His palm was the same as always: dry yet ice-cold. Shen Qingqiu's heart was slightly moved, and he was about to say something when his right shoulder suddenly went cold.

In that instant, Shen Qingqiu didn't actually feel the sensation of his right arm leaving his shoulder. He only saw something fly away as half of his body grew light before he had time to react.

Up until a monstrous, enormous pain suddenly washed through his entire body and brain.

Luo Binghe just completely ripped off his right arm!

Upon receiving the heavy injury, Shen Qingqiu's body backlashed with a wave of spiritual energy all on its own. Luo Binghe struck him, and the energy immediately broke and scattered.

There was no way to stop the blood gushing out. Shen Qingqiu's vision blurred, and he might have heard someone screaming, but he also might not have. His ears were ringing too sharply, and he couldn't understand. He only wanted to quickly escape from this person in front of him!

He stumbled backward. After just a few steps, he tripped over the remnants of some charred bamboo, and he toppled, face-up, onto the ground.

The pain from losing an arm was too terrible, to the point that it even overwhelmed the feeling of his head smashing onto the ground. Luo Binghe calmly followed him. This time, he lightly stroked one of Shen Qingqiu's calves.

Human stick!

Right now, Luo Binghe was planning on making him into a human stick!

It hurt so much that it was hard to breathe. Shen Qingqiu used his remaining arm to grab onto Luo Binghe, shaking his head wildly as he gasped for air. “Don’t... don’t...”

Don’t use that face to do something like this.

Luo Binghe used one hand to firmly restrain Shen Qingqiu on the ground. His gaze could nearly be described as sincere and affectionate.

He said gently, “It’s not as if this is my first time doing something like this. How is Shizun still so unaccustomed to it? Then, let’s do it a few more times until you slowly get used to it. How about that?”

In a heartbeat, a gut-wrenching agony spread rapidly from the base of his left leg throughout his entire body.

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t bear it any longer, and he let out a bloodcurdling scream!

Suddenly, the System’s monotonous voice issued a notice: 【The punishment has finished.】

The pain abruptly vanished, and Shen Qingqiu violently turned over and stood up before immediately collapsing onto his knees again. He didn’t

even have the energy to curse the System and slap it in the face as he half-knelt on the ground, watching his drops of cold sweat land in bursts, dazed.

A voice suddenly spoke from the side. “What happened to you?”

Only then did he notice that he wasn’t the only one here.

In addition, it seemed as if he hadn’t been pulled back to reality yet. This was still the dreamscape.

This cave also seemed a little familiar. It looked like the same cave that the Dream Demon hid in when he appeared as a black mist that first time Shen Qingqiu entered the dream all those years ago.

The one next to him was precisely the Dream Demon.

Shen Qingqiu forcefully calmed himself down and asked in reply, “Why am I here at your place?”

The Dream Demon said, “You entered an extremely powerful dreamscape, and it seemed like your primordial spirit was in danger of ripping apart. I wanted to intervene the entire time, but I couldn’t. I tried many times before I suddenly succeeded just then, and along the way, I pulled you into the formation over here.”

Before, he had the impression that the Dream Demon didn't really like him, but unexpectedly, when the Dream Demon saw that the situation wasn't good, he ended up pulling Shen Qingqiu out "along the way." Shen Qingqiu felt slightly surprised, and he said sincerely, "Many thanks, Elder... you've helped me greatly."

The Dream Demon snorted. "No need to thank me. I'm just astonished that last time in the Holy Mausoleum, you actually managed to hang on until that brat woke up. You helped him quite a bit too. Helping him means helping this old man."

That kind of agony from having an arm completely ripped off was already deeply embedded into Shen Qingqiu's mind, and it was triggered any time that face floated up in his brain. Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but grip his right shoulder with his left hand. He had to take in several breaths of air before he could say that name without his voice trembling. "Why don't I see Luo Binghe?"

Usually, the one who tried the hardest and liked pulling him into dreams the most should be Luo Binghe. Basically every time Shen Qingqiu fell asleep, Luo Binghe would come over to disturb him. But this time, the Dream Demon actually beat Luo Binghe to it and pulled Shen Qingqiu into the formation first.

The Dream Demon grew depressed just thinking about it. "How would I know? Ever since the brat learned how to control my nightmare technique, I couldn't enter his dreamscape ever again. In this world, only he dreams what he wishes to. I can't do anything about it."

If Shen Qingqiu couldn't see the adorable Luo Binghe as fast as possible, he felt as if his limbs would continue to hurt the instant he recalled that name. Could the young man who was a pure and innocent little white flower quickly come out and feed him a tranquilizer?!

The Dream Demon shot a glance at him. When he saw that Shen Qingqiu's expression was ashen, his lips pale, the Dream Demon's face grew serious. "That brat will come to find you on his own. Why are you worrying? Before, weren't you doing your best to avoid him?"

Could this count as consolation?

As Shen Qingqiu looked at the Dream Demon, who was feigning disdain, he suddenly felt that this old man was a little cute.

He relaxed and sat on the ground. After a pause, Shen Qingqiu suddenly remembered something. "Elder Dream Demon, when I was in the Holy Mausoleum before, I carried Luo Binghe east. On the way there, I met two people. One of them was a woman. Did you..."

Back then, Qiu Haitang had lost consciousness for a little. When she woke, she went crazy for no reason at all and ran away. Shen Qingqiu suspected greatly that when she was unconscious, she encountered something in the dreamscape. At that time, Luo Binghe was also unconscious, his head burning like coal, so of course, he didn't have time to invade Qiu Haitang's dreamscape. In that case, the most likely possibility was that the Dream Demon did something.

As expected, the Dream Demon twirled his beard and said, “Just a little trick I did, that’s all.”

Even though he called it “a little trick” and pretend to be indifferent, he couldn’t conceal the arrogant tone to his voice. Shen Qingqiu couldn’t resist asking, “What exactly did you show her?”

Generally speaking, if the Dream Demon wanted to destroy somebody’s mind, he would show her her own darkest and most painful memories. Could it be that the Dream Demon pulled out her memories of the Qiu clan being wiped out?

No, that wasn’t right either. If that was the case, Qiu Haitang shouldn’t have reacted the way she had the moment she opened her eyes and saw Shen Qingqiu. She should’ve overflowed with hatred and struck out with her sword instead, trying to stab several hundred holes in him. Why would she cry and scream before turning and running?

The Dream Demon: “What I showed her wasn’t her memories. It was yours.”

Shen Qingqiu understood instantly. It was the bits and pieces of Shen Jiu’s memories that were still remaining in his body!

He had always cared a lot about what Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky mentioned before, concerning the portion of the original Shen Qingqiu that he hadn't written down. Shen Qingqiu immediately said, "Could Elder please pull it out and show it to me?"

The Dream Demon looked at him, but he didn't ask why Shen Qingqiu wanted someone else to pull out his own memories for him to see. He only asked, "You don't remember them anymore?"

Shen Qingqiu prepared to toss out some excuse about how his memories were damaged when he had a qi deviation in order to avoid the question. He nodded. "Correct."

It had to be said that the probability of having one's memories damaged from qi deviation was still fairly low. But the Dream Demon didn't actually pursue the topic. Instead, he said, "It's better not to remember some things."

Shen Qingqiu said, "I earnestly request Elder's help."

The Dream Demon: "You really want to see it?"

Shen Qingqiu nodded his head. The Dream Demon reached out a finger and pressed it against Shen Qingqiu's forehead. "Close your eyes. Open them only when I let go."

Shen Qingqiu obeyed and closed his eyes. The Dream Demon spoke again. “Your memories are badly damaged and are not complete. They skip over parts and aren’t continuous. You might also see people whose faces are blurry. This is caused by your own body. There’s no need to pay attention to it.”

What he meant to say was that if there was a BUG, it was a problem with your body’s source file, not my technique.

Shen Qingqiu counted to ten in his mind, and when the pressure against his forehead disappeared, he opened his eyes. A thin young man with disheveled hair was kneeling on the ground in front of him, his upper body bound by hemp rope.¹

This young man’s face was pale, his chin sharp and his features pretty. But his face carried an irremovable sense of gloominess, and there were purple sections at the corners of his mouth and forehead. It was Shen Jiu when he was still young.

At Huayue City, when Shen Qingqiu escaped from Luo Binghe’s dreamscape formation, he inadvertently landed in the remnants of Shen Jiu’s memories. What he saw was precisely this scene. With a glance around, he discovered that, sure enough, what he saw during his hasty glimpse back then wasn’t wrong. This was a spacious room with a library and a bedroom linked together, separated only by a hardwood moon gate door. It was furnished lavishly, and exquisite calligraphy and paintings hung on the walls. It was impossible for a family that wasn’t rich to obtain these so this couldn’t be the lair of some human traffickers.²

Shen Qingqiu crossed his arms and leaned against a nearby shelf that had many treasure slots on it, waiting quietly.

The wooden door carved with flowers and plants in front of him opened soundlessly.

Shen Jiu's head remained rigid and he didn't move, but his eyes swept upwards as the newcomer's figure reflected in his irises.

A young man with luxurious clothing stepped over the threshold. When Shen Qingqiu saw that face of his, which looked 60% like Qiu Haitang's, he knew that this had to be the eldest member from the Qiu clan extermination: Qiu Haitang's older brother.

What he had suspected before was correct. No matter what, the days that Shen Jiu spent in the Qiu family wasn't like what Qiu Haitang said, nor had he been "treated like family."

The youth strolled leisurely over to Shen Jiu and circled half around him. Shen Jiu's face was tightly drawn, his lips pressed together. Even though his expression was dark, his shoulders trembled slightly. He was clearly extremely afraid, but he was forcing himself to remain calm.

Suddenly, Young Master Qiu kicked him square in the back. Shen Jiu immediately sprawled onto the ground face-first.

Young Master Qiu chuckled coldly. “What, you don’t dare to hit back this time?”

Shen Jiu landed with a nose full of blood and dust. He said lowly, “Spare me, Young Master. I didn’t know that was you.”

Young Master Qiu said, “You didn’t know? You didn’t know, and you still dared to provoke me!”

He slapped Shen Jiu onto the ground with one hand, and Shen Jiu’s head made a muffled noise when it slammed against the floor as two streams of blood flowed down his chin. Young Master Qiu seemed to derive immense pleasure from doing this, and he took great joy in slapping him like playing with a ball.

Shen Qingqiu continued to watch from the side, maintaining his silence. This happened over a dozen times before Shen Jiu finally couldn’t bear it any longer and he shouted, “What exactly do you want to do?!”

Young Master Qiu laughed maliciously. “You belong to our family now. Naturally, I can do whatever I want.”

Suddenly, a gentle and beautiful voice belonging to a young woman sounded from outside the door. “Brother? Brother? Are you inside?”

The moment Young Master Qiu heard his little sister calling for him, his expression changed, and he unbound Shen Jiu before he threatened him softly, “Wipe your face! If you dare to say anything wrong, I’ll kill you!”

Shen Jiu was both afraid and resentful. A fierce glint flashed through his eyes, but he didn’t dare to say anything despite his rage. He viciously wiped his face, rubbing away the dust and the blood from his nose, but the more he wiped, the dirtier it became. When Young Master Qiu saw this, he picked up a flower vase from the window and splashed the water inside onto Shen Jiu’s face. Young Master Qiu changed his expression before opening the door, beaming. “Why did Tang-er come over?”

Shen Qingqiu finally knew how the original Shen Qingqiu’s ‘fawning on the surface but spiteful behind people’s backs’ character developed. It was most likely acquired and influenced by Young Master Qiu...

Qiu Haitang wore an embroidered lilac robe and a pair of small white satin boots. The tips were embellished with jewels, and she was truly a delicate young mistress born from a flower bud. It was a different kind of beauty compared to her later allure, which was tempered through hardship. She stepped in through the door and giggled. “I heard that brother bought somebody, and I came over to take a look.”

She saw a teenager shrunk in the corner, his head hanging low. But his face was quite delicate and pretty, and her eyes lit up. She walked over before she said, all smiles, “You’re Xiao Jiu, then?”

Shen Jiu's face was already wiped clean, but he still looked quite unhappy, and he didn't answer her. Young Master Qiu stood behind his sister, his eyes threatening. He laughed and said, "He doesn't really like to speak. His personality is quite strange."

Qiu Haitang took Shen Jiu's hand and said, "Why don't you like to speak? Talk to me a little, please?"

Her voice was soft and coaxing, her tone intimate, her attitude innocent and pure. Nobody could have the heart to embarrass her. Shen Qingqiu thought, When Qiu Haitang was a young woman, she was truly a bit similar to Ning Yingying. It turned out that the original Shen Qingqiu had always liked this type.

At first, Shen Jiu's face was stiff, but he still couldn't hold out against a young maiden's gentle cajoling. His expression was one of silent enduring, and he turned his head, his ears slightly red. When Qiu Haitang saw this, she clapped and said, "Brother, he's so much fun. No wonder you bought him even though you never liked to bring in people from outside. I kind of like him."

Young Master Qiu smiled fakely. "I also quite like him."

When Shen Jiu heard the word "like," he couldn't help but shudder.

At this point in the memories, the entire scene suddenly darkened.

The people present all swiftly vanished. Shen Qingqiu started before he immediately understood that the Dream Demon's so-called 'rupture' had occurred. Since the memories that the original Shen Qingqiu left in his body weren't complete, the ruptures would happen extremely frequently. The previous memory had already ended, and now another one began.

The scene was still set in that room. This time, Shen Jiu wasn't bound, and he was lying on the ground with a swollen face as he picked viciously at the woolen rug on the floor to the point that his fingers were bloodstained.

Abruptly, two light knocks came from the door. A young man's lowered voice came from outside. "Xiao Jiu, Xiao Jiu?"

The moment Shen Jiu heard this voice, he suddenly moved and threw himself against the door. He pressed his face against the lock and said, "Seventh Bro³!"

The young man outside said, "Quiet down, I snuck inside."

At first, Shen Qingqiu couldn't tell who the person outside was. When he thought about it again, he realized that the reason Shen Jiu had the character for "nine" in his name was because he was ranked ninth in the hands of the human traffickers. Naturally, there would be a 'one through eight' as well.

However, Shen Qingqiu was truly a little astonished that Shen Jiu actually had a good friend with his kind of personality.

Rattling noises came from the door as if the person outside was shaking it. Shen Jiu said, "It's useless. There are five or six locks on the inside and outside. The window is also locked."

The youth said worriedly, "They didn't do anything much to you this time when the escape didn't succeed, did they?"

Shen Jiu's temper suddenly surged up, and he cursed, "They didn't do anything much to me? Are you stupid? They've locked me in here for two days already and broke both my legs. What do you think?!"

In reality, Shen Qingqiu could see clearly that though Shen Jiu had suffered a beating and he couldn't walk, both of his legs were still fine. They were hardly broken. But the young man couldn't see the circumstances on the other side of the door, and he seemed to believe Shen Jiu. He said with guilt, "It's all my fault."

Shen Jiu said angrily, "Of course it's all your fault! I blame you. We weren't close with those newcomers, so what if we were stepped on a little? Why did you have to play hero! Are you afraid that people like us with such lowly lives can't bear it?! If you hadn't played hero, why would I have helped you? If I hadn't helped you, how would I have provoked him, and how would that Qiu guy have ended up buying me?! If he hadn't bought me, how would I have become like this?! Every two days I get beat up a

little bit and every three days I get beat up a lot—he plays me like I’m a dog!”

The young man repeated, “I’m sorry, it’s all my fault.”

Sure enough, with Shen Jiu’s personality, if he had friends, they definitely had to have incredibly good tempers. After several continuous apologies, Shen Jiu finally forcefully dispelled his anger and said, “Whatever! I’ve never valued that damn thing called loyalty. I’ll give all my loyalty for this life to you.”

The young man said gratefully, “I know.”

Shen Jiu said viciously, “What the hell do you know.”

The youth said, “I really know. Seventh Bro will remember your loyalty. I will definitely repay it to you in the future.”

Shen Jiu spat, “What future! For people like you who are in the possession of human traffickers for your entire life, in the future, your fate will also be to become a human trafficker. No, you’re a good person, so you can’t be a human trafficker. At the most, you’ll just continue to beg for food.”

The youth said, “Xiao Jiu, I came to talk to you about that. I’m going to leave. I came today to say goodbye to you.”

Shen Jiu was startled, and he immediately sat up. “Leave? Where are you going?”

The young man called Seventh Bro said, “I can’t stay here anymore. The Qiu family has a lot of influence and wealth in the city. We can’t possibly beat them, nor can we escape from them. There are so many cultivating sects in this world. I’m going to join one and learn how to cultivate so I can come back and rescue you.”

Shen Jiu’s eyes suddenly lit up with a brilliant radiance. “Seventh Bro, I heard there’s an immortal mountain to the east that recruits disciples who are exceptionally talented each year. Are you going there?”

The youth answered, “I don’t know... but I’ll go give them all a try. There has to be one sect that will take me?”

Shen Jiu murmured, “If I weren’t locked in here, I could also go with you...” He couldn’t help but show the envy on his face as he pushed against the door, looking as if he was about to put some sinister plot in motion. Shen Qingqiu couldn’t resist worrying slightly for the person outside.

After a while, Shen Jiu sighed again and said, “Seventh Bro, from now on, you must not be so impulsive anymore. It ruins things every time. This time, I just got unlucky, but if you’re still like this later when you join the cultivators’ sect, what will you do then? Be calmer!”

Shen Qingqiu inexplicably found it a little comical that Shen Jiu was so young, yet he was still lecturing someone older than him. But the young man wasn't the least bit unhappy. Instead, he said, ashamed, "I'll bear it in mind."

Because he had hope now, Shen Jiu's voice grew passionate. "Hey, you have to remember what you said before. You must come back and save me!"

Seventh Bro seemed to be earnestly nodding his head, and he said heavily, "Okay. Wait a little, until I learn it all. I'll definitely come back and take you away!"

The two of them stayed silent for a while, separated by a door. Shen Jiu asked, "Did you leave?"

The youth hastily replied, "Not yet. I was waiting for you to speak."

Shen Jiu said, "Seventh Bro, come closer. Let me take a look at you through the crack in the door. I don't know whether you will... how many years will pass before I can see you again."

The young man laughed and said, "You wanted to say you don't know whether I'll die outside, right? Okay."

Shen Jiu spat and said, “You said that yourself! Don’t blame me for saying something cruel.”

He shifted closer to the door with difficulty and moved his face close to the crack in the door.

Shen Qingqiu was extremely curious as well, and he also moved closer. He passed through the extremely tiny crack in the door and looked outside.

(Note that this extra is Chapter 73 in the raws. The next chapter will continue the story. For now, enjoy this extra.)

Chapter 73: Extra: Airplane's Fortuitous Encounter

Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky was a stallion novel writer.

A relatively reputable stallion novel writer.

A stallion novel writer who, even on the Zhongdian novel site with writing deities running all over the place and lesser writers sprouting up like grass on prime soil, was spoken of by others with some frequency.

That perseverance in cramming three years' worth of work into one, releasing ten thousand words a day with expert speed and willpower, those periodic eight-chapter burst releases, that daring energy engulfing the whole country. To those writers who had followed the same path up from openly prostrating themselves on the streets, it was a legend only to be glimpsed but not attained, a myth that would take audiences but not demands.

Those harem episodes which had their integrity eaten by dogs, as well as those storylines which had their IQ eaten by dogs, merely signified the defining characteristics of his style enthusiastically discussed by his millions of readers.

Regarding his works, the most common assessment was: “A mindless book.¹ Of course, it’s a mindless book! But what a satisfying read!”

That’s right, Airplane Flying Towards the Sky’s newest masterpiece, 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》, was that typical kind of novel with many haters but even more fans. This sort of plaything was collectively known to everyone as a red book with no reputation.²

The people who liked it loved it, and the people who hated it could stomp it into the shit and spit on it several times without satisfying their hatred. This type of controversial work would always be a prime breeding ground for people picking fights.

For example, right now, while Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky was mindlessly hammering out today’s new content, he opened up a certain well-known novel forum, ready to spout nonsense to freeload points. Hurriedly sweeping his eyes over the page, the first glance made him shudder, having landed on a trending post with an aggressive title bearing his pen name and the title of his book fiercely bobbing up and down on the home page.

This was not the first time he had been on the scene while people were fighting over his works. As always, Airplane Shooting Toward the Sky didn’t hesitate to join in on the excitement, gleefully clicking on the link.

Sure enough, it was a familiar recipe, familiar taste.

#1 Ten Years of Reading Sharpens One Sword 【OP】 :

After reading ReadNovelFulls for close to ten years, I've never seen a cultivation novel as rotten as Proud Immortal Demon Way. Ah wait, spending day and night eating, sleeping, and collecting sisters, and you fucking tell me this is a cultivation novel? The logic can go die, the writing style can go die, and the author can [bleep] with it, last year I bought a pack [rage] [rage] [rage]. People who like this book come here and tell me, what part of it do you even like? What sort of mindset do you have to be in? How much do you have to hate everyone else to recommend this book? I really can't bear it, I'm done!

#2 Your Infatuated Pupil:

I've wanted to roast for a long time [sweating]... is there even any meaning to the ranking system? There's no difference between the golden core in the nascent soul stage and in normal people, everytime I see more writing about eating food and sleeping ah I can't bear to continue, it's really just spare decoration. And face-slapping once or twice is alright, but if you face-slap thousand times in the same way it's really just boring. In short, it's simply not as cool as they say, there's a bit of an Amway scam feeling to the whole thing...

Anyways this book's fans are very swift and fierce, I'd estimate they're going to gang up on you soon, best of luck OP, I'll send you a pot lid, I'm out.

#3 Swordsman Must Say:

The writing is shit. All the readers are idiots.

#4 You, This Sin Cannot be Forgiven:

Who are you calling an idiot up there? What a low character.

#5 Taking Red For Green, One After Another:

Before I jabbed open this post I knew it would be going in this sort of direction. Every time people start chatting about this book they start arguing $\neg(\neg \nabla \neg)$ I've never seen a single exception. Pull up a chair and watch the fun.

#6 You, This Sin Cannot be Forgiven:

I'm bored to death of you guys arguing every time. What's there to argue about, just because you don't like it doesn't mean other people won't like it, it's really simple logic. If you like it then read it, if not then get lost. Write your own story, you can you up you understand? OP started spewing bs before they even finished, what's the point of spewing bs just for the sake of spewing?

#7 Ten Years of Reading Sharpens One Sword:

Watch and see, kiddos. We've even gotten a U CAN U UP, this is really just rubbing the dog's head.⁴ Kid, read novels for a few more years. Is it really good for you to waste your time on the forums before break, if you can't finish your homework watch out or your teacher's going to tell your parents. Just because you like it doesn't mean other people will like it, I'm quoting your own words back to you. Also, I don't need to finish eating a ball of shit before I realize it's a ball of shit, OK?

#8 Sha Hualing's Little Bell:

(heart) (drooling) (drooling) I don't think it's as rotten as OP says, I like reading this book, I like sister Sha, huehuehue~~~

#9 Peerless Cucumber **【Expert】** :

I understand what OP is thinking. Lately, I've been reading this book straight through, it's so damn long, long and pumped full of filler.

I've never seen villains with a lower IQ than the ones in this book. The average cannon fodder has an IQ of 40 and the protagonists have an IQ of 60, it's like the author went on a 24-hour face-slapping craze without losing steam. Most of the female protagonists are stupid flower vases, and you don't even push down Liu Mingyan, the only righteous one? You don't push down the righteous empress, are you fucking kidding me? Airplane, hand over the girlfriends, I'll eat this book raw.

All my fellow readers have already roasted it for three hundred thousand words, so I'll stop talking. In fact, the most interesting thing are the monsters of the Demon Realm, it'd be best if those were written about more. The rest is just throwing fifty sisters into the family, each one doesn't even have a distinguishable personality. The writing style is so weird, each time a woman appears it's "her soft chest trembled", you could at least try a different phrase for shivering mud, a different word would be fine ah? Seriously, what substitute teacher taught Airplane literature in elementary school?

At least the portrayal of the male lead was alright, the transformation from innocent and upstanding to hateful and sinister was detailed and natural, debts of kindness and grudges were paid off, those who should have been killed were mercilessly killed. Seeing that sort of lovey-dovey male lead just makes me want to steal his girl. Bing-ge deserves that 'ge', he's cool enough and blackened enough, I like it, haha!

Shen Qingqiu this cheap person doesn't bear explaining.

#10 Cang Qiong Mountain Stair Cleaning Manager:

Does anyone here like Yue Zhangmen, I like the warm oil attack the most, whispering, silently passing by.

#11 Warrior's Hammer

Boring. It's not written as well as《Immortal XX Battle》, the difference is huge. This is what's called a real cultivation novel.

#12 You, This Sin Cannot be Forgiven

Teacher, trampling on praise feels good doesn't it, haha.

#13 Refusing to be a Potholer

The 9th floor's Cucumber Bro wrote that many words just to hate on it, it must be true love.⁵

#14 Ten Years of Reading Sharpens One Sword:

To answer floor 12, hehe I don't dare accept, I'll return the original to you. Are there not that many Proud Immortal fans who leap up to trample other books? Do you want me to flip through my records for some screenshots to fling in your face?

#15 Cang Qiong Mountain Gate Guard Platoon:

To answer floor 10, Does anyone here like Yue Zhangmen, whispering, silently passing by.

Grab the sister on floor 10! You're a sister right?! I also like Zhangmen Shixiong! I like him a lot! ☆(▽)/★ Is there anything more moe than pampering and indulging something with no bottom line! (?? ▯ ? `) It's a pity the partner was this disastrous a Shidi, the bad ending was so complete I couldn't read any comfort out of it...

#16: Dear Brother Qingge:6

Don't resolve that bitch Shen Qingqiu +10086! My god floor 15 can even moe over this type of scum.

I always felt it was a pity Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord died that early, Airplane-juju just refused to write him, or else there would be more CPs to contend with.

#17 Occasionally Filling Holes:

There's so much info in those last few levels, did this forum get invaded by weirdos...

#18 Peerless Cucumber 【Expert】 :

Upstairs, calm down. This form has a lot of green Dingding Net sisters [sunglasses]

#19 A Stately Waiter:

It really is true love for Cucumber bro, it's just the stuff he spews here isn't as vicious as what he puts in the reviews. Not malicious enough, poor evaluation.

#20: Hoeing Wheat is my Noontime Occupation:

The Proud Immortal fans are here to stir up trouble again, I see this book everywhere, it makes me want to puke. This book's quality isn't worth this much passion, if you say Airplane didn't invite the navy I wouldn't believe it. Sit and wait for the next time the skill emperor opens an invitation, look and you'll know if he got a ticket or not.

#21 Hoeing Wheat is my Noontime Occupation

To answer floor 4: Who are you calling an idiot up there? What a low character.

You're joking, the schoolkids who like to read rotten books like Proud Immortal have the nerve to talk about character. No one has as low a character as you.

#22 Dear Brother Qingge:

Because those one or two people firing area cannons are all drunk. Seeing floor 20 stir up the discussion, isn't this trumpeting for landlord... not to speak of anything else just look at Airplane's update rate. 10k every day and 25k on the weekends, how many people can do it. En, first put the question of quality to the side.

#23 Looking for Hungry Friends at the North Pole Every Day:

This fan wrote some Bing-ge x scum Shen slash (:3)∠) don't know if anyone wants to see.⁷ It's so painful, moe over a cold CP is like going to the North Pole, I'm also just courting death looking for CP in a Zhongdian novel.

#24 Cang Qiong Mountain Stair Cleaning Manager:

The slash writing sister, don't go! Is it with the eighth letter lord?! Please wuwuwu!

#25 Occasionally Filling Holes:

Airplane really doesn't know how to write romance plotlines, best if he just doesn't. I feel like Luo Binghe doesn't have feelings for any of his wives, he just wants to use them. And I can't see any of those women with real moving emotion for him.

#26 Warrior's Hammer:

As long as he collects all the sisters it's fine, it's whatever if there's emotion or not.

#26 Peerless Cucumber 【Expert】 8

Filling Holes Bro on floor 25, you're joking, you want Airplane not to write the harem? Two-thirds of the book would be gone.

#27 Taking Red For Green, One After Another:

But I feel like I can see which peak lord has real moving emotion for which peak lord... hoping for the skies. Seriously speaking, the scenes he wrote with emotional interactions between brothers were all much more exquisite and natural than Bing-ge's scenes with his wives, they practically contain deep love visible to the bare eyes. Airplane really is a natural expert fudanshi.

PS: The sister on floor 24, beggars can't be choosers...

#28 Hoeing Wheat is my Noontime Occupation:

【This level was blocked due to personal attack, currently waiting for writer to edit】

...

...

...

Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky-juju, while stirring his instant noodles with one leg propped, nonchalantly rolled the scroll wheel on his mouse, skimming over the forum posts. His eyes automatically highlighted every message from that familiar ID Peerless Cucumber.

Black sniping like a running stream, a cucumber made of iron. Even though this famous lord cucumber would constantly spew criticism without end in his review sections, his subscriptions and urges for updates never slowed a bit. Because of this, he always suspected this person was a masochist.

“Very good, you have successfully attracted my attention.” Like some sort of tyrant chairman, Airplane-juju began to nonchalantly observe Cucumber

bro's bluster in the review sections.

In the end, he concluded: it's just like if a woman was married to a disappointing husband, itching to ride on his back, grab him by the neck, and shake; kissing and spitting on him with mixed love and hate. Peerless Cucumber was locked in precisely this kind of inextricable chase while giving a loathing "Why can't I control this damn author of the novel I chose to read!"

"An upright body with a mouth full of resentment!"

Airplane-juju laid down his final conclusion and smacked his computer table, howling with laughter.

This one smack was disastrous. The instant noodles toppled over, splashing all over his hard working and meritorious beloved keyboard, spicy broth flowing a thousand miles. Airplane turned pale with fright, quickly jumping up to rescue it. But, he jumped too high and his foot caught on the power strip. With a crackle, his laptop screen went dark.

After this chain reaction of extreme joy turning to sorrow, Airplane's face was deathly white.

WTFEEEEEE!

He was just scrolling forums while downloading movies and padding his word count, his file was still open! Fuck, he couldn't have lost today's update just like this, he'd gotten to 8000 ah!

He subconsciously threw himself down next to the power strip, picking up the wire to shove it back in the socket—

And experienced firsthand what could be called “electricity running through the whole body, godly thunder from the Ninth Heaven”.

Chapter 74: Right on Schedule

... WTF!

Shen Qingqiu's outburst wasn't because of the other's face. If only that were the case, but the crucial thing was that the youth outside the door—f***, his entire face was burnt off. It was like there was a mosaic over the whole thing!

Even though the Dream Demon had said at the start that there was a certain possibility of people's faces being obscured or ruptures appearing in the memory—after actually running into this possibility, Shen Qingqiu felt an intense desire to vomit blood.

Dream Demon-juju, can't we give fixing this bug a go? I really want to know what this face looks like ah ah ah!

Just when Shen Qingqiu wanted to pass through the door and see if closing the distance could make the mosaic drop off, another rupture appeared in the memory.

This time, the setting was a study.

Young Master Qiu was writing on a table. Shen Jiu stood in attendance to the side, silently grinding his ink.

The Shen Jiu of this time was still a thin and weak youth, but he had stretched in the vertical direction. Among his peers, he would count as rather tall and thin. Standing there to wait upon Young Master Qiu, he gave off a kind of cold and tranquil scholarly aura.

When one sheet of paper was almost complete, Shen Jiu spoke, head lowered and gaze obediently. “Young Master, there’s one matter...”

Young Master Qiu didn’t even lift his eyes. “The matter you wish to speak of, is it that charlatan in the city?”¹

Shen Jiu defended, “Elder Wu Yanzi isn’t a charlatan.”

Young Master Qiu set down his brush and frowned. “Just behave yourself and stay at home, be a good son-in-law, stay peacefully with my younger sister and live your life, that’s enough. What use is thinking of those illusory fantasies all the time?”

After a spell of silence, Shen Jiu suddenly gritted out, “...live your life, live your life... I don’t want to live this sort of life!”

Young Master Qiu finally lifted his eyes. Shooting him a gaze, he suddenly shot out a foot and kicked him in the back of the knees.

With a plop, Shen Jiu smacked face-first into the ground. Shen Qingqiu subconsciously rubbed his own intact calves. Could it be that these two spent this many years with this mode of interaction...

Young Master Qiu rose from his seat and sneered, "I taught you this many years, and the things you've learned can't even compare to that charlatan's evil little tricks."

Shen Jiu, nose covered in ash and blood from his fall, lifted his head to scoff with a faint air of arrogance. "They aren't evil little tricks; they're immortal techniques. Someone with a trash constitution like you can only call them charlatans to trick and comfort yourself."

Young Master Qiu crouched down. Grabbing a handful of his hair, he crooned in his ear, "Immortal techniques? Could it be that you, these little cheap goods, want to cultivate to immortality?"

Shen Jiu tilted his head to avoid his grasp, but Young Master Qiu gave him a slow pat on the forehead, the action brimming with intent to insult. He smiled, "You don't even count as human, and you still want to become an immortal?"

Shen Jiu held his head, not saying a word. Seeing him wilt like this, Young Master Qiu did lessen the strength of his grip a bit, and his next words were

serious and heartfelt. “Staying here obediently, being well-behaved and playing your part—what’s so bad about that? You’re fifteen already. You’re not young; you’re even about to get married. You’ve long missed the optimal time to begin cultivating—what can you become? If you muddle along with him, he isn’t even guaranteed to want you.”

This was just looking for death. The thing the original goods cared the most about in life was his cultivation. He couldn’t tolerate anyone being better than him, and especially couldn’t tolerate others saying half a bad sentence about him. Or else, he wouldn’t have been driven into such a deranged state out of resentment for Luo Binghe. And this guy dared to out and say he had no prospects!

Shen Jiu suddenly turned his arm, grabbing the inkstone on the table and throwing it towards Young Master Qiu. From this angle, it looked like it was flying towards Shen Qingqiu, and he subconsciously dodged to the side.

Of course, the inkstone couldn’t hit him, and it couldn’t hit Young Master Qiu either. But, the latter was covered in a half arc of black ink spray, a set of exquisitely embroidered robes ruined just like that. Young Master Qiu’s face promptly collapsed, and he berated, “Tang-er likes you, that’s good fortune you’ve collected over several of your lifetimes! If not for our family, right now you would be on the street begging and swindling to eke out a living. This life you have—without worry for food or clothes and the chance to read and write, who gave it to you?”

He slapped Shen Jiu’s head down onto the ground. “Not the least bit of gratitude!”

Shen Jiu seemed to have thrown caution to the wind, viciously spitting, “I am human. Why do I have to feel gratitude towards a beast?!”

Praiseworthy courage!

Young Master Qiu one-handedly flung him to the wall, cursing, “I thought you’d actually made some progress in these few years, but it turns out rotten mud really doesn’t stick to the wall!”²

A sword hung on the white wall. When Shen Jiu knocked into it, it dropped to the ground. Shen Jiu collapsed into a seated position at the foot of the wall, found the hilt with his hand, and, in a moment of desperation, drew the blade with a shaky two-handed grip and pointed it at the red-eyed Young Master Qiu.

The latter didn’t at all believe he would actually make a move, pointing at him and saying, “You’re quite fired up. Are your bones itching?”

Seeing him approach a few steps closer, Shen Jiu’s soul just about flew off in fright. He yelled, “Don’t come over here!”

Young Master Qiu said, “No future prospects! You...”

After this “You,” he would never again speak a word.

Slowly lowering his head, he saw that sword sticking straight into his stomach.

While Young Master Qiu’s face was still full of disbelief, Shen Jiu suddenly pulled out the sword.

Shen Qingqiu stood to the side, enraptured...

F*** f*** f***, an on-site live broadcast of murder!

The atmosphere changed in such a split second. They hadn’t even spoken a few sentences and a massacre occurred!

Shen Jiu stood in a daze. One hand covering his abdomen, Young Master Qiu aggressively snatched back the sword and kicked him to the ground, yelling, “Help!”

Shen Jiu hurriedly threw himself over to grab his boots. During the ensuing violent scuffle, a few old servants rushed in the door. Seeing this type of scene in the study, they began to shout in loud voices. Shen Jiu, in panic and fear, made some sort of seal and the sword in Young Master Qiu’s hand suddenly shot out to skewer the old servants through their chests.

The next he turned his head, Young Master Qiu was staggering towards him, scarlet-covered hands reaching for his hair. Shen Jiu stabbed out again, this time piercing his lung.

And then, stab after stab, using his full strength, Shen Jiu stabbed fifty times in a row, fiercer and fiercer, the expression on his face growing more and more malevolent until the body's face and vitals were a bloody mess of flesh. Then, he finally stopped, panting for breath.

This must have been Shen Jiu's first kill, and the first time he killed someone using his own spiritual energy.

Shen Qingqiu watched from beginning to end, astonished.

The first time and already this savage!

Shen Jiu stared blankly at the room full of toppled corpses for a while. Suddenly, he awakened, throwing down the sword with a clang. He paced back and forth through the study, subconsciously wiping his hands on his clothes again and again, looking like he was out of his wits.³ But, he was only distracted for a spell and managed to calm down extremely quickly. This whole process of changing states of mind took less than a minute. This type of mind.

Shen Jiu halted, experimentally hooking his finger. The ghastly blood-covered sword on the ground slowly rose.

Seeing the sharp sword flying before him, a strange sort of excitement blossomed on Shen Jiu's face, and he took the sword firmly in his grasp!

He flicked the point of the sword and strode out of the study, murder weapon in hand. Shen Qingqiu stood for a while before the System notified:

【Hint: please focus on the plot hole-filling objective. Recommended distance is within 10 meters to guarantee the complete collection of plot line!】

So if he doesn't follow, he'll lose points on the plot hole-filling objective? Shen Qingqiu hurriedly went to follow behind, not daring to fall behind a single step. Shen Jiu had just turned a corner when he ran into two burly house servants. With a wave of his arm, a cold light flashed out to skirt against two oily-fat necks and blood spurted like fountains.

Shen Jiu was practically killing people on sight. The more he killed, the more enthusiastic he was; the sinister smile at the corner of his mouth tilted up into a more and more ferocious expression. Unceasing blood-curdling screams followed his path as he efficiently beheaded a dozen people. Shen Qingqiu noticed that he only killed men and not a single woman. The division between sexes was clear, and the direction of his hatred was very obvious. The little maids and servant women all hid in the corners of the kitchen, not daring to come out, and he didn't go out of his way to silence them.

While watching this shocking scene in trepidation, a cry of fear suddenly sounded out from behind.⁴

Qiu Haitang stood at the end of the long corridor, blankly staring in their direction. Shen Jiu was covered in fresh blood like some sort of living ghoul, just drawing his sword from a servant's neck.

Qiu Haitang's bright and beautiful face twitched a few times. Her eyes rolling back, she collapsed in a puddle of blood.

Clearly, this girl was the type to faint at crucial times all along.

Seeing Qiu Haitang, Shen Jiu cooled down a bit and his sword hand drooped down. After muttering to himself for a bit, he set off for the kitchen.

Not long after, a fire began to burn. The black night clouds above the Qiu residence reflected red light like the lava of purgatory.

Shen Jiu had dragged Qiu Haitang's body outside into a shrub when a wordless figure appeared from behind. He threw his head around, sword in hand and an ominous glint in his eye, but let out a held breath when he saw who it was. "Elder."

This “Elder” had to be that Wu Yanzi who set up shop in the city to show off spiritual tricks, the one who incited Shen Jiu’s rebellious uprising.

The other said cruelly, “You didn’t kill them all?”

Shen Jiu was silent for a time, then said, “The person I wanted to kill is already dead.”

The person said, “Actually, one of the things your brother said was not wrong. Though your innate talent is admittedly good, you’ve already passed the optimal time to begin cultivating. In addition, after suffering torture, even your bones are somewhat damaged. From now on you should be able to achieve some success, but actually climbing to the peak is impossible. If it were a few years earlier, then it would be a different question.”

Since this person had heard Young Master Qiu’s words, that meant he had watched this wretched play from head to tail. But, he had no intention of interfering, only making like a wall to observe. Looks like this “Elder” wasn’t any sort of gentle character. If Shen Jiu really followed him, it probably wouldn’t be on any sunlit open road.

Shen Qingqiu had thought that even after entering late, one could reach core formation in ten or so years. This body’s aptitude was already quite impressive—how could he guess that the original Shen Qingqiu’s ability was another level higher? Knowing the truth of the situation, even an unambitious person like him would inevitably sigh in regret. In addition, it wasn’t hard to understand why the ambitious and aggressive original goods

always had a heart full of resentment and always felt aggrieved. After all, it hurt much more to have had and lost than never to have had at all.

Blue veins popped up on Shen Jiu's sword hand. He said coldly, "That beast isn't my brother. In addition, now that things have reached this stage, is there another path I can take? Are you giving me another path?"

That person had already turned around. Seeing Shen Jiu still standing at the gate of the Qiu residence, he asked, "You're still not coming? Who are you waiting for?"

This "Who are you waiting for?" should have just been a throwaway rhetorical question, meant to urge him to follow. Shen Jiu turned to gaze into the blaze shooting into the sky, his pupils seeming to ignite along with the Qiu residence.

The lucky survivors of the Qiu house servants fought to escape, all fearing to be the last. In the chaos of cries and howls, only his pale silhouette stood steadfast in front of the gate, scarlet and yellow firelight playing shadows across his body, intertwining in a messy dance.

The fire in the Qiu residence blazed higher and higher, and the roof beams collapsed. A pale track seemed to have washed itself into the layer of ash on Shen Jiu's smoke-covered face.

He forcibly tossed the sword into a sea of fire, turning to follow his master.

“I won’t wait anymore.”

It was then that Shen Qingqiu knew that the youth who promised to come back and save him—turns out he didn’t come back after all.

Wasn’t this natural and inevitable? This was a legendary flag ah. It’s one of the two great flags along with “I’ll come back home and get married.” People who solemnly vow that “I’ll definitely come back” or “I’ll come back right away”—you’ll definitely never see a shadow of them again!

In particular, these two kids’ wishes were too beautiful, too naive. If they went to find a master one by one, was it certain that there’ll be one house that’ll accept both? Completely wrong.

Even if he successfully found a master and, after a few years, really achieved some success in his education, after seeing the face of the wide world and gaining more worries that demand his attention, it’s not certain he would be willing to come back to find his childhood playmate. In addition, the jianghu was unpredictable and full of all kinds of unexpected dangers. All in all, the chance that this youth would really be able to come back and save Shen Jiu was less than 5%.

But, after getting to this stage in the plot hole-filling, Shen Qingqiu could understand Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky’s outline-chopping tendencies a little bit more.

If he actually wrote this type of character with his original backstory, it would definitely be an arduous and thankless task. If you said he was scum, he was also pitiful; if you pitied him, he was undeniably ruthless. A character who was both scum and wretched was usually a godly body and prime disaster area for fights to break out. Might as well chop him down into a bare-faced cheap character for the protagonist to stomp under his foot—easier to write and more satisfying for the readers.

Nevertheless, Qiu Haitang was innocent. Her love was deep, her hate was righteous, and she hadn't really done anything wrong in this whole affair. But, revenge had ground this artless and innocent girl into a bitter woman with a heart full of schemes. Her death in the Holy Mausoleum was even more of an injustice. Her conclusion wasn't even as fortuitous as the one she got in the original stallion novel.

If he was able to give her a hand at the beginning, that was for the best.

Right when Shen Qingqiu was sighing in sorrow, the scene suddenly warped like a picture on an old TV, black and white snowflakes flashing wildly. The scenery and people's faces all distorted into a spectacle too horrible to see, the sound scritchng, the clamor as if in an alien language.

The System notified: 【Memory badly damaged, data loss at 5%; data loss at 7%; data loss at 9%.....】

The ruptures in the memory were getting bigger and bigger!

The loss percentage grew higher and higher. Shen Qingqiu madly slapped the System notification window like how he tried to “fix” bad signal or bad connection on the TV when it was little. After a couple dozen slaps, it was actually weirdly effective. The data loss percentage hit 10%, and the notification sounds finally ground to a stop. The snowflakes in the scene suddenly disappeared and the picture became clear.

Shen Qingqiu finally released a held breath, withdrawing his hand and retreating. Before he had steadied his stance, he stopped to stare.

A few steps in front of him squatted a small young boy.

A few streaks of ash crossed a pale and tender face that might have accidentally been smeared there when wiping sweat. A jade Guanyin on a red rope hung around his neck and a shivering rag bundle was tied on his back. He was earnestly huffing and puffing on the ground... digging a hole.

Shen Qingqiu blurted out, “Luo Binghe?”

Little Luo Binghe didn’t hear him, still striving to dig holes and fill them with dirt.

Casting a glance around his surroundings, hundreds of boys and girls of mixed clothing and differing ages stood in an open valley, each putting their whole strength into... digging holes.

A realization flashed through Shen Qingqiu's head, and he raised his head to look. Sure enough, above the valley was a steep mountain cliff and two people standing atop its peak.

One wore dark-colored ceremonial robes, bearing steady and calm, overlooking the people in the valley with fixed attention.⁵ A longsword hung at the other's waist and a folding fan slowly turned between his fingers. His robes were green as clear water, ripples stirred by the wind. He subtly raised his head, looking askance at the ants below like he didn't particularly care to watch.

That's right, it was Yue Qingyuan and "Shen Qingqiu."

This was Luo Binghe's trial site the year he took a master and entered Cang Qiong Mountain.

You didn't see wrong; you're not wrong—the trial subject was digging holes!

Even though Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky had spent many paragraphs and author notes explaining that digging holes was not just digging holes, but a way to test through a seemingly simple action the hole-digger's endurance, speed, perseverance, spiritual methods, even their character etc. etc., Shen Qingqiu didn't remember a single justification. In his heart, no matter how many explanations you rip out it was just digging holes, pure and simple!

The Shen Jiu of this time should have already taken the seat of Qing Jing Peak Lord.

Cang Qiong Mountain Sect's rules were like this: the twelve Peak Lords advance and retreat together. They receive their assignments together, and when they abdicate they abdicate together too. When they hold ceremonies, they would partner up and crowd into a clump, and especially when they retreat into seclusion they would join up and retreat in groups. Even if any Peak Lord meets misfortune and perishes in office, they would just leave their seat empty. Those five years Shen Qingqiu had faked his death and fled, the Qing Jing Peak Lord's seat had remained empty. This was so that there wouldn't be a situation of Peak Lords of different generations working together.

Even though there were extenuating circumstances when this rule would be rather inconvenient, it had succeeded in preventing a generational gap, and it maintained particularly strong cohesion and bonds between Peak Lords.

Thinking of this, Shen Qingqiu couldn't resist jumping to another rule.

After the past generation of Peak Lords confirmed their head disciples, they would change their disciples' names according to the generation name to demonstrate their change in status.⁶ Out of all the "QingX" names under the sky, Shen Jiu was unfortunately given the character "Qiu." It was truly the malice of the world.⁷

Shen Jiu hated this character "Qiu" to the bone. Having this name, of all things, conferred upon him, how couldn't he feel sick to death at heart?

Even Shen Qingqiu couldn't resist wanting a tender moment of silence for this guy. No wonder the original goods didn't hold much reverence and gratitude towards the last generation's Qing Jing Peak Lord.

On top of the cliff, the two people seemed to be having a discussion. Shen Qingqiu looked at the small Luo Binghe, immersed in his endeavor. He placed an immaterial pat on his head, then leaped up the cliff to stand beside the two people and listen to their conversation.

Yue Qingyuan said, "This year, there seem to be even more people than in years past."

Shen Jiu narrowed his eyes, no happiness or anger on his face. Two fingers twitched, the folding fan in his hand spreading slightly open.

A person walked up from the side, greeting Yue Qingyuan: "Sect Leader-shixiong."

This person did not even spare a glance for Shen Jiu, the one standing to the side, resentment about to spill over from his eyes.

This cool a character, who could it be but Liu-juju!

The Liu Qingge of this time had only officially occupied the seat of Bai Zhan Peak Lord for a couple of years, and an unseasoned air was still

visible in the outline of his features. His gaze was swift and fierce, and there was a type of youthful mettle beneath his movements.

Yue Qingyuan said, “Liu-shidi, you’ve come just in time. There’s no harm in looking. See which ones are good.”

Liu Qingge only took one look and said, “He has the best innate talent.”

Shen Qingqiu nodded, pleased. Sure enough, Liu-juju had some good eyes. The one he pointed to was precisely Luo Binghe, his back towards the three, still striving to dig holes.

Yue Qingyuan said, “Liu-shidi, do you want him?”

Liu Qingge said, “If he wants to come, he’ll come himself.”

Bai Zhan Peak was always like this: whether you wanted to come or not, if you came then get ready to get thrashed. If you didn’t take the initiative to go up to Bai Zhan Peak crying and shouting, looking for tyrannical beatings, but sit there waiting for others to pick their disciples, then you had no way forward, destined not to find your fate at Bai Zhan Peak.

Shen Jiu said placidly, “Good natural talent doesn’t guarantee any achievement.”

Liu Qingge didn't spare him a trifling glance. "Compared to the unorthodox method of officially starting cultivation at sixteen, achievement will definitely be higher."

... Sure enough, these two despised each other from the beginning. Liu Qingge didn't like to talk, he especially didn't like to talk with people he disliked, but he even got out sixteen words to taunt Shen Jiu!

His okay relationship with Liu Qingge today was nothing short of a miracle.

Yue Qingyuan reprimanded, "Liu-shidi."

Liu Qingge didn't listen to his preaching, turning to leave. "Going to practice."

Says he'll go and he goes, coming and going like the wind. Shen Jiu was rooted to the spot, shaking with anger at his few sentences. He squeezed his fan with too much strength and the ribs cracked under his grip. Yue Qingyuan said helplessly, "Liu-shidi just doesn't know how to talk; you've always known not to let him get under your skin."

Shen Jiu humphed, giving off a strange air. Before they got a chance to find out what he was preparing to say, Ning Yingying climbed up.

She hugged Shen Jiu's waist and shouted, "Shizun, Shizun, will Yingying have a shimei or shidi?"

Seeing her, Shen Jiu's face relaxed. "Do you want a shidi or shimei?"

Ning Yingying nodded over and over. Shen Jiu lifted his head, waved his open fan, and once again carefully calculated something with narrowed eyes.

He suddenly said, "I want that kid."

He was staring at Luo Binghe. Yue Qingyuan started.

He'd reckon the original goods' spotty record of treatment towards disciples with exceptional innate talent was long renowned throughout the whole sect. Now that he was opening his mouth to ask the Sect Leader for the good seedlings, Shen Qingqiu could understand Yue Qingyuan's hesitation. It was really... something you couldn't be too careful in considering.

Seeing Yue Qingyuan muttering to himself, not answering, Shen Jiu coldly repeated himself. "I want him."

Daring to speak like this to the Sect Leader, are you looking for a beating? Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat.

Unexpectedly, Yue Qingyuan slowly nodded—he really agreed. “Okay.”

Shen Qingqiu had nothing to say.

That Yue Qingyuan could still tolerate him... how did this body live peacefully until today!

And there was Liu-juju. So it turns out the reason why the original goods was so bent on getting Luo Binghe into his own hands was the root of the problem you buried!

Ning Yingying cheered, rushing down the cliff to pull Luo Binghe out from the crowd in the valley. This section was the beginning of the “Luo Binghe comes under ‘Shen Qingqiu’s’ tutelage” arc in the original work!

But, because it was the male protagonist’s POV, Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky-juju didn’t bother describing in detail the bright currents and dark tides between these three Peak Lords. Instead, he started to put pen to paper right where a fragrant little loli suddenly dropped from the sky to pull out Luo Binghe. He would believe that seeing this section, every single reader, like Shen Yuan at that time, thought this was the fortuitous opening of the protagonist’s life-long bullshit luck in continuous romance plots. Little could they have imagined this was just a scrap of candy before the big knives came stabbing down.

Shen Qingqiu knew what was waiting for Luo Binghe next. But, he could only look on helplessly and watch—watch Luo Binghe follow Ning Yingying into the bamboo house on Qing Jing Peak. Shen Jiu sat in Shen Qingqiu's favorite seat holding a teacup, still blowing on the leaves.

He had long sent away the chattering Ning Yingying. Ming Fan stood in attendance to the side and started to speak for him. "From now on, you will stay at Qing Jing Peak."

A surprised and flush rose on little Luo Binghe's face. He kneeled down to present his orderly salutations in a clear voice. "This disciple Luo Binghe has seen Shizun!"

Shen Jiu tugged at the corner of his lip, at long last lowering the teacup from his chin.

He said leisurely, "Tell us, why did you come to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect?"

Like he was reciting a lesson, nervous but conscientious, Luo Binghe said, "This disciple has admired the elegant manner of all the masters atop this mountain of immortals since youth. If I could gain entry and achieve success in my studies, my mother's spirit in heaven could also be gratified."

Shen Qingqiu knew this was the answer he had tossed and turned again and again on the road here to polish.

Shen Jiu let out an “oh.” “You had a mother at home?”

He said, almost absent-mindedly, “What was she like?”

Luo Binghe raised his smiling face, both eyes sparkling. “My mother was the person who was best to me in this world.”

Shen Jiu’s face twitched, raising a hand to stop him.

He looked Luo Binghe up and down. “You are indeed at the age that’s best for cultivation.”

Shen Qingqiu could see three words on the original goods’ face.

Envy, envy, and more envy.

He envied Luo Binghe’s “mother who was best to me in the world,” envied Luo Binghe’s innate talent, envied that Luo Binghe was accepted into Cang Qiong Mountain Sect at the optimal age. To have an indignant heart full of envy for a small child, he really was this type of person.

Shen Jiu stood up, walking over to Luo Binghe step by step. Shen Qingqiu subconsciously blocked him, but how could he stop him?

Luo Binghe lifted his face and looked at the Qing Jing Peak Lord walking towards him like he was beholding a god.

But who would have thought the god would walk by him without a sideways glance and pour the cup of tea in his hand onto him as he passed, lid and all?

The tea wasn't just boiled, so it was only somewhat hot, but Luo Binghe's whole body was frozen, dumbfounded.

Shen Jiu, hands tucked behind his back, walked out of the bamboo house without taking his leave. Ming Fan tapped along behind, turning round to chide, "Kneel down! Shizun didn't tell you to rise. If you dare to rise, I swear I'll hang you up for a beating then shut you in the woodshed for three days!"

... This was the first time Shen Qingqiu discovered—this kid Ming Fan, his gift for looking for death like a cannon fodder really was fully leveled!

Luo Binghe had just been accepted into the sect, so his heart had been full of joy and gratitude. After inexplicably getting tea poured over his head for no reason, it was like a bucket full of cold water with ice cubes mixed in had been thrown in his face. His entire heart was quenched by the cold.

He kneeled dumbly in place, not even blinking.

Soundlessly, two teardrops rolled down his cheeks.

This was the first time Luo Binghe cried since he buried his adoptive mother with his own hands, and it was also the last time he cried on Cang Qiong Mountain.

Since then, no matter what wrongs he suffered, no matter what “Shen Qingqiu” did to him to vent his own twisted feelings, Luo Binghe never again let out unrestrained tears like he did that day.

Shen Qingqiu crouched in front of him, but his sleeves passed right through—he couldn’t touch, couldn’t hold, couldn’t even wipe his tears. His heart hurt for him; it was unbearable enough to drive him to death.

Knowing very well that Luo Binghe couldn’t hear, he still said, “Come on, don’t cry.”

Luo Binghe stared at his own knees, fists slowly tightening on his legs. The tears flowed faster and fiercer, dripping onto his lapel.

Shen Qingqiu futilely attempted to wipe his cheeks, coaxing, “Shizun won’t hit you ever again. Don’t cry.”

Luo Binghe raised his palm to rub his eyes. He picked up the teacup on the ground and set it to the side. Grasping the jade pendant over his heart, he straightened up into a proper kneeling posture.

Shen Qingqiu knew the current motions of his heart.

It must have been some rule he didn’t understand, something he did wrong to offend the Peak Lord, and he was educated for that reason. As a disciple, kneeling for Shizun should be expected.

Seeing these tiny movements, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t resist turning to face him, kneeling down as well.

Reaching out his arms, he held Luo Binghe’s oh-so-tiny body tightly in his incorporeal embrace.

After closing his eyes to a field of darkness for some time, the next time he opened them was to snow-white bed curtains and tassels in the four corners occupying his field of view.

Suddenly seeing a different scene, Shen Qingqiu hadn’t quite adjusted, not making a move up until Yue Qingyuan’s voice sounded from beside him.

“You’re awake?”

Shen Qingqiu mechanically blinked his eyes a few times. His throat a bit dry, he forced out, “Zhangmen-shixiong.”

Yue Qingyuan sat by the bed. After looking at him for some time, he said, “You kept calling Luo Binghe’s name.”

Shen Qingqiu: “... En.”

Yue Qingyuan: “Crying and calling.”

Shen Qingqiu wiped his face. Aside from cold sweat, there really was some other liquid there. Sure enough, tears were an infectious sort of thing.

“...” He said meekly, “Shixiong, I can explain.”

Can explain what? What reason for the true story “Qing Jing Peak Lord cries and calls out his own disciple’s name in his dreams” would be sufficient for people to believe?

Seeing him unable to come up with the words, Yue Qingyuan sighed and said, “Let it be. It’s good that you’re awake; you don’t need to explain.”

Shen Qingqiu sat up, embarrassed. He suddenly realized that this scene was a bit familiar. The first time he had woken up in this world, it was also Yue Qingyuan keeping guard at his bedside.

Yue Qingyuan observed his complexion and said, “You’ve been asleep for five days. Do you need to sleep some more?”

Asleep for five days! Shen Qingqiu scarcely avoided toppling over again on the spot.

System: 【Plot hole-filling event “Shen Jiu”: completion progress 70%】

He’d only completed 70%? Hold it, other than that 10% incomplete material from memories damaged beyond repair, what about the other 20%? Where did it go!

He didn’t have time to ponder it that much. Shen Qingqiu grabbed Yue Qingyuan. “Sect Leader, the first day it snowed was at Luochuan!”

Finding that he was excessively agitated and that his words were without coherence or order, he fixed his expression and began again with a calm and solemn tone. “What I meant was, it’s very likely that Tianlang-Jun will use Xin Mo to open a rupture and begin to merge the Two Realms at this time and this place.”

Yue Qingyuan: “How do you know?”

Shen Qingqiu was stuck again. Could he out and say it was because the original work said that this time and this place was the most fitting one?

Shen Qingqiu said, “I spent some time in Tianlang-Jun’s possession.”

Yue Qingyuan: “So he just told you directly?”

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t find an explanation on short notice. He could only harden his face and say, “Zhangmen-shixiong, please, I need you to trust me.”

Yue Qingyuan looked at him for a while. Closing his eyes for a spell then standing up, he said warmly, “You rest first. This thing can be handed over to our other comrades to handle.”

Rest. Do you mean sleep? I’ve already slept for five days!

A core formation cultivator needing to sleep for so many days—only in 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》would this be taken as nothing out of the ordinary. If you switched for a different novel author, they would definitely be ridiculed until their own mother wouldn’t recognize them!

Yue Qingyuan had just left when Shen Qingqiu rolled off the bed, looking all over for an outer robe. He turned this way and that, when a person took advantage of his distraction to sneak up behind him, a hand coming up to cover his eyes.

Shen Qingqiu subconsciously struck out with an elbow, yelling, “Who is it!”

A person with this much guts, who also likes playing this sort of senseless game with him, who else could it be? His elbow was firmly caught, a familiar voice saying by his ear, “Shizun, why don’t you guess?”

He’d already opened his mouth to call him Shizun, the hell do you want him to guess? Shen Qingqiu rolled his eyes. The person behind him suddenly grasped his waist, rolling them both onto a bamboo couch at the side. The bamboo creaked under two people’s weight. The object covering his eyes shifted away—of course, it was Luo Binghe.

His hand changed places to cover Shen Qingqiu’s mouth. “Don’t blink. Shizun’s eyelashes are so long, they’re making my hand itch, and my heart itches too.”

You have long eyelashes; the one with the longest eyelashes is you!

Shen Qingqiu blinked some dozen times in a row to express his fury. Luo Binghe smiled and leaned in to press a kiss on his eyelid.

He said, “Don’t yell under any circumstance. If we’re discovered at Qing Jing Peak, Shizun’s clean reputation really will be wrecked at once.”

What clean reputation do I have left? It’s all long been wrecked by this rebellious disciple.

Luo Binghe kissed down the line of Shen Qingqiu’s eye. “I said I’d come to get you. We haven’t seen each other for so many days—did Shizun miss me?”

The correct response, in his mind’s eye, should be first a knee to the stomach to kick this degenerate disciple off the couch, then a graceful rearrangement of his appearance, and finally an elegant and aloof “No.”

But for some reason, thinking of the Luo Binghe in the memory kneeling all alone in the bamboo house, silently picking the teacup up from the ground, he couldn’t bear to raise his leg.

Shen Qingqiu began to breathe like he was trembling in Luo Binghe’s palms.

He closed his eyes and nodded.

Chapter 75: Flurry Arrives on Greedy Winds

This translation is by Lily (BC Novels) at bcnovels.com.

He reckoned that Luo Binghe had already prepared to be kicked off at once and did not entirely anticipate that Shen Qingqiu would actually nod.

He went stiff on top of Shen Qingqiu on the spot, his expression freezing.

Shen Qingqiu finally realized what he had just done and the meaning of that nod just now. He wanted to kill himself out of shame and even had the heart to kill someone to silence them.

Nononononono it's not what you think—let me explain!!!

But, Luo Binghe didn't give him this opportunity. The hand holding his waist suddenly tightened, his voice lowering. "... You really missed me?"

Shen Qingqiu's brow creased. Luo Binghe, his breath harried, wouldn't abandon this path of questioning. "You really did?"

You're covering my mouth. Even if I wanted to respond I can't!

Does this mean I can only either nod or shake my head?

Shen Qingqiu nodded and shook his head in succession, messing around for a time. Luo Binghe pressed, “Did you miss me or not?”

Seeing his expression like he was about to cry, Shen Qingqiu really didn’t have a way out—time to admit defeat.

An ineffable tragic emotion stirring within him—time to sacrifice this old face—he slowly nodded again.

This time, Shen Qingqiu could see full and clear. He could confirm that in that split second, Luo Binghe’s breath froze.

A faint spark slowly ignited in his eyes, quickly engulfing his whole face, his whole body, growing with the force of a prairie fire.

Just when Shen Qingqiu thought he would break down crying tears of joy, Luo Binghe lowered his head and buried his face deep in the crook of Shen Qingqiu’s neck. The hand covering his mouth slowly let go.

And then, like a chick pecking at rice, he began to lay a broken and dense thicket of kisses on the corner of Shen Qingqiu’s mouth.

Shen Qingqiu finally extricated himself to breathe, forcing three words through the gaps in his teeth. "... Making a scene."

Luo Binghe muttered, "I also missed you a lot—a lot. There wasn't a time, a moment when I wasn't thinking of you..."

The breath that was rising in Shen Qingqiu's chest slowly drained back out.

Laying flat on the couch like a dead fish, he stared at the roof of the bamboo house in despair. After a while, he sighed. "... Then why didn't you look for this teacher in the dreamscape these last few days?"

Luo Binghe's dark and moist eyes stared at him. "Shizun, don't you think I'm annoying?"

He's sticky during the day, he's sticky in dreams at night, twenty-four hours of the day and always looking at this face—of course, it's annoying!

But, in a moment of incaution, he had gotten used to the stickiness. Now, Luo Binghe was lying right on top of him, and Shen Qingqiu didn't even feel like it was something unbearable...

How did it get to this stage? Isn't this a bit excessive!

Shen Qingqiu said dryly, “You know you’re annoying, and yet you still don’t restrain yourself.”

Luo Binghe said, “Either way, this isn’t the first time Shizun turned his back on me. If he’s annoyed, then so be it.”

Hearing him say this, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t resist feeling a bit sick at heart.

How much does Luo Binghe like him after all?

Even though he suffered that sort of treatment the days when he first entered Cang Qiong Mountain, as soon as Shen Qingqiu showed him a drop of kindness Luo Binghe swept away every injury he had suffered, clean and tidy. He put him in the bottom of his heart without the slightest hesitation.

A glass heart had been shattered by Shen Qingqiu just like that, completely unaware. Like a young wife, he had picked up the pieces one by one by himself and stuck them back together to gently and carefully hand back over, heart full of expectation, only for it to be shattered again, stuck back together...

Luo Binghe said softly, “Every time Shizun was on Cang Qiong Mountain with others, he smiled so happily. I thought you wouldn’t miss me very much.”

Master Shen had spent so many years putting on a mask until it became habit, especially in Cang Qiong Mountain Sect. At most, it was a meaningful look, like a smile yet not. Or, it was a smile on the skin but not the flesh, making it impossible for others to guess his true thoughts underneath. Otherwise, it was a half-hearted performance of a fake smile. Since when did he “smile so happily”?

Shen Qingqiu couldn't accept it. “Nonsense.”

Luo Binghe said, “Indeed, Shizun would never show an open-hearted smile on his face. But whether or not Shizun was smiling in his heart, of course, I knew.”

Lying on someone's body and acting like a spoiled child while playing with a strand of their hair, are you a little schoolgirl!

Shen Qingqiu rolled his eyes and said, “Yes. You're the roundworm in my stomach.”

Luo Binghe said, “I don't want to be a roundworm.”

Shen Qingqiu smacked the hand playing with his hair like he was swatting a mosquito. “Then, what do you want to do? Tell me, who did this teacher smile at before?”

After finishing, he had hit him on every word, but that idle hand still wouldn't be driven off. Luo Binghe actually began to count. "Many people. Liu... Liu-shishu, Sect Leader Yue, Shang Qinghua, Ming Fan, Ning-shijie, the people at Xian Shu Peak, Wan Jian Peak, Qian Cao Peak, Qiong Ding Peak, Bai Zhan Peak, the gate guards, the stair sweeps..."

He wouldn't even let off the gate guards and the stair sweeps—where would this kid stop his grudge? The whole of Cang Qiong Mountain would get swallowed by this special concentrated-flavor vinegar from the Demon Realm!

Shen Qingqiu criticized, "The way you called Shishu was too insincere. From now on, don't call him that."

Luo Binghe said resentfully, "When he calls me a little brute or a thankless wretch, he's sincere enough."

Shen Qingqiu couldn't resist laughing at that. His folding fan was sitting beside the couch, and he picked it up to give Luo Binghe a few taps on the head. "Was he wrong? You dare lay your wolf claws on this teacher's body. If you're not a little brute, then what?"

The words were coming too smoothly, not even he himself realized that this was pushing the bounds of propriety. The tail end of his words lifted the corner of his mouth, seeming frivolous yet heavy, a bit coquettish, and extremely undignified.

Luo Binghe looked down from above. When this scene entered his eyes, he only felt some sort of fire tickling its way up to burn wildly in his heart and stomach. He subconsciously moved to place a leg between Shen Qingqiu's knees, but fearing getting kicked off the bamboo couch after discovery, he hurriedly moved his head over to let Shen Qingqiu hit him with his fan to his heart's content. "Even if I am a little brute, then I am only Shizun's little brute. Other people can't call me that."

Hearing this, Shen Qingqiu felt like a liter of sour plum juice had been forcibly poured down his throat, sickening enough to make his hair stand on end. He almost snapped his fan in his grip. He hurriedly used it to jab Luo Binghe in the chest to prop him up. "Get up."

If they wanted to speak of official matters, they had to be sitting upright in a proper position. With one person on top of the other, no matter how serious the topic of conversation, it would turn indecent. Luo Binghe wasn't quite willing but still climbed up to sit on one side of the couch.

After sleeping for five days, Shen Qingqiu felt like his old waist was about to break, but at least he could still straighten. He thought he looked like some old man with pursed brows and pained face beating his legs and rubbing his back, but in others' eyes it was a completely different scene: hair in disorder, loose over the shoulders; inner robe with collar askew, showing a strip of pale shoulder and neck, throat and collarbone clearly defined. Because he had just been rolling around on the couch, a pale layer of red was painted across his cheeks, silently frowning and rubbing his lower back. In this type of situation, errant hearts couldn't help but stray further and further.

Luo Binghe, not blinking a single blink, scooted closer, slowly helping him rub his back. Shen Qingqiu said, satisfied, “Good. Considerate.”

Luo Binghe said, “Shizun still doesn’t know how considerate I can be.”

[T/N: I’m about 90% sure this exchange is supposed to be some sort of innuendo. 贴心 (tie1 xin1) is a term that can mean “intimate”, “close”, or “considerate”. SQQ is most most likely using the latter meaning, and LBH’s response is more literally translated as “Shizun still doesn’t know the benefits of being more 贴心 with me,” with a double meaning between the first and second translations. I changed this line a bit so I could use the same English term.]

He really knows how to ask for pampering. Luo Binghe continued, “When facing Tianlang-Jun if Shizun needs my assistance at any point, don’t hesitate to call for me.”

Shen Qingqiu had been avoiding the topic of Tianlang-Jun to keep from upsetting Luo Binghe. He never thought he would raise the topic himself—sure enough, it was a bit too considerate. He thought for a bit, then said deliberately, “Your father...”

Luo Binghe buried his head in his shoulder, saying stuffily, “I don’t have a father. Only Shizun.”

...

Why do I feel like I'm your dad?

Shen Qingqiu waved away this helpless feeling and said earnestly, "If you are reluctant, by all means, don't force yourself."

No matter how much of an exotic flower he was, he was still Luo Binghe's father. In any case, he was still a person Luo Binghe had once secretly longed to meet, even if in reality he was far from the image of Luo Binghe's longings.

The movements of Luo Binghe's hand never stopped. He said indifferently, "I'm not reluctant."

Shen Qingqiu carefully examined him. En, sure enough, this face... was an honest expression of one who sincerely wished to help gang up on someone and beat them up. No traces of reluctance at all.

Actually, this was a good thing. Though joining up with the son to entrap the father wasn't a very upright path, if Luo Binghe truly wanted to join hands with the cultivation world to dethrone Tianlang-Jun, not only would the human realm gain a ferocious ally, Luo Binghe would also max out his righteousness points while he was at it. He would be able to remedy the losses he incurred at Zhao Hua Temple a bit.

Before Yue Qingyuan had left just now, he had told him to rest well and that “This matter can be handed over to our other comrades to handle,” meaning that he didn’t want him to go to battle. Shen Qingqiu muttered, “Sect Leader-shixiong might not let me go to battle. When the snow begins to fall, Luochuan. It’s best if you be mindful of this time and this place.”

Luo Binghe softened the grip on his waist, saying in a warm tone, “Sometimes, I feel Shizun really has an excessive understanding of some things.”

Shen Qingqiu’s heart thumped in his chest.

Luo Binghe continued, “Just like that time in the Holy Mausoleum. Shizun had clearly never entered the Holy Mausoleum before, but he knew the layout of the rooms inside and the demonic artifacts guarding the tombs like the back of his hand, and could even exploit them to his own advantage. It draws this disciple’s esteem and makes him sigh in admiration.”

Shen Qingqiu deliberately traced out, “All those ancient books Qing Jing Peak has accumulated over the years are not worthless scraps of paper and verbose nonsense. There’s always useful information inside.”

Luo Binghe let out an “Oh.” Done massaging his waist, he began to use his fingers to slowly comb out the long hair loose at Shen Qingqiu’s back. “This disciple has also read some of those ancient books but didn’t catch sight of this much. Sure enough, he is still too far from Shizun’s ability.”

... How could he have forgotten? Luo Binghe also had a heaven-defying top student halo. If he said he'd "read some," that means he already knows all of those dusty old books on Qing Jing Peak by heart. Of course, he'd know if there was any "useful information."

This child was not Yue Qingyuan. If he didn't want to talk, Yue Qingyuan wouldn't ask, but Luo Binghe would definitely pester him to death to get to the root of the issue. He wasn't that easy to deceive. Shen Qingqiu was still racking his brains to figure out how to detour around this bend when, suddenly, Ning Yingying called from outside the bamboo house. "Shizun, you're awake, right? Can Yingying come in?"

Good kid, what an obedient disciple!

Shen Qingqiu said quietly, "You go first."

Luo Binghe's hands paused. "Why is it that I have to go and they don't?"

Ming Fan also called from outside. He yelled, "Shizun, a few of our shishu are already here. Is it convenient for you to get up?"

Why did this many of them come at once! Shen Qingqiu jumped off the couch, pushing Luo Binghe out the window. Luo Binghe threw back while leaving, "So it turns out Shizun likes to sneak around like this..."

Shen Qingqiu knocked him on the forehead with his fan. “Who’s the one being sneaky? Whose fault is it?”

Why do you have to make it look like a secret love affair every time!

Luo Binghe soundlessly flipped out the window but stretched his hand in again to grab Shen Qingqiu. He said softly, “Shizun, after these affairs have been settled, do you want to leave with me?”

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t quite tear down his face and could only stay reserved. “This teacher is still the Qing Jing Peak Lord.”

If Luo Binghe wants to see him, can’t he just come to find him? Why insist on leaving with him? He didn’t want to contribute any more source material for Resentment of Chunshan.

Luo Binghe sighed. “I thought so.”

He had just closed the window when the bamboo house’s door opened. Qi Qingqi’s voice arrived before her person did. Lifting the curtain to show her bright and beautiful face, she pouted, “You really are more and more pampered. At Zhao Hua Temple, were you struck a few times or beaten until you were spitting blood? You slept five days in one go!”

Shen Qingqiu turned and said half-sincerely, “Don’t be like this Qi-shimei, you’ve always known about my debility.”

Qi Qingqi snorted. “I’ve always known you’re inconvenient and troublesome.”

Liu Mingyan followed behind her, bowing in greeting after entering. Behind her was Liu Qingge. Ming Fan and Ning Yingying followed Mu Qingfang at the very back. The modestly-sized bamboo house was crammed full of people all at once. Shen Qingqiu began to sweat. Fortunately, Luo Binghe had left through the window, or else there’s no way he’d be able to hide now.

Mu Qingfang smiled, “I was saying that Shen-shixiong’s complexion was normal, no unusual signs of sickness; he really was just sleeping. You should believe me this time, no?”

Shen Qingqiu voiced his shame, pointing out seats for each Peak Lord. Seeing Liu Qingge sweep his eyes over every part of the room after he entered, his gaze cold, he said, “Liu-shidi, I’m over here.”

Liu Qingge looked back, turning towards Shen Qingqiu. “Who was here just now?”

Chapter 76: Return to the Abyss

Shen Qingqiu pointed them again towards the seats, saying, “Our shixiong have just left.”

As he lifted the teapot from the table, Ming Fan hurried over to help, only to be stopped by a sharp glance telling him not to intervene. As Shen Qingqiu personally poured tea for everyone, Liu Qingge finally sat down, reached for his teacup, and sipped quietly.

Qi Qingqi spoke, “Naturally, our other shixiong have already come by. Liu-shidi, from that face of yours, I thought you were speaking of Luo Binghe.”

While words themselves may have no deeper implications when spoken, a listener could easily twist their intentions. Shen Qingqiu’s cheeks were already sore as he faked another smile. “Now how could that be possible?”

Qi Qingqi placed her teacup down on the table rather heavily and raised an eyebrow as she spoke. “Of course. How could that be indeed? If Luo Binghe dared to return to Cang Qiong Peak now, you’ll see just how we take care of scum like him!”

Mu Qingfang, sitting off to the side with his hands in his sleeves, commented casually, “Well you’d have to be able to take care of him first.”

Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but laugh a little at their expense. Qi Qingqi immediately pointed at him. "You've still got the guts to laugh. The most problematic one here is you! Shen Qingqiu, I'm telling you now: it's a good thing you took responsibility and came back with our shixiong and shidi this time. If you left with Luo Binghe again, I'd personally take care of you and expel you from the sect! See if you'd even be able to stand afterward!"

There were obviously supposed to be words of concern, but she was so harsh that it was surprising that she didn't head straight over and seize Shen Qingqiu by the neck.

Mu Qingfang replied. "Well, all is well now."

Although he said it was "all well," he clearly wanted to sigh in exasperation. Qi Qingqi spoke, "If it weren't for shixiong's refusal to pull out his sword until absolutely necessary, and how he was forced to charge in with little information, Luo Binghe would never have been able to take advantage of him and escape. If you had been just a little later, you may have been able to witness our shixiong's Xuan Su sword."

At those words, Shen Qingqiu felt his heart stutter. After all, he had never seen the Xuan Su sword in any scene, whether from the original book or over on this side of things. He didn't know what Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky was thinking either. Would it kill him to write it? All the hints of grandeur, like thunderous roars on a stormy sky without a single drop of rain. All that lengthy, elaborate build-up, and then at the very end, there was nothing but an empty black pit waiting!

With no explanation whatsoever, Yue Qingyuan was just pierced through with a thousand arrows and fell over dead! (bye bye!)

Ning Yingying had been sitting off to the side with her head down the entire time since she walked in. Shen Qingqiu waved her over and asked, “What’s wrong?”

Ning Yingying came over slowly and looked up with two eyes that were as red as a little bunny’s. With a sniffle in her voice, she quietly spoke, “Shizun, now that you’re back, don’t leave anymore, okay?”

And she was crying again. Shen Qingqiu was left dumbfounded. He wasn’t a man prone to crying—at most, they would be rather figurative tears, falling deep in his heart. So why were all his disciples so quick to start sobbing? Her tears fell like an unending storm of raindrops on her pretty, delicate cheeks.

Her words seemed to resonate with Ming Fan as well as he cried along sorrowfully. “Shizun—”

That one was definitely not from the same delicate crying scene!

Qi Qingqi didn’t let the opportunity to lecture him slide past. “Look! Look at your disciples. Don’t you care about them at all? You have more than the one disciple, but you only care for that one ingrate! Did you forget the rest of them?”

Shen Qingqiu patted Ning Yingying gently on the back, comforting her while defending himself. “Since when have I cared only for the one?”

Liu Qingge finished the remaining third of his tea, closed his eyes, and said, “Come back and stay. Don’t leave anymore.”

Shen Qingqiu agreed succinctly. “Alright.”

Hearing that, Qi Qingqi was finally satisfied. Liu Qingge was just about to speak again when he suddenly froze. Then a murderous aura overcame him.

Everyone in the room noticed his sudden change in demeanor and grasped their swords without hesitation. Suddenly, Liu Qingge rose and dashed towards the windows. Shen Qingqiu felt his heart leap into his throat.

Liu Qingge pushed open the windows. Outside, the sky was clear and the moon shone brightly. Below them were deep forests of bamboo. There wasn’t a single human figure in sight.

Of course, Luo Binghe wouldn’t just stand there stupidly—he probably left a long time ago. The air inside the room finally seemed to relax a bit. Mu Qingfang spoke, “Liu-shixiong, what did you see?”

Yet Liu Qingge didn't turn around. Instead, he reached a hand out the window as if catching something floating from the skies.

After a while, he brought his hand back in and turned towards them as he replied, "It's snowing."

Shen Qingqiu lay in his bed with his eyes wide open that entire night. On the next day, as soon as he heard the alarm bells, he rushed out of his bamboo house.

The ringing of the bells seemed to grow more urgent by the second, every toll landing deep and heavy as it echoed throughout Cang Qiong Peak. The disciples from each peak gathered, from the Rainbow Bridge to Qing Jing Peak. All flocked and gathered outside Qiong Ding Palace, yet even in the crowd, all were completely silent.

Shen Qingqiu settled things quickly on Cang Qiong Peak before heading for the palace. On one side of the palace was a tall white crystal mirror that stood over ten feet high¹. Other than An Ding Peak's stand-in disciple, all the other Peak Lords had gathered here, standing forwards in a picture of dignified grace.

Reflected in the mirror was a wide, flowing river surrounded by tall mountains, green fields, and a few sparse rows of white roofs.

Yue Qingyuan said, "The middle reaches of the Luochuan River. Look to the sky."

Above the scene, an ominous darkness was gathering—black, cavernous mountains began to rise from behind the rolling clouds. It looked almost like a massive inverted, pitted skull, as it began creeping out of the dark clouds, the empty holes staring down upon the world below.

That was the demonic Maigu Mountains.

Yue Qingyuan spoke. “We received news that this began last night. At first, only a few scattered boulders appeared. But within the hour, it became clear that they were forming mountains.”

One of the peak lords was shocked and exclaimed, “Within an hour? This... it’s much too fast!”

No. This was a perfectly normal speed of merging. Tianlang-Jun really did choose the “best place” after all, just as he had said. Without interference, scenes like this one would be visible across within the day. Within the next two days, the two worlds would be fully merged—just like shredding apart two beautiful paintings, then stitching the pieces together into a blotchy, muddled new picture.

Liu Qingge crossed his arms as he stood, holding the Cheng Luan sword in his grasp. “Then we need to move faster.”

Yue Qingyuan spoke. “Each Peak Lord will bring two-thirds of the disciples from their peak with them. We will arrive at the midpoint of the Luochuan River within half an hour.”

At the Sect Leader’s command, the Peak Lords immediately scattered. Arriving in half an hour would give them each less than ten minutes to prepare, so they had to move quickly. Shen Qingqiu was also preparing to head back to gather his own men when Yue Qingyuan called out to stop him. “You will stay here.”

Shen Qingqiu turned around. “Shixiong, you know that I must go.”

Yue Qingyuan replied, “Shidi, other than the first snowfall and Luochuan River, what else do you know?”

Shen Qingqiu slowly replied, “In order to stop the merger, we must first pull out the Heart Devil Sword. It currently stands in a skull in the Maigu Mountains, and Tianlang-Jun must be there as well to feed strength into it.”

Meaning the solution was: 1) Destroy the Heart Devil Sword, 2) Kill Tianlang-Jun

Yue Qingyuan insisted, “You will stay behind.”

Shen Qingqiu was just about to speak again when Yue Qingyuan raised his hand in a sealing motion, as if he was about to cast a barrier to lock Shen Qingqiu directly inside the Qiong Ding Palace.

The Sect Leader's about to lay down the law!

Shen Qingqiu straightened, his back going completely rigid as he tried to decide whether he should reach for his Xiu Ya Sword. Right at that moment, a frayed voice cried out in alarm from outside the palace. Both men dashed out immediately and looked to the direction that the disciples outside were pointing towards. Shen Qingqiu gasped quietly under his breath.

They could only watch as the clouds rolled in like massive tides in the vast sea of sky above Cang Qiong Peak, a bleeding red color. A beam of red light cut through the sky and colossal, flaming boulders began to appear one by one like meteors falling straight towards Cang Qiong Peak.

Yue Qingyuan's expression didn't waver. He held out his hand and whistled; Xuan Su—sword, scabbard, and all—flew immediately into his outstretched hand. Shen Qingqiu watched as each boulder was crushed into tiny particles, like thousands of glowing embers floating down after an explosion of fireworks lit up the sky.

The red clouds swirled about a massive crater, like the top of an erupting volcano. Within, they could see countless pairs of arms and screaming human heads, rolling about in pain, as if trapped in purgatory.

F**k, the Endless Abyss—Cang Qiong Peak sure drew the grand prize on this one!!!

In his mind, Shen Qingqiu cursed relentlessly: god***** Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky!

If you were going to write a merger, you could've at least stated clearly somewhere that Cang Qiong Peak was located in the same location as the Endless Abyss!

After this tide rolled past them, they didn't know when the next wave would be coming in. They didn't know how long it would be until the Twelve Peaks were completely merged with the Endless Abyss, becoming a sea of fire and lava, a hell on earth. Cang Qiong Peak couldn't be saved now.

Yue Qingyuan turned to the stand-in disciple of An Ding Peak. "Please call for aid from the masters of Zhao Hua Temple." Then he turned and raised his voice. "All disciples remaining here, you are to follow your orders. As soon as the boundary is broken, leave all belongings behind and immediately retreat from the mountain!"

All the disciples gathered in the square before them answered at once. "Understood!"

Yue Qingyuan turned and said, “Qingqiu-shidi, you will also go to Luochuan.”

Liu Qingge, who had returned after gathering his disciples from Bai Zhan Peak, said, “Then what about you, Sect Master?”

Yue Qingyuan replied, “I will hold this back for as long as I can until the master of Zhao Hua arrives. Then I will join you.”

Shen Qingqiu spoke, “Sect Leader-shixiong, will you be alright alone? How about I stay here.....”

Yue Qingyuan actually laughed a bit at that. “I tell you to stay, and you want to go. I tell you to go, and now you want to stay. Little.....shidi, what will I do with you?”

Liu Qingge pulled him along and started to leave, and spoke tersely. “Time to leave. If he says he will join us later, then he will join us later.”

Finally, in the face of disaster, Cang Qiong Peak had the self-respect expected of the top sect in a cultivation novel. There were no more leisurely carriages or boats rolling casually along. Thousands of swords flew across the skies faster than a flash of lightning. If anyone below glanced up, they would only see streaks of light speeding past, like a moving stream of stars.

How spectacular that scene must be. It was a pity that the menacing mountains appearing on the horizon took away any possible awe such a magnificent sight would bring.

An Ding Peak really was the master of logistics, and they were extremely efficient. Support from Zhao Hua Temple arrived very quickly and helped support the boundary. Yue Qingyuan quickly left and caught up with them. Not half an hour later, he arrived at the middle reaches of the Luochuan River.

Because there were so many of them, they were forced to land in groups, a few at a time. Both banks of the Luochuan River were already crowded with people: those who heard of it through passing news, those gifted with extraordinary visions, and cultivators from all clans and sects who had arrived to investigate, donning uniforms of every color. The cultivators were all busy evacuating the civilians from the area. Wu Wang and Wu Chen led a group from the Zhao Hua Temple over to join them.

Yue Qingyuan joined his hands together in a bow. “My deepest gratitude to you, Masters, for sending your disciples to aid us. Otherwise, I fear the thousand years of history that stand behind the Cang Qiong Peak would have been destroyed in an instant.”

Wu Wang was a monk that usually had plenty to say, yet today his face remained grave and he didn’t speak a single word. In fact, it was the Great Master Wu Chen who finally replied after wiping the sweat from his brow. “Amitabha. The thousand years of history that were about to be destroyed were not only your own— Zhao Hua Temple was nearly caught in the same devastating dilemma.”

Yue Qingyuan was slightly surprised. “Such a thing was happening? Masters, you have sent hundreds of disciples out to Cang Qiong Peak—are there enough remaining to protect the temple?”

Shen Qingqiu was also confused. Was it possible that the Zhao Hua Temple had reached the point of sacrificing even their own wellbeing for the sake of aiding other sects?

Wu Wang’s face continued growing paler, and the Great Master Wu Chen, seeing his continued silence, could only reply and explain. “This...it’s really too difficult to speak of. It was not our own strength that saved us, but rather that which we borrowed from another who lent us their aid.”

Yue Qingyuan asked curiously, “Could it have been Tian Yi Monastery?” Tian Yi Monastery had always been known for being unfettered and leisurely, a sect with little organization or discipline. They just went with the flow and made little contribution of their own. If they were the ones who managed to support the temple, it would be quick a shock.

The Great Master Wu Chen shook his head. “It was the Huan Hua Palace.”

Shen Qingqiu’s fan froze as the words slipped from his tongue. “Huan Hua Palace? Isn’t that.....“

Wu Wang's face was completely ashen as he spoke. "Correct. It was indeed Luo Binghe."

Suddenly, they heard two small sounds of chortling laughter from the side. A light, clear voice spoke in a perfectly mannered tone. "This one wouldn't dare accept any gratitude for that which we have provided. If anything must be said of the matter, I was only trying to help Shizun."

Chapter 77: Maigu Demonic Ridge

Crammed in here were all cultivators with five senses that were keen and acute. Whether or not they were in close proximity, all of them now turned towards Shen Qingqiu; hundreds of pairs of eyes, with varying gazes, enveloped him from all directions.

Spreading open his fan, Shen Qingqiu silently hid the lower half of his face behind it.

Luo Binghe sauntered in, the hem of his black outfit fluttering as a breeze wafted across; the sword suspended on his waist was surprisingly Zheng Yang¹. Behind him, Mobei-Jun was on the left with his head held high, while Sha Hualing sashayed seductively on the right. Huan Hua disciples, who have long been missing in action, trailed closely behind them. Bringing up the rear was a small army of black-armored infantry made up of demons. Shang Qinghua muddled along in the middle, weaving in and out, back and forth, like a slippery loach; this was an extremely incongruous sight to behold. Both of them stared daggers at one another the moment they came face to face with each other, sending knives and swords back and forth with their glares; how boisterous!

Luo Binghe crossed over in an imposing manner and took his stand as the third party of the trio; the colorful expressions that appeared on everyone's face were more than enough to make an emoji pack. Especially those from Cang Qiong Mountain, there was a period of time when they would fight those from Huan Hua Palace whenever they crossed paths with them; even now, their anger still felt particularly raw upon seeing this old enemy of theirs. Yet, the words of Zhao Hua Temple plainly suggested that they were

allies at present and not foes, so they could only endure it and restrain themselves.

Qi Qingqi warily asked, “Is what both masters said for real?”

Luo Binghe smiled, “Is Peak Lord Qi suspecting that Zhao Hua Temple has also been..... ah, brainwashed and oppressed by me?”

Seeing that they were going to get into an argument again, Shen Qingqiu hurriedly said, “The words of Great Master Wu Chen are naturally true.”

Hearing his words, the hundreds of eyes that were originally looking away from him seemed to have been triggered, and once again they all turned towards him. Qi Qingqi glared at him, looking at him as if Shen Qingqiu was a wayward and unfilial daughter siding with her husband instead of her parents².

Luo Binghe’s eyes were fixed on him. It was as if he could see no one else but Shen Qingqiu. He said, “Shizun, after not seeing you for so many days, this disciple missed you very much.”

Didn’t they just meet last night.....

If someone else had said “missed you very much,” everyone here would have been covered in goosebumps. But it happened that Luo Binghe’s

physical attributes and settings had been configured in a way such that “no matter what he said, others would not feel out of sorts,” thus everyone’s attention did not shift to him. Shen Qingqiu could feel the unfeeling gazes from everyone around him, so he could only reply with what he thought was an appropriate “mhm.”

There was still a trace of a smile at the corners of Luo Binghe’s mouth. He continued, “The Northern and Southern demon territories have always been at odds with one another. The Northern Territory, of which I’m the leader, does not approve of the merge. We are thus willing to assist and join forces with all of you to fend off the enemy.”

Standing with his hands at his back, Luo Binghe looked like a model human being. Who would know that behind the scenes, he was like a young girl who loved to lean on others while crying and acting like a pampered child..... Who would believe it?!

Yue Qingyuan calmly said, “Forgive me for being suspicious. We parted on bad terms the last time at Zhao Hua Temple. And now Palace Master Luo suddenly wants to join forces with the cultivation world to fight off your biological father.....”

Luo Binghe replied succinctly, “I’m only doing this for one person. I don’t care about anything else.”

This time, he did not say for whom, but was there any difference? Was there any point?

In the snowy winter, Shen Qingqiu shook and turned the folding fan which he had used as a prop for posing like a cultured gentleman into a cattail leaf fan, wishing he could sweep away the various gazes directed at him to the nine heavens with a wave of his fan. One of the sect masters said with a dry laugh, “Peak Lord Shen has trained a good disciple. It’s indeed a great blessing for the cultivation world.”

Although he said “trained a good disciple,” his tone was no different from saying “married a good husband.” Upon hearing it, Shen Qingqiu’s fanning movements started to carry an undercurrent of murderous intent. Wu Wang looked as if he wanted to smash these two – people who corrupt public morals – to death with his staff. Great Master Wu Chen hurriedly said, “Since Benefactor³ Luo is willing to help, that’d be the best. I would also like to ask Sect Master Yue to take charge of the whole operation.”

The various sects had always considered Yue Qingyuan to be the pillar of strength during critical moments. This time was no different; he naturally began to deploy and give instructions to the various sects, “Zhao Hua Temple, please arrange for the rest of the manpower to keep the barrier up. Stop Maigu Ridge from falling further. You must prevent it from connecting with the river.”

Great Master Wu Chen looked awkward as he said, “We will do our best. However, Luo River is broad, and its two banks are far apart. There is no place to land, and the foundation is unstable; it is not suitable to set up an array there.”

Yue Qingyuan thought for a moment and said, “How about sending a Cang Qiong disciple to ride a sword to set up and maintain the array in the air?”

Luo Binghe suddenly piped up, “There’s no need to go to so much trouble.”

He turned his head aside but said nothing. Mobei-Jun spontaneously stepped out, marched to the river, and stepped onto the surface of the water. Solid ice rapidly spread wherever he walked. It did not take long for the body of waters to be frozen by three feet. Even so, it continued to expand until even the swimming fishes were frozen in ice. With just a little more time, he would be able to freeze the entire middle stretch of Luo River.

The output advantage that Demons had over humans was innate. There were exclamations of marvel, as well as chagrin, all around. Wu Chen said his thanks. With no trace of arrogance, Luo Binghe looked back at Shen Qingqiu with bright, shiny eyes.

Shen Qingqiu saw that he had scored a lot of brownie points, and the hostility and wariness that everyone had towards him were no longer as bad. He could not help but feel gratified and said, “Mhm. Well done. “

A wide smile spread across Luo Binghe’s face. Somehow, the corners of Shen Qingqiu’s mouth lifted too. As soon as Shen Qingqiu noticed it, he immediately pulled the corners of his mouth down and composed himself. He wondered if it was not only tears that were contagious but even smiles too.

Yue Qingyuan continued to assign tasks. Tian Yi Monastery would continue to spread out to other places beside Luo River where signs of the merge had begun to show and protect and evacuate the commoners in those places.

Next up was Cang Qiong Mountain. Yue Qingyuan thought for a moment and said, “When the first wave of demons from Nan Jiang break through the barrier, Bai Zhan Peak will take the lead.”

There were only forty people from Bai Zhan Peak, and someone could not help but ask, “Most of the demons from Nan Jiang are beasts, each of them formidable. Can forty people really resist the first wave of attacks?”

How dare they doubt the battle capability of the combat clan!

Liu Qingge stepped on the rocks with his foot. The tassel of his sword fluttered in the wind along with his white sleeves and black hair. Instead of answering directly, he said coldly to the disciples behind him, “Those who do not kill at least a thousand, scam on your own to An Ding Peak.”

Forty people shouted in unison, “Yes!”

Shang Qinghua muttered weakly: “Don’t discriminate against An Ding Peak.....” Logistics is innocent, long live logistics!

Yue Qingyuan continued to entrust tasks to Qiong Ding Peak, Xian Shu Peak, Qian Cao Peak..... Each in their own positions, with their own duties. Shen Qingqiu saw that Luo Binghe was too laid-back and could not help but ask, “How many people have you brought with you? Don’t you need to make arrangements?”

As soon as he opened his mouth, he felt countless ears pricked up and listened intently with bated breath. Even the whispers abruptly quietened down. The lithe Taoist nun triplets nearby let out a snicker.

Luo Binghe replied, "I've brought everyone I could. The arrangement is simple." Saying so, he pointed to Sha Hualing and Mobei-Jun who were standing behind him. "Entrust Jiuzhong-Jun to her. Entrust the ugly beasts to him."

.....Wasn't that pitting the daughter against her father again? That was simply.....

Shen Qingqiu probed, "And?"

Luo Binghe nodded solemnly, "And"—a smile spread on his face—"entrust Shizun to me."

The place erupted with coughs all around. Shen Qingqiu could barely maintain his composure.

He snapped the folding fan shut and gripped it in his hand. Adjusting his expression, he said in all seriousness, "I have something to say to the former An Ding Peak Lord. For the time being, discuss with the various sect leaders on a plan to deal with the enemy."

Without caring about the reactions of others, he ran the moment he was done talking. He grabbed Shang Qinghua and dragged him as if dragging a dead boar to underneath a tree that was slightly isolated from the others.

Shen Qingqiu said, “Why are you still alive? You should have died eight hundred chapters earlier. Why hasn’t Mobei-Jun offed you yet?!”

Shang Qinghua adjusted his collar: “Shen Da Da4, you should have died earlier than me. Now you are still alive and kicking. Aren’t you ashamed to talk about me?”

Shen Qingqiu held his forehead and took a deep breath, “Brother Towards the Sky, Hero, Hero Airplane, do you lack love? So the original background for Shen Qingqiu you initially mentioned was that he was abused by a pervert in his childhood? Do you like to write bitter and tragic background stories that much?”

Shang Qinghua replied, “The more tragic the character, the higher the popularity.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “Bullshit! After getting spammed with two threads of reader comments braying for my castration, you’re telling me this is popularity?”

“That was because I didn’t stick to the original settings.” Shang Qinghua put forth his argument and reasoned with him, “Bing-ge5, tragic or not? Popularity, high or not?”

He still dared to use Luo Binghe as an example! Shen Qingqiu smacked him with his fan and asked, “Do you really like to make use of this point that much?”

He thought of a miserable Luo Binghe kneeling on the ground to pick up broken teacups. Of his small and thin body straining to carry two buckets of water up and down the mountain steps. Of him huddled in the corner of the woodshed shivering uncontrollably at night. He felt so flustered and perturbed at those recollections he had the urge to hit someone, and this someone must be Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky!

Shang Qinghua observed his face and said in astonishment, “.....What expression is that? Don’t tell me your heart aches for him? Damn, I always thought you were tenacious, unyielding, and would always hold your ground. I always thought you were straight!”

Shen Qingqiu kicked him. “I don’t have time for your nonsense. Out with it, how do we fight Tianlang-Jun!”

Shang Qinghua felt sorry for Tianlang-Jun and said, “Don’t fight him! Don’t you feel he has suffered enough? And to be honest, I can’t think of how to fight him myself, since the outline and details have not been worked out yet.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “If we don’t defeat him, the ones who will suffer will be you and me. If you can’t think, then think of a way now. You are the one

who established the foundation of this world; your thoughts themselves are the fabric of the story!”

He had yet to finish speaking when they heard Luo Binghe’s voice, “Shizun, are you done with the discussion? It’s almost time to set out.”

It was not even five minutes. Shen Qingqiu turned around quickly and said, “Set out?”

Luo Binghe said: “Sect Master Yue and I think it’s best to send ten people to seize the sword. Shizun, are you going? I’ll go if you’re going.”

Shen Qingqiu replied, “All right.”

After a pause, he pointed to Shang Qinghua: “Take him, too.”

The colors drained from Shang Qinghua’s face, and his eyebrows twitched. He yelled for Cucumber Bro to spare his life, but Shen Qingqiu had already swaggered away. Liu Qingge and Bai Zhan Peak were responsible for staying behind to guard the surface of the ice. Shen Qingqiu walked past him, then suddenly turned back and said half in jest, “Since you want your disciples to kill a thousand, then, Shidi, you must personally kill ten thousand to set an example.”

Liu Qingge scoffed and said, “I’ll kill whoever dares to come.”

Shen Qingqiu asked, “You feel reassured this time?”

Liu Qingge thought for a moment and reluctantly said, “Sect Master-shixiong is around.”

Luo Binghe tugged at the corner of Shen Qingqiu’s robe and said, “Shizun, take me flying.”

Shen Qingqiu looked down at his waist, “.....Don’t you have a sword?”

Faced with Shen Qingqiu alone, Luo Binghe was now no longer the overbearing and arrogant man. He said bashfully, “Recently, I’ve been using too much demonic energy and too few spiritual energy. I’ve kind of forgotten how to use it.”

The other ten people nearby were looking at them. Shen Qingqiu did not want to delay, and thus he casually said, “Come on up!”

They rode the sword high into the sky and landed as soon as they entered Maigu Ridge. So Luo Binghe did not really embrace him for long.

The place they landed at was a rough patch of rock, with dried skeletons and bones growing out of the crevices between the dense white stones.

Looking up, strange dark trees towered above them, intertwined with one another. The peculiar cries of some unknown monster, combined with the caws of crows, reverberated through the ridge.

It should take them some time to search the ridge before finding Xin Mo sword. Shen Qingqiu warned, "There are many monsters in Maigu Ridge. It's better not to touch anything that looks alive."

Luo Binghe was of the demonic tribe. To show his sincerity for their cooperation, he took the lead this time. Shen Qingqiu walked beside him. As they walked, Luo Binghe quietly reached his hand out to hold Shen Qingqiu's hand.

Wu Wang gave a loud cough, while Wu Chen said "Amitabha." Yue Qingyuan simply and calmly shifted his gaze away.

Shen Qingqiu's breath caught. His forehead, cheeks, neck, and earlobes all felt as if they were burning. He was flustered, and, for no reason, felt like someone with a guilty conscience. He slowly withdrew his hand.

The instant his palm turned up empty, Luo Binghe's eyes looked as if they were instantly transformed into a wilderness blanketed with freezing snow.

It was not long before he let out a laugh, lowered his voice and said, "What are you afraid of? They have a favor to ask of me; they will not dare to say anything."

Reika's Notes:

“Married a good husband.” Everyone has now realized that Luo Binghe is a doting husband!

“Those who do not kill at least a thousand, scram on your own to An Ding Peak.” LOL, poor An Ding Peak!

(♪ ✧ ∇ ✧ ♪) Luo Binghe loves to ride Shen Qingqiu's sword.

Please let me know if there are any errors. Thanks for reading.

Chapter 78 –Past Faces Long Gone¹

Shen Qingqiu said, “That’s not the problem.”

Luo Binghe wouldn’t let it go. “Then what is the problem?”

Shen Qingqiu raised his fan. “Let’s settle our current task first. We can talk about it later.”

Luo Binghe slowly retreated, smiling faintly. “Fine.”

He said softly, “... either way there’s plenty of time to talk about it later.”

Everyone present could sense countless numbers of creatures stirring, hidden beneath the surface of the dark thicket of branches, waist-high brush, and piles of deathly pale stone all around. Lustrous green eyes and whispering pants rose and fell like tiny waves.

At this time, the advantage of having Luo Binghe walk in front was fully apparent. As long as it was him facing the direction they were walking, the sinister winds would immediately pause, and not a single voice would be heard.² The hidden demonic beasts would either play dead in force or frantically stream into retreat.

To say it a bit coarsely, it was like they were fleeing a god of pestilence...

With this godly assistance, the time it took to reach their destination was much shorter than anticipated.

If there was suddenly a column of roiling black energy rushing into the sky in the middle of a field of curling white fog, anyone who wasn't blind could see the anomaly.

The cavern mouth was hidden by layer upon layer of thick green leaves, dark as an overcast forest. Standing beside the cave mouth would give anyone a fit of chills. Their party halted their footsteps in hesitation.

According to his original imaginings, before reaching this stage they should have had to kill eight hundred enemy generals, chopped up a thousand demonic beasts, and met all sorts of poisonous insects and strange flowers on the way before they could reach the last hurdle after thousands of trials and tribulations.

Even if there weren't that many formalities, shouldn't they have at least gotten some blood on their clothes before they were worthy of the BOSS fight?!

One of the sect leaders said, "I'm afraid we cannot make a rash move."

Another agreed, “It’s best if we scout out the real situation first.”

Luo Binghe said, “That’s for sure.”

He had just finished speaking when Mobei-Jun suddenly kicked Shang Qinghua out.

He really just kicked him... out... out... out...

Right in front of Shen Qingqiu’s astonished gaze, Shang Qihua rolled and fell into the cavern to “scout out the real situation.”

After a moment of deathly stillness, a wretched screech suddenly exploded out from inside the cave. “AHHHHHHHHH!”

At lightning speed, Shen Qingqiu shoved aside a handful of vines to pour into the cavern with the others when he heard a voice sound out. “Peak Lord Shen, we meet again.”³

The Xin Mo sword was stuck in a crack in the rock at the far end of the cavern. That black energy and purple smoke were spilling from its point. Tianlang-Jun sat atop a piece of limestone, Shang Qinghua standing not far from the rock.

Natural light from outside the cave flowed in, illuminating half of Tianlang-Jun's body. Immediately, some drew in a cold breath.

Shen Qingqiu finally knew why Shang Qinghua's earlier screech was so wretched.

Even though the smile on Tianlang-Jun's face was as elegant as before, almost half the right side of his face had rotted into a purple-black mass, making this smile an extremely frightful sight.

His left sleeve was deflated, empty. Apparently, that arm which kept falling off couldn't be reattached anymore.

This dilapidated appearance, a dry lamp out of oil, was far from the final BOSS Shen Qingqiu had imagined.

Shen Qingqiu couldn't resist taking a glance at Luo Binghe's expression. But, his face only held a nearly wooden calm, an emotion he couldn't decipher.

Tianlang-Jun tilted his head, saying, "Fewer came than I imagined. I had thought it would be like last time at Bailu Mountain with hundreds of experts coming into battle."

Wu Wang snorted. “Look at this appearance of yours, human but not human, demon but not demon, you don’t even have a single lackey by your side. Do we even need that many people to come?”

Tianlang-Jun said, “It’s true that I don’t have a lackey here, but I do have a nephew.”

Before his words had fallen, a green shadow flashed across the cavern mouth. Without a breath of sound, Zhuzhi-Lang blocked in front of Tianlang-Jun.

For some reason, this master-servant pair were both in a sorry state. Tianlang-Jun’s Dew Flower body wasn’t suited to demonic energy and had rotted until it was full of holes; this was understandable. But, Zhuzhi-lang also had pupils suffused with yellow, plate after plate of scales crawling up to cover his neck, cheeks, forehead, arms, and all exposed skin. It was a frightful and sinister sight, very close to his half-human half-snake form in the Dew Flower cave.

He said hoarsely, “Master Shen.”

Shen Qingqiu said, “It’s me... how did you end up like this?”

Yue Qingyuan said, not batting an eyelid, “Shidi, you have some relationship with this person?”

A deep relationship indeed.⁴ In the course of events up until today, he had had the most important sort of connection with this person. Shen Qingqiu was just about to speak when Tianlang-Jun faintly raised his chin, squinting at Yue Qingyuan. “I remember you.”

He thought, then said, certain, “At that time, that old man from Huan Hua Palace wanted you to help him mount a sneak attack, but you didn’t pay him any attention. Now, the Cang Qiong Mountain Sect Leader is you? Not bad.”

Yue Qingyuan said, “Sire, your memory is not bad as well.”

Tianlang-Jun smiled, then let out a sigh.

“If you were also suppressed in a pitch-black place for decades, never seeing the sun, with only the option of thinking of things past to while away the time every day, your memory would be not bad just like mine.⁵”

This time, no one responded. Yue Qingyuan gripped Xuan Su, striking out with sword and scabbard included.

Tianlang-Jun was just about to dodge the strike when, with waves of rumbling, half the cave wall behind him collapsed, opening a big hole. The outside was high in the air, flying sand and rolling stones tumbling to drop down in a fall. The cold air suddenly rolled in, fine snowflakes dancing through the air to confuse everyone’s sight. Wave surging over wave of beastly cries and the sounds of battle faintly floated up from the ice surface

hundreds of meters below. The first wave of Southern Border demons had already touched ground.

Tianlang-Jun said, "I'd guess, it's definitely Bai Zhan Peak fighting on the front lines again. Am I right?"

Dozens of people had scattered, each charging over from every angle. Wu Wang, brandishing his spiritual staff into a formidable wind, extremely firm and fierce, stole to the very front. Zhuzhi-Lang was pushed to retreat step by step by Xuan Su, but still diligently drew a good part of the firepower. Tianlang-Jun continued to sit on the limestone and said leisurely, "I remember at that time, you dragged it out until the very last moment to draw your sword. Will you do the same today?"

Yue Qingyuan didn't respond. Just when he was about to send a palm strike at Zhuzhi-Lang's chest, another Sect Leader stole ahead to strike first. Zhuzhi-Lang didn't dodge or retreat, taking the full force of the strike, but the one who let out a wretched scream was actually that Sect Leader.

Shen Qingqiu's pupils suddenly contracted. He yelled, "Don't touch him—his body is covered in poison!"

In the chaos of battle, a few people were poisoned, a few others jolted out of the cave by the bursts of demonic energy and spiritual energy. Their bodies thrown out in midair, they would flip onto their swords mid-fall and steady themselves. Shang Qinghua surreptitiously slid towards Shen Qingqiu. Zhuzhi-Lang was caught in the raging bloodlust of battle, and unexpectedly seeing a furtive figure sneaking towards the outside,

reflexively flung over two green snakes. Seeing this, Shen Qingqiu flicked his hand, a green leaf flying out to save Airplane-juju's life, when the two green snakes were suddenly skewered by a sharp spike of ice solidifying out of midair.

Mobei-Jun appeared in the middle of the battle like a ghost, picked up Shang Qinghua, tossed him at Shen Qingqiu like tossing a chicken, and smashed a fist towards Zhuzhi-Lang.

In the next ten seconds, Shen Qingqiu finally witnessed first-hand what could be called a "vicious beating"...

With Zhuzhi-Lang suffering Mobei-Jun's wild beating, the firepower directed at Tianlang-Jun suddenly heightened.

Though Tianlang-Jun was down an arm and fighting one on many, his elegant poise still didn't drop a pinch. "Ay, why are you like this again. Fighting many on one, don't you think you're winning without a fight, violating the rules of justice?"

One Sect Leader rushed to attack. "Towards you, this type of Demon Race monster harboring evil intentions, fearing that any part of the world is not in chaos, what justice is there to be said!"

The next moment, his head exploded into pieces like a clove of garlic. Tianlang-Jun smiled. "Actually, I didn't really have any evil intentions at first, and I wasn't quite interested in seeing the whole world in chaos. I

would occasionally cross the border and come to this side to sing some songs and read some books. It was very nice. But, now that I've stayed under Bailu Mountain for that many years, I'm a bit reluctant not to do some of those things you're thinking of."

Yue Qingyuan flicked his finger. Xuan Su unsheathed by three inches, spiritual energy exploding up. Tianlang-Jun's body creaked like his skeleton was shifted out of alignment, making a sound of surprise. "Sure enough, you are a Sect Leader. Very good, your shifu himself wasn't much to speak of, but his eye in picking disciples and successors was quite good."

He reached out a hand, directly grabbing Xuan Su's point. He smiled as if he was ignorant and unaware of everything around him. "But why don't you draw it completely? Just like this, you still can't do anything to me."

Yue Qingyuan's gaze darkened, and Xuan Su drew out another half inch!

Suddenly, he heard Luo Binghe say coldly, "He can't do anything to you. What about me?"

Tianlang-Jun had not yet shed his smile when, suddenly, a strong stream of demonic energy surged over, chopping down like a machete.

His only remaining hand shed its arm and flew out of the cavern, swept up by a wild gale, falling straight down Maigu Ridge.

Luo Binghe finally showed his hand!

This father-son pair once again faced off, and this time, it was finally Tianlang-Jun who had no power to retaliate.

Luo Binghe's eyes were glaringly red, his face stretched taut, his strikes ruthless and tyrannical, not allowing any mercy. Now, both of Tianlang-Jun's hands were gone. Even with his left arm and right stump he was pushed to his limits. When Zhuzhi-Lang broke away from Mobei-Jun, his face and body were already a mass of blood and flesh. Seeing his master hard-pressed, it was like he had lost his head in the melee, crashing his way straight over. Right at that time, Wu Wang had been brushed by Tianlang-Jun's demonic energy, flying backward and spewing a mouthful of blood as Great Master Wu Chen went to catch him. Seeing Zhuzhi-Lang about to collide with him, Shen Qingqiu knew the situation was taking a bad turn. He flashed over to block in front of Wu Chen.

Upon seeing Shen Qingqiu, a wisp of clarity flashed through Zhuzhi-Lang's glistening yellow pupils. He violently braked, losing his balance and nearly stumbling into a fall. Just when he was going to detour around Shen Qingqiu to go help Tianlang-Jun, a flash of white light suddenly shot across the scene. Zhuzhi-Lang's back heavily thudded into the cave wall, nailed into the cliff rock through his chest.

That half-length of slender sword blade in his chest was precisely Zheng Yang6.

Shen Qingqiu turned, and Luo Binghe slowly pulled back. Tianlang-Jun stood serenely some meters behind him.

He only stood for a while, then gracefully collapsed to the ground.

...

The battle is over?

It was this easy?

Shen Qingqiu still felt this was a bit unacceptable.

He didn't even get in a few strikes. And they're done just like this?

He smacked Shang Qinghua. "... Didn't you say Tianlang-Jun was very hard to fight?"

Shang Qinghua said, "... It is very hard."

Shen Qingqiu: "Is there any logic to this win?"

Shang Qinghua: “No matter how difficult a BOSS, don’t even think of making a wave in front of the male protagonist. Isn’t this the publicly known logic?”

The two looked all around. There were dozens of people when they came, but now, in this blood-filled scene, only a few were left standing. Shen Qingqiu looked at the two he used to regard as a BOSS level of extreme difficulty. One was nailed to the wall, dripping blood; one was lying on the ground, fitting the description of “rag doll, trampled and strings broken” one hundred percent.

He didn’t feel the unrestrained satisfaction of defeating the final BOSS a bit. The more he looked, the more it felt like his side was bullying the old and the disabled, like a shameless gang beating...

That’s right, this definitely was a gang beating. But who knew it would become like this? The BOSS’s actual strength fell too far from their expectations!

Luo Binghe turned, not yet dyed by a drop of blood. Calm and composed, he asked Shen Qingqiu, “Do you want to kill him?”

He was pointing at Tianlang-Jun. Zhuzhi-Lang heard and grabbed Zheng Yang’s blade, straining to pull it out. Many of the scales on his neck and face had been scraped off in the chaos of battle, and with these bursts of strength, blood began to pour down in streams.

Ever since he knew Gongyi Xiao had been killed by him, Shen Qingqiu always felt a bit of discomfort in his heart. But this scene really was a spectacle to horrible to endure, and it was hard for onlookers not to sympathize. And, even though Shen Qingqiu had been afflicted by his strange method of repaying gratitude countless times, at the very least Zhuzhi-Lang had never held any evil intentions towards him.

Shen Qingqiu sighed. “You’ve already gotten to this state. Why bother?”

Zhuzhi-Lang coughed out a mouthful of bloody foam, saying hoarsely, “Gotten to this state?”

He smiled bitterly. “If I said that my appearance at Bailu Mountain was my original body, what would Master Shen think?”

A peal of thunder crashed onto Shen Qingqiu’s forehead.

What, that snake man crawling all over the ground on Bailu Mountain was actually Zhuzhi-Lang’s original form?!

Zhuzhi-Lang gasped a breath and said, “My lineage is humble. Just because my father was a primal giant snake, I was in this deformed half-human half-snake shape when my mother gave birth to me. Up until I was fifteen, others would always shun me and hate me, insult me and beat me. If my

Lord never helped me gain a human form and support me, I would be a monster squirming on the ground my whole life.”

He clenched his teeth and said, “My Lord gave me my first chance to become human, and you, Master Shen, gave me my second. Maybe it was merely the wave of a hand to you both, but to me, it’s a debt I’d pursue through ten thousand deaths... Master Shen is asking me ‘why bother’? You tell me why I bother.”

Tianlang-Jun suddenly sighed. “Silly child, why are you telling him so much?”

Even though he was lying on the ground, he was as graceful and poised as ever. If you ignored the half of his face which had been corroded by demonic energy, he would be even more graceful and poised.

He gazed at the sky and continued pensively, “People, always believe that ‘those of different clans, their hearts must travel different paths.’⁷ But, no matter how close someone is to you, they could betray you in the blink of an eye. Why have you always clung to your one-sided wish of repaying gratitude? No matter how much you say, he won’t understand you; he’ll only get fed up and not comprehend. Why do you need to say any more?”

For a while, everyone on the scene stayed in silence. A good-natured youth who had had no vicious intentions, full-heartedly enjoying discussions of love, only to find it was nothing but a trap, and then suppressed under a dark and sunless mountain for countless days and nights. Who had the right

to tell him not to hold a grudge? Who had the right to tell him, “Let it go, get over it”?

But, Great Master Wu Chen said, “If sire truly did not hold these intentions in the past, it was our wrong to have believed slanderous charges. But you cannot hide or flee from today’s disaster. Every evil cause will bring about evil fruits. Sooner or later they will all be repaid.”

He clasped his hands and said, “But Miss Su didn’t hesitate to take the poison and wanted to go see you. How can you blame her for betraying you?”

Tianlang-Jun started slightly, raising his head.

Shen Qingqiu also felt his heart tremble.

Great Master Wu Chen would never tell a lie, but the version of events he told seemed to be a bit different from the one other people told and knew.

Great Master Wu Chen said, “At Zhao Hua Temple, because I didn’t want Miss Su to suffer criticism after her death, and because I agreed to protect the secret, this old monk could not talk and explain the true facts.

“Miss Su was forcibly detained in Huan Hua Palace by the Old Palace Master. She was stubborn and refused to take orders; she wasn’t willing to

trick you to the ambush location which had been set up with dozens of suppressing spells. The Old Palace Master only discovered that she was already pregnant when he was punishing her in the Water Prison. He feared that forcing an abortion would endanger her life, and Miss Su was even more willing to resist at all costs. So, the Old Palace Master gave her a bowl of poison, a type of poison deadly to the demon race, and told her that as long as she was willing to drink it, he would let her go to see you.

“Miss Su drank the Old Palace Master’s drug and set off alone. But she didn’t know that the Old Palace Master had changed the ambush location to the Bailu Mountain where you two used to meet.”

In his shattered body, Tianlang-Jun strove to lift his head. A bloodstain was still drying on his lip and, in a daze, he indeed had a kind of unspeakably pathetic appearance.

“This old monk met Miss Su on the road to Bailu Mountain. At that time, it was not long after she had drunk the drug, and her whole body was covered in blood, leaving crimson trails with every step. I heard her say a few fragments in explanation, and couldn’t bear to deceive her. After I told her the truth about how Tianlang-Jun had already been suppressed for good, she finally knew that all her Shifu had told her was a towering lie. Not only was the location incorrect, but the time was too!

“At her request, this old monk protected her and helped her evade the Huan Hua Palace disciples on patrol, sending her to the upper reaches of the Luochuan River. From then on, I didn’t know any more traces of her whereabouts.

“Tianlang-Jun, maybe it’s true that Miss Su wasn’t a purely benevolent person. She, the Huan Hua Palace successor with high hopes piled on her, was originally set up high. In the beginning, she may have gotten close to you without good intentions. But in the end, between the two of you, was it you who bewitched her with malicious intent or her who couldn’t keep a handle on her emotions?

“This old monk was not a player in this affair, and I never knew any of these truths. But, from what I saw and what I knew, she really did reject the orders of the shifu who had raised her for decades and didn’t open her mouth even after suffering all kinds of torture in the Water Prison, refusing to trick you or harm you—if in the end she wasn’t pushed to using a last resort, which mother in this world would drink that bowl of poison?

“She did not abandon and reject you, but had no other alternative. No one in this world pitied her, you just missed the opportunity ah...”

Tianlang-Jun’s lip seemed to tremble.

After a while, he said, “... Is that so.”

He finished these three words. Then, he asked, “It’s true?”

Great Master Wu Chen said, “This old monk would swear on his life, not half a sentence of these words were false.”

Tianlang-Jun turned his head, looking at Shen Qingqiu and Yue Qingyuan, and asked as if searching for confirmation. “It’s true?”

He didn’t even care if the onlookers knew the truth of the situation, asking every person he could find. Yue Qingyuan faced him, wordless, silently lowering his head and pondering something unknown. Shen Qingqiu thought it over again and again before finally slowly nodding his head.

Perhaps the Old Palace Master didn’t hold any intent of slander and injury at first but, seeing the two gradually grow closer, he began to regret sending Su Xiyao to approach Tianlang-Jun.

Su Xiyao had lost control of the situation and actually fell in love with Tianlang-Jun wholeheartedly, even having Luo Binghe; this was the straw that broke the camel’s back. Then, the Old Palace Master produced evidence out of context, gave short measure, wove a series of events, and cast Tianlang-Jun straight into the role of an exceptional devil hungering to topple the Three Realms.

And plainly wrecked this many people for this many years.

Tianlang-Jun seemed to suddenly lose all his strength, once again collapsing to the ground.

He sighed. “Alright. At least, there’s one thing that wasn’t that terrible.”

A few snowflakes dotted his eyelashes, trembling into motion. He didn't know whether it was this first snowfall to grace his brow in decades, or solidified, unfallen tears.

Shen Qingqiu turned to look at Luo Binghe. He had listened from beginning to end but seemed as if he had heard nothing at all, even letting out a quiet chuckle.

After explaining all these events, the knot gnawing at Tianlang-Jun's heart had been untied. But to Luo Binghe, the degree of cruelty had not lowered a bit.

It had only gone from the result of being rejected by mother and father to the result of being given up on by mother and father.

He was the one who was given up on just like before.

The Xin Mo sword was still emitting a steady flow of purple-black energy, and the sounds of battle below grew clearer and clearer. It seemed that the descent of Maigu Ridge was continuing, some unknown distance from the iced-over surface of the Luochuan. Yue Qingyuan walked a few steps towards the cliff wall pierced by the Xin Mo sword. Shen Qingqiu said, "Things are already like this. Tianlang-Jun, you should withdraw."

If he withdrew now, it still was not too late. But if Tianlang-Jun continued to pour demonic energy into the Xin Mo sword, the only way to stop the merge would really be to kill him. How to say, Shen Qingqiu did not

especially wish for Tianlang-Jun to actually die. After all, for the youth who liked to speak of love to become like this really was enough of a tragedy. If they were to take his life as well... where could you find a BOSS this miserable!

But, Tianlang-Jun suddenly let out a laugh.

That laugh resounded through the cavern and the mountain ridge. He seemed to find the situation extremely comical, tilting his head and saying, "Peak Lord Shen, look at how I am now—I can't even maintain Zhuzhi-Lang's human shape."

At this time, Shen Qingqiu had not yet detected the meaning within his words, only faintly feeling his heart jump in his chest.

Tianlang-Jun drawled, "I've fought with you people for this long, and the toll on this body of mine could not be said to be small. Think about it, the one who's been supplying the Xin Mo sword with demonic energy this whole time, who could that be?"

These words were not spoken especially fast or slow, but after they entered Shen Qingqiu's ear, it was a sentence a word. Hearing them, his neck gradually stiffened as though he had fallen into an icy rift.

"You should indeed tell someone to withdraw. It's just that, that person is not me."

昔颜已逝 (xi1 yan2 yi3 shi4) The xiyan in this is pronounced the same as Su Xiyān, yān is the same character, probably intentional?

鸦雀无声 (ya1 que4 wu2 sheng1), lit. crow and peacock make no sound.

迅雷不及掩耳 (xun4 lei2 bu4 ji2 yan3 er3), lit. '[rapid] thunderbolt no time to cover ears'.

This is sort of a play on the term for 'relationship' used here. 渊源 (yuan1 yuan2), with the characters for 'deep pool' and 'origin'.

不见天日 (bu4 jian4 tian1 ri4), literally translates as 'never seeing the sky/heaven or the sun'. As an idiom, can mean 'a world without justice' or 'suffering oppression'.

Luo Binghe's original sword he was using at Quiet Peak (before Xin Mo/Heart Devil sword)

非我族类，其心必异 (fei1 wo3 zu2 lei4, qi2 xin1 bi4 yi4). lit. not my clan, their heart must be different. A saying from the Zuo Zhuan.

Chapter 79: Former Affection is Lost Forever

(T/N: The title 昔情难追 is literally “one cannot get back affection from the past”)

Tianlang-Jun’s body was already extremely broken. Zhuzhi-Lang had been nailed onto the stone wall, while Great Master Wu Chen was supporting Wu Wang, whose head was bleeding. Mobei-Jun was dragging Shang Qinghua, and Yue Qingyuan stood next to Shen Qingqiu.

Only Luo Binghe was standing directly across from the Xin Mo sword. His head was currently lowered, and he was calmly adjusting his sleeves.

Shen Qingqiu said lowly, “Luo Binghe, come here.”

Luo Binghe shook his head once. Just one time, but it was very resolute.

Shen Qingqiu said, disappointed, “You tricked me again.”

Luo Binghe’s movements paused, and he asked in return, “Shizun, I told you I would help you deal with Tianlang-Jun; I can kill him right now for you to see, so how can you say that I tricked you?”

Tianlang-Jun laughed. “Purposefully using the enemy for your own gain—that’s a pretty good move. It’s just too bad that I wasn’t very useful, so he still has to do it himself.”

When he said “purposefully using the enemy for your own gain,” the unease in Shen Qingqiu’s heart grew even stronger.

Did Luo Binghe deliberately give the Xin Mo sword to Tianlang-Jun? After all, once Tianlang-Jun got the Xin Mo sword, his body molded from the Dew Flower Seed rotted faster and faster. Even if Luo Binghe gave the sword to him, he wouldn’t be much of a threat.

Perhaps his confusion was too great, and everything that he was thinking ended up leaking onto his face. Luo Binghe said, hurt, “Shizun, what are you thinking now? He did indeed steal the Xin Mo sword, but it continued to recognize me as its master, that’s all. You said that from now on, you would rather believe the best of me than the worst. Why are you not willing to trust me again?”

Shen Qingqiu said slowly, “I’ve trusted you many times before. Up until a moment ago, I had always trusted you.”

Luo Binghe, “Is that so?”

He pulled on a twisted smile. “But I don’t dare to trust Shizun anymore.”

This smile was extremely strange. Shen Qingqiu realized that something was wrong with his state of mind, and he relaxed his expression and tone of voice. “Now what’s wrong?”

He grew a little bit gentler, but Luo Binghe suddenly stopped smiling.

He looked heartbroken and devastated. “Shizun, I said it before. Sure enough, you’re the happiest when you’re together with them.”

In the beginning, Shen Qingqiu still couldn’t figure out who “they” was referring to. Luo Binghe paced unhurriedly back and forth in front of the stone wall with the Xin Mo sword.

He laughed self-mockingly. “Every time I begged for Shizun to come with me, you never agreed once. Even if you agreed, it was only because I did all I could to demand it of you. You were forced, and you were never willing to do so. But when they asked you to stay, you never had the slightest bit of hesitation.”

He looked at Shen Qingqiu. “Shizun, you don’t laugh very often. I love to see you laugh. But when I remember that you only laugh like that when you’re together with them, I’m...”

He whispered, “...very, very hurt.”

Shen Qingqiu finally understood. “They” was referring to Cang Qiong Mountain.

That day in the bamboo house, when Liu Qingge abruptly opened the window to investigate, he really had detected Luo Binghe, who had been hovering outside the whole time. Liu Qingge had noticed the trace of killing intent that Luo Binghe was exuding, as well as his despairing anger.

He hadn’t left. Instead, he heard all the cheerful chatter and laughter coming from inside the bamboo house, including Shen Qingqiu’s sound of agreement, and he had remembered it.

Shen Qingqiu said, “You’re angry because of that?”

“Angry?” Luo Binghe viciously spat out two words: “I hate!

“I hate myself!”

He violently sped up his steps, his hands clasped behind his back.

“I hate myself for being useless. I hate myself for not being able to get anybody to stay. Never... has anyone been willing to choose me.”

The rest of the people in the cave couldn't act rashly. Right now, Luo Binghe was the supply supporting the Xin Mo sword, and nobody wanted him to suddenly explode. But Yue Qingyuan said, "By doing this, aren't you forcing him to pick a side?"

Luo Binghe stopped walking, and he shook his head. "Pick a side? No. This isn't that.

"I know that if he has to choose, Shizun definitely won't pick me. So, it's fine as long as there isn't a choice."

A layer of red flushed across Luo Binghe's deathly pale face, and he was full of an odd excitement. "So, this time, I've learned my lesson. If Cang Qiong Mountain doesn't exist, wouldn't everything be fine? This way, Shizun will only have me."

Great Master Wu Chen couldn't bear to listen any longer. His hands were pressed together as he endlessly chanted the names of Buddha. "Benefactor Luo, you've gone insane."

Luo Binghe was still laughing loudly. Great Master Wu Chen continued, "If there's no possibility of choosing, then admittedly, there's no possibility of abandoning you. But how can you dismiss everything that Peak Lord Shen has done for you?"

Luo Binghe said tenderly, “Shizun, if Qing Jing Peak is gone, I can create a new one for you. It’s fine if you resent me or hate me. I won’t make any more unreasonable requests. If you’re unhappy, you can hit me or kill me. In any case, I won’t die. As long as... as long as you don’t leave me, I’ll be fine.”

He said sincerely, “Really. This is the only wish I have left.”

Looking at Luo Binghe’s hazy consciousness and qi-deviating appearance, Shen Qingqiu’s mouth tasted bitter, and he couldn’t say anything.

Luo Binghe’s eyes were unfocused, and the circle of blood red around his pupils occasionally expanded and shrank. His smile was warped, and he genuinely looked like someone who had gone completely mad and lost his rationality. Shen Qingqiu didn’t know if Luo Binghe was the one controlling the sword, or if the sword was controlling him.

Zhuzhi-Lang said, “Besides Cang Qiong Mountain, there are thousands of things that Master Shen cares for in this world. Will you only be happy if you destroy them all?”

Luo Binghe smiled. “Yeah? Why wouldn’t it be fine?!”

He tilted his head to the side before he suddenly turned and said ruthlessly, “Shut him up!”

When Mobei-Jun heard this, he thought a little before he punched Zhuzhi-Lang in the face.

Tianlang-Jun looked at Luo Binghe, pity flashing through his eyes. He sighed. "... the Xin Mo sword has already corroded your mind. You've gone mad."

This was the only time since he and Luo Binghe had met that he had an expression that looked a little like that of a father's. But Luo Binghe was completely unaware of it, and he smiled faintly as he nodded. "That's right. I've gone mad."

When Shen Qingqiu heard him fully admit that he had gone mad, his heart throbbed with a stifling pain.

He said softly, "Binghe, first leave that sword. Stand a little further away from it."

As he coaxed Luo Binghe with gentle words, he secretly placed his hand on the Xiu Ya sword's hilt underneath the cover of his wide sleeve. Luo Binghe laughed. "It's useless. Shizun, you don't need to be like this. The nicer you are to me, the more afraid I am."

As he spoke, he made a very slight lifting gesture with his right hand. Instantly, the purple energy around the Xin Mo sword surged greatly. Zhuzhi-Lang spat out a mouthful of blood. That punch just then had only silenced him for a while, and he said calmly, "Pitiful."

“Pitiful?” Luo Binghe murmured, “Correct, I’m pitiful. Even if Shizun is only pitying me, that’s fine. Shizun, can’t you stay by my side just once?”

Tears rolled down his cheeks.

Luo Binghe gritted his teeth, his eyes scarlet. “Shizun, you always let go of me time and time again.

“Every time, every time, anyone, anything! They can all become your reason for abandoning me, and sometimes you don’t even need a reason! It’s like this every single time!”

Suddenly, Shang Qinghua fell onto the floor with a crash. Shen Qingqiu also subconsciously steadied himself against the stone wall.

The entire floor started to shake violently. The speed at which Maigu Ridge was falling increased even more!

Yue Qingyuan said quietly, “Shidi, he’s gone mad. How do you wish to handle this?”

Luo Binghe chuckled coldly before he took two steps back and suddenly seized the hilt of the Xin Mo sword. The ground started to quake even more

intensely, and if you looked out from the cave entrance, you could see countless mountain peaks of varying heights peek through from the rolling clouds. Shen Qingqiu was about to draw Xiu Ya when there was suddenly a burst of dazzling white light from beside him. Yue Qingyuan had pulled out his sword first, and the whistling of the sword tore through the air filled with flying snow and purple-black energy.

Xuan Su left its scabbard!

Mobei-Jun saw Yue Qingyuan level his sword at Luo Binghe, and he took a step forward to meet his attack. Xuan Su's spiritual energy rose sharply, and before Mobei-Jun even touched it, it directly sent him flying out.

It seemed like Mobei-Jun had never expected that he too would one day be sent flying by someone. With that kind of expression, he plummeted off of Maigu Ridge in the blink of an eye. Shang Qinghua looked scared out of his mind, and he grabbed a sword before he rushed past. Shen Qingqiu hastily grabbed him and said, "What are you doing!"

Shang Qinghua howled, "F***, he can't fly!" before he also jumped off.

Shen Qingqiu peered down from the hole against the flying snow and violent wind. He just happened to see Shang Qinghua, who was riding the flying sword, catch Mobei-Jun when they were still about three hundred meters from the surface of the ice. After confirming that he wouldn't crash and die, Shen Qingqiu didn't even have time to release a sigh of relief before he suddenly looked back and saw that Luo Binghe and Yue Qingyuan had already started to fight.

Naturally, Luo Binghe's explosive energy was terrifying, but Shen Qingqiu hadn't expected that after Xuan Su left its scabbard, its power would be as formidable as it was. It was on the same level as Luo Binghe in his crazed state. Shen Qingqiu could sense it, and the raging spiritual and demonic energy in the air created pressure and rumbling noises in his ears and throat. He saw that this cave would collapse sooner or later, and he scrambled over to the cliff wall before he grabbed onto the Xin Mo sword with his bare hands. With force, he pulled it out of the wall!

Even though he had pulled it out, the Maigu Ridge's falling momentum still didn't slow. When Luo Binghe saw, he wanted to go snatch the sword away, but how would Yue Qingyuan give him that chance? The Xuan Su sword ripped a visible, dazzling mark in the air, and an enormous restrictive, complicated spell created an invisible cage, trapping Luo Binghe inside.

Yue Qingyuan saw that Shen Qingqiu had already obtained Xin Mo, and he said in a low voice, "Leave!"

How could he leave in this kind of situation? Shen Qingqiu immediately shook his head, and he was about to toss the Xin Mo sword to him when he suddenly felt his legs give out from under him.

No, it wasn't him, it was the floor that gave out. This cave finally collapsed!

On the second layer of Maigu Ridge.

Shen Qingqiu dug Yue Qingyuan out from the pile of rubble. “Sect Master? Shixiong? Zhangmen-shixiong!”

Yue Qingyuan’s face was slightly pale, and blood trickled down from the corner of his mouth. He swallowed, and he seemed to have swallowed a mouthful of hot blood.

He opened his eyes and glanced at Shen Qingqiu. “... where’s everybody else.”

The structure inside Maigu Ridge was similar to that of an irregular wasp’s nest, one cave connected to another. Shen Qingqiu looked around him. “I didn’t see Great Master Wu Chen or Tianlang-Jun and the rest. They might be buried here, or they might have fallen into another cave as the rock collapsed.” He looked back. “Shixiong, when did you get hurt?”

Yue Qingyuan didn’t answer. He asked, “You still have the Xin Mo sword?”

Shen Qingqiu showed him the sword. “I do. But Maigu Ridge is still falling, so the merging shouldn’t have ended yet. Shixiong, you should take the sword down, and destroy it.”

With his assistance, Yue Qingyuan slowly stood up. “... what about you then?”

Of course, he had to go back and find Luo Binghe.

Shen Qingqiu avoided answering. “Shixiong, your injury isn’t typical. What in the world happened?”

Yue Qingyuan dodged the question, and he said, “I didn’t want to at first. But I... am an easily impulsive person in the end.”

Shen Qingqiu felt like those words of his were strange, but he didn’t have time to think about it carefully. He supported him and continued to walk. “Shixiong, can you still walk? Go down first, destroy the sword, and find Mu-shidi to treat your wounds. Leave Luo Binghe to me.”

Yue Qingyuan stood up with difficulty with Shen Qingqiu’s aid. Fresh blood dripped onto the ground. Shen Qingqiu thought that he was fine, and he let him go, but unexpectedly, the moment he let go, Yue Qingyuan toppled over after standing for a short while.

Shen Qingqiu went pale with fright. He hastily went to support him again. “Zhangmen-shixiong? Zhangmen-shixiong?” After feeling his pulse for a moment, even someone like him—with a very shallow understanding of healing—could tell that Yue Qingyuan’s current state was extremely terrible!

Yue Qingyuan looked distracted, as if he hadn’t heard what Shen Qingqiu said. He muttered, “But... those two times at Jinlan City and when Luo Binghe encircled the peak, I controlled myself and took in the big picture...

but every time I thought back to it after it was over, I would have been better off... just being impulsive.”

Seeing his drowsy appearance, Shen Qingqiu wished he could violently pinch Yue Qingyuan’s philtrum¹ and pinch him awake. But at the same time, he didn’t dare to do something so impolite, so he could only speak loudly next to Yue Qingyuan’s ear, not letting him pass out. “Shixiong, wake up! What you did was right!”

Yue Qingyuan closed his eyes and shook his head. He drew in a breath before he released another burst of severe coughing that made Shen Qingqiu’s heart leap with fear.

Blood flowed unceasingly outwards with the coughs. He said with difficulty, “Help me... put Xuan Su back.”

Shen Qingqiu hastily pressed the glaring white Xuan Su that had fallen to the side back into its scabbard before handing it to him. Only then did the color of Yue Qingyuan’s face finally look a little better, and he drew in the most difficult breath of air.

He stared blankly at Shen Qingqiu’s hand that had put away Xuan Su. He didn’t take the sword; instead, he said, “If I die here, you... please help me take Xuan Su back to Wan Jian Peak.”

Shen Qingqiu was given a shock. “What did you say?”

Die? Was Yue Qingyuan's injury severe to the point that it was very likely that he would die?!

Yue Qingyuan, "Xuan Su's power is unusually strong, but I never draw it out to fight the enemy. You must have guessed the reason why."

Shen Qingqiu nodded. Not only had he guessed, but many people had also guessed before.

Yue Qingyuan said, "Xuan Su is my life. Do you understand what that means?"

Absolutely not. But Shen Qingqiu knew that it definitely wasn't some rhetorical technique used to express how he loved his sword more than his life.

He also knew that what Yue Qingyuan was about to say was certainly going to be a secret that he had never told anyone else before.

Sure enough, Yue Qingyuan said, "Every time I draw Xuan Su, what is consumed is my life span."

The moment he said that Shen Qingqiu immediately felt as if the Xuan Su in his hand weighed a thousand times heavier.

No wonder Xuan Su never left its scabbard.

No wonder he would never draw his sword unless he absolutely had to.

Shen Qingqiu said, shocked, “Shixiong, you... you’ve had a qi deviation before?”

Using his life span as fuel for spiritual energy, tying his own life together with his sword. Unless he had experienced a major accident while cultivating and had a qi deviation, why else would Yue Qingyuan cultivate this kind of evil path?!

Yue Qingyuan said slowly, “I entered Qiong Ding Peak when I was fifteen years old. I had a goal to reach, and I was impatient for success. Pursuing the Way of Unity of Man and Sword² failed, and instead, I ended up like this. Completely the opposite of what I wished for, leaving behind great resentment and lifelong remorse.”

As he spoke, the remaining bit of color that had risen to his face just then because of his coughing suddenly faded completely again. Shen Qingqiu quickly cut him off. “Don’t talk anymore. This isn’t the time to talk about it. Let me first send you down to find Mu-shidi.”

The two of them took a few difficult steps forward. Yue Qingyuan abruptly said softly, "... I'm sorry."

Shen Qingqiu didn't understand what he was apologizing to him for. There wasn't any reason for Yue Qingyuan to be sorry to him. On the contrary, it should be him apologizing, since he was always slacking off and taking it easy, not saying anything but still stirring up a bunch of trouble, forcing Yue Qingyuan to get a headache as he cleaned up behind him.

But what Yue Qingyuan said next stunned him completely.

Yue Qingyuan's voice was shaking. "... really... I'm sorry.

"Obviously it was so I could go back faster; obviously I wanted to immediately go back and get you... but instead, it ruined things. You weren't wrong. After all, I'm a very impulsive person...

"After that, Shizun abandoned my entire body and spiritual meridians, and I was shut in the spirit caves for over a year. Everything was a mess, and I had to start over completely.

"I called out, I shouted, but it was useless. For an entire year, they let me go crazy however I wanted in the dark cavern. Nobody was willing to actually listen to what I was begging for; nobody was willing to let me out...

“I used all my energy and effort, but by the time I returned, the Qiu residence had already been destroyed for many days...”

The sound of something shattering came from somewhere deep within his mind.

In an instant, all of Yue Qingyuan’s eager concern and silent protection in the past circled through his mind like a revolving lantern³, along with countless other scenes and details, incomparably clear.

No wonder no matter how much trouble “Shen Qingqiu” caused, the Sect Master had never punished him for it. He had always shown him unlimited forgiveness and infinite patience.

No wonder Shen Jiu hadn’t been able to wait for the person who was coming back to save him.

Yue Qingyuan, Shen Qingqiu; Yue Qi, Shen Jiu.

So that’s how it was!

Yue Qingyuan said, “I really... didn’t purposefully not go back. The only thing was that it turned out that it’s true the world is very cruel, making you and I miss each other completely...”

Blood flowed even more with each sentence he spoke. Shen Qingqiu took him by the arm, and they had to stop every other step. He sighed and said, "... don't talk anymore."

He knew everything that came after that.

But Yue Qingyuan persevered. "This time, just let me finish talking.

"It was precisely as you always said. 'I'm sorry' is nothing but an empty phrase; it's completely useless. I never explained either, so today, you have to hear it. It isn't so I can beg for understanding. It isn't so I can win sympathy, but rather, if I don't say it now... I'm afraid it really will be too late."

Shen Qingqiu's heart felt bitter, his eyes hot.

Too late. It was already too late!

Shen Jiu was already no longer here.

Perhaps he was dead, or perhaps his soul had moved to a different unfamiliar world, just like Shen Yuan.

But no matter what, he would never be able to hear what Yue Qingyuan was saying again.

The System delivered a succession of announcements:

【Hidden Character ① Zhuzhi-Lang, 100% complete】

【Hidden Character ② Tianlang-Jun, 100% complete】

【Hidden Character ③ Su Xiyan, 100% complete】

【Plot Hole Filling Event ① Shen Qingqiu, 100% complete】

【Plot Hole Filling Event ② Yue Qingyuan, 100% complete】

【The completion percentage for characters has reached the minimum standard. As per the System's testing, there are no evident holes in logic. B points +300 per task, with a total sum of 1200. Congratulations on being promoted due to "Many Vent-Worthy Points⁴." You've earned the "Absurd Writing is Now Readable" achievement.】

【Cool points have been cleared. Under the current circumstances, you may use B points as replacement currency for fulfilling the requirements for dropping key items. Will you accept or decline?】

There was a long series of beeps, full of joy. Instead, Shen Qingqiu felt unprecedented dismay.

He said, “Is there any point?”

Of course, the System wouldn’t answer him. Shen Qingqiu pointed two middle fingers at the interface from the depths of his heart.

What kind of damn thing was this System? What was the point?

Just so he could know exactly how unlucky these people could be? Just so he could personally witness the many brutal ways someone could get screwed over in this world?

Or was it so he could drive Luo Binghe mad?

Everyone said that Luo Binghe had already gone mad. Even Luo Binghe himself had laughed and admitted that he had gone mad.

In the original work, after struggling for several million words, the Xin Mo sword that had been suppressed by Luo Binghe in the end actually gained the upper hand here, and it had corroded Luo Binghe's rationality.

This wasn't caused by one or two factors, but more so a gradual accumulation of things, before it finally exploded completely. There had been many signs before this, but Shen Qingqiu had never noticed.

Or rather, he had never known that Luo Binghe actually felt so insecure beneath the surface to the point that he felt inferior.

First, he thought of Luo Binghe as too evil, but after that, he had thought of Luo Binghe as too bright and strong. When he looked back, there were initially signs of the Xin Mo sword beginning to corrode Luo Binghe's rationality all the way back from Zhao Hua Temple.

Luo Binghe, who had just heard his own background, received a great shock. It was the moment when he was the most frightened, and he had reached out towards Shen Qingqiu, begging Shen Qingqiu to leave with him.

But he hadn't taken Luo Binghe's hand. Instead, he told Luo Binghe to leave by himself first. At that time, Luo Binghe's mind started to become extremely unstable. What he needed wasn't to withdraw safely, but to be with Shen Qingqiu. Even if he ended up being trapped at Zhao Hua Temple, unable to escape; even if he was attacked by everyone at the scene, it was still better than telling him to leave by himself!

For Luo Binghe, whose mind was in that sort of state, it was the same as “abandonment.”

It was like a repetition of how Su Xiyan had taken the poison that was deadly to him back then.

Just as Luo Binghe had said, he wasn't forcing someone to pick a side. Because Luo Binghe firmly believed from deep in his bones that he knew the answer: in the end, there would be a day that Shen Qingqiu would abandon him.

His entire mind was filled with a near paranoiac fear and anxiety towards things that hadn't happened. How had he not gone completely crazy?

Yue Qingyuan's footsteps grew weaker and weaker, and he almost couldn't even stand anymore.

Shen Qingqiu had never seen this Sect Master be weakened to this degree. Yue Qingyuan had always been calm and powerful. Even though he didn't talk much and wasn't aggressive, he was gentle and kind, and also extremely dependable with no loss to his dignity.

Now, not only was it difficult for him to even walk, he uncharacteristically had a lot to say. He most likely really did feel like he couldn't hold on for much longer.

Shen Qingqiu was basically dragging him forward. As he walked, he said, “Zhangmen-shixiong, bear it, you must not faint. Everything will be okay very soon.”

Yue Qingyuan laughed bitterly. “During all these years, you’ve never mentioned the past. You’ve only ever called me Zhangmen-shixiong. Have you made up your mind never to say Qi-ge⁵ again?”

The muscles in the hand that Shen Qingqiu was gripping the sword with gradually tightened. Yue Qingyuan wanted to hear Shen Jiu⁶ say Qi-ge. But, he wasn’t Shen Jiu!

He polished the original Shen Qingqiu’s cold and hateful energy, and he refused resolutely. “I won’t.”

He couldn’t raise a death flag! Judging from the TV shows and novels, those characters who had their final wishes fulfilled and finished saying their last words would always be satisfied and immediately keel over. Shen Qingqiu said harshly, “I didn’t hear anything you said just then. Bear it, until we get down!”

Yue Qingyuan closed his eyes and sighed. “Xiao Jiu ah...”

Don’t say it.

He didn't dare imagine just what kind of expression Yue Qingyuan wore in the original work after Luo Binghe cut off "Shen Qingqiu's" legs and sent them to Cang Qiong Mountain Sect in a gilded box. Even though he clearly knew that it was a futile effort, he still stepped into Luo Binghe's trap honorably without looking back, up until ten thousand arrows pierced his body.

The loyalty of a lifetime unexpectedly had to be repaid by so many things.

Yue Qingyuan didn't even have time to tell "Shen Qingqiu"—who was filled with resentment and had helped Luo Binghe lure him into the trap just to scrape for one more moment to live—the reason why he hadn't been able to go back and rescue him that year.

Why didn't he say it sooner?

Just like him and Luo Binghe, it was the same. Why didn't he say it sooner?

If he hadn't guessed and assumed so much from the very start, Luo Binghe perhaps would have never blackened from beginning to end. He would've been that cute and bashful disciple for the rest of his life at Qing Jing Peak.

Even if Shen Qingqiu took ten thousand steps back and had no choice back then but to push Luo Binghe down into the Endless Abyss, he completely could have achieved his goal using a different method. He wouldn't even

have had to waste any time thinking about it. Only now did Shen Qingqiu realize that, if he had wanted Luo Binghe to go down, he very likely would've only needed to say a single word and Luo Binghe would've obediently gone down.

Shen Qingqiu had never once thought of this possibility. He didn't believe that someone would be so stupid, that Luo Binghe would be so obedient.

But in reality, he really was that stupid, that obedient.

After many twists and turns, they took quite a few detours and went around in a big circle, and he looked around at a loss. He didn't know where they were, and he could only feel regret and deep hurt, sighing 'if only I had known sooner.'

But in this world, there was no such thing.

After walking through this cave, two figures covered with dust suddenly appeared in front of them.

The moment he saw those two round, shiny bald heads, Shen Qingqiu blurted out, "Great Master Wu Chen. Great Master Wu Wang."

The short and small monk carrying the big and tall monk was precisely Great Master Wu Chen. He had lost one of his wooden fake legs, and it was

hard to walk with one leg. Nor could he free his hands to clasp them together in prayer. Not willing to be impolite, he repeated a few more 'Amitabha's. "Amitabha, Peak Lord Shen, finally I found you. What happened to Sect Master Yue?"

After Yue Qingyuan closed his eyes, he leaned against Shen Qingqiu's body heavily. Shen Qingqiu said, "Zhangmen-shixiong... smashed his head against a rock. What about Great Master Wu Wang?"

Wu Chen said, "He was injured by that Tianlang-Jun's demonic energy and hasn't awakened yet. The cavern collapsed, and those few from the demon race have all disappeared completely."

Shen Qingqiu drew Xiu Ya and handed it to him. "Great Master, may I please request of you to first take my shixiong and Great Master Wu Wang and leave Maigu Ridge on a flying sword?"

Wu Chen, "What about Peak Lord Shen?"

Shen Qingqiu said succinctly, "My disciple, I will take care of him."

Great Master Wu Chen said solemnly, "If Peak Lord Shen is willing to face him calmly, then that would be ideal."

Shen Qingqiu, "I'm ashamed. But I hope that I can resolve this matter before it creates irrevocable consequences. I will entrust Zhangmen-shixiong to Great Master then. If you can, please hand him over to Mu-shidi of Qian Cao Peak as fast as possible once you go down. I am extremely thankful."

Wu Chen put down Wu Wang and took Xiu Ya. He bowed properly before he said suddenly, "Xin Mo rose all because of an obsession."

Shen Qingqiu was startled. "Does Great Master want to say that if I wish to get rid of Xin Mo, I must break the obsession?"

But Wu Chen shook his head. "If it can be broken, then that would not be an obsession."

"That's also as I thought." Shen Qingqiu returned the bow and turned.

Who told him to be Luo Binghe's obsession?

Chapter 80: Key Item

The interior of Maigu Ridge had caved in until it was all a mess. Originally, there were hundreds of thousands of interconnecting caves extending in all directions, but now, half of them had collapsed because of the quake. Every nook and cranny was blocked off by fallen rocks.

Shen Qingqiu struggled to navigate his way through them.

Suddenly, a faint demonic aura emanated from amongst a pile of giant, arching rocks.

Shen Qingqiu subconsciously shouted, “Luo Binghe?”

It could not be Luo Binghe—immobilized by Yue Qingyuan’s seal—crushed under it, could it?

He leaped over and lifted the topmost layer of the stone slab to reveal damaged green scales underneath. Big and small stones rolled down with every feeble rise and fall of those green scales.

Zhuzhi-Lang’s snake form was coiled into a small, impermeable and protective fortress around Tianlang-Jun, who lay unharmed in the middle.

The disintegration of Tianlang-Jun's body was even more severe now. His head looked as though it could drop off at any moment. He opened his eyes and looked at Shen Qingqiu, even being in the mood to greet him, "Peak Lord Shen."

Shen Qingqiu asked, "How are both of you doing?"

Tianlang-Jun replied, "I'm used to this. Zhuzhi-Lang, not so good."

He was indeed not in a good state.

The light in his two large yellow pupils, which used to shine brilliantly like a pair of lanterns, had begun to dim, although they still had spirit in them. Many of the green scales on his body had fallen off and there were patches of red and black over the body; he was covered all over in wounds.

Shen Qingqiu helped to push away the piece of rock that was pinning down his tail and found Zheng Yang still stuck in its body. He reached his hands out, grasped the hilt of the sword and pulled it out. The damage caused by blood loss was nothing to the demons; on the contrary, Zheng Yang was brimming with spiritual energy and sticking it into its body had caused even more serious harm.

Tianlang-Jun said, "Isn't Peak Lord Shen not very fond of paying him any attention?"

Shen Qingqiu said, “Who said I don’t give him attention? It’s just that there’s a communication breakdown sometimes. He... how is he?”

Tianlang-Jun used the remnant of his ruined arm to “stroke” that triangular snake head. He didn’t answer, but countered with a question, “What do you intend to do next?”

Shen Qingqiu replied, “Destroy the sword, of course.”

Tianlang-Jun said, “Xin Mo has already consumed Luo Binghe’s mind and is now one with him. Isn’t destroying the sword now the same as killing him?”

Shen Qingqiu resolutely said, “Then I’ll think of another way.”

Tianlang-Jun asked, “Even if it’s too late to prevent the merging of both worlds?”

Shen Qingqiu took a breath and said impatiently, “.....Then so be it! I’ll do my best. We will talk about the rest when the time comes.”

At last, Tianlang-Jun laughed again. He said, “Peak Lord Shen, you’re really a strange one. To use the words of you humans, you profess to harbor

no feelings and yet there is¹. This is so true of your actions towards Zhuzhi-Lang, and even more so towards my son.”

He gave a sigh again and lamented, “As expected, I still can’t hate humans.”

Seriously, no matter how strange I am, you still win hands down when it comes to being strange. Shen Qingqiu could not continue with the conversation and instead asked, “Where is Luo Binghe? Have you seen him?”

Tianlang-Jun curiously asked, “I thought Peak Lord Shen knew? Isn’t he always behind you?”

Shen Qingqiu’s eyes immediately widened. With his hairs standing on end, he slowly turned his head around.

Sure enough, Luo Binghe stood behind him, staring fixedly at his back.

There was no knowing exactly when he had started standing there. Or to put it in another way, when he had begun to tag behind Shen Qingqiu.

Luo Binghe smiled and said, “Shizun, hand me the sword.”

Maintaining his composure, Shen Qingqiu lifted up Xin Mo sword and said, “You can come over and get it.”

Luo Binghe took a step towards him and suddenly stopped dead in his tracks. The corners of his mouth twitched and his shoulders shook.

Shen Qingqiu leveled the sword in front of him and asked, “What’s the matter?”

Luo Binghe clenched his teeth and hissed, “.....Get lost.”

Before Shen Qingqiu could react, Luo Binghe pressed down on his temple with one hand, threw out a violent punch with the other, and shouted, “All of you get lost! Don’t pester him. Scram!!!”

This was not directed at him, and the blow did not land on him but brushed past Shen Qingqiu and destroyed a part of the cave wall which was already full of dents to begin with.

Tianlang-Jun helpfully pointed out, “Xin Mo’s hallucinations”.

Needless to say, Shen Qingqiu could more or less figure it out himself, too. Luo Binghe obviously looked like he saw something others were unable to see. He was striking out with the spiritual and demonic energy in his hands at the space beside him in a frenzied manner, locked in battle with

opponents that never existed. The mountain shook again, and stones tumbled down in chunks. Shen Qingqiu glanced at the two men on the side; they could be perfectly described as the old and the weak, the sick and the disabled. He shouted, “Binghe, come here!”

Luo Binghe had a vacant look on his face: nonetheless, he was still very obedient and went after him as expected.

The one leading in front moved fast like the wind, whereas the one following behind was like a wandering soul, yet he maintained his speed and never once fell behind. Right at this moment, the system prompted:

【Luo Binghe’s Anger Points 300. Multiplying Xin Mo’s factor by 10, the current value is 3000.】

Shen Qingqiu yelled, “Where is the key item? Can’t you bring it out quickly?! Jade Guanyin! Jade pendant! Take it out fast!”

System: 【Hello, the release of the key item is currently loading. It is recommended that you use other tools for the time being.】

Shen Qingqiu, “Loading my—! What other tools are there, show them to me!”

System: 【Friendly Reminder: The Small Scenario Pusher Luxury Edition Package that you have purchased previously is still unused.】

Shen Qingqiu abruptly came to a halt.

Truth be told, he still has yet to figure out what the heck this “Small Scenario Pusher” was and how it worked. But, judging from that one time user experience he had, it appeared to be—quite useful!

Shen Qingqiu gnashed his teeth and said, “.....Proceed!”

Show me what this Luxury Edition is made of. Bring it on!

He had just jabbed on the confirm button when the ground gave way beneath him again.

On the way down, Shen Qingqiu only had one thought: what a scam, so much for “pusher”—you damn bulldozer2!

He tumbled and slid for a spell, and above him, the rocks were coming down in torrents. Yet, not one piece of the falling rocks struck him.

Someone was taking the blows for him.

Luo Binghe was delirious, and his mind was in a fog, yet when it came to the crunch, he had still instinctively used his own body to shield him from the crumbling rocks.

With a single backhand push, he flung off a boulder that had smashed into his back. He was oblivious of the pressure as he lowered his head to look blankly at Shen Qingqiu; there was a fleeting moment of clarity in his eyes, but with a blink, it was abruptly replaced with turmoil.

The dark red symbol on his forehead was spreading out in a pattern along his entire snowy white face, even extending down towards his neck. Xin Mo, which had fallen to a side, was ceaselessly glowing and dimming purple amidst a black cloud of energy, as if pulsating in tandem with the markings on him.

Luo Binghe muttered, “Shizun...?”

Shen Qingqiu responded with an affirmative “mhm.” Seeing fresh blood flowing down Luo Binghe’s forehead, his voice quavered a little.

Luo Binghe asked, “Shizun, is it really you?”

“.....mhm.”

Luo Binghe said, “Is this for real this time? You left with them earlier, didn’t you? I saw you.”

Shen Qingqiu replied, “I’m not leaving.”

Luo Binghe slowly bent down, burrowed his face in the crevice of his neck, and whispered, “Shizun, I’m hurting. My head hurts.”

This manner of speaking was like the whining of a pampered child, yet it also seemed like he was really, really hurting. Shen Qingqiu slowly reached out his arms and placed them around the back of his shoulders. Patting him gently, he coaxed him as if he was pacifying a child, “Be good. It won’t hurt anymore soon.”

Luo Binghe asked, “If I am good, it will no longer hurt, and so Shizun will never leave me alone again?”

Shen Qingqiu said, “The pain will go away very soon.”

Luo Binghe said in a low voice, “I don’t believe it.”

All of a sudden, he flew into a rage and bellowed, “I don’t believe it! I don’t believe it!”

Seeing him act up again, Shen Qingqiu grasped his shoulders, bravely lifted his upper body and raised his head.

Something was wrong with the angle. It hurt when their teeth knocked against each other. With his mouth blocked, Luo Binghe's stunned eyes were still wide open. He blinked once, then a second time.

Shen Qingqiu's eyes were wide open too. Staring wide-eyed at each other like this gave him an extremely weird feeling.

After staring at one another for a while, none of them closed their eyes. So he could only give in and closed his eyes first. His eyelashes quivered, and he deepened the kiss.

Honestly speaking, this kind of collision, where his mouth and teeth were still hurting so much that they felt numb, simply cannot be called kissing; it can only be called gnawing.

But obviously, Luo Binghe was very happy to gnaw all over Shen Qingqiu's lips, like he was eating candy. His breathing became more and more urgent, and he suddenly pushed Shen Qingqiu back and pressed him to the ground.

With a ripping sound, Shen Qingqiu's outer garment was torn into pieces.

The remaining pieces of clothing were stripped off by Shen Qingqiu himself. In between the act of tearing at it, his pants were pulled down to his knees, and his last remaining undershirt, that had been loosely covering his upper body, slipped off his smooth, rounded shoulders.

Luo Binghe ran his hand along the collar and slipped his hand in, groping.

He was burning hot all over, it was even worse than the time at the Holy Mausoleum. His hand kneaded hard on Shen Qingqiu's skin.

He was burning, hurting, flustered.

Shen Qingqiu knew what was coming. He had already made up his mind and was ready. He consciously turned his body around, with his back facing Luo Binghe.

Although he had no experience in this kind of thing, he had heard that it was easier to enter from the back if it was the first time. He thought that this posture was kind of disgraceful, but he did not dwell too much on it. He originally meant to make it more convenient for Luo Binghe to have his own way with him, but who knew that he would be brazenly flipped back again.

Luo Binghe wedged himself in between his legs, staring intently at his face. They were only a few inches apart, their hot breaths intertwining.

A burning hot object was propped up against the dry opening on his lower body; its diameter was somewhat terrifying, like an engorged ball of something.

Because the front end was slightly moist, his tight opening was able to take a little of it in.

Luo Binghe did not charge in immediately. He was in a daze, yet he still insisted on staring fixedly at Shen Qingqiu's face; bit by bit, he rained small, gentle kisses on Shen Qingqiu's cheeks. Shen Qingqiu was initially a bundle of nerves, but because of this unconscious act, he relaxed a little.

He relaxed too early.

Shen Qingqiu finally experienced what it felt like to be split apart alive from the middle.

He went mad with pain, kicking his legs back in a retreat. Luo Binghe clamped down on his waist and dragged him back, chafing his back against the rough rocks and stinging his flesh.

The flare of pain at this very instance made Shen Qingqiu's mind go blank.

He struggled violently like a dying fish out of water. But the more he struggled, the more emotionally unstable Luo Binghe became; his eyes red,

his breathing in disarray, his thinking clouded..... all he could think of was to hold on to Shen Qingqiu and plunge it in until the very end!

The thickest part of the tip, which was connected to a long shaft, was already buried inside him, pressing down heavily on his internal organs. Shen Qingqiu held his hand against Luo Binghe's chest, but his waist was being held down in place, his legs were pressed against his own chest, and his hips were raised so high that he could not stop his intestinal wall from being stretched open all the way.

He choked back a scream, loosened up as much as he could, and spread his legs open, letting Luo Binghe shove it all into the deepest recess.

With it buried deep, it was as if he was being penetrated by a scorching nail and pinned to a rock alive. Luo Binghe, looking like he had finally found some sense of security, grabbed Shen Qingqiu by the hair and pulled him up into a kiss.

The pain on his scalp could be overlooked, but the change in position gave Shen Qingqiu the horrible illusion that his internal organs had been displaced; the opening in his rear end was writhing uncontrollably. Unaware of this, Luo Binghe did not show restraint. Feeling invigorated, he began to thrust in and out without mercy.

His actions were fast and savage. After hundreds of thrusts with alternating speed and varying depth, Luo Binghe was finally able to repeatedly enter him unhindered.

The sound of papapa, intermingled with a watery, squelching sound, rang incessantly in his ears.

Shen Qingqiu's eyes filled with tears.

It hurts.

Boy, it hurts.

He trembled with pain, but he did not forget what he had to do at this juncture. Transferring his spiritual energy over, he guided the turbulent demonic energy inside Luo Binghe into his own body.

This method was awfully stupid, but it was also extremely effective. The source of Xin Mo's demonic energy was Luo Binghe; if he split up and transferred some of this energy over to him, then Maigu Ridge would naturally stop collapsing due to a lack of power.

The flesh wall of his insides shuddered as it enclosed that object that was ramming in and out relentlessly; no man has ever explored this territory before, and the grinding caused the tender meat of the wall to burn hot and swell. At the start, the passage was difficult, but after the bursts of searing pain, the intestinal muscles gradually moistened, with blood and intestinal secretions smoothing the way for intercourse.

In the darkness, the smell of blood pervaded the air. The sounds of agonizingly repressed panting and flesh pounding on flesh were all the more vivid.

Luo Binghe was so into it as he stubbornly clung on to Shen Qingqiu and nudged his cheeks against Shen Qingqiu's forehead. He was a picture of obedience and aggrievement, but the same could not be said for sight below, which could almost be described as brutal.

Shen Qingqiu was embraced so tightly that he had difficulty breathing. The five fingers on his right hand drew blood as he dug them into the rocky ground. Even his breath hitched several times before he managed to gasp for breath.

He could not take it anymore.

He really could not take it anymore.

Just as he felt light-headed and his vision grew dark, a faint white light flashed across.

With a crisp, clear “ding” sound, it landed on Shen Qingqiu's bare shoulders.

Luo Binghe was wary and raised his eyes for a look; in that split second, he was momentarily in a trance.

And then, his pupils shrank. The images which were previously blurred gradually superimposed over each other, becoming clearer and clearer.

He slowly lowered his head, and the color drained from his face.

Shen Qingqiu was lying under him. His clothes were all torn. His legs were trembling and would not close. His eyes were terribly red. He looked as if he was going to take his last breath any moment now.

Luo Binghe reached out a hand to touch him but got cold feet and his hand froze in midair. He mumbled, “.....Shi.....zun?”

Finally hearing Luo Binghe addressing him as “Shizun” in his usual manner, Shen Qingqiu looked as if he had been revived and gasped for breath. Only, this gasp for breath was so laboriously taken that it sounded like a sob instead.

Luo Binghe was stupefied. “Shizun..... I..... What did I do?”

Shen Qingqiu originally wanted to clear his throat, lighten up the mood and say, you didn’t do anything except do your shizun, is all. In the end, he did not manage to clear his throat but coughed out a mouthful of blood instead.

Both of them were frightened out of their wits by this mouthful of blood.

Shen Qingqiu had not even shed a tear yet when Luo Binghe broke down. His tears dripped onto Shen Qingqiu's cheeks and slid down along its contours.

Shen Qingqiu used to be afraid of women crying, but now, the thing he feared most was Luo Binghe crying. Ignoring the pain in his rear end, he wiped Luo Binghe's face and consoled him as if he was coaxing a child. "Don't cry."

Luo Binghe's tears rolled down his shoulders like beads tumbling off a broken string. He was at a loss as he hugged Shen Qingqiu and sobbed, "Shizun, don't hate me..... I don't know..... I didn't want to hurt you..... Why didn't you push me away; why didn't you kill me?"

Shen Qingqiu patted his back sporadically. "This master knows. This master is willing."

As he coaxed him, he felt a boundless sense of desolation.

The one whose cherry got burst was him, alright? Why was the one who popped his cherry crying even harder than him? Why did the one who got screwed still have to turn around to comfort the one who screwed him?

Give him a break! A deflowered Luo Binghe was simply even harder to placate than a deflowered maiden!

Shen Qingqiu resignedly said, “Then..... you pull out first.....”

Luo Binghe’s tears were still hanging off his eyelashes. Disregarding his bashfulness or the fact that he was still not done with venting, he gingerly withdrew.

He stared blankly at the tragic picture that was in between Shen Qingqiu’s legs, his face turning whiter and whiter. Even so, he still attentively straightened Shen Qingqiu’s undershirt and draped his own outer robe over his body.

Shen Qingqiu did not dare to look down at his lower body too. Very slowly, he closed his legs. As he did so, the muscles on his face twitched slightly. He tried his best to hide the pain on his face.

In order to divert Luo Binghe’s line of sight and attention, Shen Qingqiu extended a hand to pick up the Jade Guanyin at one side and gestured to Luo Binghe to lower his head.

Luo Binghe stammered, “I thought..... I thought it was long gone..... I thought I would never ever find it again.....”

Shen Qingqiu helped him to put on the red string around his neck and told him, “Keep it safe from now on. Don’t lose it anymore.”

Luo Binghe hesitantly asked, “At that time, it was Shizun who helped me out of a tight spot. Could it be, from that time onward, Shizun has..... has always kept it by his side?”

It had always been stored in the system inventory, to say that he had always kept it on him was not exactly wrong. With this reasoning, Shen Qingqiu feebly nodded his head.

Luo Binghe’s hands tightened around him. As he wept, he suddenly noticed that the patterns on his arm were rapidly fading away. His forehead and cheeks, which were burning hot, were also cooling down rapidly.

He asked in astonishment, “What are you doing?”

Shen Qingqiu hugged him tightly, locking Luo Binghe in his arms so that he could not move. He murmured, “Nothing. I told you, it won’t hurt anymore soon. Be good, don’t move.”

Luo Binghe’s voice cracked as he asked, “Shizun, are you going to use your own body to draw away Xin Mo’s demonic energy like the last time?”

The “last time” he spoke of was referring to the time when Shen Qingqiu self-destructed. That had certainly cast a huge shadow over him. Shen Qingqiu replied, “It’s different from that other time.”

Luo Binghe clenched his fists and said with his voice quivering, “How is it different? Shizun, why are you treating me this way? For others, you would even go so far as to do the same thing again! Do you think..... I’d still be able to see it happen again with my own eyes? I should have known a long time ago, that no one would choose me and would rather abandon me and leave.....”

Shen Qingqiu said sternly, “Luo Binghe, you listen here!”

Sure enough, Luo Binghe compliantly listened with tears in his eyes.

Shen Qingqiu said, “Su Xiyan risked her life to give birth to you. Luo Binghe ah Luo Binghe, think about it, being the kind of person Old Palace Master is, would he have given his disciple some mild medicine?

“That would definitely have to be something that is fatal to demons. If she had really lost heart, accepted her fate and took the medicine, even if you don’t die, how would you have been able to grow up to be this big all safe and sound?”

Luo Binghe’s shoulders trembled. Shen Qingqiu continued, enunciating each word, “If I were in her shoes, I would not hesitate to drink it regardless of how lethal it is. Then, after escaping from the water prison, I would

absorb it all into my own body. Regardless of how agonizing and horrifying the process is, regardless of the price to be paid, regardless of whether it would be a painful death, I would never let this child suffer any harm.

“This is how I see it. You can take it as just an interpretation because there is no one who can tell you what Su Xiyan was thinking before she breathed her last. But if she really saw you as a disgrace, she didn’t need to do anything more. She could have just lowered you into the Luo River, on the coldest days of the year, in a harsh and frozen landscape—how could you possibly survive?

“Or perhaps, she wasn’t willing to give up her position at Huan Hua Palace as the head disciple—with all the glory and a promising future to be had—and continued to gulp down every new poison sent by Old Palace Master; there would be no need to flee and hide pathetically from the pursuit of Huan Hua Palace’s disciples; nor did she have to strip off her outer robe and wrap it around you after giving birth to you all on her own on a secluded boat; she also need not use the last of her strength and energy to put you in a wooden basin and push you away to safety……. You don’t even need to wait for someone to save you at all since you would have already become a wandering soul who met his freezing end in Luo River.

“Now that you are standing here, alive and well, how can you hang on to the words of others and believe that your mother was really so cold-blooded and cruel that she didn’t truly want you?”

After saying his piece in one breath, Shen Qingqiu felt stifled and sensed the demonic energy flowing haphazardly in his limbs and bones. He used his remaining strength to grasp Luo Binghe by the wrist.

“Channeling away Xin Mo’s malevolent energy wasn’t because of any other person, or anything else. It was all for you.

“I..... have no wish to see a Luo Binghe who has fallen into the clutches of Xin Mo, with his mind so twisted that he would be perpetually haunted by phantoms for the rest of his life.

“What this master expects of you, is for you to be alive, sober, and strong.”

He then continued in a whisper, “So, stop saying that nobody wants you, or that no one would ever choose you.”

Luo Binghe knelt by his side. His eyelids could no longer take the weight of his tears any longer and fell freely, like a child who has suffered too much injustice.

He was merely a child all along. He walked alone on this earth, ran around in the dark, and fallen countless times. He never asked for much, and yet he always never managed to grab hold of those few he desired. If he had known this, Shen Qingqiu thought, he would definitely..... definitely.....

But as it had been said earlier, there was really never such a thing as “if I had known” in this world.

All of a sudden, Luo Binghe let out a laugh. One of his hands grabbed hold of Shen Qingqiu's hand and laid it on his face, while the other hand picked Xin Mo up from the ground.

The blade of the sword, which was encircled with swirling purple light, let off a whine that sounded like a shrill scream. The sound of something shattering into pieces reverberated in their ears.

“Shizun, I know why you are saying this much.”

Luo Binghe peered at him and pulled up the corners of his mouth.

“But, if Shizun, the only one in this world who holds this kind of hope for me, is gone, then..... what's the point of me being alive, sober, and strong?”

The heat from Luo Binghe seemed to have spread to him. Shen Qingqiu felt a little dizzy.

In a state of grogginess, he could hardly hear Luo Binghe's voice anymore, let alone stop his suicidal act of destroying his sword. He vaguely thought, then so be it.

“Dying together” also meant being “together.”

It did not seem to be all that bad.

But there was a voice that could still be heard clearly—

【Congratulations, you have achieved the targeted score for the various attributes and your account has been upgraded to Junior VIP user. May I ask if you wish to activate the advanced function “Self-Saving”?】

Translation notes:

“...you profess to harbor no feelings and yet there is”

道是无情却有情: This line is from Zhuzhi Ci (the same “Zhuzhi” as Zhuzhi-Lang), which is a poem by Liu Yuxi, a poet of the Tang Dynasty, who based it off a folk song. To put it simply, the poem is about the mixed feelings (bafflement, affection and hope) of a young maiden who was unsure if the gentleman she liked reciprocate her feelings (he was indifferent before) when she heard him singing about his feelings for her from the river; it was after a sunshower, and the sky was clear on the East bank while it was still raining on the West bank, leading our maiden to equate his ambiguous feelings with the equally ambiguous weather.

The word 晴(qíng; clear) is used in the poem to refer to the weather but it also refers to 情(qíng; feelings) given the context of the poem. Tianlang-Jun literally used the word 情 (feelings) here, putting the emphasis on Shen Qingqiu's feelings, thus referring to someone who says (or acts) like he has no feelings towards someone but he actually does, i.e. Shen Qingqiu with Zhuzhi-Lang (in the end he still cares about him) and Luo Binghe (L-O-V-E).

Chapter 81: The Story Begins

《Proud Immortal Demon Way》was a YY stallion novel. The great author Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky had clearly defined it as such since the very start.

Shen Qingqiu was widely-known to be a shameless straight man. He had also clearly defined himself as such from the moment he was born.

So, when Shen Yuan first flipped open this remarkable, shockingly high-quality book called 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》—which had even exceeded his own standards for style—if someone had told him then that: ah, you're going to do gay things with the male lead of this novel, and what's more, you're the one who's going to lie down and present yourself to him to be done... he definitely would've taken all fifty thick, brick-like physical volumes of 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》and showed the other person what it meant to have their brains dashed out.

Now, he floated in the empty dimension that he had passed through when he first entered this world, as he listened to the System's familiar Google Translate accent spread through the entire space, the same as ever.

【Hello. Because of your enthusiastic hard work and energetic cooperation, each value has already reached the necessary minimum standard for promotion.】

【The System is very honored to inform you that you have already been promoted to junior VIP member. Here, you are especially reminded that VIP members may enable the advanced feature “Self-Saving.” 】

【Under the circumstances in which your life points fall to their lowest possible value, you may restore yourself to full health once.】

Resurrected with full health!

This VIP treatment was really too damn kind.

Shen Qingqiu said, “Um, about that. Can this Self-Saving feature only be used once? I can only use it on myself?”

The System: 【Correct.】

Shen Qingqiu instantly thought of a very serious problem. He had first drawn over a majority of the demonic energy from Luo Binghe’s body. Even if he destroyed the Xin Mo sword now, it shouldn’t greatly affect Luo Binghe. But originally, he had thought that he was more or less screwed, so that child had sobbed and said that he would die together with him. If he used the Self-Saving feature now, Luo Binghe better not foolishly follow him and kill himself!

Shen Qingqiu asked hastily, “What about Luo Binghe? How is he now?”

The System: 【At the time being, you do not have the authority to inquire about issues related to the source of all energy. Do you wish to examine your past achievements?】

He was already a VIP, so why couldn’t he inquire about it! Shen Qingqiu was filled with anxiety, but if his authority wasn’t enough, then it wasn’t enough; if he couldn’t ask, then he couldn’t ask. No matter how anxious he was, it was useless. The System persisted: 【Do you wish to examine your past achievements?】

It seemed like he had no choice but to see them. Shen Qingqiu waved his hand. “Yes, yes, yes. Hurry up!”

Along with a peal of jubilant BGM1, the System slowly unrolled a list of achievements like pulling open a scroll:

【The number of landmines avoided was above twenty, eliminating the “Landmines Raining Down Like Lightning” tag, earning the “Rather Many Tsukkomi Points” medal.】

【The highest value your past B-points reached was over 5000, earning the “Absurd Writing is Now Readable” medal.】

【There have been at least three extremely melodramatic outbursts, earning the “Torrent of Abuse” medal.】

【The insignificant side plots that flooded the main plot have been removed, earning the “Unequalled Water God” tag.】

【The Hidden Characters have been mended, and basic Plot Hole-Filling has been completed, eliminating the “Big Plot Holes Everywhere” tag.】

【The total value of cool points has surpassed the allowed maximum, earning the “Not a Bad Rub”2 medal.】

【You have attained the System’s recommended standard. In summary: a love story about a chuunibyou who wants to destroy the world.】

When Shen Qingqiu saw that line: “...”

There was no way to fight back at all [waves bye-bye]. If he thought about it carefully, it was indeed true that ever since he entered this story, 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》unconsciously deviated from being an unscrupulous YY stallion novel into a pure love story filled with victories and losses centered around a crazy virgin entangled with melodrama.

As Shen Qingqiu stared at that row of sparkling medals, he suddenly noticed that there was a tiny pink “♀” symbol on the upper left corner of the achievement list.

He knew that the ♂ symbol represented male, while ♀ represented female, so he felt that it was a bit strange. “What does this symbol mean?”

The System: 【It indicates that the various achievements acquired on the list are all honors with a female inclination.】

Shen Qingqiu: “... you’re kidding me, right.”

The System: 【The genre classification of 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》 has already been modified.】

Wait a second.

Why was it now female-oriented!

No wonder this kind of bizarre and melodramatic plot could actually earn so many medals! It turns out that it had already been reclassified as female-

oriented, and was now being calculated according to standards for female-oriented works?!

Also, why did the female-oriented genre have a “Not a Bad Rub” medal. What did they have to rub!!!

Could it be that the main final ending point was to be reclassified to become female-oriented?!

Shen Qingqiu, who had learned the truth, finally sprayed out that mouthful of old blood that he had choked back from the very first day he transmigrated all the way until now.

As a result, a dense circle of heads surrounded him all at once.

Ning Yingying, Ming Fan, Qi Qingqi, Mu Qingfang, and a bunch of other people were all crowded at his bedside, everybody talking over each other, saying things like “oh no Shizun vomited blood is Shizun going to die” and “he won’t, once the blood is out he’ll be fine.” Gloomy and cold stone walls that were slightly damp surrounded them, as well as two tiny candles. Shen Qingqiu managed to make out that this was a spirit cave before the echoes jolted through him, making his head throb with pain. He couldn’t hear anything clearly as he hunched over, clutching his head, only to hear Liu Qingge say, “Everyone move aside!”

Once he spoke, everyone else immediately shut up. The younger generation stuck out their tongues before slipping back. The space they cleared out was

filled by Liu Qingge, who stood with his arms crossed by the stone bed.

Shen Qingqiu finally managed to find someone who was reliable, and he clutched onto him and asked, “Where’s Luo Binghe?”

Liu Qingge’s face went dark, and he said, “He’s dead!”

Shen Qingqiu: “...dead?”

He really foolishly followed him and sacrificed himself in the name of love?!

Judging from Liu Qingge’s appearance, he didn’t seem like he was joking, nor did Liu Qingge ever joke around. Shen Qingqiu suddenly sat up, but his movements were too forceful as a dull pain abruptly came from his lower half.

His face immediately twisted, and he collapsed again with a thud.

This reaction was too exaggerated. Liu Qingge seemed as if he had received a huge shock as he stumbled three steps back, fidgeting awkwardly. He looked like he wanted to go forward and say something, but also like he wanted to run away. Qi Qingqi grabbed him and shrieked, “Look at you, look at you! What are you doing! We already told you not to scare him, but you scared him so much that he fainted again!”

Shen Qingqiu laid on the stone bed and raised his hand. "I didn't faint. I..." There was just a certain part of him that hurt, and he wasn't able to sit properly for the time being...

In the past, Ning Yingying was the most afraid of Bai Zhan Peak's Peak Lord, but now she had some guts, and she threw a fit at Liu Qingge, stamping her feet. "Liu-shishu, how can you be like this. No matter how much you dislike Ah-Luo, you know that Shizun just woke up and won't be able to bear any shocks. Yet... yet you just say whatever you want, randomly cursing him to death."

Mu Qingfang also looked reproachful. "Liu-shixiong, this really isn't any way to treat a sick person. It's not good at all."

This was the first time Liu Qingge became the target of public criticism. He wasn't good with words in the first place, so he simply went back to the side of the table and spat out, "I won't say anything anymore!"

Shen Qingqiu pressed a hand against his temples while he supported his waist with his other hand. "Who is going to tell me exactly whether he died or not."

Qi Qingqi said, "He didn't! That brat thought that you were on the brink of death, so he almost went over with you. Later, Mu-shidi said that you were fine and still breathing, so how could he bear to die?"

Thank the heavens a freak accident hadn't occurred. Nobody would be able to withstand another freak accident.

Shen Qingqiu knew that what Liu Qingge had said just then was out of anger, but he had also been given a fright for a few seconds, so his self-respect felt a bit damaged. He criticized, "Peak Lord Liu, can you not be like this? I asked you first because I trusted you. You really make me feel disappointed."

Liu Qingge glared at him. Shen Qingqiu wasn't afraid of his glares, and he sat up sluggishly as he picked a position that wouldn't press down too hard on his crucial parts and make them hurt. He asked, "What in the world happened? How am I back at Qing Jing Peak? What about Maigu Ridge? Where's Luo Binghe?"

Qi Qingqi said, "No need to worry about Maigu Ridge anymore, it exploded long ago."

Shen Qingqiu repeated, "Exploded?"

Qi Qingqi: "Didn't you and Luo Binghe destroy the Xin Mo sword in Maigu Ridge? When the sword broke, the entire mountain exploded."

Ming Fan squeezed in next to the bed. "Yeah, yeah, Shizun. Most of the mountain smashed onto the ice and created a really big hole. Later, the ice on Luochuan all melted. Both you and Luo Binghe fell into Luochuan, and it was Liu-shishu who fished both of you out."

Shen Qingqiu was in the middle of accepting the cup of tea Ning Yingying was giving him. He was about to drink it, but fortunately, he hadn't yet or else he definitely would've spat it out.

"Both of you"?

Shen Qingqiu shot a glance guiltily at Liu Qingge. If he didn't remember incorrectly (how could he remember this kind of thing incorrectly), he and Luo Binghe had just finished at that time, hadn't they!

Even though Luo Binghe had helped him dress afterward, there was still more or less proof of his sins left behind on his body. It would be strange if the great lord Liu couldn't see anything abnormal with his all-seeing eyes.

No wonder Liu Qingge kept staring at him with those severe "have to cleanse the sect" eyes. Public indecency brought shame to the sects!

Qi Qingqi rambled, "He fished both of you up at once, and you two were hugging so tightly it was like you guys had rigor mortis, refusing to separate. So many people were watching too, isn't that shameful, my great Cang Qiong Mountain..."

That was for sure, with everyone watching. Shen Qingqiu felt extremely remorseful. Even with thousands and thousands of precautions, he still

wasn't able to prevent Resentment of Chunshan from gaining new source material.

However, it was too strange that Luo Binghe had been willing to obediently send him back to Qing Jing Peak, and he actually hadn't just directly taken Shen Qingqiu away, especially with the way Luo Binghe's mind worked. Shen Qingqiu felt like it wasn't quite normal, and he pursued the matter. "Then just where is Luo Binghe right now?"

Ning Yingying was still the one who remained cute and obedient. "Shizun, you slept for so many days and didn't wake. Of course, he went to go look for spiritual medicine for you."

Look for what spiritual medicine? He just barely managed to escape from the clutches of death and was resurrected at full health, so what was that brat doing running around wildly instead of kneeling at his bedside waiting for him to wake up? Leave that kind of chore for some little disciple to do!

Ning Yingying muttered quietly, "If only he weren't driven down the mountain by the rest of the masters..."

Shen Qingqiu didn't even feel like pretending to be aloof anymore. He couldn't keep a poker face, and he ended up releasing a puff of laughter.

Luo Binghe had offended too many people from the Cang Qiong Mountain sect, so it was normal that he would be driven away. It was only that now,

he actually knew that he should swallow his anger and be obediently driven away. It was truly pitiful.

However, as long as he was all right... then everything was fine.

It'd be a wonder if he was all right. Shen Qingqiu's expression suddenly changed. "Zhangmen-shixiong!"

How could he forget that there was still Yue Qingyuan back there who had been on his last breath!

He flipped and stood up at once, stuffing his feet into his boots before running outside. Nobody else expected for him to suddenly jump up, and they all stood there stunned for a bit before they chased after him. Mu Qingfang shouted, "Shen-shixiong, you should lie down a bit more—"

After he ran out of the spirit caves in one breath, the fragrant, crisp, and damp scent of the mountains flooded into his nose. Suddenly, several dazzling golden fireworks exploded in the pitch-black night sky outside. If he listened carefully, he could even make out the sounds of voices and a rowdy clamor floating over from Qiong Ding Palace.

While Shen Qingqiu adjusted his boots, he asked, "What's going on? Why is it so noisy over on Qiong Ding Peak? Where's Zhangmen-shixiong?"

Qi Qingqi tugged at her chest garment, which had become crooked, and she said irritably, “So you still remember to be concerned about Zhangmen-shixiong, hah. He didn’t die.”

Mu Qingfang laughed. “Shen-shixiong, you truly woke up at the perfect time. You won’t miss the celebration.”

When Shen Qingqiu heard that Yue Qingyuan was in good health, he let out a sigh of relief. It looked like drawing his sword at Maigu Ridge hadn’t actually used up all of Yue Qingyuan’s lifespan, or else Shen Qingqiu really wouldn’t know how to live with himself. He didn’t know whether other people had found out about Xuan Su’s secret either.

As his thoughts changed direction, he began to wonder shamelessly: what celebration? Could it be that they were celebrating how he finally woke up? There was no need to go through such trouble and put on such a show, what an inconvenience.

It seemed like Liu Qingge had guessed what he was thinking, and he unhesitatingly destroyed Shen Qingqiu’s ego. “They’re celebrating successfully preventing the two realms from merging. It’s got nothing to do with you.”

Shen Qingqiu said, embarrassed, “Is it impossible to also celebrate a bit for me along the way?”

Since it was a celebration held for an event of such universal rejoicing, naturally the people from Cang Qiong Mountain Sect were not the only ones attending. All the various sects that had participated in the battle at Luochuan had all been invited. There was a clamor of voices on Qiong Ding Peak, the crowds dense, and Shen Qingqiu also saw quite a few familiar faces. Those three beautiful Daoist nuns were currently pestering somebody with warm words and soft voices, and the person they were bothering was actually the cold and refined, full of righteousness Liu Mingyan, the gauze still covering her face.

Now, Shen Qingqiu had an extremely strange feeling when he looked at Luo Binghe's harem gathered together, vying for the spot of top beauty. He was just as passionate about observing them as before, but he could no longer observe them with the same YY attitude anymore. He peered at them from the corner of his eyes a few times, only to hear the three sisters say with delicate voices, "Dear big sister, dear mistress, dear senior, can you give me an autograph?"

"We finally managed to find the author, so please let us have a keepsake."

"Is it really out of print? There won't be any more copies?"

They held a pile of garishly bright booklets, stuffing them towards Liu Mingyan. The booklets seemed extremely familiar, and Shen Qingqiu secretly felt puzzled, as if he should care about those booklets a lot. Just when he was about to walk over to see what exactly the three large characters written on the cover were, suddenly a figure furtively flashed to the side of him.

Shen Qingqiu quickly caught up to him and grabbed onto the person. He said coolly, “You still dare to come to Qiong Ding Peak? You’re not afraid of Qi Qingqi skinning you alive?”

After being caught by someone, Shang Qinghua nearly kneeled on the spot then and there. When he heard that it was Shen Qingqiu, he let out a long sigh and turned. “Why, Cucumber Bro, for better or worse, you and I share a friendship since we’re from the same place and suffered similar circumstances from being beaten up. Don’t be in such a hurry to chase someone away.”

Shen Qingqiu, “If you dare to come on Cang Qiong Mountain, then that means your whitewashing has already succeeded?”

Shang Qinghua, “Correct. If I say how, I’m afraid I’ll scare Cucumber Bro. I’m probably going to come back and become An Ding Peak’s Peak Lord again. This is all thanks to Bing-ge’s³ influence, may he live long and in peace.”

Shen Qingqiu, “Yue Qingyuan let you come back?”

Shang Qinghua, “This is called the return of the prodigal son who has mended his ways. It’s not like I did anything particularly outrageous, so why wouldn’t he let me come back?”

Shen Qingqiu let him go. He said resentfully, “Zhangmen-shixiong is too nice.”

Shang Qinghua fixed his collar. “Why else would he be so unlucky? Good people are taken advantage of.”

Shen Qingqiu looked him up and down. “You don’t look crushed at all after all this foolish messing around ended up completely changing your own novel.”

Shang Qinghua said, “You can’t say it like that ah. Maybe you think it’s just all foolish messing around that isn’t worth a damn, but for Bing-ge, your foolish messing around is probably the meaning of this entire world.”

... holy s***, Great God Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky was able to say something like that?!

Shen Qingqiu was terrified. “F***. You didn’t turn back into the original character, did you?”

Shang Qinghua said seriously, “Don’t be like that. I’m also a young person with literary ideals. Of course, I have my own reflections and emotions.”

Shen Qingqiu laughed coldly. “What literary ideals? How come all I saw in the original work was shameless fanservice?” Not to mention his hand speed that could produce ten thousand words a day, and the courage to even occasionally explode with twenty thousand. If he didn’t have such

equipment, there was no way 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》 would have been able to hold out before it was serialized!

Shang Qinghua spread his hands. “You think that I always wrote shameless content that lacked any integrity from the very start? I’ve also written belles-lettres⁴ before, but they were all unpopular, so I had no choice but to go down a path that catered to the masses. It must be said that writing novels is a very lonely undertaking. Rather than writing a stallion male protagonist who’ll be stereotypical in the end, it’s more in line with my philosophy for writing to create the current Bing-ge—this kind of weirdo male protagonist whose character is a bit more complicated, has contradictions and conflicts, and has a rough destiny.”

Shen Qingqiu concluded, “So, your philosophy for writing is to write about gay guys?”

Shang Qinghua: “Do you look down upon gay male protagonists? Works of art and artists all like to create gay guys. Belles-lettres favors gays, do you know that?”

He waved his arms wildly and passionately. “Cucumber Bro, if the System hadn’t chosen you, this faithful die-hard reader, perhaps the plot wouldn’t have deviated so thoroughly, thoroughly to the point that it deviated all the way back to my original scrapped outline. Even though the me back in reality—who couldn’t endure the loneliness and was under financial pressure—chose to finish writing 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》 according to other people’s preferences and what they found cool... now, all thanks to you, essentially everything that I wanted to write has already unfolded in front of my eyes. Cucumber Bro!”

He patted Shen Qingqiu's shoulders with deep sentiment and solemnity. "You... are the chosen one; as for my career, I have no more regrets!"

... why did it sound like the System and this world were both products of Shang Qinghua's resentment over scrapping that outline and going with what was mainstream?

Shen Qingqiu, who shamefully became this kind of "chosen one": "Who's your faithful die-hard reader?"

Shang Qinghua waved his hand and one-sidedly declared his victory. "I'm not going to talk to you; you're an anti-fan."

Shen Qingqiu was about to say, "I'm only an anti, not a fan!" when he suddenly heard Shang Qinghua starting crooning something like, "Emotions are warm, kindness hard to bear, lips moving together, desires turning the evening to the next morning, never resting from dawn to dusk." The crucial point was that melody, which sounded extremely familiar to the point that it made Shen Qingqiu's hands and teeth itch. He pointed at him and said, "Shang Qinghua, what are you singing?"

Shang Qinghua continued to croon. "The warmth of emotions makes gratitude hard to bear. Lips to lips, locked in a kiss. Let this night linger 'til tomorrow's dawn. Day after day, night after night; never to end. Will tomorrow be another today? When 'til Zheng Yang reaches its zenith? As Zheng Yang ascends, the voice of Autumn stirs. A sheathless Xiu Ya, a

spurt of cold nectar. Tragic pleas amidst choked sobs, thus in vain; for he rises again⁵...”

Shen Qingqiu was in disbelief. “F*** you—why don’t you just try and sing another line?”

Shang Qinghua said, “Great Lord Shen, why aren’t you listening to what I’m saying? You must never go around casually f***ing people. Bing-ge will go crazy. I’m telling you, this Resentment of Chunshan is equivalent to Shi Ba Mo⁶. You two are the legendary national homos, do you understand? I have no problems with you shutting me up, but ultimately it’s useless. You can’t possibly make all the countless people in the world shut up...”

Finally, Shen Qingqiu was able to fulfill his wish of violently beating up Great God Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky.

How despicable. Too despicable!!!

This kind of author who dug plot holes and left them unfinished; whose characters collapsed to Siberia yet still went viral⁷; who even dragged in readers to help fill the plot holes with a “you can you up”⁸ attitude—fully deserved to be totally beaten to death!

Just when he was ready to drag Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky into the dark forest nearby and continue doing this and that, he suddenly heard a

familiar “Amitabha” from behind him. Great Master Wu Chen said, “It’s truly a great blessing that Peak Lord Shen came out safe and sound.”

Shen Qingqiu steadied himself and turned around, only to see the two abbots from Zhao Hua Temple walking slowly towards him, along with Yue Qingyuan.

He relinquished Shang Qinghua and slightly rearranged his appearance. He smiled genuinely from his heart. “Zhangmen-shixiong, Great Master Wu Chen, Great Master Wu Wang.”

Yue Qingyuan’s complexion didn’t look frail at all, and he also smiled back in return. Wu Wang leveled Shen Qingqiu with a look and walked away extremely pointedly. That expression was exactly like that of an old Daoist scholar whose head was full of old-fashioned ways of thinking and happened to see a woman who had taken the wrong path in life. It terrified him to the point that he gave a shudder.

Great Master Wu Chen said, “Peak Lord Shen, don’t argue with Great Master Wu Wang. Ever since this old monk lost both legs at Jinlan City, Great Master Wu Wang has held extreme loathing for the demon race. In turn, also towards Peak Lord Shen...”

Shen Qingqiu rubbed his nose and said indifferently, “No matter.”

Being disliked by an old bald donkey didn’t mean much.

Great Master Wu Chen said, “However, he’s gotten much better now. When Tianlang-Jun was kept at Zhao Hua Temple, Great Master Wu Wang never made things difficult for him.”

Shen Qingqiu, “Tianlang-Jun was detained by Zhao Hua Temple?”

Great Master Wu Chen, “It can’t be considered detainment. This old monk just wanted to have a long chat with him about dharma, while simultaneously helping him to slow down the deterioration of the Dew Seed body. After he stabilizes in a few years, then he may go free. When that time comes, he can do as he likes, whether that be continuing to travel the human realm or bringing Zhuzhi-Lang’s body back to the demon race. This old monk believes that he doesn’t actually have any evil tendencies; even if he did once upon a time, they should be gone now.”

At Jinlan City, Great Master Wu Chen’s legs had been destroyed by sowers who were sent by Tianlang-Jun. Yet for him not to pick a bone over that, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help but feel admiration. Moreover, he wasn’t carelessly merciful.

At their last encounter, Shen Qingqiu had also felt that Tianlang-Jun probably wouldn’t have any desire to destroy the world ever again. That wasn’t what he really wanted or liked to do in the first place.

It was just that without a slightly foolish Zhuzhi-Lang following behind him, helping him to settle accounts, fend off minions, collect strange little books—there would be an unavoidable sadness every now and then.

Just like the him right now.

The monks from Zhao Hua Temple left first, heading for Qiong Ding Palace. Though Yue Qingyuan was the Sect Master, he didn't go with them. Instead, he stood in his original spot, staring silently at Shen Qingqiu. For some unknown reason, Shen Qingqiu felt slightly awkward standing across from him.

As if testing it out, Yue Qingyuan let out a, "Xiao Jiu..."

Shen Qingqiu: "Shixiong, it's Qingqiu."

Even though it was hard to explain the truth to Yue Qingyuan, Shen Qingqiu still hoped that he could show him the difference as much as possible.

Yue Qingyuan gave a start before he smiled weakly. "... It's Qingqiu. Qingqiu-shidi."

Shen Qingqiu glanced at Xuan Su, hanging from his waist. He hadn't spoken yet before Yue Qingyuan spontaneously said, "Shidi, no need to worry. I will go into secluded cultivation after this again for several months, so I should be in good health for the time being."

Shen Qingqiu said, “Then Zhangmen-shixiong must not impulsively draw his sword from now on. Your cultivation can improve, your realm can still rise, but there is no way to recover your lifespan.”

Yue Qingyuan shook his head slowly. “My lifespan is not the only thing that cannot be recovered.”

Amidst the sound of young disciples cheering and laughing, the two of them walked unhurriedly towards Qiong Ding Palace under the clusters of fireworks overhead.

Yue Qingyuan, “What do you plan to do after this?”

Shen Qingqiu, “For now, I have no plans. When Luo Binghe returns, I suppose I’ll see what he wants to do.”

Yue Qingyuan laughed. “You really do adore this disciple of yours very much.”

Shen Qingqiu was just pondering over how he should answer when he suddenly heard Yue Qingyuan say, “Shidi. Cang Qiong Mountain will always be somewhere you can turn to and come back anytime you feel tired from wandering about outside.”

He spoke extremely earnestly and seriously.

Yue Qingyuan had always been like this: he would inevitably accomplish everything he promised. If he could not, he wouldn't hesitate to make up for it no matter the cost.

Ever since Shen Qingqiu entered the role of a character in the novel, he had always refused to become that scum villain from the original work. He had drawn a clear boundary and was proud of doing the complete opposite. There had never been a moment where he had as intense and impulsive a thought as he did now.

If he really were Shen Jiu, then everything would be fine.

If that person could really hear what Yue Qingyuan just said, then everything would be fine.

Shen Qingqiu walked slower and slower until he suddenly lifted his head and looked as far as he could see as if he had sensed something. Separated by the crowd, Luo Binghe stood in front of him, underneath Qiong Ding Palace's tall white stone platform.

He stood all alone, acting as though nobody else was there. But when the pedestrians strolling around saw that face of his, they wore all sorts of different expressions. Shen Qingqiu subconsciously jogged a few steps forward before he looked back again and glanced at the person behind him.

Yue Qingyuan said, “Go ahead.”

He stood cheerfully and silently behind Shen Qingqiu. Just like the past, just like the future.

One particular year, the insolent demon race came to Qiong Ding Peak to provoke and demonstrate their strength. There was quite a bit of smashing, fighting, and burning; they had also destroyed a pile of floor tiles while wielding a hammer.

Luo Binghe was currently staring, head lowered, at the cracks between the white bricks on the ground when he suddenly heard the familiar sound of a fan unfolding. A pair of white boots stepped over the crack in the stone, through which a motley assortment of young vegetation had already sprouted.

He raised his head abruptly.

Shen Qingqiu shook his fan. “Don’t ask any questions. This master wants to first ask you: as a disciple, why were you not respectfully and quietly waiting for Shizun to awaken, instead of leaving to run wildly about?”

Luo Binghe composed his excited expression with great difficulty, and he said, stifling his emotions, “Nobody welcomes me on Cang Qiong Mountain. I could only occasionally go and secretly take a peek. When I didn’t see Shizun just then in the spirit cave, I thought that Shizun had been hidden by them, or, Shizun left again...”

As Shen Qingqiu listened to his slightly wronged explanation, he couldn't help but remember what Shang Qinghua had just said.

If Shen Qingqiu hadn't meddled in everything, Luo Binghe most likely would have really blackened to the end, becoming the dark youth from the original work who tore people into human sticks with his bare hands and cursed the world and himself. Even though now he had grown up into a romantic young man, it didn't seem to be much of an improvement... but, for better or worse, there were still aspects of him that made him lovable, right?

At least Shen Qingqiu only discovered now that he himself truly quite liked this type.

Shen Qingqiu sighed. "You know you're unwelcome, yet you still obediently sent me back to Cang Qiong Mountain?"

Luo Binghe, "I thought that Shizun would definitely want to see Cang Qiong Mountain more when you first woke up..."

In spite of his image, Shen Qingqiu made an exception and smacked him on the forehead with his fan.

He said resentfully, "Of course the one this master wants to see first the most is you!"

Luo Binghe endured the smack, but he was so stirred up that his face grew red. His eyes also started to grow watery, looking like he wanted to say something but couldn't. Shen Qingqiu almost couldn't take it anymore, feeling weak from head to toe after being stared at by that kind of gaze, when he suddenly heard shouts and the sounds of swords rise around him.

Yang Yixuan stood on the eaves of Qiong Ding Palace. He yelled, "Sure enough, that demon race rascal is back again to bother Master Shen!"

Immediately, there were countless answers to his cry, as people instantly reproached, "He still dares to come! Ready your weapons, where's my weapon?"

"Shixiong, that's my sword, give it back! If you want to fight, go back and get your own!"

No wonder Luo Binghe hadn't kept watch by his side, waiting for him to wake. It turned out that everyone was still clamoring to beat him up on Cang Qiong Mountain; what a "warm welcome."

Shen Qingqiu said helplessly, "Oh, not bad. Your judgment was correct. You really could only come in secret with these circumstances."

Luo Binghe said softly, "I said long ago that I was unwelcome here."

Shen Qingqiu rubbed the top of his head. “No worries. Shizun welcomes you.”

Qiong Ding Peak was filled with shouts for fights and killing, interspersed with genuine and fake cries. The ones eager to give it a try were all a bunch of disciples who wished to see the world in chaos. The majority belonged to peaceful passersby who turned blind eyes to Luo Binghe, that world-destroying demon king. Shen Qingqiu didn't know whether to laugh or cry, and he said, “It would be better to leave.”

Luo Binghe didn't react for a short while. “Leave?”

Shen Qingqiu nodded. “Didn't you say that you weren't welcome here? Then go, to somewhere that will welcome you.”

He added, “This time, no matter where you want to go, this master will accompany you.”

Because of that sentence, Luo Binghe's face, which looked to be very intelligent, was taken over by a stupefied expression that was unbearable to watch.

Shen Qingqiu hadn't lowered his voice. Besides Cang Qiong Mountain Sect's disciples, the peak was squeezed full of cultivators from all sects who had received invitations to come and enjoy the celebration. Their senses

were keen, so they didn't have any justification for not hearing it clearly, but they all simultaneously pretended they were deaf. Those watching the fireworks pointed at the sky, those conversing laughed so loudly that they almost shook the roof.

Their cooperation was out of careful consideration for Cang Qiong Mountain's reputation, but Liu Qingge didn't appreciate it. He jumped down from the roof and shouted at Shen Qingqiu, nearly out of flustered exasperation, "Hey!"

Qi Qingqi was in a rage. "... this old woman doesn't care anymore! Go wherever you want! Shen Qingqiu, you, you two... Mingyan, let's go! Why are you watching?! What is there to watch, have you never seen shamelessness?!"

"Shimei. Don't create bad karma from your words. Your image ah..."

The current Cang Qiong Mountain—besides shielding someone's wrongdoings, carrying out forceful eviction, and being very familiar with the demon race—also housed a master and disciple pair who served as the leading roles for pornographic novels. Were there any other images that could leave such a deep impression on people's hearts? Shen Qingqiu thought a bit and was actually rendered speechless.

Like leading a child, Shen Qingqiu took Luo Binghe's hand. He didn't know when it had happened, but somehow it had changed into Luo Binghe leading him.

He could feel the fingers covering the back of his hand gradually tightening, gripping more firmly. Forcefully, to the point that it felt painful. Luo Binghe lifted his head slowly, and the entire river of stars filling the sky glimmered and flickered in the depths of his pitch-black eyes.

Shen Qingqiu was used to the sight, and he turned his head, his frame of mind now greatly changed like that of an old monk after a pilgrimage⁹.

After experiencing countless hardships and suffering through trials and tribulations, he finally surrendered to an earth-shattering disciple, managing to obtain enlightenment with great difficulty. So, he might as well and just let him cry a bit. In any case, that was just how Luo Binghe was. To tell the truth, with such an unconstrained, tumultuous rollercoaster of a plot, Shen Qingqiu also wanted to let his old tears flow freely ah.

As for the transformation of this unique, spectacular novel: it's true that the Great God Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky had no regrets remaining for his career, nor could the unmatched troll Peerless Cucumber still say that he disliked it.

If the author won't fill plot holes, then this old man will do it himself. In all the long history of stallion novels, where could you find a reader like him, who took the lead and gave his own life to filling holes? Devoting so much just to rescue the B points for an incomparably absurd, brainless, beginner-level YY novel!

Even though some deviations had probably occurred during the rescue, at... the very least... he... truly accomplished “you can you up, no can no BB”10!

The second he flipped open《Proud Immortal Demon Way》, the story officially began; the moment he closed 《Proud Immortal Demon Way》, the story still remained unfinished.

Or, in other words, the story that circulated among the people of the world has already come to an end. But, the story between you and me has only just begun.

—Finish—

BGM – background music

尚可一撻 – slang meaning “rubbing one out”

A nickname for Luo Binghe. The “ge” part means elder brother.

The closest translation of 纯文学 I could find was belles-lettres, which is essentially “light, entertaining, and often sophisticated literature” basically – writing that’s actually good and scholarly, not like YY stallion novels

Non-literally translated by Lianyin since it's meant to be a tragic love song about a master-disciple...who love to papapa. We hope the double entendres are clear.

十八摸 – a folk song that everyone knows. Most people can hum a few lines of it but very few can sing the entire song.

喜大普奔, the closest translation I could think of personally was “going viral,” while the literal translation is “news so exhilarating that everyone is celebrating/spreading it around the world” – it's meant to convey exaggerated enthusiasm.

You can you up (originally in English) is part of a fuller Chinglish slang phrase (you can you up, no can no BB), which criticizes people who complain about something someone else has done by essentially saying ‘if you can do it better, then you do it’)

取经老僧, literally referring to the journey monks made to India to learn more about Buddhist scriptures/become enlightened. People are probably most familiar with ‘Journey to the West’ (西游记) in which the monkey king Song Wukong escorts the monk (Tang Seng) on his journey to, well, the west.

See previous note. Meaning: “Criticism?! Let's see you do better!”

[Prev Chapter](#)[Next Chapter](#)
Report chapter Comments

Bing-mei and Bing-ge's Climactic Showdown

The first stop after (getting chased off) leaving Cangqiong Mountain was, without a doubt, Luo Binghe's demon headquarters on the northern border.

Shen Qingqiu had previously stayed in this underground palace for a while, when he was under "house arrest". At the time, outside the 1:1 scale model of Bamboo Cottage, they'd been tilling soil and spreading manure, the uneven forest of bamboo dying and living and dying again; now upon revisiting the place, he didn't know what sort of methods Luo Binghe's cautious and conscientious bunch of demon underlings had used, but they'd actually succeeded in planting proper living bamboo, and had created a rustling sea of shaded green.

The first ten days or so after they arrived, Luo Binghe unsurprisingly stayed glued to him every day, so sticky you couldn't pry him off if you tried, but these past few days he'd actually begin to show some restraint, and had suddenly started acting polite. Supposedly the northern and southern borders had been having constant civil conflicts lately, giving him a lot of work to do, which in turn meant the amount of time he spent wandering around Shen Qingqiu's person was cut short by a lot.

This was obviously false. In Shen Qingqiu's opinion, this was definitely because he'd tactfully declined Luo Binghe's earlier request to share the bed, and had once again injured Maiden Luo's glass heart



.

Alright so he'd declined out of habit, if Luo Binghe had just tried a little harder then he would've accepted!

How was he to know that the moment he waved his hand, Luo Binghe would rush out the door, off to search for a nice corner in which to squat and grow mushrooms...

Shen Qingqiu guessed that he'd most likely spent these past few days hiding in the inner hall, and decided he might as well go there himself to smooth things over.

The inner hall was off-limits to anyone other than Luo Binghe. But this "anyone" obviously didn't include Shen Qingqiu. Luo Binghe had said before, he could walk through this underground palace with his eyes closed, whichever way he wanted. The order had been passed down through the ranks, so nobody with eyes would dare to obstruct his path.

Shen Qingqiu slipped right on in, unexpectedly saw no sign of Luo Binghe, and started taking a real good look at every corner of this private little space which Luo Binghe had always kept shut so tight.

Just when he was about to give it a real good feel as well, the stone door suddenly flew open, and a figure came staggering into the room.

Shen Qingqiu's gaze hardened at first, but after seeing who it was that had entered, he involuntarily cried out: "Luo Binghe?"

Luo Binghe seemed not to have anticipated in the slightest that there would actually be another person in the inner hall.

The pupils of his eyes abruptly shrank, showing Shen Qingqiu's inverted reflection in his pitch-black eyes, and the murderous rage that had previously covered his face instantly transformed into extreme astonishment.

But Shen Qingqiu didn't bother to notice all this. The only thing he could see right now was that Luo Binghe was covered head to toe in blood. Luo Binghe walked a few steps before his knees gave out. He rushed forward to catch him, just in time to accept Luo Binghe into his embrace, and automatically reached around to grab hold of his blood-soaked back: "What happened? Who did this?"

To think there'd come a day when Luo Binghe could get beaten into this state in his own territory. Alright, so this didn't really count as a bug. The

protag of this harem novel had already turned gay, there weren't really any plot points worth calling a bug at this point.

Luo Binghe's throat spasmed, throwing out a single scalding word from between teeth clenched so hard it seemed his gums might bleed: "...Go!"

"Go?" Did that mean...he wanted him to escape?

Shen Qingqiu hurriedly said: "Alright, we'll go." He then moved to put an arm around Luo Binghe's waist.

To his surprise, Luo Binghe shut his mouth tight, and suddenly pushed him away.

This was the first time Shen Qingqiu had actually been pushed away by him; he was struck dumb on the spot, thinking to himself, did this brat want him to go ahead on his own?

From fear that he'd get dragged into it?

There didn't seem to be any other explanation. At once he scolded: "Don't fuss, this teacher is taking you back to Cangqiong Mountain Sect."

The veins in Luo Binghe's temple started throbbing as he said in a harsh voice: "I'm not going!"

Shen Qingqiu assumed he was throwing a tantrum again: "This isn't the time to be acting difficult, let's first go over there to hide for a while." He placed a hand against his back as he spoke. Luo Binghe's face abruptly froze.

A warm and ceaseless flow of spiritual energy was transmitting from his back, wave after wave of it pushed into his body.

After sending energy for a while, Shen Qingqiu felt this should be enough, removed his hand to unsheathe the Xiuya sword instead, pulled up Luo Binghe, and soared up on the spot.

The Xiuya sword had come out of Wanjian Peak, so no matter the situation, riding Xiuya into the range of Cangqiong Mountain's air defense barrier would never trigger the alarm; as such, Shen Qingqiu was able to quietly and secretly bring someone back to Qingjing Peak.

However, what he could hide from the other peaks, he was unable to hide from the disciples of his own. When he secretively arrived at Bamboo Cottage with Luo Binghe in tow, there were already people inside.

Ming Fan was holding a small broom, talking endlessly as he swept, while Ning Yingying stood on a small bamboo stool, sleeves rolled up, reaching on her tiptoes with a duster as she dusted the highest level of the bookshelf.

Shen Qingqiu kicked the door open when he entered, scaring the two out of their wits, but upon taking another look, they immediately called out: "Shi ___"

Shen Qingqiu made a zipper-pulling motion in front of his mouth, and the pair promptly went silent.

Shen Qingqiu said in a low voice: "What are you shouting for, do you want to attract that bunch from Baizhan Peak?"

If they knew he'd returned, Liu Qingge would definitely come over, and if he came over, there was no way he could hide Luo Binghe's current state!

You must understand, the ones most energetically enthusiastic about ganging up on Luo Binghe whenever they saw him were those terrorists from Baizhan Peak. Luo Binghe didn't dare fight back either, because of Shen Qingqiu's hindering presence, so every time he ended up getting chased around like a living target; even if they couldn't kill him, it was still a huge pain.

Ning Yingying's almond eyes widened, hands raising to cover her mouth as she nodded repeatedly like a chick bobbing for grain. Upon catching sight of the bloodstained Luo Binghe, she moved her hands away, taking in a sharp breath before saying: "Shizun, what's wrong with A-Luo?"

When Luo Binghe's sideways glance swept over Ming Fan, a trace of incredulity and utmost hatred flashed through his eyes. That gaze was bone-chillingly cold, so that Ming Fan couldn't help tightening his grip on the broom, shrinking into himself, and almost falling back onto the ground.

But Shen Qingqiu didn't see all these little details, busy helping Binghe over to sit on the bed: "He's gotten a little injured. You two leave us for now. Is the medicine kit Qiancao Peak sent over still in the same place as before?"

Ning Yingying said: "We haven't touched anything in Bamboo Cottage, it's all where you left it. Shizun, do you need your disciples to help?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "No. This teacher can handle it alone."

After chasing out the two disciples, Shen Qingqiu helped Luo Binghe to sit up straight, padded his back with pillows, let him lean against them, then finally kneeled down to help remove his boots.

Luo Binghe had kept his mouth shut this whole time; after Shen Qingqiu lowered his head, his line of sight zeroed in on the man's pale white neck, his gaze hard to read, the look on his face fluctuating between guarded and cold.

Shen Qingqiu assumed he lacked the energy to speak because of his injuries, and upon seeing his forehead dripping with cold sweat, wiped his face with fresh water and a soft cloth, picked out a pile of bottles and jars from the medicine chest Mu Qingfang had allocated to him, then turned around and reached his hand to remove Luo Binghe's clothes.

Luo Binghe immediately grabbed his hand.

The force with which he'd grabbed him was incredibly great; Shen Qingqiu furrowed his brows and, unable to smack him over the head with his other hand, lowered his voice to say: "Don't act so unruly, I'm going to take a look at your wounds."

Luo Binghe still wouldn't let go. Shen Qingqiu was carrying a multi-colored variety of pills in his left hand, and had already lost patience by now, so at this point he decided to simply shove the entire handful right into his mouth!

With his mouth stuffed full of dozens of pills of varying sizes, Luo Binghe's face darkened, and he finally let go. Shen Qingqiu took this opportunity to quickly rip open his clothes. After glancing over it, he wasn't sure where to start, and could only bring himself to gently dab and wipe at the mess of blood with a cloth.

Slivers of black qi escaped from turned-out flesh; these didn't seem to be normal wounds, or else with Luo Binghe's self-healing abilities, they would long since have healed back to normal. Shen Qingqiu carefully helped him clean up as he said: "Where in the world have you been these past few days, and who did you fight to end up in a state like this?"

Luo Binghe continued to stay silent. Shen Qingqiu finished wiping off his chest, and following what Mu Qingfang had taught him, grabbed hold of Luo Binghe's wrist to check his pulse; if he really was in a bad state, it would be better to call Mu Qingfang over before considering anything else.

As he was checking, he took a few more glances at Luo Binghe's hand and chest.

A strange uneasiness crawled its way into his mind.

He had the faint feeling something was wrong.

Like...there was something missing.

But seeing Luo Binghe's current state, with his pale lips and cold gaze, he couldn't be bothered to ponder this in too much detail; he sat down on the bedside, continuing to transfer spiritual energy to him.

As the spiritual energy flowed unhurriedly through all the channels of Luo Binghe's body, Shen Qingqiu felt his tense muscles gradually begin to

relax, quietly let out a sigh of relief, and reached out a hand with the intent of pulling Luo Binghe into his embrace.

Luo Binghe once again threw him off.

After getting pushed away a second time, Shen Qingqiu threw aside the cloth in his right hand and helplessly said: “What is it now?”

Luo Binghe’s eyes were filled with nothing but a sense of guarded wariness, which led Shen Qingqiu to inwardly roll his eyes as he criticized him: “This isn’t the time to be throwing any tantrums. My not letting you sleep with me the day before last certainly isn’t worth you staying angry ‘til today.”

At that, Luo Binghe’s mouth seemed to twitch.

Shen Qingqiu resentfully changed plans to reaching out and feeling his forehead, then muttered: “It’s a little warm. Are you...dizzy at all?”

Suddenly, Ning Yingying’s voice could be heard from outside: “Liu-shishu, you can’t enter, this isn’t a convenient time for Shizun right now!”

Ning Yingying usually spoke in a soft and quiet voice, delicate and coy to the point that sometimes you couldn’t even hear her clearly if you didn’t get close enough; this completely out-of-character shouting was clearly an attempt to tip off Shen Qingqiu inside the house. He immediately jumped off the bed, and had just put down the curtains when Bamboo Cottage’s wooden door was thrown open with a bang.

Liu Qingge came charging into the building with his sword on his back, only to see Shen Qingqiu with one hand held behind him, turning around with a lift of his eyebrows: “I trust you’ve been well since we last met, Liu-shidi.”

Liu Qingge practically threw the words in his face: “Cangqiong Mountain has a rule – Luo Binghe is not allowed up.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Why have I never heard of this rule?”

Liu Qingge: “It’s newly decided.”

Ming Fan poked his head in, interrupting: “That’s right Shizun, Cangqiong Mountain really does have this rule now, it’s just that Zhangmen-shibo hasn’t had it carved into the regulation stone yet. Everyone knows it...”

Shen Qingqiu reprimanded him: “You shut your mouth!”

Don’t think I don’t know it was you who called Liu Qingge over, you little brat!

This youngster had admired Baizhan Peak for a long time now, and insisted on reporting even the tiniest fart of an incident to Liu Qingge – he’d practically already become Qingjing Peak’s official spy!

There were few among the youth who didn’t admire Baizhan Peak, that much was understandable – but this sort of selflessness, secretly running off to slip information to them, was simply shameful!

He’ll deal with you later!

Ming Fan wilted at the reprimand, withdrawing back outside with his tail between his legs; Ning Yingying stood anxiously by the door, and with her anger yet to be assuaged, she stomped hard on his foot, whispering blame at him for ruining things.

As soon as the two retreated, Liu Qingge immediately pulled open the bed curtains.

Luo Binghe was half sitting on the bed, an ominous glint in his eyes, much like an injured young leopard; he glared murderously at Liu Qingge with eyes like blades of ice or poisonously fierce flames, an explosive attack burst grasped in his hand, ready to shoot at any moment. Shen Qingqiu hurriedly interposed himself between them, one leg pressing onto the bed board, blocking in front of Luo Binghe: “Shidi, don’t be like this.”

Liu Qingge was caught between surprise and bewilderment: “He’s been hurt?”

Shen Qingqiu really wanted to give him a slight bow with hands clasped in front, sighing: “If he hadn’t gotten hurt, it would be difficult for me to reasonably bring him back. Just turn a blind eye to this, shidi, and don’t chase him away.”

Liu Qingge said: “If he’s injured why doesn’t he stay in the demon realm?”

Because it was in the demon realm that he got injured!

Shen Qingqiu: “There’s been a bit of a situation...”

Liu Qingge: “That bunch of ghosts and goblins started an armed rebellion?”

“Er.” Shen Qingqiu cast a glance at Luo Binghe out of the corner of his eye, unsure whether involving demon internal affairs in the conversation was acceptable or not, and vaguely replied: “Perhaps.”

Liu Qingge said: “He should clean up his own messes. Cangqiong Mountain is here to support you, but not him.”

Luo Binghe suddenly let out a bitter laugh, which in turn pulled at the injuries near his chest, causing him to immediately grit his teeth at the pain. The sound of how hard he was enduring caused a burst of confidence to suddenly swell up within Shen Qingqiu, and he resolutely said: “Liu-shidi, do not forget that this is Qingjing Peak.”

Whether or not Qingjing Peak wanted to keep someone was obviously up to the peak lord’s decision!

Liu Qingge hated how indisputable this was, putting on a cold expression as he said: “Just keep shielding him then, for all I care!”

After throwing down this line, he stomped loudly out the door. Before even two seconds had passed, he came stomping back again, throwing something into Shen Qingqiu’s bosom.

Shen Qingqiu looked down at the thing he’d just caught to discover it was that folding fan of his again.

The folding fan he'd dropped who-knows-where during the battle royale over the Luo river. Every time, it was always Liu Qingge who'd pick it up, which meant clearly he and this fan were brought together by fate; maybe he should just give it to him and be done with it!

He cleared his throat, then said in a refined and gentle voice: "Thank you, shidi, for troubling yourself to return this every time."

Liu Qingge abruptly turned around and left.

Luo Binghe's voice sounded out from behind Shen Qingqiu, his throat sounding somewhat hoarse: "...Liu Qingge?"

This one spoken line was a genuinely uncertain question.

Shen Qingqiu said: "Don't mind him. He's always like this, he just needs to shout a bit is all. Once he's done shouting, he'll leave."

Luo Binghe narrowed his eyes, a thoughtful expression gradually making its way onto his face.

Shen Qingqiu placed the folding fan on the table as he continued comforting him: "Don't worry, with everything this teacher said today, he won't be coming to cause you any more trouble for the moment. If Baizhan Peak's disciples come to attack you again, just fight back – it's fine as long as you don't kill them, there's no need to deliberately let them have their way. You could even count it as helping Qingjing Peak gain face."

The more Luo Binghe listened, the odder that glitter in his gaze became.

He called out in a voice that seemed almost to be testing the waters: "...Shizun?"

Shen Qingqiu tilted his head: "Hm?"

Both the tone and expression were exceedingly gentle and yielding, as if he might grant whatever you asked of him. Luo Binghe turned his gaze away, his mouth twitching slightly: "It's nothing. I just wanted to...try saying it."

The fact this child liked to incessantly call him Shizun this and Shizun that wasn't exactly a new discovery for Shen Qingqiu. He patted his head: "Why don't we go to sleep? Whatever is going on over in the demon realm, you can worry about it after you've healed up here."

Luo Binghe ever-so-slightly nodded his head.

At that, Shen Qingqiu bent over, pulled out the blanket and pillows behind him, and helped him lay back. Before lying down, he first carefully helped loosen Luo Binghe's hairtie, so that it wouldn't press against his head as he slept.

Once he had finished doing all this, Shen Qingqiu blew out the lamp, rustled away as he removed his outer clothing, and climbed into bed himself.

He put his arms around Luo Binghe and said: "Go to sleep. This teacher will help you adjust your breath."

Now that both hugging and sleeping had happened, surely that little temper from earlier should have disappeared, right?

Shen Qingqiu closed his eyes and adjusted his entire body's spiritual breath to be as level as possible, just like the evening tide, gently washing through Luo Binghe's spiritual channels.

Within the darkness, a pair of clear bright eyes flickered with a cold light, not closing for a very long time, just staring straight at the peacefully resting Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu's long hair lay scattered across his arm and fingers; he grabbed a strand of black hair, slowly closing his grip as he silently mouthed this name over and over again.

Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu.

His mouth suddenly curved in a strangely dark and perverse upwards arc.

This silent smile grew ever wider across “Luo Binghe’s” face.

As if having discovered some incredibly amusing toy, his eyes shown brightly, seeming almost to show a sliver of merciless excitement.

That night, Shen Qingqiu’s dreams were detailed and endlessly long.

The next morning, the first to open his eyes was Luo Binghe.

His snow white face had slightly regained some of its color, and looked much better than the night before. Shen Qingqiu, meanwhile, had been lively as a rabbit when they went to bed last night, whereas upon waking this morning he was still hugging onto him, half-asleep, looking somewhat weary.

Shen Qingqiu really had given him a full night’s worth of spiritual energy, not stopping even after he’d blearily fallen asleep.

Luo Binghe slowly opened and closed his eyes, staring at him for a while with a complicated look in his gaze, then reached out to nudge Shen Qingqiu’s arm.

At this nudge, Shen Qingqiu woke up with a start. Luo Binghe took the opportunity to get up and out of bed.

Shen Qingqiu was quite bewildered by this. Normally you couldn’t even *kick* him off, but today he was moving on his own?

He pressed at his temples, brows furrowing: “What are you getting up so early for? Making breakfast? Don’t bother with that today.”

He could see Luo Binghe was dressed only in thin underclothes; the criss-crossing injuries visible beneath his open collar had already healed, leaving no more than pale marks, so he’d probably be completely recovered within the day, but nearly half his chest was currently laying open to the wind. That robe from last night was naturally unwearable now, so he spoke up in

reminder: “Your old clothes are still in the side room. Yingying and the others haven’t touched them.”

Luo Binghe wound his way around the screen, heading for the side room.

A small space entered his field of vision, totally spotless, with a full set of bamboo furniture; there was a small table by the bedside, with neatly ordered books and scrolls, and all kinds of writing brushes placed in order of length. Opening the wardrobe revealed neat and tidy sets of folded white clothes. There was even a variety of high-quality jade accessories hanging up above.

While Luo Binghe was in the side room, Shen Qingqiu very slowly sat up in bed, sweeping his gaze around in search of his boots as he massaged his temples.

He slept way too effing badly last night. He was really fricking annoyed!

Just constantly dreaming! Dreaming dreaming dreaming dreaming!

He’d even dreamed dark parts of his past like that time he’d gone to Shuanghu to fight the Skinner! There’d even been dreams within dreams!

He’d gone over all of the whole Immortal Alliance Convention and Jinlan and Huayue Cities like watching a moving picture, getting thrashed, spitting blood, growing plants out of his body...so many dreams squeezed into a single night made his head feel like it was going to explode!

This was definitely due to simultaneously sleeping while giving Luo Binghe spiritual energy. The moment his spiritual consciousness became unstable, those around him would suffer calamity even in their sleep.

At this point, Luo Binghe came out of the side room, properly dressed. Shen Qingqiu still hadn’t found his boots, and so gave up looking; instead he motioned with a hand for Luo Binghe to approach the bed, and then tugged him down.

The first tug failed to move him, and Luo Binghe raised an eyebrow: “What are you doing?”

Shen Qingqiu felt under his pillow for a hair tie and wooden comb, saying: “What would you say I’m doing.”

Only then did Binghe obediently sit down in front of him, looking appraisingly all around Bamboo Cottage; Shen Qingqiu casually asked as he brushed his hair: “What are you looking at?”

Luo Binghe’s gaze was keen and cool as ever, but his voice changed to a warmer and softer tone: “Every time I’ve returned to Qingjing Peak these past few years, it’s always been in a rush, so I could never find the time to get a good look.”

Shen Qingqiu held the hair tie in his mouth for a moment, sneakily and distastefully gave him a tiny braid, and said: “Well you can get your fill of looking these next few days. Later I’ll go pay another visit to Baizhan Peak, and tell Liu Qingge to take better care of them. There isn’t the slightest reason that Qingjing Peak’s disciples should be chased and beaten by Baizhan Peak.”

Luo Binghe paused a moment, slowly turned his head, smiled at him, and called out in a pleasantly sweet voice: “Shizun?”

“Hm?”

“Shizun.”

“Mm.”

He called the name a good many times in succession, as if he’d never before tried using such a novel form of address, and was able to get a reply every time, making him more addicted with every try; eventually Shen Qingqiu could take no more of this, picked up the folding fan, and knocked it on the back of his head: “What are you calling out for? Saying it once is enough. Speak properly.”

That hit to his head made Luo Binghe's face darken, but he quickly readjusted his expression, flashed an enigmatic smile, turned his gaze off to the side, and said: "Did Shizun not sleep well last night?"

Is it possible to sleep well, while hugging you?

Shen Qingqiu indifferently replied: "I dreamed a pile of old memories is all."

Luo Binghe said: "Then how about next time we change it so I sleep hugging Shizun instead?"

Of course he could casually say something like that. Shen Qingqiu successfully accomplished his goal, patted his head, and pushed him off the bed: "Go on, shoo."

Sure enough, Shen Qingqiu did exactly as he said, and paid a visit to Baizhan Peak.

Going there was as familiar as a walk in the park for him, without even the need to give a visiting card; he had a few sips of the clear rice porridge Ming Fan brought him, put his clothes in order, then quickly and carelessly left. Luo Binghe was made to stay put in Bamboo Cottage, with a repeated warning to "be good and wait for this teacher's return", but there was no way he'd be willing to obediently wait.

The moment he opened the door, a petite orange figure leaped into his field of vision. Upon focusing his gaze, Luo Binghe said with a radiant smile: "Yingying."

To his surprise, Ning Yingying shuddered, turning pale with fright: "A-Luo, what's wrong with you! Did you hit your head!? Why are you addressing me like that! What sort of creature is Yingying supposed to be, how terrible!"

Luo Binghe: "....."

Ning Yingying had terror written all over her face and still refused to back down: “Why aren’t you calling me Ning-shijie!?”

Luo Binghe: “...Ning-shijie.”

This one “shijie” was clearly spoken through gritted teeth. But Ning Yingying let out a sigh of relief, patted her chest, and lectured: “Now *that’s* how it should be. Suddenly changing it isn’t like you at all. I know Shizun loves you, but you should always pay close attention to the order of seniority, so that you won’t give a bad name to the status of us Qingjing Peak disciples, as well as Shizun’s teaching.”

Luo Binghe felt the veins in his forehead twitching as he listened, lost his patience, and interrupted her: “I have something to ask you.”

Ning Yingying immediately revealed a look of understanding.

With a wave, she very seriously placed a broom and duster in Luo Binghe’s hands.

She said: “Shijie understands. Here you are.”

Luo Binghe: “.....”

Ning Yingying said in a sincere and earnest manner: “There’s no need to take offense, A-Luo, I know you’ve always insisted on cleaning and tidying Shizun’s Bamboo Cottage on your own. But you and Shizun have been gone for such a long time, your da shixiong and I had no choice but to take over for you. Now that you’ve returned, though, I might as well hand the task back to you. Your shijie won’t fight you over chores. Shijie understands at least this much.”

Understand my ass!

Luo Binghe turned on his heel and headed for Xianmei Peak.

The disciples of Xianmei Peak had always been very welcoming—this was the same no matter where he was.

In the past, Shen Qingqiu had quite often made Luo Binghe run errands and do odd jobs for him, and he could often be seen at Xianmei Peak, delivering a message, handing over a visiting card, inviting somebody, borrowing something, and so on.

When the male disciples of other peaks came up, a number of them would furtively look around, looking and looking until they'd looked into the celestial fairies' boudoirs or even their baths; of course, the latter would have been (beeeeeep)ed to death by the girls' swords before they even reached the bath. Only Luo Binghe, every time he ascended the peak, was able to treat everyone with due respect, keeping strict boundaries of his own accord, which was why public praise for him around Xianmei Peak was relatively high. As such, the entirety of Xianmei Peak tacitly allowed him to enter the inner hall to wait.

Liu Mingyan, a white muslin veil covering her face, bowed politely as she said: "Luo-shixiong."

Before Luo Binghe could reply, Liu Mingyan gave him a nod: "Has Luo-shixiong come on Shen-shibo's orders to extend an invitation to Shizun? Please wait here a moment, and I will return as soon as I have helped make arrangements for these path friends from Tianyi Monastery."

The three path friends she spoke of were a trio of pretty Daoist nuns.

Their appealingly exquisite figures were wrapped in watery blue Daoist robes, and were currently circling busily around her. Three pairs of limpid gazes fixed on Luo Binghe, one moment whispering in each other's ears, the next stamping their feet and acting unrelentingly coquettish, their cheeks flushed red, looking for all the world like three bright blue flowers coiling around a slim and graceful lotus, trembling at the slightest wind, tittering and laughing, boisterously playing, crowding into a single mass as they walked outside.

Luo Binghe then did as he was told and patiently waited for Liu Mingyan's return.

He hadn't stood around long when he suddenly noticed – poking out from beneath a haphazard pile of scrolls on the writing desk – the corner of a book, one which had very clearly been stuffed completely under them in a hurry.

To think Liu Mingyan would have things that needed hiding.

He casually pulled out that hidden little book and gave it a quick once-over, thinking only that the cover was garish, the three large characters which formed its title getting increasingly more crooked at they went along; he frowned, saw that the author's name was "Willow Lodges Sleeping Flowers", smiled slightly, and flipped it open.

.....

.....

.....

When Shen Qingqiu came back from his tea and heart-to-heart chat at Baizhan Peak, Luo Binghe was already waiting for him inside Bamboo Cottage. The moment he walked in, he could feel a burning, scalding hot gaze sweep towards him.

Shen Qingqiu: "....."

=□= Why was he suddenly kind of afraid to close the door!

Luo Binghe was reclining on the bed, smiling as he said: "Is something wrong? Why isn't Shizun coming over here?"

His tone of voice was still that same soft and very slightly hurt voice, but his eyes were another story.

He was using a gaze like he'd never seen Shen Qingqiu before, looking him up and down appraisingly, just as if he were attempting to peel off an entire layer of skin with his eyes alone.

Shen Qingqiu had excellent skin, his shoulders neither wide nor thick, with a thin waist and long legs; covered by the Qingjing Peak uniform's layer upon layer of green, he cut a clean and elegant figure, and was really rather good-looking.

That's right. He was good-looking.

Shen Qingqiu closed the door to Bamboo Cottage behind his back; before he'd even reached five steps' distance, he was pulled forward, fell directly into Luo Binghe's bosom, and felt a tightening around his waist.

Luo Binghe slid to his lower back, intermittently rubbing and kneading.

Hand. Hand. Thank you! Hand! Your hand!

Shen Qingqiu reached back to grab Luo Binghe's claws, but Luo Binghe used that force to twist him around and, before he knew it, he'd been placed on Luo Binghe's thighs, sitting with his legs spread, and very firmly stuck. The next moment, Luo Binghe pressed down on his neck, and Shen Qingqiu's lips were captured.

*I can't move. F*ck, in this position I'm seriously scared to move!*

Actually the two had already done much more than this by now, but last time was under special circumstances, and they'd been facing imminent catastrophe, so there'd really been no time to feel any embarrassment or reservation about it. And in the near half a month they'd spent in the demon realm, while Luo Binghe had been very intimate with him, maybe because he was shy or something, he'd never once done anything to overstep his bounds.

But this time, this place, and this situation were entirely different.

The sun hadn't even set yet. Was it really okay to be fooling around in broad daylight!

He couldn't have broken the boy from holding back too much, could he?

Shen Qingqiu was very unused to being so close to someone while wide awake, but a porcelain doll like Luo Binghe – who could break into pieces at a touch – absolutely could not be allowed to fall again, so he cautiously opened his mouth in response.

Funnily enough, having used Shen Qingqiu's body for so long, this is what it felt like: It was frigid and inflexible from head to toe and top to bottom, there wasn't a single place you couldn't touch, not a spot you could poke that tickled, and there didn't seem to be any sensitive parts anywhere either; but right now, as Luo Binghe kneaded him in an irregular pattern of gentle and slow movements, he actually found himself itching more than he could bear.

Why is he so good at this? Why!

Even though he's obviously a virgin? Why!

One time and he's mastered it without any need for practice? Why!

Is this fair? I want to make a complaint, I want to shout a protest. Why!

The pressure with which Luo Binghe bit at his lips was sometimes light and sometimes heavy, his tongue provocatively stirring around his mouth; Shen Qingqiu had trouble keeping up with this rhythm, and started panting for breath, but as soon as he turned his head away it would get turned back again, and he'd be kissed even more deeply than before. Unable to catch his breath, with his brows knitted and eyes shut tight, he was naturally unable to see the ill intent that flashed in Luo Binghe's eyes.

Seated unsteadily on his thighs, he subconsciously reached out to grab Luo Binghe's collar, but this grab failed to catch hold of any clothes, instead touching directly onto the skin of his chest.

Smooth, unblemished skin.

In an instant, Shen Qingqiu's mind was clear as snow.

He suddenly put strength into his palm, and shot a burst at “Luo Binghe’s” heart.

“Luo Binghe” took this powerful direct blow of spiritual energy, and yet was completely unaffected; he let out a grim laugh, one hand clutching Shen Qingqiu’s right wrist as the other continued to press down on his neck, incomparably skillfully turning and flipping them both onto the bed, and smiled cheerfully as he looked down on him from above: “What’s wrong Shizun, don’t you love me? Why won’t you give it to me?”

F your venerable self! Shen Qingqiu cursed: “Scram!”

“Luo Binghe’s” lips and teeth changed from lovingly clinging to tearing and biting, the taste of blood suddenly pervading inside Shen Qingqiu’s mouth. He formed seals with his left hand, Xiuya responding to the call and flying over from where it had been lying on the table. “Luo Binghe’s” movements slowed slightly, and Shen Qingqiu took the chance to throw up a leg, kicking him in the chest; before he could get up, there was a tightening on his ankle, and he turned his head to see “Luo Binghe” with one hand gripping it, suddenly tugging hard and once more dragging him back beneath him. He immediately followed up by repositioning Shen Qingqiu’s body, taking hold of his calves and pressing down hard, bending them up to his chest.

This whole series of movements was done all in one go!

Shen Qingqiu said in a stern tone: “Where is he!?”

“Luo Binghe” tilted his head in reply: “Who are you asking about? If you mean me, aren’t I right here?”

Shen Qingqiu suddenly relaxed his tone of voice, saying: “How did you get here?”

“Luo Binghe” played with his hair as he said: “Compared to that, I’d much rather ask how you figured it out, Shizun?”

Mother clucker. Luo Binghe's palm and chest had sword wounds. He'd made them himself way back when!

Shen Qingqiu said: "You really want to find out?"

"Luo Binghe" pressed his body a little lower, saying in a chilly yet slightly teasing voice: "It's fine if you don't say it. We have all the time in the world, so we can take our time slowly 'finding out'."

Shen Qingqiu said: "Then why don't you take a look behind you?"

The curve at the ends of "Luo Binghe's" lips immediately froze as he came to an abrupt realization, guardedly turning his head.

In the dimming light, a face exactly the same as his own came closing in towards them.

That icy face was as bone-chillingly cold as bitter frost, but the eyes were like will-o'-the-wisps, burning a fiery deep red.

Within Bamboo Cottage, two completely identical men, two completely identical faces.

Aside from the fact one wore white and the other black, it was entirely impossible to tell the two apart.

The black-clothed Luo Binghe had a sword hanging from his waist, wrapped tightly in layer upon layer of charms.

To think that the once totally-domineering Xinmo sword had been wrapped in such a rough and unsightly manner, unable to let slip even a sliver of demonic energy.

He shouted in a low, hoarse voice: "Get off of him!"

Along with this anger-filled shout, there also came an accompanying blast. The white-clothed "Luo Binghe" caught between Shen Qingqiu's legs immediately returned the attack without the slightest hesitation. Both blows

counterbalanced each other, a violent noise sounded in the air, and smoke came falling down around them.

He looked incredibly disappointed, saying disdainfully: “Of all the times to come back, you just had to choose a time like this...”

Before he’d finished speaking, Shen Qingqiu crooked his second, middle, and ring fingers; the hilt of Xiuya, which after missing its target had gotten pinned into the wall, vibrated slightly before suddenly flying into his hand. Shen Qingqiu grabbed onto it, and immediately swung his arm downwards!

Caught in a two-pronged attack, “Luo Binghe” was finally unable to continue holding this provocative position. He flipped off the bed, not forgetting to give Shen Qingqiu’s waist a good pinch as he left, and nimbly landed at the other end of Bamboo Cottage, feigning sadness: “Shizun strikes out with such a heavy hand. Do you not feel the least bit sorry for your disciple?”

Fuck your mother!

Who’re you calling your shizun!

This guy was the original *Proud Immortal Demon Way*’s Zhongdian harem protagonist “Luo Binghe”! He’d been let out before, back when the system’s punishment protocol went online—this man to which Zhongdian readers prostrated in worship like a god, whom nobody would refer to in those days without respectfully addressing him as: Bing-ge!

Shen Qingqiu could never have imagined that this guy could not only appear in the punishment protocol, but was actually able to manifest in this world in his genuine physical form. In light of this, it seemed that the system’s so-called punishment may not have been to let out an imitation personality, but had pulled Bing-ge over directly from the parallel original world!

He’d been getting the vague feeling something wasn’t right since yesterday, but Maiden Luo had always played to the tune of acting a little difficult or throwing a tiny tantrum at the drop of a hat, and in his own concern and

impatience, he'd focused all his attention on treating injuries; it was because of this that Shen Qingqiu hadn't thought too deeply on it.

The actual Luo Binghe had sword wounds on his palm and chest, which Shen Qingqiu had left himself. That boy had kept them all this time, treating them like precious treasures and refusing to properly heal them, so how could he have felt "smooth, unblemished skin"?

When all was said and done, it was because they still weren't familiar enough with each other's bodies that he'd taken so long to remember. It was sheer luck that he'd managed to figure it out in the nick of time. That was a real close one, his integrity in old age (.....) had almost gotten ruined there.

So then when they ran into each other at the underground palace's inner hall yesterday, the "go" he'd said was now very easy to understand. The meaning of this word wasn't "run away, I don't want to be a burden on you", but rather "get out of my fucking face, you damn scum!"

The black-clothed Luo Binghe with the sword at his waist threw himself forward, anxiously saying: "Shizun, that bastard didn't do anything to you did he?"

Er, wouldn't calling him a bastard, be insulting yourself...

Cursing aside, the sight of this Luo Binghe holding him so tightly, with such an eager expression, made Shen Qingqiu feel quite gratified. Now *this* was the right style!

He cleared his throat, confirmed that his clothes hadn't gotten ripped or thrown askew, made sure his appearance wasn't disorderly, and only then said: "This teacher is fine." He then suddenly remembered that if "Luo Binghe" had been covered in injuries yesterday, with lacerations all over, this one probably hadn't gotten off scott-free either, and hurriedly asked: "How about you? Are you injured?"

Luo Binghe nodded: "It's already recovered."

Shen Qingqiu grabbed his wrist, flipped it over, saw a not-too-pale, not-too-deep white mark on the palm, and felt a stirring in his heart: “What in the world is going on? Where have you been these past two days, and why is he here?”

Luo Binghe shook his head: “This disciple knows not. While in seclusion in the underground palace’s inner hall the day before yesterday, a violet light suddenly surged from the fragments of the Xinmo sword, and this...man appeared, carrying another Xinmo sword in his hand. I exchanged blows with him, and in a moment of inattention, upon entering the rift which Xinmo had cut open, the rift then closed. I only had enough time to take the sword from him; when I returned again, Shizun was nowhere in sight, so I had no other option but to take my search all the way to Cangqiong Mountain.”

So these past two days, Luo Binghe had run off to *Proud Immortal Demon Way*’s original edition?

To think that the Xinmo sword’s Nexus Slash could already defy the laws of reality to this degree, even able to cut open a portal to a parallel universe.

This thing’s existence could no longer be explained away as a bug!

A gay guy from JJ-net suddenly finding himself in a Zhongdian harem with beauties for miles, the poor thing must have been scared out of his wits. Shen Qingqiu was just in the middle of feeling an irresistible rush of tender affection (.....) when he suddenly heard someone coldly saying: “Excuse me, I’m still here. Could you stop giving me the cold shoulder, please?”

The original Luo Binghe was used to always being the center of everyone’s attention; seeing these two throw themselves at each other the moment they met, pretending like he didn’t exist, and acting lovey-dovey to a nauseating extreme, he felt indescribably irritated, and silently put strength into grinding a few pieces of limestone to powder beneath his feet.

Luo Binghe blocked in front of Shen Qingqiu, his tone dark and awe-inspiring: “What were you doing just now?”

“Luo Binghe” indifferently said: “Just playing around, is all.”

Shen Qingqiu was shocked.

Playing with who?

...Playing with me?

Bing-ge you...will you refuse nobody!?

Are you the type to have no scruples over gender, who doesn't take into account whether it's meat or fish, who eats whatever gets brought to your mouth?

Or do you mean to say not a single member of the original harem got picked up here, so you've gone mad from withdrawal?

Bing-ge clicked his tongue, saying disdainfully: “Who let him be so useless, that he actually doesn't have a single woman.”

This criteria for “uselessness” was enough to throw you for a loop. But Luo Binghe's focus wasn't on this point, his indignant eyes seeming practically about to bleed as he said in a low voice: “How dare you humiliate Shizun like this...”

The other “Luo Binghe's” gaze suddenly turned red, looking him in the eye as he sneered: “He isn't the only one I want to humiliate. Just look at what a good-for-nothing you are! For you to be Luo Binghe and yet act so unsightly, spending all day hanging around as shameless and petty a man as Shen Qingqiu...”

Before he'd finished speaking, Luo Binghe exploded.

The inside of Bamboo Cottage was so filled with black qi that you could barely see your hand in front of your face, neither of them willing to back down, when suddenly a ray of white light penetrated down from above; it turned out their wildly tossing energy blasts at each other had caused the perfectly innocent wooden eaves of the ceiling to be hit with disaster, blasting open a large hole.

Luo Binghe looked up, and his face immediately grew even darker than the demonic energy he'd been shooting from his hands.

Shen Qingqiu had pretty much the same expression: *Flying fuckbuckets, what am I supposed to tell Anding Peak when they come to fix this?*

Luo Binghe was unwilling to destroy Bamboo Cottage, and so leapt out the door, shouting: "Come out!"

The one from the original work humphed: "Fine with me, I can't fight freely in this rotten little house!"

Two figures, one black, one white, disappeared in the blink of an eye. Shen Qingqiu was in the middle of considering whether Baizhan Peak's people would indiscriminately beat both Luo Binghes to death if he called them over, when Ming Fan and Ning Yingying came rushing in with a gaggle of disciples behind them. He guessed they'd probably been doing their evening reading a moment ago, and had hurried over here when they heard the strange noises, some carrying their guqins with them, others still holding books in their hands.

Shen Qingqiu immediately said: "Halt!"

All the disciples hurriedly stood to attention, and Ming Fan opened his mouth to ask: "Shizun, did something..."

Shen Qingqiu cut him off: "Form an orderly line."

The Qingjing Peak disciples immediately acted on reflex and lined up. Shen Qingqiu then said: "Go down and run laps around Qingjing Peak. You'll be running thirty laps!"

If he directly drove them away, this bunch of rugrats would definitely refuse, and would even insist on staying behind to help (make more trouble), so it would be better to make them leave before then. Receiving such an immediate command caused all the disciples to look at each other. But if Shizun wanted them to run, then they might as well start running.

The whole flock of green-clothed boys and girls ran down towards the foot of Qingjing Peak, one after another like a living train.

Upon seeing that he'd steered them away, Shen Qingqiu let out a sigh of relief, then turned around and quickly leapt into the bamboo forest in the back mountain.

The goods from the original work was able to keep complete control over the Xinmo sword, whereas the one he'd raised, due to his not-entirely-stable temperament – or possibly because he had a particularly large amount of distracting thoughts running through his head – was very susceptible to getting invaded or hit by blowback, meaning he was probably afraid to use the sword recklessly and was overly cautious as a result; it was possibly precisely because of this that he'd taken the initiative in using charms to seal Xinmo. Having a cheat weapon but being afraid to use it was like having a golden rice bowl and being unable to ask for food. What all this meant was that the sword had yet to be unsheathed, and it looked like they were just having a fistfight.

But the destructive power of this fistfight was still way too strong!

The ground had already gotten several dozen deep holes carved out of it, bamboo stalks were toppled, leaves were swirling through the air, and the startled cries of nesting birds were loud enough to reach the heavens. If things kept going like this, Qingjing Peak was going to be peeled into Bald Head Peak. Shen Qingqiu watched for a gap in the fighting, then sent Xiuya whistling at top speed towards the original Luo.

A flash of silvery light streaked past long and narrow eyes; “Luo Binghe” suddenly inclined his head, brushed the blade away with a single finger, then tilted his head as he said: “I’m clearly the same person, so why does Shizun help him but hurt me?”

Like hell you’re the same person!

The Luo Binghe he'd raised was – after Shen Qingqiu got involved in his storyline, and the system's tampering with the genre had gotten it moved under JJ-net Literature City's BL division flag – psycho maiden Luo, Bing-

mei for short, and was clearly an entirely different person from this harem protagonist overflowing with bastard energy, whose head was filled with nothing but vulgar thoughts and who had done all his leveling up with low-IQ villains and side characters!

Shen Qingqiu remained silent, shared a glance with Luo Binghe, and without any need for another spoken word, they simultaneously went on the offense against Original Luo.

Between the two Luo Binghes, the disparity in strength wasn't very large, with the majority of Original Luo's earlier wounds having been made by Luo Binghe; but add a Shen Qingqiu into the mix, and the scales gradually began to tip.

In the midst of the snow-white flashes from swords moving like weaving dragons, spiritual energy and black qi surged and intertwined, acting in flawless concert. Barely dodging a few strikes, "Luo Binghe" narrowed his eyes slightly, seemingly angered, but rather than showing any great signs of those feelings, he only pursed his lips.

He suddenly said: "What's so good about a guy with as terrible technique as him?"

Shen Qingqiu's hand shook for a second at abruptly hearing a line like that.

Endure it, keep fighting.

Unexpectedly, Bing-ge wasn't done: "You've also experienced my skill by now, Shizun. We're both the same person anyway, so why not go with me instead. I'll certainly make you happier than being with him."

Shen Qingqiu: "Shut up!"

Luo Binghe mumbled: "...Experienced?"

Shen Qingqiu: "Focus on fighting."

Luo Binghe said: "What does he mean by experienced. What does he mean, happier than being with me?"

“Luo Binghe” ambiguously said: “Or do you mean to say that Shizun actually *likes* being hurt? If that’s the case, this disciple can guarantee your satisfaction.”

In an instant, Luo Binghe’s face twisted. He placed his hand on the Xinmo sword in what was practically an unconscious movement.

Shen Qingqiu hurriedly shouted: “Don’t unsheathe it!”

This brought Luo Binghe back to his senses, and he immediately drew back his hand, but the red in his eyes was getting increasingly stronger, and his breathing began to turn ragged. He gritted his teeth and rushed forward, taking the lead in initiating close quarters combat.

Force met with force, the two men identical in strength, using identical techniques, the results of each attack just as identical. Shen Qingqiu heard a muffled cracking sound.

Between the two Luo Binghes, one had broken his left hand, the other his right arm, each hanging limply at his respective side. Even the following reaction was exactly the same: If their arms were broken they’d kick with their feet, and so, there was another two cracks—this time they’d broken their legs.

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t take any more: “Enough!”

The way they were fighting, were they planning to end it in mutual destruction!?

“Luo Binghe’s” expression suddenly softened, turning his gaze to Shen Qingqiu as he said: “Shizun, are you angry with me for hurting you last time?”

The other one said with widened eyes: “Shizun, you’ve met him before?”

If that time in the system counted as a meeting, then yes. Shen Qingqiu was unwilling to go into details, and said: “We only met once.”

Bing-ge could really make use of every inch available, saying in a hurt tone: “Last time was my fault. This disciple admits his mistake, but wasn’t Shizun perfectly happy earlier? We’re both your disciple, how could you have the heart to treat me like this?”

Acting. You’re acting. Go on with your acting. You truly deserve the title of renowned back-stabber, purveyor of honeyed words and sharp swords, the man who hides blades behind his smile, Bing-ge!

As expected, Zhongdian-style dark-type protags were treacherous to a T – this was him deliberately disturbing Luo Binghe’s mind. There was no way Shen Qingqiu could allow him to have his way, and so he boldly and confidently cursed, without the slightest hesitation: “I didn’t enjoy it in the slightest!”

The moment he said this, he felt an intense burst of weakness, numbness, and heat rise up from his lower abdomen.

Impossible to ignore, impossible to constrain, like a million ants were crawling stickily throughout his innards.

The corners of “Luo Binghe’s” mouth curled upwards, his voice cheerful yet sinister: “Are you still capable of saying one thing and meaning another?”

Heavenly demon blood.

How could he have forgotten that, as long as it was Luo Binghe, any of them could control the blood parasites within his body?

There were two Luo Binghes here, one inciting the blood parasites, the other suppressing the blood parasites, clearly at odds against each other – the result of all this being that that moment of weakness, numbness, and heat came in discontinuous bursts, rapidly spreading from his abdomen to the rest of his body, even reaching his fingertips. Shen Qingqiu gasped a few hot breaths, his vision a little blurry, the hand holding his sword beginning to turn unsteady.

As soon as Luo Binghe lost focus, the Xinmo sword was seized from where it had been hanging at his waist.

The one from the original work looked very pleased with himself, a bit of bloodthirsty excitement mixed in with his proud smile – but just as he grabbed hold of the sword’s hilt, about to remove it from its sheath, Shen Qingqiu suddenly spoke up with a chilly voice: “Don’t celebrate too soon. Look above you.”

What was above the three men’s heads at this moment was nothing but rustling green bamboo leaves, swaying along with the wind. “Luo Binghe” didn’t need to raise his head to sense the total lack of a threat above him, and gave a shallow smile: “Shizun takes me much too lightly, if you really thought you could play such a childish trick on your disciple.”

Not going to look?

Alright, you asked for it!

Shen Qingqiu formed seals with his left hand, sharply and clearly snapped his fingers, and focused his gaze.

“Luo Binghe” was just about to speak, when a flimsy leaf streaked past his face.

His smile froze.

A thin trickle of blood slowly dripped down his cheek.

All around him, bamboo leaves fell in ever-increasing numbers, the lazily drifting green leaves suddenly picking up speed, each one cold and sharp as the east wind as they blew by with him at their center.

Plucked Leaves Flying Flowers Mystic Arte, Million Leaves and Flowers!

“Luo Binghe” threw out a blast, destroying the crowded barrage of leaf blades flying toward him. The entire bamboo forest was filled with scattered leaves flying after him like they were aiming to steal his very soul, outwardly appearing gentle, but at the slightest touch proving to be

powerful enough to slice through flesh and bone; it was possible to dodge one or two of them, but countless sky-blotting hundreds rushing to envelop him was enough to make anyone flustered for a moment, to say nothing of the fact he'd broken an arm and a leg in the crude fighting from moments before, making movement difficult. Shen Qingqiu was just about to throw himself into the fray when a shadow pushed in front of him, sending its one intact palm straight into "Luo Binghe's" solar plexus.

Upon seeing that extremely familiar face show a look of disbelief, for an instant, Shen Qingqiu actually felt his heart soften a little.

"Luo Binghe" took a few steps back, his throat moving as if he'd swallowed a mouthful of blood, then sneered: "You really have a deep connection, huh? Not bad."

Although it was a taunt, his one intact hand was already curled into a tight fist, the veins on the back of his hand appearing and fading with the motion.

After reaching adulthood, there had never been anyone able to push him into a plight like this.

Finding himself at such a disadvantage made him remember those bygone days when he'd suffered humiliation at the hands of others, trampled over in every possible way.

The hot tea poured over his head, the woodshed open to the wind on all sides, the unrestrained beatings and verbal abuse, the kneeling in the scorching heat of afternoon all the way to the middle of the night, the lack of enough food to fill his stomach.

Those days were connected in a thousand different ways to the face currently before him.

But now, the owner of that face was standing by the side of that man who looked identical to him, supporting that broken arm, afraid to touch yet equally afraid to let go, as if he were able to feel that pain first-hand, and frowning as he said: "Why must you insist on fighting him head-on? It's

clearly broken and yet you keep fighting. I don't want to see you acting this recklessly a second time."

Although it sounded like a reprimand, that tone of voice was angry, worried, and distressed.

Even a fool could tell.

A cold wind passed through the forest, rustling the foliage, causing bamboo leaves to float slowly down.

He couldn't take this.

It wasn't fair.

The image of those two standing together was unexpectedly dazzling, making his eyes hurt just looking at them, a painful heat pricking at the edge of the sockets.

They were undoubtedly both "Luo Binghe", so why, why was it that the other one had met this kind of Shen Qingqiu, whereas the one he himself met was a narrow-minded and shameless scoundrel, to whom jealousy had become second nature?

Why!

The carefully preserved clothes and other items, the clean and tidy side room, the soft chatter, a thousand kinds of pitiful, a million kinds of yielding.

He undoubtedly held only thoughts of disgrace, clearly disdained this couple's sickening relationship as being beneath contempt.

However, his saying "Come with me" at this moment, was something he was unable to restrain himself from blurting towards Shen Qingqiu.

Upon hearing these three words, Luo Binghe sneered: "What did you say? Hm?"

He cracked his knuckles; by the looks of it, it seemed he'd actually incited the urge to kill.

Shen Qingqiu approved of him using a finishing move, three cheers for the finisher, but...allowing Luo Binghe to kill “Luo Binghe”, what kind of situation was this supposed to be?

Let him do the honors? That was even more impossible. Besides, who knew whether or not the “protag’s golden body is unbreakable” rule would apply to the original work’s Bing-ge as well?

Shen Qingqiu pressed two fingers on his shoulder, reminding him not to be too hasty just yet. But just when he was giving himself a headache over how to deal with this, “Luo Binghe” made the first move.

He clapped his hand on the Xinmo sword, causing the seals to break open, black qi and violet light surging outwards, and as the two stood completely on guard, he used his Nexus Slash, cut open a rift in space, and leapt into it.

He chewed ferociously at his lip as he turned to look back at them.

He couldn't accept this.

The rift disappeared along with that figure.

So he'd left...just like that?

Bing-ge...was that easy to get rid of!?

Shen Qingqiu stared blankly for a while before remembering to react: “When we get back you are immediately destroying the remaining pieces of the Xinmo sword. This thing must not be preserved.”

It was way too buggy an object. If they kept holding onto it, who knew what sort of crazy happenings might unfold.

Luo Binghe quietly nodded; although he shouldn't need anyone to support him, Shen Qingqiu still continued lending half his body for him to lean on.

The two hadn't walked far when Luo Binghe dejectedly asked: "Shizun, is my technique, really that bad?"

...Honestly speaking, it was terrible.

Seriously terrible. Not just his kissing, but touching, stripping, rolling, they were all too terrible to pass muster.

As for sticking it in, while he didn't have anything else to compare it with, keeping in line with everything else, it was probably also...a failing grade.

Shen Qingqiu obviously wouldn't say this out loud, handwaving it all with a: "Not really."

The look of dejection on Luo Binghe's face grew stronger than before.

Shen Qingqiu comforted him: "You don't have any experience, after all."

Bing-ge's skill was the result of hard training, through hundreds of nightly battles with great numbers of women!

Luo Binghe lowered his head. By the looks of it, it seemed he was contemplating the best spot to crouch down and plant mushrooms in again. Shen Qingqiu was weakest to seeing him like this, and coaxed: "This teacher will treat your hand and leg, and afterwards we can...do some exploring together. How about that?"

Luo Binghe suddenly raised his head: "Really!?"

Shen Qingqiu had totally expected this reaction, calmly patting his head: "Treatment first."

Luo Binghe nodded, then with a couple cracks, reconnected his hand and leg.

He quickly stood up, using his perfectly intact hands to take hold of both of Shen Qingqiu's arms, a halo of red flushing his cheeks, his eyes shining bright: "They're healed! Shizun, r...ready to explore together?"

On the top of Bamboo Cottage, there was a hole.

Wind was currently whooshing right through it.

Shen Qingqiu lay on his back, looking up at the sky. Luo Binghe was pressing down above his body, like a dog, kissing and licking downwards from his neck.

He stared at the big hole above him, which had been blasted open by who-knows-which Luo Binghe during the earlier battle, was truly unable to continue pretending he didn't see it, and spoke up: "...Why don't we do this somewhere else."

Luo Binghe lifted his head, and stubbornly said: "I don't want to."

Even going down the mountain and renting a room or something would be better than doing it here!

Before Shen Qingqiu could open his mouth, Luo Binghe spoke again: "We're not changing. It has to be here. In Bamboo Cottage."

These words were spoken extremely firmly. Probably, from his point of view, Bamboo Cottage really was a very special place.

Shen Qingqiu admitted defeat, and conscientiously removed his clothes. He could consider himself as having some experience by this point. If he waited for Luo Binghe to do it for him, once he was done stripping those clothes would no longer be wearable, so he was better off peeling himself clean on his own.

There was a moment of rustling, outer robe, underclothes, belt, each piece falling one by one to the floor, in intersecting colors of green and black.

As he "bared" himself before him, a chilly wind blew past; Shen Qingqiu felt both kind of cold, and kind of embarrassed. But Luo Binghe didn't have this sort of feeling in the slightest.

He kneeled between Shen Qingqiu's legs, his Adam's apple bobbing, the look on his face nervous to an extreme.

Last time back at Maigu Ridge, although he couldn't remember it very clearly, just seeing the miserably bloody aftermath was enough to know how badly he'd done. That, combined with the ruthless blow he'd just taken, meant that he had a mind to perform well, but didn't know how to go about it. Shen Qingqiu felt bad watching him hesitate, let out a sigh, and reached out of his own volition to loosen the waistband of his pants.

Upon seeing a blush spread vigorously across Luo Binghe's fair-skinned face, he couldn't resist lifting a hand to scratch Luo Binghe's chin, thinking this child really was a little cute when doing this sort of thing.

But when he'd finished untying his belt and slid his gaze downwards, seeing the thing already raising its head down there, any thoughts of cuteness were immediately tossed unimaginably far away.

.....

Frick. This size!

Shen Qingqiu decisively said: "Out of the question!"

Luo Binghe was thunderstruck: "Shizun, you promised..."

What he meant by "out of the question" was, he couldn't go for it straightaway like this, it'd be fatal!

How in the world had he survived last time, he could barely believe he'd had a thing like this stuck inside his body and actually hadn't died. He hadn't died!

Shen Qingqiu struggled with his thoughts for a moment, then said: "This teacher...how about I use my hand to help you deal with it first."

He could at least rub it down a bit for him first!

Shen Qingqiu's maiden fingers had never serviced anyone else before, this was his unprecedented first time. He poked at the tip of that reddish-purple, veiny, overly-exaggerated shaft, steeled himself, and grabbed hold.

Luo Binghe cried out “it hurts”, the gaze he turned to him looking a little put-upon.

Shen Qingqiu unceasingly continued his self-hypnosis, grasping it in a grip that was neither loose nor tight, and began to slowly stroke.

The more he stroked the more fearful he became.

No matter whether you picked thickness, hardness, or temperature to discuss, this just wasn’t an organ any living creature should have, was it?

It wouldn’t be wrong to call it a weapon, would it!?

Aside from Shen Qingqiu not having a good handle on his strength at the beginning, and making it hurt a little when he grabbed it, Luo Binghe clearly and rapidly got into the mood from this fondling, staring at Shen Qingqiu with slightly narrowed eyes, rippling with watery light, his breathing turning slightly uneven.

Shen Qingqiu stayed expressionless, but he was working his absolute hardest with his actions. The more he stroked the more sore his hand became, but the damned thing, aside from its umbrella-shaped head secreting a tiny bit of thick white liquid, basically showed no intention of releasing. It refused to go down, refused to come, instead getting even more swollen and hard. No matter how calm and composed Shen Qingqiu may have been, it was impossible to prevent the expression on his face from contorting.

Luo Binghe had been secretly taking note of his expression the entire time, and at this moment, suddenly said in a cautious tone: “Shizun, how about... you do it?”

Huh? Shen Qingqiu had the suspicion he’d misheard.

Luo Binghe was willing to let him be on top?

Luo Binghe said: “I’m afraid I’d cause Shizun pain, so it would be better if Shizun did it instead.”

He spoke earnestly, his expression sincere, and immediately lay down, only for Shen Qingqiu to hurriedly say: “No. It’s better if you do it.”

Letting him do it—he didn’t have this kind of experience either though? If in a moment of carelessness he caused Luo Binghe to end up bleeding all over the place, even knowing that Luo Binghe would still be in high spirits, he personally wouldn’t be able to sleep at night!

Besides, there’d be other opportunities after this to get another turn at topping, so there was no harm in coaxing him a little more, and letting him get a taste of sweetness.

In short, his giving up the right to lead absolutely wasn't because he'd been a little moved by that offer.



As if in encouragement, Shen Qingqiu patted his head, turned himself around, and laid his upper body atop the pillow.

He propped his elbows on the bed, shoulder blades raised high, the line of his back drooping into a soul-stirring soft arc, his buttocks practically placed right in front of Luo Binghe.

Shen Qingqiu's face had just turned feverish with embarrassment, when suddenly Luo Binghe took hold of his waist, and flipped him back over again.

He helplessly said: "What's the matter *this* time?"

Luo Binghe said: "Shizun, I want the front..."

You want to do me from the front!?

Shen Qingqiu was exasperated: "Don't gain an inch and ask for a foot." He then lay back on his stomach again, muttering inwardly.

This kid is really way too fussy. Being willing to let him do me is already pretty good!

Unexpectedly, Luo Binghe flipped him back over again, just as if he were flipping a pancake, and said with a sullen and miserable look: "Shizun, are you really that unwilling...to look at my face?"

His forehead was beaded with sweat from trying to hold back, the tip of his nose had turned slightly red, and tears practically spinning in his eyes.

Shen Qingqiu didn't have the slightest doubt that if he rejected him, Luo Binghe could start bawling on the spot!

Imagining a scene like that, Shen Qingqiu felt frustrated at the same time that he felt his heart soften, unable to restrain himself from saying: "That's not it."

Luo Binghe was on the verge of tears as he made his inconsolably broken-hearted accusation: "Then why do you keep trying to turn your back to me?"

You're seriously overthinking it...where the heck do you keep coming up with all these little ideas and moody fits!

...Forget it! If he was giving up his self-respect then so be it, as long as it kept Luo Binghe from these wild flights of imagination. Shen Qingqiu

carelessly said: “Alright alright, from the front then. Put away those tears, that’s no way for a grown man to act.”

The facts proved that Luo Binghe’s crocodile tears were of little actual worth; with an “oh”, they were gone as quickly as they came, and he brazenly pressed his head closer as his hands moved to feel Shen Qingqiu’s skin.

Shen Qingqiu had a slim waist, and his long, smooth legs were straight and slender. Because they were positioned facing each other, he had no choice but to bend them to accommodate; moving one’s gaze downwards, the view between his legs was fully visible to the eye, with a hidden ravine placed between a pair of perfectly round buttocks.

Luo Binghe’s hands trembled slightly as they stroked their way down the inside of those exquisitely smooth thighs. Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help pulling back. As if afraid he’d go back on his promise, Luo Binghe pressed down on one of his thighs, and with the other hand sent a finger inside.

It seemed his finger had already been liberally coated in grease, giving it a creamy feel that made entry no problem at all, and was quickly enveloped in the inviting heat of those soft inner walls.

The feeling of a finger nimbly pressing and bending around in the tight inner passage of his body was incredibly strange; Shen Qingqiu felt a shivering sensation shoot up from his tailbone and a numbness at his scalp, and could no longer be bothered to wonder where Luo Binghe had gotten such a full arsenal of preparational tools.

Luo Binghe held his breath, concentrating his attention completely; when he sent in the third finger, Shen Qingqiu felt a slight tearing sensation, gasped, put a hand on his forearm, and said through clenched teeth: “... Slow down.”

As if he were a toddler learning to take its first unsteady steps, Luo Binghe really did slow down, following Shen Qingqiu’s instructions in taking it one step at a time, pressing and kneading in a probing sort of manner. Upon his making contact with a certain tender patch of those flesh walls, Shen

Qingqiu shivered, felt that it wasn't all that uncomfortable, and endured his shame in saying: "...Mm, there...is good..."

Why did he have to personally teach someone else how to do him?

Acting as master even to this level, Shen Qingqiu really wanted to light an entire Cangqiong Mountain's worth of candles for himself.

Luo Binghe observed Shen Qingqiu's face as he very carefully expanded him. The emerging scarlet color around the outer edges of his eyes, the forcefully pursed lips to keep himself from leaking out any sound, the repeated wrinkling and relaxing of his brows, not a single subtle change was able to escape Luo Binghe's eyes. This feeling of being entirely unable to hide caused Shen Qingqiu to feel increasingly, unbearably ashamed, and in his embarrassment felt the urge to turn his head away. Suddenly, he caught sight of something peculiar out of the corner of his eye.

There was a sinister-looking wound going horizontally across Luo Binghe's chest, close to his heart.

That was from the sword he'd stabbed into Luo Binghe's chest, back when he pushed him down into the Endless Abyss.

He'd really never had any intention of purposely hurting Luo Binghe, and yet the honest truth was that he'd allowed him to get hurt time and again.

Shen Qingqiu's vision blurred for a moment, and without thinking he reached a hand out to touch that scar. In that same instant, Luo Binghe completed the preliminary stages of preparation work.

The moment those fingers were pulled out, the hole immediately closed up tight, and Luo Binghe's scalding hot chest pressed up against him.

A hot, thick, umbrella-shaped head pushed against the soft and moist entrance; Shen Qingqiu closed his arms tight around Luo Binghe's neck, sucking in a deep breath like he was preparing to face his death, as he felt his body gradually getting split open by that thing.

It still hurt. The entrance was too small, and was painfully stretched.

Even if they had that grease from who-knows-where as lubricant, the invading object's diameter was just too large. As the pain from his lower body intensified, Shen Qingqiu involuntarily hugged Luo Binghe ever-more-tightly, legs unconsciously rubbing up against his waist. When Luo Binghe spoke, the sound caused his eardrums to buzz.

“Shizun...is this alright?”

Luo Binghe's voice was filled with a sense of restraint – it was clear that he was putting all the effort he had into not rushing it all in at once.

Shen Qingqiu untruthfully said: “...It's fine.”

Having received his approval, Luo Binghe slightly tightened his grip on his waist, and began sticking it in more vigorously than before.

With his intestines stuffed full, hole pushed into a tightly-stretched circle, his lower body felt as if it were no longer a part of himself. Luo Binghe pulled out a tiny bit, then thrust in a good half; this continued pace, with its unending squelching noises, tormented Shen Qingqiu so that he was simultaneously itching and in pain, wanting nothing more than to smash his head against a wall, and before he noticed, tears were streaming down his face. It was just at this moment that Luo Binghe turned his head, preparing to give him a kiss; upon suddenly seeing Shen Qingqiu looking as if he were in so much pain he'd lost the will to live, he was struck dumb for quite a while, having received a great mental shock, and tears began to spill out of his eyes as well.

Teardrops dripped onto Shen Qingqiu's cheeks, splattering away any words he could possibly say.

What're you crying for!?

Luo Binghe said in a trembling voice: “I'm sorry...I still ended up hurting Shizun...”

“.....”

Luo Binghe said: “It’s because this disciple is too stupid...”

Two people sobbing at each other, what the heck kind of situation was this supposed to be!

Enduring the discomfort in his lower body, Shen Qingqiu kissed his cheeks and eyes, kissing away his tears, and said: “It’s fine. It doesn’t hurt that much anyway. Anyone can have things they’re not good at. Keep going.”

Luo Binghe dejectedly said: “Maybe I should just pull out instead.”

Fuck! This wasn’t funny, if they really left the matter unsettled like that, they’d both end up with mental trauma from here on out, what if they ended up with ED!?

It was better to get the pain over with rather than prolonging the agony, and with things having reached this point, they should at least let *one* person get pleasure out of it, right!?

Shen Qingqiu made up his mind, suddenly flipping himself into a sitting position and pressing Luo Binghe down beneath him.

Having used all the day’s stored energy at once in this moment, Shen Qingqiu no longer had the strength to support his legs, his bottom sitting heavily down, and taking Luo Binghe’s thing as deep as it could. The tip felt as if it had pushed up right against his stomach, causing a sudden short-lived urge to dry-heave, which he swallowed back down.

Last time Luo Binghe didn’t come, so it probably didn’t count as completely losing his virginity – this time he was at least going to help make sure that virginity got lost!

With that thought, he propped himself up against Luo Binghe’s abdomen, managing with great difficulty to sit up a bit; suddenly the head of the thick, hard mushroom he was holding inside him rubbed up against a certain spot, and an abrupt shock of pleasure swept over him, exploding in his

underbelly and spreading throughout his body. Taken by surprise, Shen Qingqiu's lower back softened, and he leaned forward into a sprawl. Luo Binghe just happened to sit up at this moment, and caught him fully in his arms.

Luo Binghe was very sharp, and questioned: "Shizun, does it not hurt when I touch there?"

Not only did it not hurt, it actually felt a little...good!

Shen Qingqiu's current position was sitting on Luo Binghe with his legs spread wide, the two of them facing each other, lower bodies embedded close together.

In order to keep his balance, Shen Qingqiu had no choice but to reach out with weak and aching arms to embrace his neck. Luo Binghe's every slight movement was able to affect their inseparably connected lower bodies, forcing out a nasally groan that held a different flavor from any previous noises Shen Qingqiu had made. Luo Binghe pulled himself together, took those plump buttocks in his hands, lifted a bit, then aimed directly for that spot from before as he brought him down again.

This time Shen Qingqiu was no longer able to keep his mouth shut, and he let out a whine; his legs no longer obeyed him, trembling as they clamped tight around Luo Binghe. His buttock squeezed deathly hard as well. Having got the knack of doing this, Luo Binghe began to officially go on the offensive.

The movements weren't methodical in the slightest, knowing only to blindly and violently hump, but it was exactly this that could push a person to drop all their defenses. Shen Qingqiu had no idea whether he was suffering or happy, his indistinct moans and disheveled breathing turned disjointed with each push, sticky wet sounds and intense slapping noises transmitting from below. Milky white liquid seeped out from his prick, gradually flowing in increasingly greater quantities, leaving a dripping downwards trail. The longer the thrusting went on, the more difficult it became to relieve the tingling heat within him.

Suddenly, the jumbled sound of scattered footsteps floated in from outside Bamboo Cottage.

“I’m exhausted...”

“Shixiong, wait for us...we...we can’t run anymore...”

If one were to say that a moment ago Shen Qingqiu had been entirely absorbed in dizzying lust, this time his soul had flown right out of his body.

It was the Qingjing Peak disciples he’d sent off to run laps before!

Shen Qingqiu immediately pushed against Luo Binghe’s arms in an attempt to get up off of him. Unexpectedly, Luo Binghe clamped down on his waist, ruthlessly pressing downwards.

This sudden thrust went in too deep, stretched him too wide, the stimulation excessively intense; as soon as Shen Qingqiu opened his mouth, Luo Binghe immediately covered it with his own, muffling his whines and leaving him with no recourse but to swallow his choking sobs, closing his eyes against a continuous stream of tears.

There was no way Luo Binghe would so easily let him go now that he’d tasted success; his lips and teeth were tender and loving in their touches, while his lower half energetically pounded away. Outside they could hear Ming Fan saying: “Huh, is it just me or is Bamboo Cottage missing something? Is that a hole?”

“You’re right, shixiong, it really does look like there’s a hole there.”

“When did that happen? Someone should probably run over to tell Anding peak right now, so they can come repair it as soon as possible.”

Fearful that they might actually come in, or call someone else to enter, Shen Qingqiu dug his fingers hard into Luo Binghe’s back, his buttohole contracting and making it increasingly difficult to pull in and out.

Ning Yingying seemed to stomp her foot, temper flaring: “What are you talking about repairs for? We’re all practically dying of exhaustion, if

anything needs repairs it can wait until tomorrow!”

The disciples all hurriedly replied: “Alright alright. We’ll listen to shimei.”

“If shimei says we’ll repair it tomorrow then we’ll repair it tomorrow.”

Ning Yingying spoke up again: “Besides, Shizun doesn’t like outsiders entering or cleaning even A-Luo’s side room on their own, he definitely wouldn’t be happy if we touched anything without permission, you should know this by now!”

At that, Luo Binghe’s gaze flickered, and he suddenly pushed Shen Qingqiu down onto the bed.

The group of disciples prattled on as they walked away in the direction of the cafeteria, and Luo Binghe finally stopped pressing against Shen Qingqiu’s lips, moving instead to his chest, biting at his nipples while thrusting more ferociously than before. Shen Qingqiu didn’t even need to look; he could clearly feel how the soft flesh of his inner walls had been repeatedly turned in and out again, cold one moment, painfully hot the next. After being pierced for so long, his intestines had already grown used to the size of Luo Binghe’s penis, and now conformed perfectly to its in-and-out movements.

Luo Binghe murmured: “Shizun.”

Shen Qingqiu couldn’t stop himself from saying: “Stop...calling me that!”

Following teacher-disciple terms of address in deadly earnest at a time like this increased the level of embarrassment by a hundred-fold, making it impossible for Shen Qingqiu to keep holding onto the last shreds of his dignity.

But Luo Binghe suddenly spoke softly in his ear: “Shizun, I couldn’t find you there.”

The shaking timbre of his voice caused Shen Qingqiu’s mind to clear somewhat.

Luo Binghe said: “The ‘me’ over there, had many people by his side, but he didn’t have you. Shizun, I searched a long time, but I was never able to find you.”

“Maybe it’s because you weren’t there, that ‘I’ became that way.”

He continued: “I...I don’t want to become that way.”

Shen Qingqiu sucked in a deep breath, hugged Luo Binghe’s head to his chest, patted him, and said: “Don’t worry, you won’t become the way he did.”

“Shizun will never abandon you again.”

Demons could last a very long time. Shen Qingqiu knew this.

The protagonist could last a very long time. Shen Qingqiu knew this as well.

But exactly how long a demon bloodline + protagonist setting could go, Shen Qingqiu clearly hadn’t been mentally prepared to find out.

By the time Luo Binghe finally came, Shen Qingqiu had already gone into a daze, and was woken up when the boiling hot liquid poured into his belly.

By this time he no longer cared to worry whether or not he’d used protection or come inside. He just wanted to sleep!

His inner walls were swollen, even the smallest amount of friction eliciting burning pain. Luo Binghe reluctantly pulled out, doing his utmost to help him alleviate his own desire.

A couple faps in, and Shen Qingqiu was still of the same opinion: He just wanted to sleep!

Luo Binghe said: “Shizun...”

Shen Qingqiu knew what he wanted to say, and ruthlessly said: “Lacking.”

Luo Binghe wasn't dismayed by his criticism this time; on the contrary, he very cheerfully conceded: "I was lacking. Much too lacking."

"...What are you doing."

"It's exactly because I did so badly, that I hope Shizun can accompany his disciple in exploring some more..."

"....."

A Record of Fighting Succubi With The Great Liu

This story takes place during the time period when Teacher Shen kicked Luo Binghe into the Endless Abyss to level grind.

Shen Qingqiu said: “I still think it would be better if you didn’t follow along. Really.”

Liu Qingge kept walking ahead, acting as if he hadn’t heard.

Striding forward with head held high, showing disdain for all before him, Chengluan’s sword tassel swinging behind him, it was as if he were walking not through a mountain path full of crisscrossed flowering branches and tangled hanging vines, but across Baizhan Peak’s training grounds beneath the scorching sun.

Shen Qingqiu gave his heartfelt admonishment: “Shidi, don’t force yourself.”

Liu Qingge cut him off: “Are you going back or not?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “I’ll return as soon as I beat this quest...I mean, finish dealing with the succubi here.”

Liu Qingge: “You said the same thing last time, too.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Mmhm.”

Liu Qingge: “And then we didn’t see hide nor hair of you for a month!”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Your shixiong isn’t going to die out in the wild. When haven’t I returned to Cangqiong Mountain to find you all when Without a Cure was about to act up? There’s no need to trouble Shidi with specially chasing after me...”

Liu Qingge stressed his next words: “I didn’t chase. It was Zhangmen shixiong’s orders.”

Yes, right, of course. Shen Qingqiu said with a grief-laden voice: “Zhangmen shixiong, truly is a good man...”

He paused, then continued: “The truth is your shixiong is saying this for your sake. There are rumors going around the city below the mountain, saying that the succubi love handsome, vigorous young men most of all; if Liu-shidi insists on coming along, I’m afraid you may fall under the covetous gazes of those evil creatures.”

Liu Qingge let out a loud humph, and was just about to reply, when suddenly the sound of a graceful and enchanting singing voice came echoing leisurely from the valley.

This singing voice was deeply alluring, full of hidden meaning and seductive intent, winding its way in gently, like feathers tickling your heart.

The two turned the corner, and arrived at the entrance to a cave.

Suddenly, seven or eight little girls popped out from amidst the flowers and plants surrounding them, each of them lively and bright-eyed, their hair combed into double buns; they looked young and immature, and were in fact exactly that, not even knowing to restrain the demonic qi on their bodies as they shouted in crisp, clear voices: “Who goes there?”

Upon finding loli blocking his path, Shen Qingqiu said in an amiable manner: “Is this...”

Before he could finish his greeting, Liu Qingge reached a hand behind his back and pulled Chengluan two inches out of its sheath, sending sword qi sweeping across the area. Just this one move was enough to partially collapse the cave entrance, the seven or eight little girls immediately shrinking back into the greenery with screeches and shrieks.

Succubi, because of their racial advantage and charming looks, rarely ever came across an occasion in their lives in which they’d be treated as roughly

as this; add to that the fact that these were young ones who had yet to see the world, and they burst into tears on the spot.

The sound of little girls sobbing and crying surrounded them on every side. Shen Qingqiu rubbed at his ears, saying: “Shidi, you really need to learn to be more caring toward the fairer sex.”

Liu Qingge impatiently replied: “There’s no point pitying demons and ghosts. If we’re fighting then let’s hurry up, finish beating them down and head home!” His answer was curt and succinct, spoken in a strong and resounding voice, the words flowing like poetry, awe-inspiring in their righteousness!

Suddenly, someone spoke from within the cave: “You two lord immortals are really quite boorish – what could these little girls of mine have done to offend you, that you would scare them into this state?”

With these soft words, a slim and graceful woman came sashaying out, dressed all in dark green. A ray of sunlight illuminated the cave mouth, letting them see that her skin was soft and white, her figure was flirtatiously pretty, and her every movement possessed an enrapturing seductiveness to it.

The little succubi who’d been frightened to tears by Liu Qingge all wailed accusingly: “Madam Meiyin, this cultivator is really scary! He’s bullying us!”

This Madam Meiyin was a succubus, and an outstanding beauty at that – therefore, according to this harem novel’s amazingly coy nature, she must necessarily have an affair with Luo Binghe.

Under normal circumstances, Shen Qingqiu was very conscientious in regards to those women Luo Binghe had touched before, not getting anywhere near them, let alone actively trying to bother them. There were two reasons why he’d forced himself to butt in this time:

The first, was because the old couple at the foot of the mountain whose only son had been bewitched away had cried much too miserably;

The second, was because Madam Meiyin was licentious by nature, and had countless husbands and lovers outside of Luo Binghe! She may have been dallying with Luo Binghe, but after the deed was done then that was it, nothing more than a casual romance, and she hadn't been added to the harem. What the readers got to enjoy was that kind of pleasure one gets from simultaneously NTRing a whole bunch of people.

So strictly speaking, Madam Meiyin didn't count as Luo Binghe's wife!

Liu Qingge clearly had no plans to converse with the opposite sex; he didn't show the slightest bit of remorse for collapsing their cave door, and turned his head away. Shen Qingqiu said: "Ahem, my shidi...isn't used to outsiders getting near him."

Madam Meiyin turned an ominous look towards Shen Qingqiu: "The girls under this lowly one's wing are still young and irresponsible, and so milord immortals have my apologies for their provoking you. But this area was only just built, and you two cultivators collapsed it into this state the moment you deigned to honor us with your presence."

Don't look at me, go look at the guy next to me. He's the one who collapsed it!

That's the doing of Cangqiong Mountain Sect Demolition. If you wanna learn demolition, go to Baizhan Peak!

Shen Qingqiu had always held to the standard of diplomacy before violence, and waved his fan as he courteously said: "It was not our original intention to destroy Madam's cave dwelling. It is just that we received a request from the Huang family below the mountain, and hope that Madam would be able to release young master Huang back to his home."

Madam Meiyin said: "Oh? Young master Huang? This lowly one has met – if not ten, then at least eight young men here by the name of Huang; may I ask which young master Huang milord immortal is referring to?"

Liu Qingge smiled sarcastically: "Just let them all out and there won't be a problem!"

Madam Meiyin feigned embarrassment, saying: "It isn't that this lowly one won't let him go, but if he himself insists on staying, and refuses to go home, I'm afraid there won't be anything I can do."

Liu Qingge tsked out loud.

Shen Qingqiu also had no interest in continuing this game of back and forth, saying: "At any rate, I do ask that Madam please bring him out. We have our own arrangements in regards to the rest."

Madam Meiyin replied in a soft voice: "In that case, I invite milords to please follow this lowly one into her home."

She turned around and walked into the cave, swaying her hips as she went; Shen Qingqiu waited a few steps before following behind, lowering his voice enough that only the two of them could hear: "She doesn't plan to hand him over, neither does she plan to let us escape."

Liu Qingge said: "I'm not afraid of her."

Different situations called for different measures. Rather than immediately shedding all pretense of cordiality, it was better to take each step as it came, changing plans according to the situation.

The two men followed her lead, walking into a spacious cavern filled with aromatic herbs and brocade silks. Twelve seductively well-rounded maids were divided equally at either end of the cave, carrying circular fans in their hands, talking and laughing quietly.

Madam Meiyin invited them to seat themselves at a stone table, saying: "I've already sent a servant girl to bring out young master Huang; would these two lord cultivators be willing to share a drink with this lowly one while we wait?"

Shen Qingqiu knew she only had so many tricks she could play, and wasn't afraid in the slightest, so he smiled as he replied: "If you would be so kind."

Madam Meiyin solicitously poured wine for the both of them, affectionate and loving as she offered them each a cup, her gaze constantly flitting towards the bitterly frowning Liu Qingge. The more her gaze flitted, the more blatantly provoking it became; Liu Qingge simply rolled his eyes and treated her as if she were dead, whereas Shen Qingqiu was secretly overjoyed at the scene.

Madam Meiyin had always held a preference for prettyboys like Luo Binghe and Liu Qingge! Now that Liu Qingge had caught her eye, would he be able to escape her evil clutches?

Now that she'd seen such a delicate-featured man with such beautifully snow-white skin, she was willing to use every trick up her sleeve, do anything it took to attach herself to him, determined to push him down and pleasure her fill (.....) before she'd consider letting go.

The look on Liu Qingge's face was sure to be incredibly marvelous not long from now. Oh no what to do he was actually kind of looking forward to this, please forgive him for this sin.

Sure enough, they'd only sat a short while when Madam Meiyin covered her mouth with a sleeve, casting a shy glance at Liu Qingge as she asked: "May I ask if this lord immortal has a dual cultivating partner?"

How straightforward.

Never before had any other human or demon dared ask Liu Qingge such a question. As if muffled thunder had suddenly come crashing right over his head, for a moment he seemed to suspect he'd misheard, eyebrows and mouth even twitching at the corners, his gaze clearly at a loss as he subconsciously turned to look at Shen Qingqiu.

This was the first time Shen Qingqiu had seen such a near-unimaginable expression appear on Liu Qingge's face, like witnessing the the day of a millennium-old iceberg's collapse; inwardly he was wildly laughing up a storm, but his face still showed not a ripple of surprise, enduring so hard that his fan-waving hand was shaking with the effort, barely managing to

cover the upwards-jerking corners of his mouth as he said in a deadpan voice: "...None. He has none."

Madam Meiyin was puzzled by this: "Why would he have none? With such an elegant appearance and bearing, how could there not be any female cultivators enamored with him? This lowly one simply cannot believe your words."

Shen Qingqiu expressed agreement: "Mm. I am quite curious as well."

Otherwise why do you think number one on the list of Cangqiong Mountain's Ten Mysteries was "Is the Great Liu frigid or not"?

Liu Qingge unhappily sucked in a breath, then said in an icy cold voice: "Why isn't he here yet."

Madam Meiyin said: "Please be patient, milord. It could be that young master Huang is unwilling to come. If you are unhappy, perhaps you could allow this one to do a small performance, to relieve you two of your boredom?"

Shen Qingqiu cheerfully assented. She then continued: "This one cannot do much else, but my little romantic fortunes have always been reasonably accurate. Which lord cultivator is willing to let me tell their fortune?"

Shen Qingqiu inclined his head: "Shidi, have you any interest?"

Liu Qingge very stiffly said: "None at all!"

Shen Qingqiu spread out his hands: "He has no interest, so I suppose it will have to be me."

According to the original setting, Madam Meiyin's fortunes in regards to affairs and marriages and the like were 10/10 in accuracy.

If she said Luo Binghe would have 613 wives, then he absolutely wouldn't end up with 612. If she said Luo Binghe's next girl liked to do it in the cow (beeeep) girl position, then there'd be no way she was good at doggy (beeeep) style!

How could Shen Qingqiu, a damn bachelor with an unpredictable future, *not* feel unbearably tempted to know?

Madam Meiyin smiled sweetly, pulled up a beautiful flower bud with the flick of a pale white wrist, and held it out before Shen Qingqiu: “Please grant it your breath, milord.”

Shen Qingqiu knew the process for this, lowering his head ever-so-slightly and blowing a light breath on the flower bud.

When Madam Meiyin pulled back her hand, what had barely a moment ago been just a flower bud, was already gradually blooming into a full flower. She grasped the stem in her fingers, lifted it up to her eyes with a smile teasing at the corners of her mouth, took a glance at the center of the petals, and suddenly froze.

Liu Qingge had originally been sitting still and upright, but at this moment his body leaned over slightly, as if he wanted to hear. Shen Qingqiu used his fan to push against his shoulder, reminding him: “Shidi, you ‘have no interest’, remember.”

Liu Qingge immediately sat up straight again.

Madam Meiyin looked for a while, her expression growing graver by the moment.

She said in a vexed tone of voice: “Lord cultivator, for this past red string of yours, my skills are lacking, as I...can’t quite get an accurate view. At first glance, it appears to show a life of solitude, but upon closer inspection, there seems to be another faintly-discernible red string.”

She sighed regretfully: “The way this red string is broken...it’s truly an incredible pity.”

Shen Jiu was a man who’d had a fiancée, but Shen Yuan was an unmarried bachelor. With the two strings tangled together, being unable to get a clear picture was perfectly normal. Shen Qingqiu expressed understanding:

“There’s no need to pay attention to the events of the past. Perhaps Madam could look at the future instead.”

He really did want to know whether or not he’d be able to get a girl on this side. It didn’t have to be a supreme beauty, he’d be happy as long as she wasn’t a hermaphrodite!

But to his surprise, the look on Madam Meiyin’s face grew even stranger than before, as if she couldn’t bring herself to speak.

This expression made Shen Qingqiu’s heart skip a beat.

Could it be that the result was—he was doomed to be forever alone!?

Eventually, Madam Meiyin finally opened her mouth.

She hemmed and hawed as she spoke: “Uh...your significant other, is younger than you. Their position, or perhaps I should say level of seniority...is also inferior to yours.”

Of those women who were both older and higher in position than him, up until now the only ones Shen Qingqiu had seen were a few nuns from Tianyi Monastery, which really didn’t suit his tastes. He guessed that even if he were to look across all the cultivation world there probably weren’t very many, so these two points Madam Meiyin had given were perfectly reasonable – reasonable to the point they were basically rubbish.

Madam Meiyin continued: “Your first meeting was far from a pleasant one, and may even have inspired hatred between you. But because of a certain incredibly important turning point, your relationship began to change completely.”

This line seemed kind of probable, and Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help a rising interest in her words. Liu Qingge had unconsciously moved closer again, but this time Shen Qingqiu couldn’t be bothered to tease him, focused on listening to her explanation.

Madam Meiyin's elegant brows knitted together as she spoke again: "This person often accompanies you by your side. You've even saved each other's lives in the past."

At this, Shen Qingqiu was confused again.

Why did he get the feeling there wasn't a single girl in his vicinity that fit these requirements?

Ning Yingying? Liu Mingyan?

No need to think about it, Luo Binghe's harem, cross that out!

Qi Qingqi?

Indeed, she was very slightly beneath him in seniority, and their first meeting...how exactly their first meeting had gone, he'd forgotten a long time ago. "Often accompanies you by your side", this one didn't really fit all that well – actually Shen Qingqiu was the one who wanted to go to Xianmei Peak to "often accompany by their sides", but while he had evil intentions he didn't have the guts to match, and couldn't bring himself to do such a vulgar thing as peeping.

In the end, Shen Qingqiu was entirely unable to visualize the image of himself and Qi Qingqi dating. Hacking each other to pieces was more like it.

Unexpectedly, Liu Qingge spoke up to say: "Is there anything else?"

Shen Qingqiu was startled; it was only then that he noticed that, while earlier Liu Qingge had only been secretly eavesdropping from the sidelines, now he'd already scooched his seat all the way over.

When had the great Liu become so interested in gossip?

Madam Meiyin said: "Milord's fated lover pays very little attention to others. But the moment they come to care about someone, they will care with their entire heart and soul."

Liu Qingge thought a moment, his expression turning surprisingly grave as he asked: “What about looks?”

Shen Qingqiu speechlessly looked at him.

I haven't even asked, what are you asking for?

And getting right to the main point, at that!

Madam Meiyin said with great certainty: “A top-ranked beauty, one of the most stunning in the realm.”

Liu Qingge quite uncharacteristically pursued this topic relentlessly: “Spiritual power? Natural talent?”

“Outstanding talent, excellent spiritual power, an illustrious status, and a noble bloodline.”

Liu Qingge shook his head in apparent incredulity, saying: “Just now, you said this person, and he, were often together?”

Madam Meiyin nodded: “They may experience momentary separation, but will very quickly reunite again. Also, every time will be the other actively chasing after him.”

The corner of Liu Qingge's eye was twitching uncontrollably; he ruthlessly pressed at it, looking as if he'd suffered a great emotional shock. Or we could use a much more fitting phrase: He'd been violently thunderstruck.

Madam Meiyin added yet another line, dealing him a mortal blow. She turned to Shen Qingqiu and sighed: “Oh how this lowly one envies you. Milord do you know, this person is really and truly devoted to you.”

Liu Qingge rigidly turned to face Shen Qingqiu, revealing a sort of complicated expression impossible to describe in words. There was clearly no joy or anger in it, and yet it appeared as if he were suffering great torment. Shen Qingqiu gave him a funny look: “Shidi, what's wrong with you?”

Liu Qingge said with great difficulty: “.....It’s inaccurate.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Hm?”

Liu Qingge suddenly raised his head, firmly repeating: “Her fortune is inaccurate!”

Madam Meiyin refused to accept this: “How are you so certain that the fortune this one has given is inaccurate?”

To tell the truth, Shen Qingqiu felt it was inaccurate as well.

What was all this about someone constantly accompanying him, who was young and beautiful and noble, and a sugar mama to boot...this had Zhongdian loser hentai trash written all over it. Even hentai trash wouldn’t go as far as using blatant Gary Stus, okay? There just wasn’t a single Miss Perfect anywhere in his vicinity that could fit these qualifications. And even if there were, she’d be a member of Luo Binghe’s harem. Hehe!

Liu Qingge stated decisively: “Total nonsense. What do you mean, devoted! There’s nothing of the sort!”

Having had one of her greatest talents brought into question, Madam Meiyin grew angry as well: “It isn’t as if *you’re* his destined lover, what right do you have to call it inaccurate?”

Wait a minute, young master Huang hasn’t even shown up yet, could you two not come into conflict over an insignificant thing like this? Plus shouldn’t I be the concerned party here?

Liu Qingge had already lost his patience by now, so the moment the opposing party turned hostile, he immediately flared up, suddenly striking down with a palm and splitting the stone table into two neat halves; Chengluan unsheathed itself at his call, the sword qi cutting like a blade. Madam Meiyin flew into a rage, clapping her hands as she said: “Everyone come out!”

Wait a minute...why are we suddenly fighting...what exactly was the last straw here! I still haven't figured out where the turning point was...

Naturally, nobody paid any attention to Shen Qingqiu's [gesture](#) for them to stop. Seeing Madam Meiyin and a large number of succubus serving girls about to have them surrounded on all sides, he took a moment to readjust his expression, and quickly entered battle mode. Chengluan shuttled back and forth between flying bursts of spiritual energy, and Madam Meiyin blew an ear-splittingly sharp whistle.

Fuck! Slow down! I still haven't mentally prepared myself!

At the sound of their master's whistled command, the clothes of every last one of the succubus serving girls burst apart!

Shining, brilliant, filling his entire field of vision, was a vast ocean of pale white bodies...

Although Shen Qingqiu knew these succubi's favorite ultimate weapon was to explode their clothing as a wildly dancing team, that didn't mean he'd be able to withstand the visual shock of such a stunning scene!

He instinctively shut his eyes, backed up a couple steps, and bumped into Liu Qingge.

The succubi ceaselessly spouted lewd talk, their tender voices echoing around the entire cave. Any normal man would long since have lost all reason to his fascination, abandoned his sword in surrender, and obediently thrown himself into that paradise of lust. But to his terror, Shen Qingqiu realized that Liu Qingge actually seemed not to see them at all, his face as expressionless as ever; he swung his sword in a large horizontal sweep, blood reflecting off the edge of his blade, killing to his heart's content!

The naked, bare-skinned succubi revealed their true colors, four limbs touching the ground, sharp nails digging into the earth and stone, slurping back their saliva as they charged upon the surrounded pair in endless waves, only to be thrown back again by spiritual power.

Shen Qingqiu honestly wanted to fight seriously too. Really. But he just couldn't look directly at them!

Even for an experienced senior like himself, who'd read countless stories of this ilk, it still took great difficulty for him to control himself in the face of such waves of vivacious bodies; how in the world was Liu Qingge able to keep himself entirely unaffected!?

Madam Meiyin's beautiful face paled – not having anticipated that all her subordinates attacking at once would be unable to entrance the two men's minds, she lifted her skirts and made a run for it. Shen Qingqiu's original reaction was to chase after her, but a moment's thought reminded him that the goal of this trip had been to rescue the Huang family's son, as well as the other men who had been locked up as pets for the succubi, and so he turned to Liu Qingge: "There's no need to fight the rest, I expect they won't be able to start any more excitement regardless. Rescuing people is more important."

Liu Qingge suddenly said: "You shouldn't believe that."

Shen Qingqiu couldn't make heads or tails of this: "What?"

Liu Qingge said: "That just now! She was making it all up!"

Shen Qingqiu said: "Don't get so excited. I didn't believe her to begin with."

The great Liu's behavior was much too unusual, to the point Shen Qingqiu couldn't help side-eyeing him. He'd barely glanced a short while before Liu Qingge caught his gaze, the other man immediately giving him a strict chiding: "Stop looking at me!"

The more he said this, the more Shen Qingqiu wanted to look at him. The moment he did so he realized that, whether due to anger or something else he wasn't sure, Liu Qingge's face – from the corners of his eyes down across his cheeks – was haloed with a light layer of pink. His gaze, which had always been calm to the point of indifference, now seemed like an icy lake shattered into a million pieces, dashing back and forth in his eyes.

Shen Qingqiu stared at him, then suddenly reached out to grab his pulse.

Immediately upon gripping Liu Qingge's wrist, one could feel that his skin temperature was higher than average. After checking his pulse for a spell, Shen Qingqiu solemnly said: "Mm, Liu-shidi, tell your shixiong honestly, have you dual cultivated with anyone before?"

Liu Qingge: "...Why are you asking this."

Shen Qingqiu said: "I'm just asking is all. Do you know how to dual cultivate?"

Liu Qingge breathed in heavily, then said through gritted teeth: "Shen, Qing, Qiu."

Shen Qingqiu said: "Alright. I'll ask a different question, Liu-shidi, how... are you feeling right now."

Could he hold on 'til they got down the mountain...

Liu Qingge said: "Not well."

Of course not.

Even the great Liu, if he were to get hit with the captivating perfume or shall we say springtime medicine which every succubus carried, that would be incredibly...disastrous!

Shen Qingqiu made a prompt decision. He said: "Good luck, Liu-shidi. Your shixiong has business to take care of and thus will be going on ahead!"

Liu Qingge grabbed hold of the back of his collar, saying in a stern voice: "What do you mean, good luck!? What business do you have!?"

Shen Qingqiu looked back at him, and was practically frightened out of his skin.

If we were to say that earlier Liu Qingge's face was merely a rosy glow spread across his skin, now it was a fire burning straight up to the clouds, his face so red it could scare a man to death.

He hurriedly said: "Don't be hasty! Liu-shidi, calm down! You just stay here and meditate, your shixiong will go free young master Huang and the rest, then come back to look for you afterwards, alright? Don't you worry, I absolutely won't return during this time, feel free to do whatever you want, nobody else will know."

He made a break for it as soon as he finished speaking, but Liu Qingge immediately clapped a steel-like claw onto his shoulder: "What are you running for!"

Mother clucker he's actually latched on!

Liu-shidi, Peak Lord Liu, dearest ge, I'm trying to withdraw for a bit, give you some time and space to solve your problem in, y'know? Don't tell me you don't even understand a hint like this!

You might as well have wasted all these years of life. When you formed that golden core did it form in your brain!?

Shen Qingqiu said: "Your shixiong staying here won't have any use, now will it."

Liu Qingge smiled angrily: "If you let me beat you up so I can let off steam, that'd be real useful!"

This wasn't something that could be resolved just through fighting. Shen Qingqiu said: "Shidi, why are you so irritable, you shouldn't let that charm poison control your sense of reason."

Liu Qingge's handsome face alternated between blushing and paling with anger; it was like he'd gotten flustered in his attempts to restrain himself, had no idea what to do about it, grabbed onto Shen Qingqiu in his frustration, and now refused to let go.

Shen Qingqiu looked at the pitiful state he was in and thought to himself, that violent group on Baizhan Peak doesn't know anything but to fight and kill all day long, everyone obsessed with cultivating and brawls, and having grown up under a tradition like that, it's possible Liu Qingge really was mentally deficient in that respect, not even knowing how to fap; for a moment he felt a strong surge of sympathy.

When it came to coaxing people, Shen Qingqiu was an expert, staying calm even in the face of death: "Liu-shidi, here now, do you remember how you first came to know me?"

The original text of course had never given a detailed account of how these two cannon foddies had started their feud; Shen Qingqiu rambling like this was no more than an effort to distract his attention.

If this was any other time, Liu Qingge would absolutely not be this easy to mess with – but when tugged at now, he was just barely able to keep control over his muddled mind, walking along as he said through gritted teeth: "I remember. At the twelve peaks' sword tournament, I fought you!"

Shen Qingqiu: "....." *Out of blows, friendship grows, huh.*

Did this mean that it was because Liu Qingge had fought him back then, and beaten him real good at that, that just now he'd made that demand for Shen Qingqiu to stay and let him vent by beating him up?

Shen Qingqiu answered with an "Oh", leading him deeper into the cave, and brought up another question: "Did I beat you back afterwards?"

Liu Qingge was seriously burning up, but didn't forget to add a conceited humph. "There's no way."

Very good.

Shen Qingqiu placed a hand on his shoulder, patting it: "Then today, your shixiong will be getting his payback from you, Liu-shidi."

And then—

He kicked Liu Qingge into Madam Meiyin's rose petal-filled bathing pool.

The splashes came up five feet high, and although Shen Qingqiu had the foresight to cover his face with his fan, he still ended up soaked head to toe in freezing cold water. If Liu Qingge went down to soak in water this temperature, it would absolutely cure what ailed him; he went down on one knee by the edge of the pool, still maintaining his face-covering stance, and asked in a reserved manner: "Liu-shidi, how about now? How are you feeling?"

For a long while, there was no response. After Liu Qingge sank into the pool, not even a single string of bubbles had come up from below. Shen Qingqiu wondered to himself, could it be that Liu Qingge was unlearned in the art of swimming? That didn't seem right. Could he have fainted from fever? Maybe the Lingxi Caves hadn't gotten Liu Qingge killed, but this place would drown him instead?

The more he thought, the more he worried that he might have caused the loss of a life. Shen Qingqiu hurriedly leaned closer: "Liu-shidi? Liu-shidi!"

The surface of the water was covered entirely by scarlet petals, making it difficult for him to see the water below, and so he was forced to keep leaning closer. Suddenly, there was a tightening around his ankle, and a hand dragged him into the flower pool.

With this sudden fall into the water, a freezing cold stream came rushing around him on all sides, cold enough to turn Shen Qingqiu's face blue. Upon finally finding purchase at the edge of the pool, he turned his head to see an expressionless Liu Qingge, dripping wet as he floated behind him, a few rose petals still stuck in his hair.

Shen Qingqiu said: "Liu-shidi, that wasn't a very nice thing to do. Your shixiong made you go down in order to help remove the captivating perfume, I don't see any reason I should have earned such a reprisal."

Liu Qingge said: "Didn't you ask how I felt? What you're feeling right now is how I feel."

Clear reasoning, a strong counterattack. By the look of things, he was successfully out of danger.

Yue Qingyuan and Shen Qingqiu

(1)

There was a clang as Shen Jiu kicked that little pitch-black basin, sending it flying into the air.

He folded his arms, not saying a word. Shiwu or Shisi—whichever the boy was—shrank back, but with the other boys by his side goading him on with their eyes, he summoned up the courage to stick out his neck and say: “Shen Jiu, don’t get too cocky. It’s not like you bought this street, there’s nothing saying we can’t be here too!”

The main street was wide and even, with heavy foot traffic. If you were planning to beg for alms, this was the perfect place to do it. A few passersby stopped to watch the group of children as they fought, but the majority simply hurried on past.

This newcomer brat dared challenge him? Shen Jiu lowered his head, looking for a stray brick with which he could show the kid a thing or two, but it was right at this moment that a tall boy came walking in their direction and, upon seeing him rolling his sleeves and lowering his head, rushed forward to stop him: “Xiao Jiu, let’s go somewhere else.”

Shen Jiu said: “No. I’m staying right here.”

The other boy took this chance to tattle: “Qi-ge, he’s bullying me.”

Yue Qi said: “He’s not bullying, Shiwu, Xiao Jiu’s just joking with you.”

Shen Jiu said: “Who’s joking? I want him out of here. This is my territory, and if anyone tries to take it from me I want them dead.”

With Yue Qi blocking in front of him, Shiwu’s courage swelled, and he stuck out his neck to yell: “Whenever we go somewhere new you always

take over the best spot, we all got sick of you a long time ago! You better not think you're all that, or that everyone's afraid of you!"

Yue Qi spoke up in reproach: "Shiwu." In the struggle, Shen Jiu gave Shiwu a kick in the leg: "If you wanna fight me then why don't you go ahead and do it? You're blaming your bad luck on the location but really you just suck. Bastard, who're you calling your Qi-ge? I dare you to say it again and see!"

"*You're* the bastard! You're gonna get sold off sooner or later, and then I bet you'll end up being a pimp!"

Yue Qi didn't know whether to laugh or cry at this: "Where did you learn to say this sort of nonsense!" He tugged Shen Jiu towards the side of the road as he coaxed, "All right, you're the most talented here. You'll be the best no matter where you go, so let's try a different street."

Shen Jiu stepped on his foot: "Back off! You think I'm afraid of him? Come on, come at me! One-on-one or all at once, I'm not scared!"

Yue Qi knew perfectly well that he wasn't scared, and that if he actually let Shen Jiu fight, he'd use dirty tricks like going for the eyes or hitting below the belt, malicious to an extreme; when the time came the ones who'd get the worst of it and end up in tears would be the other guys. He held back his laughter as he said: "Are you done stepping on me? If you've had enough then stop doing it. Qi-ge will take you to play."

Shen Jiu said in a fierce voice: "Fuck playing! What would be fun would be if they all died."

Yue Qi looked at him, helplessly shaking his head.

If there was a seven and nine, naturally there was also a one-through-six. But of that early batch of children, six and above had either been sold off, or died young. These two were the only more experienced kids left.

When Shen Jiu was even younger than he was now, he'd been a thin and tiny little dumpling. Yue Qi had cradled his head as they sat on the ground, a "blood letter" spread out in front of them; on this letter was written that

the two were siblings whose parents had both died, and who had come across hard times while searching for relatives in foreign lands, leaving them alone and impoverished, wandering the streets with no-one to depend on, etc. According to what they were told, Yue Qi was supposed to be bawling his eyes out, but no matter how hard he tried he was unable to squeeze out those tears; as such, this task always fell to Shen Jiu, who was originally supposed to fake being sickly and at the brink of death. He was a small child, with a face that didn't draw people's ire, and could cry like it was the end of the world, making passersby feel pity at the sight of him and each offer their own generous donations; to call this a source of easy money wouldn't be overstating things at all. But over time as Yue Qi gradually grew older, he became less and less willing to perform this little act, and so was tasked with patrolling for information. Shen Jiu wanted to go with him, but wasn't allowed, and so continued to lord over the street, a scourge upon all around him.

The two were just about to leave this bustling city street, when there suddenly came the sound of crowded hoofbeats.

The stall owners on either side of the street turned pale with fright, those with carts pushing them out of the way, those on foot making a run for it, as if they were faced with a formidable foe. Yue Qi didn't understand what was going on, and just when Shen Jiu had dragged him to the side of the road, a great horse came charging around the corner.

The horse's bit was unexpectedly made of pure gold, golden-bright, dazzling, and heavy; atop the horse sat an arrogant and high-spirited young lord. His countenance was beautiful and fiery, with slender brows, and eyes shining with vitality, so bright as to be piercing. The lower hem of his violet clothes fell loosely on both sides of the saddle, his tapered sleeves pulled tight around his arms, and in the palm of his fair-skinned hand was a pitch-black whip.

Shen Jiu was blinded by the gold, and couldn't resist sticking his head out, only to have Yue Qi hurriedly tug him back, ensuring that the two kept their distance.

They hadn't gone far when when there suddenly arose a scream and the sound of a scattered crowd; a gaggle of little brothers came rushing towards them, all throwing themselves at Yue Qi, so terrified that they were practically about to cover him in snot and tears. Shen Jiu was made furious by this, but Yue Qi hurriedly said: "What are you crying for, what happened?"

One of them shrieked: "Shiwu's gone missing!"

Yue Qi immediately stopped moving: "He didn't follow us?"

The boy wailed: "Just now on the street there was too much going on, I didn't get a good look..."

Yue Qi said: "Calm down, talk slowly."

As it turned out, the young lord on the horse had turned the corner with his guards, caught a glimpse of Shiwu and friends out of the corner of his eye, and scrunched his nose: "Where did these come from?"

A guard said: "I don't know where these beggars came from, Young Master Qiu."

The young lord said: "So what are you leaving the dirty things here for?"

The guards needed no more instructions from their master, and brazenly came over to shoo away the children. It had taken a lot of effort for Shiwu to take this territory from Shen Jiu, and he wasn't willing to let himself be driven away so easily, indignantly shouting: "Who died and made you lord of this street—"

He'd wanted to continue by saying "It's not like the street is yours", but with a wave of the young lord's hand, a black shadow fell upon him, and a bloody welt appeared on his face.

The mark from the whip was barely centimeters from his eyeball; before Shiwu could realize it hurt, he'd already been scared silly.

That young lord said with a big smile: “Nobody died, but as for lords, my family built this street.”

It was unknown whether Shiwu had fainted from fear or pain; there was a thump as he fell to the ground.

Shen Jiu didn’t wait for the end of this story to begin heartily laughing aloud, but it didn’t take long for him to be unable to laugh any further. After doing a headcount Yue Qi realized they were missing a few, and turned around to say: “You go ahead, I’ll catch up with you soon.”

Shen Jiu was delighting in the others’ misfortune: “Don’t meddle in other people’s business, you don’t think that Qiu guy will actually kill them, do you?”

Yue Qi shook his head: “You go back first. I’m the oldest, I can’t just leave them.”

Shen Jiu said: “They’re not gonna die. At most they’ll just get a beating. It’ll beat some sense into them, they’ll be fine.”

Yue Qi said: “Go back.”

Unable to stop him, Shen Jiu cursed: “You’re always sticking your nose where it doesn’t belong!”

And with his cursing done, he hurried along after him.

(2)

Qiu Jianluo found Shen Jiu to be incredibly amusing.

It was just like beating a dog. If you beat a dog, it would hang its head, shrink to one side and whimper; which admittedly wasn’t very menacing, but wasn’t interesting either. But if you stepped on this dog, it would snarl out a low growl, staring at you with a fearful look in its eye, and yet not daring to rebel—*that* reaction was *much* more interesting.

When he gave Shen Jiu a slap in the face, Shen Jiu must have been cursing the Qiu family's ancestral tomb a hundred times over in his head, and yet he had no choice but to obediently endure the kicks, obediently offer his face to be beaten.

It was really too fun. Qiu Jianluo couldn't help laughing aloud at the thought.

Shen Jiu had just suffered through a good beating, and covered his head with his hands as he shrank away, watching him rock back and forth with laughter.

Immediately after buying Shen Jiu, Qiu Jianluo had had him locked away for a few days, until the boy was dejected and depressed. It was only when the sight was enough to nauseate him that he picked him up like a kitten and handed him over to a few swarthy guards, telling them to give him "a good scrub".

And so, Shen Jiu was given a ruthless scrub-down, practically losing a layer of skin in the process, before he was finally carried back to the study. After getting all that old dirt scalded off of his body, his pale face and shoulders and hands were rosy from overly forceful rubbing, dripping wet hair still giving off wisps of steam. Dressed neat and properly, standing nice and upright off to the side, he actually looked quite pitiful.

Qiu Jianluo tilted his head, looking at him for a good while; an odd feeling arose within him, as well as the notion that he rather liked the boy, and he pulled back the foot he'd originally planned to kick him with.

He asked: "Can you read?"

Shen Jiu said in a tiny voice: "I know a few characters."

Qiu Jianluo spread out a snow-white piece of paper, then knocked on the desk: "Write them for me."

Shen Jiu reluctantly grabbed a small weasel-hair brush, holding it with a reasonably proper grip. He dipped it in ink, thought a moment, first wrote

out a “Qi”, paused, then wrote a “Jiu”.

Although he wrote the strokes backwards, the results weren’t crooked or skewed, looking as proper as they were pretty.

Qiu Jianluo said: “Where did you learn this?”

Shen Jiu said: “From watching other people write.”

The brat couldn’t actually read a single word, only knowing to copy the characters mechanically, and yet showed frightening ability. Qiu Jianluo was very surprised. And so, with an even more amiable manner than before, imitating his tutor’s way of speaking, he lauded the boy with praise: “You have some talent. If you’re willing to do some proper study from here on out, you might be able to walk a proper path in the future.”

Qiu Jianluo was four years older than Shen Jiu, at the age of sixteen, and his parents placed high hopes in him; raised in a house gilded with gold, treating all those around him as beneath his notice, the only person in the world whom he treated as the darling of his heart was his little sister Haitang. Haitang was also the entire Qiu family’s treasured darling; Qiu Jianluo always acted the part of a good older brother whenever he was in her presence. In the past he’d longed for her never to marry, but after Shen Jiu came on the scene, he came to have different plans.

Qiu Haitang very much liked Shen Jiu. If he could properly teach Shen Jiu, he’d make a convenient in-law, which didn’t seem like too bad an idea. His sister would be by his side, and he could keep Shen Jiu around to keep playing with; as long as the boy did as he was told, they could all live together in harmony.

If she married him she wouldn’t have to go far, and she’d still rely on her own family for food and clothing expense, so it wouldn’t be any different from not having married at all. Aside from the pairing being rather like Shen Jiu was a toad having gotten his hands on swan meat, he couldn’t think of any other noticeable issues.

Qiu Jianluo's scheme sounded quite beautiful in his own mind, and he'd often warn Shen Jiu: "If you dare make Haitang unhappy, your life is forfeit."

"If it weren't for Haitang, I would have beaten you to death a long time ago."

"It's common decency to return a favor. It was our family that allowed you to become something approaching human – even if you were to pay us back with your life, that would only be proper."

The older Shen Jiu grew, the more he understood, you couldn't show this man even the slightest disobedience. Whatever he said, that was how it must go, and no matter how nauseating his orders may have been to hear, those feelings couldn't be revealed; that was the only way to avoid getting beaten.

But deep down, he'd often reminisce about the day he first met Qiu Jianluo, which was also the one and only time he'd ever made Qiu Jianluo go wild with anger.

Yue Qi had insisted on bringing back Shiwu and the others, and nearly collided head-on with Qiu Jianluo's horse's hooves. In an instant Shen Jiu forgot Yue Qi's repeated warnings, that they were better off not letting anyone see these "immortal magics" of theirs—he transformed the gold into a sharp blade, stabbing into the horse's bones.

Qiu Jianluo pushed the horse to turn in circles there on the street, the horse leaping wildly without pause. Shen Jiu quietly cursed with all his heart that he'd fall, fall right off and break his neck; unfortunately, his horsemanship was exceptionally good, and even when the horse's front legs were lifted high up in the air he still stayed steadily in the saddle, roaring: "Who did it!? *Who did this!*"

Of course it was Shen Jiu who'd done it.

But if when Qiu Jianluo later came knocking at their door, Shiwu hadn't taken the chance to say it out loud, nobody would ever have known that he

was the one who'd played that trick.

If they hadn't saved him, Shiwu would already have been trampled to death beneath the hooves of the Qiu family's horses. He'd gotten his little life back from death's door, and yet had turned right back around and sold them out. Shiwu should have been trampled to death, trampled into a puddle of mushy meat paste that everyone in town could spit on. Yue Qi should never have gone back to save him. If he died it'd serve him right.

Shen Jiu took comfort in repeatedly mulling over these happy yet useless malicious thoughts, relying on them to get through day after day of torment. Waiting for a certain someone to keep his word and come rescue him from this hell.

(3)

In regards to why Yue Qi hadn't come back to find him, Shen Jiu had thought on it a great deal.

Maybe he'd been discovered as he was running away, and the slavers had broken his legs. Maybe he had no provisions on the road and refused to beg for food, and so had starved to death. Maybe his aptitude was too low, and none of those immortal mountains was willing to take him in. Shen Jiu had also thought about how he himself would walk to the ends of the earth in search in search of his remains, how he'd use his hands to dig a grave for him, and perhaps even manage a single strained tear. If he had the luck to still be alive, then he would risk it all to save him from an abyss of suffering—even if Shen Jiu himself would have been escaping a wolf's den just to enter a tiger's hole, considering he was currently in an abyss of suffering himself.

But never could he have imagined that their reunion would be under circumstances like this.

He repeatedly swung his sword up and down, up and down, blood splattering everywhere, a gruesome scene. When droplets of blood splashed

into his eyes, he'd only blink, not showing any more expression than that, his actions all seeming to be calm and adept.

After Wu Yanzi took him out of the Qiu house, the most he'd taught this "disciple" of his was how to commit murder and arson, how to steal, how to reap benefit from confusion. Just like they were doing now, taking advantage of the Immortal Alliance Conference to rob a remote group of ridiculously naive, noble-born young disciples who thought themselves to be cultivation elites, snatching away their hoarding pouches, and dealing with their bodies.

When Yue Qi discovered him, he must have been stunned by this ghastly appearance of his, ignoring even the disciples' corpses on the ground as he took a few steps forward.

Shen Jiu shivered, hurriedly lifting his head.

Yue Qi got a clear look at his face, and in an instant, both of them turned deathly pale.

Shen Jiu said in a stern voice: "Don't come any closer!"

Unexpectedly, his first reaction was to throw himself to the ground, grab a signal flare off one of the corpses, and set it off into the sky.

Shocked and confused, Yue Qi reached out a hand as he walked, opening his mouth to call out—

A cruel, monstrous laugh sounded from the jungle off to the side.

"Good disciple, who is this? To have scared you into such a state. Who would have thought there were times that you could be afraid, too?"

Shen Jiu loosed his grip, the empty flare falling silently from his hand onto the ground. He suddenly turned around: "Shifu, it's not that I'm afraid of him – I made a mistake just now, and accidentally let these guys on the ground set off their signal flare. People might be coming any moment!"

Yue Qi realized this seemed to be an incredibly desperate situation, and calmly formed a burst of spiritual energy. Wu Yanzi snorted: “I guessed that was the case, when I saw the fireworks. You’ve always been nimble, so what happened this time! If they want to set off signals, can’t you just cut their hands right off?”

Shen Jiu lowered his head: “This disciple is to blame. Let’s leave quickly – once those old fools get here, we won’t be able to escape anymore.”

Yue Qi blocked in front of him, raised the sword in his hands, and looked at Shen Jiu with slightly reddened eyes; his voice was hoarse, but unnaturally firm: “You can’t leave.”

Shen Jiu glared at him.

Wu Yanzi sized him up, then did the same for his sword, and said with a sneer: “Cangqiong Mountain’s. And Qiongdong Peak’s at that. Xuansu Sword, Yue Qingyuan?”

Shen Jiu was somewhat startled by those words, but quickly returned to urging him on: “Shifu, since he’s from Cangqiong Mountain, we won’t be able to kill him very quickly; it would be better if we use that time to escape. If everyone catches up to us we’re dead meat!”

Wu Yanzi gave a bitter laugh: “Cangqiong Mountain might have great fame and prestige, but not so much that I’d fear a youngling. Especially not when he’s asking for death himself!”

When he and Yue Qi began their fight in earnest, Shen Jiu realized that the concern he’d felt for Yue Qingyuan, and the clumsy efforts he’d made in that regard, were actually somewhat laughable. He feared Wu Yanzi, feared this “shifu” of his more than death itself, but Yue Qi – or perhaps we should say Yue Qingyuan – had stood against him, and even without unsheathing his sword was still managing to handle him with ease.

And yet he was unable to say he was entirely reassured by this, because he was very much familiar with Wu Yanzi’s fighting style and his trump card for survival.

Wu Yanzi had a set of black curse talismans; countless times he'd watched as Wu Yanzi, at a disadvantage, threw out a dozen of these talismans, killing his opponent on impact. Even a number of famous cultivators had been unable to escape this sinister move of his, to say nothing of Yue Qi, who one could tell at a glance had very little actual battle experience, only able to follow the fighting pattern he'd been taught, trading blows in the orderly manner of a student on a training ground.

Thus, when Wu Yanzi tossed out that set of black talismans, Shen Jiu stabbed him in the back.

Yue Qi grabbed his hand, and they ran in a mad dash for their lives; having just been through a fierce battle, the two had yet to recover from their fright, leaning against a tree as they panted desperately for air.

It was only after they'd calmed down that Shen Jiu began to carefully size up Yue Qi.

His cultivation level was noticeably high, his bearing steady and strong, the perfect model of a man from an influential family. Not even the slightest bit close to the abyss of suffering his imagination had been so set on.

This was Yue Qingyuan, not Yue Qi.

Yue Qingyuan looked excited, his face flushed, and was just about to speak when Shen Jiu threw a question in his face: "You joined Cangqiong Mountain?"

It was unclear what Yue Qingyuan thought of at that moment, but his excited expression lost some of its spirit, his complexion turning pale once more.

Shen Jiu said: "You became Qiongdong Peak's head disciple? Not bad. Why didn't you come back to find me?"

"I..."

Shen Jiu waited a while, but no more words came.

He said: “Why don’t you keep talking? I’m waiting for you. I’ve already waited so many years, a little while longer won’t hurt.”

There was no way Yue Qingyuan could keep talking.

Shen Jiu folded his arms, finally waiting long enough to hear Yue Qingyuan’s low voice: “Qi-ge is sorry.”

An icy anger crawled up to fill the entirety of Shen Jiu’s thoughts; he could practically taste the blood in his mouth, smell it in his nose, from the injuries the attacking fury was leaving on his heart.

In the beginning he’d always suffered in silence, a rat who could do nothing but cover his head and take whatever beatings came his way; later he was a rat who ran wildly through dark ravines, as everyone around called out their desire to beat him. No matter how he changed, he was always a rat. Cowering with tail tucked between his legs, unable to see the light of day. Squandering away the years, wasting what time he had. Meanwhile, Yue Qingyuan was the epitome of a swallow transformed into a phoenix, or a carp who’d successfully leapt through the Dragon gate.

He said: “Sorry, sorry...you’ve only ever known how to say sorry.”

There was an angry smile on Shen Jiu’s face, his words decisively final: “It’s totally useless.”

Some people are bad by nature. In Shen Jiu’s mind, he was one of those maliciously bad people himself. Because for one short instant, he’d had a clear realization.

He’d rather have met a Yue Qi who’d died in some unknown corner of the world, his cold and ugly corpse left out with no-one to bury it, than see a strong and graceful Yue Qingyuan with boundless prospects ahead of him.

(4)

The things and people Jiu disliked numbered too many to count.

If someone disliked *everything*, then it would naturally be quite difficult to say he had a good temperament. Luckily, by the time he became Shen Qingqiu, he already knew to at least not let it show on his face.

Among everyone and everything on Cangqiong Mountain, the one he disliked most was without a doubt Liu Qingge.

Liu Qingge accomplished his ambitions at an early age, with outstanding natural-born talent, great spiritual strength, and swordplay that was shocking in its perfection. He had an illustrious family background, with both parents alive and well. It didn't matter which you picked out from among these things, because each of them was enough to give him three sleepless days and nights of tooth-gnashing anger, let alone all of them being gathered on one person.

At the annual martial arts tournament for the twelve peaks of Cangqiong Mountain, Shen Qingqiu's opponent in battle was Liu Qingge.

The conclusion was of course, without a doubt, his loss.

Losing to the future Baizhan Peak Lord wasn't anything to be ashamed of – you might even say it should have been this way from the start, that this was only normal.

But Shen Qingqiu would never think this way. What he could see wasn't the onlookers' gasps of admiration at his being able to hold his own in the fight for so long; all he saw was the arrogant look on Liu Qingge's face, like there could be no other outcome, as he pointed the tip of his Chengluan sword barely millimeters from his neck.

Qingjing Peak flaunted itself as a nobles' peak, and Shen Qingqiu had taken to playing that part like a fish to water; but Liu Qingge could always push his antisocial tendencies to the tipping point, making him unwilling to waste the energy even to pretend at interpeak harmony.

The phrase Shen Qingqiu most often said to Liu Qingge was: "One of these days I'll kill you, Liu Qingge!"

The lovely young pipa-carrying woman had long since thrown on her thin garments and rushed out the door in fear. Liu Qingge gave him a look: “With your ability?”

It was only three words, but from them Shen Qingqiu could make out a boundlessly spiteful overtone, and turned his wrist in response. Yue Qingyuan saw the situation turning sour, pressed down on his elbow to stop him from pulling out his sword, and turned his head to shout: “Liu-shidi! You go back first.”

Liu Qingge appeared uninterested in getting tangled up in this, let out a sarcastic laugh, and in a flash had disappeared entirely from view. The only ones left where the two men in this side room of Nuanhong Pavilion. One with his clothes in disarray, the other with not a hair out of place, made a very distinct contrast against each other.

Yue Qingyuan pulled Shen Qingqiu up off the bed, showing a rare moment of anger: “How could you do this?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Do what?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Two of Cangqiong Mountain’s head disciples had a big fight in a pleasure house. Does that sound good to you?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “If you don’t say anything and I don’t say anything, then nobody will know which part of what sect! This isn’t Cangqiong Mountain, which of Cangqiong Mountain’s sect rules ever said its disciples couldn’t come here? It isn’t like Cangqiong Mountain is a Buddhist temple or a Daoist monastery, they can manage the whole world’s affairs but they can’t meddle with my looking for women. If shixiong finds it shameful, then you’d better keep good watch over Liu Qingge’s mouth.”

It was true that Cangqiong Mountain didn’t have this rule expressly written anywhere. But those who practiced cultivation should already know the principles of cleansing the mind and cultivating the spirit, and be capable of self-discipline; particularly Qingjing Peak, where the peak lord and disciples had always been clean-living and honest. And yet this commonly-known unwritten rule was being used by Shen Qingqiu as grounds to make

trivial complaints. Yue Qingyuan choked at his words, left speechless for a moment, before saying in a melancholy manner: “I won’t speak of it. Liu-shidi won’t either. Nobody will know.”

Shen Qingqiu pulled on his boots as he replied: “Guess I should thank you guys then.”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Intimate engagements with the fairer sex are harmful to one’s cultivation.”

Shen Qingqiu gave a bitter smile: “Did you not hear the tone in Liu Qingge’s voice when he said those three words? With my ability? Can I match up to him at my level? My cultivation’s already bad, whether I hurt it or not.”

Yue Qingyuan was silent for a moment, then said: “Liu-shidi isn’t a bad person, really. He isn’t purposely attacking you specifically – he treats everyone else the same way.”

Shen Qingqiu laughed: “‘Treats everyone else the same way’? Zhangmen shixiong really shouldn’t try to mislead me. Does he treat you the same way as well?”

Yue Qingyuan patiently replied: “If you show him a bit of goodwill, he’ll repay you twofold.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Zhangmen shixiong is truly a fair and considerate man. Only why doesn’t he show me goodwill first, or show me a little pity? Why do I have to be the one to yield to him first?”

With him being thick-skinned to this degree, it was difficult for Yue Qingyuan to speak up again. He naturally couldn’t just say, *if after the martial arts tournament you hadn’t kept thinking up tricks to trip him up and mounting sneak attacks to embarrass him, you wouldn’t currently have such a vitriolic relationship with Liu Qingge that the two of you can’t even bear to look at each other.*

Shen Qingqiu roughly tugged his clothes back up around his shoulders, stuck Xiuya in its sheath, walked a few steps, thought of something, then turned around with a question: “How did you know to come here to find me? Who told you?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “I went to Qingjing Peak, but didn’t see you. Instead I saw a group of Baizhan Peak disciples preparing to go up.”

“Preparing to go up and do what?”

“.....”

Shen Qingqiu sneered: “They were getting ready to ambush me, weren’t they?”

Although conflicts frequently arose between Shen Qingqiu and Baizhan Peak, this particular conflict really had been entirely unnecessary. A Baizhan Peak disciple had gone to a remote little town for a mission, and had coincidentally caught sight of a familiar face entering the biggest brothel in the area, Nuanhong Pavilion. Everyone across Baizhan Peak was just like Liu Qingge, not holding any goodwill towards Shen Qingqiu. Unwilling to let this opportunity slip by, the disciple had immediately followed him in and begun mocking Shen Qingqiu, saying that he had a faked sense of morality and was only pretending to be noble and virtuous; for him to show up in a place like this was really causing his own sect to lose all face.

A few disagreeable words, and Shen Qingqiu beat him to a pulp. When the disciple returned to Baizhan Peak, he then ran into Liu Qingge. After questioning him, Liu Qingge – burning with anger – immediately rode his sword out to give payback, prepared to return every punch with one of his own. If Yue Qingyuan hadn’t caught those Baizhan Peak disciples preparing to tear down Shen Qingqiu’s Bamboo Cottage, it’s unclear how much destruction this little town would have suffered under their hands.

While Yue Qingyuan may have stayed silent, Shen Qingqiu could still guess the answer, because the likelihood of Baizhan Peak planning to do anything

good was zero to none. He changed the topic: “What did you go to Qingjing Peak for? Didn’t I tell you not to come looking for me?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “I just wanted to see how you were doing.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “My thanks to Yue-shixiong for going to the trouble. I’m doing very well. I may be an unpleasant person, but fortunately Qingjing Peak’s peak lord does not despise me.”

Yue Qingyuan followed behind him, saying: “If you’re truly doing very well, why have you never stayed the night on Qingjing Peak?”

Shen Qingqiu cast him a dark look.

He knew, Yue Qingyuan must think he was being ostracized by people on Qingjing Peak.

Yue Qingyuan’s assumption wasn’t without reason, but this time it really was wrong. Although Shen Qingqiu wasn’t liked by his peers, they didn’t dislike him so much that they wouldn’t make space for him to sleep.

It was just that he hated being crowded together with other people of the same sex.

Before, after each of Qiu Jianluo’s beatings or before he predicted he’d be getting a beating, he’d always crawl away to shiver in Qiu Haitang’s room. Qiu Jianluo was unwilling to let his little sister see that cruel side of him, and so that became the only place he could hide.

Once upon a time, a girl like this had been their big sister. But after she grew older, she was sold to a shriveled old widower as his second wife; afterwards they left that city, and never saw her again.

Liking women wasn’t shameful in the least, but treating a woman as your savior, shrinking into her embrace in search of self-confidence—Shen Qingqiu needed no one to tell him how incredibly shameful that was. So he would rather die than tell anyone, particularly not Yue Qingyuan.

Shen Qingqiu slowly and deliberately said: “If I were to say that I *wasn’t* doing well on Qingjing Peak, what do you think you’d do? Would you try to get me into Qiongdong Peak, the same way you recommended me for Qingjing Peak?”

Yue Qingyuan thought a moment, the solemnly replied: “If you wanted me to.”

Shen Qingqiu let out a decisive humph: “Of course I don’t want you to. If I want to be head disciple, are you willing to give up the position to me? Would you be willing to let me be zhangmen?”

His voice rose in strength: “Whatever you may think of it, Qingjing Peak is still ranked second of the twelve peaks, so I’d be better off waiting to get this position.”

Yue Qingyuan sighed: “Xiao Jiu, there’s no need for you to always be this way.”

A shudder went down Shen Qingqiu’s back at the sound of that name, making him incredibly jittery: “Don’t call me that!”

Shen Jiu had been the most alert and resourceful among the Qing generation, and the peak lord was considerably fond of him. Thus not long after he joined the sect, and despite his foundation being lower than those around him, he was still chosen to be the next successor. After the peak lord gave the head disciple a name, that original name was discarded from use.

In the past Qiu Jianluo had forced him to study reading and writing; Shen Jiu had refused to learn, loathing it to a violent degree, but now it was through being smarter than the others at reading and memorization, that he’d managed to get into the Qingjing Peak Lord’s good graces. Even more laughable was the fact that, of all the many characters and numbers in the world, the peak lord had by some strange stroke of luck decided to name him “Qiu”.

But no matter how laughable it was, no matter how much anger it made him feel, Shen Qingqiu still wanted it. What this name represented was the fact

that, from today onwards, he'd be living a changed life as a brand new person.

Shen Qingqiu reorganized his thoughts, then said with a smile: "Just hearing this name feels oppressive to me – I've long since forgotten it. I ask Zhangmen shixiong to forget it as well."

Yue Qingyuan said: "Then if I call you this way, and you're willing to answer, will that mean it no longer makes you unhappy?"

"....." Shen Qingqiu's smile turned grim, "That could never happen. Yue Qingyuan, I'll say this one more time. Don't let me hear that name again."

(5)

Shen Qingqiu finally could take it no longer, and went to Qiongdong Peak.

Qiongdong Peak was a place which Shen Qingqiu had always done his best to avoid visiting whenever possible. Yue Qingyuan, similarly, was a figure he'd rather not see if he didn't have to.

Because of this he'd always considered the twelve peaks' yearly martial arts tournament to be an incredibly inconvenient event.

The twelve peaks of Cangqiong Mountain had rigidly defined ranks; these ranks had nothing to do with each peak's strength, but were based on the order in which Cangqiong Mountain's first generation of peak lords made their name in the world. The way later generations of peak lords referred to each other was thus decided by their ranks, rather than the order in which they'd joined the sect. Therefore, even though he'd joined the sect much later than Liu Qingge, Qingjing Peak was ranked second, with only Qiongdong Peak above it. Baizhan Peak ranked seventh, and so Liu Qingge had no choice but to grind his teeth to powder while calling him "shixiong".

But at the same time, also because of this ranking, every time Qiongdong Peak and Qingjing Peak's disciples lined up in a mutually-facing formation, there was no way for the head disciples not to end up standing together.

Yue Qingyuan was never able to catch him at other times, and so would take full advantage of this opportunity to ask an unceasing torrent of questions. Big questions about what he'd learned while practicing austerities, small ones about whether he was eating well or keeping warm, chattering on and on. Although Shen Qingqiu was pestered beyond endurance, he wasn't stupid enough to embarrass the zhangmen's head disciple in a public space surrounded by people. Where Yue Qingyuan asked twenty questions, he would answer one, distant but not impolite – while inwardly he would be pondering the incantation he'd memorized last night, or calculating other matters.

This was the most comical scene in every year's martial arts tournament. These two might not have noticed, but for many disciples, before the tournament began for real, watching a pair of head disciples – one incredibly uncharacteristically ignoring the command for silence as he quietly whispered, the other absent-mindedly staring straight ahead as he grunted vaguely in reply – was their only source of pleasure during the peak head's long and tedious speech.

And so, when Shen Qingqiu came up Qiongdong Peak of his own accord, not only was Yue Qingyuan astonished but happy, practically every disciple at the scene was itching to raise a cheer and call everyone to come watch the show.

But Shen Qingqiu didn't have much to say, and had even less interest in giving people a show; he stepped in with a request for permission to stay and cultivate in the Lingxi Caves, then stepped right back out again at a nice brisk walk.

The Lingxi Caves were abundant with spiritual energy, and were isolated from the outside world. As Shen Qingqiu passed through its tunnels, his complexion grew ever-more gloomy.

The effect which all that time he'd wasted under the hands of Qiu Jianluo and Wu Yanzi had had upon his cultivation, couldn't be called small.

Among the new generation of peak lords, Yue Qingyuan had naturally been the first to form his core. Qi Qingqi and Liu Qingge had come soon after,

making their breakthrough at practically the same time; even someone as mediocre as Anding Peak's Shang Qinghua had barely managed to catch up to their level before officially taking up his position.

The more Shen Qingqiu's impatience grew, the more stuck he became. Overly worried, his every day felt like he'd swallowed a few hundred catties' worth of tobacco-stuffed firecrackers, the burning smoke spreading through his belly and brain and making him flighty and impetuous, a hurricane of rage. With the state he was in, there was naturally no-one willing to provoke him. But not daring to provoke him, did not mean that Shen Qingqiu would let you go.

He'd undoubtedly given Luo Binghe the wrong introductory cultivation manual, the boy should long-since have died bleeding from every orifice with his major organs ruptured, so why was it that not only had this *not* happened, but his level was actually steadily rising!

He'd told Ning Yingying a hundred thousand times to stay far away from Luo Binghe and not to mingle together with him, so how come he could see them whispering in front of him every day!

Shen Qingqiu was overly suspicious, always feeling as if everyone was talking behind his back about how he was still incapable of forming a core, didn't accept his position, wanted to sabotage him in secret, and so on and so forth.

If he couldn't make that breakthrough during his seclusion this time in the Lingxi Caves...

Shen Qingqiu sat on the stone platform, his imagination continuing to run wild, vainly thinking himself into a cold sweat. He was struggling to breathe, stars erupting before his eyes, when suddenly he felt a burst of spiritual energy run despotically through his veins.

This was no small matter; in a moment of panic, he hurried to adjust his seating, trying to recover control over his state of mind. It was then that he suddenly sensed someone approaching from behind.

Terrified, Shen Qingqiu quickly picked up Xiuya, pulling it partially from his sheath as he said in a stern voice: “Who’s there!?”

A palm came pressing gently down on his shoulder.

Yue Qingyuan said: “It’s me.”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

Yue Qingyuan continued to send him spiritual energy, calming the frantic stampede of his agitated spiritual flow, as he said: “I am at fault here. Your current unsteady frame of mind is because I frightened you, shidi.”

What had frightened Shen Qingqiu just now was his own wild imagination, but it was exactly because of this that he couldn’t bear to hear another expose him, and indignantly said: “Who said I was frightened!? Doesn’t Zhangmen shixiong never enter the Lingxi Caves for seclusion? Why is it that the moment *I* arrive you come trying to steal my spot!”

Yue Qingyuan said: “It’s not that I never enter. I have actually come here in the past.”

Shen Qingqiu was baffled: “Who cares if you’ve come before or not?”

Yue Qingyuan sighed: “Shidi, can’t you speak a little less, and focus on harmonizing and quieting your qi instead?”

A tiny flame lit up on the dried-up stone candle holder. Shen Qingqiu had originally wanted to make another retort, but once he got a clear look at the full appearance of the cave he had chosen, he was startled by the sight, and blurted out: “Did someone fight to the death here?”

The cave walls were covered in marks from something chopping and hacking away at them, like layer upon layer of scars on someone’s face, the sight both sinister and shocking.

Behind him, Yue Qingyuan said: “No. Fighting is forbidden in the Lingxi Caves.”

Aside from sword marks, there were also large areas stained with dark-red blood.

Some appeared to have been sprayed out from someone whose body had been pierced by a sharp blade. Other marks looked as if someone had once kowtowed with their forehead against the walls, as if pleading something, knocking their head on the rock over and over again.

Shen Qingqiu stared at those near-entirely blackened bloodstains: “Then... does that mean someone died here?”

When the two of them were together, it was usually Yue Qingyuan taking great pains to keep the conversation going; never had there been a situation like this, in which Yue Qingyuan didn’t say a single word. Shen Qingqiu was greatly unaccustomed to this, goosebumps even rising on his skin: “... Yue Qingyuan?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “I’m here.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “If you’re here then why aren’t you talking?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Isn’t that because I might annoy my shidi again, the moment I open my mouth?”

Shen Qingqiu snorted: “That’s right. It *is* annoying. So you knew that after all!”

But he didn’t want to fall back into silence either, here in the darkness, and so had no alternative but to reluctantly continue the conversation: “I’ve heard that the Lingxi Caves may sometimes confine those disciples who have qi deviations, or who fall to evil ways; do you think that might be what happened?”

After a long time, Yue Qingyuan gave a very quiet and noncommittal “Oh”.

Having received an unsatisfactory answer, Shen Qingqiu narrowed his eyes as he stared for a moment at the wall, then said appraisingly: “It looks like

this person wanted very badly to leave, and struggled a long time before dying.”

If all this blood came from the same person, even if they didn’t lose their life they must at least have lost a good half of it.

Shen Qingqiu suddenly noticed something off about Yue Qingyuan’s hand on his shoulder. He spoke up guardedly: “What’s wrong?”

It was a long while before Yue Qingyuan answered: “It’s nothing.”

Shen Qingqiu shut up.

He couldn’t see what expression Yue Qingyuan may have been showing behind him, but the hand sending him spiritual energy was faintly trembling.

(6)

Shen Qingqiu awoke to traces of a refreshing sensation coming from his wounds. It alleviated the unbearable burning pain from before by quite a lot.

Forcing himself to open his eyes, he saw a figure on one knee by his side, head lowered in the act of examining his condition.

The lower hem of a black robe lay evenly over the white stone platform, a few scattered and empty medicine bottles pressing it down over a simple and unadorned longsword.

The sword was Xuansu. The person was obviously Yue Qingyuan. He still had that same handsome, gentle face, though it was much more wan and weary than usual. It was really only Yue Qingyuan who’d still come to see him at a time like this.

Shen Qingqiu started to talk, his voice hoarse: “How did you get in?”

Luo Binghe had put his heart into ensuring he did not have an easy time of it, so there was no way he would have allowed Yue Qingyuan to enter the water prison and give him this bit of relief.

Yue Qingyuan breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that he could still talk, and held his hand as he said in a low voice: “Don’t speak. Concentrate your qi and gather your spirit.”

He wanted to transmit spiritual energy to Shen Qingqiu, to let the wounds heal faster. For once Shen Qingqiu didn’t try to shake him off, because inwardly he was thinking: *That’s right, he is the head of a sect after all; no matter how tough Luo Binghe and that old man from Huanhua Palace may be, they still need to show a certain level of consideration on the surface.*

But it had probably still taken a lot of effort to get in here.

Spiritual energy flowed into his wounds, the pain whirling around in his body feeling like steel needles pricking him all over. Shen Qingqiu grit his teeth, smiling despite the overwhelming hate: “That little bastard Luo Binghe certainly has quite a few tricks up his sleeve.”

Hearing the deep-rooted malice in his tone of voice, Yue Qingyuan let out a sigh.

Yue Qingyuan was actually not someone prone to sighing; it was just that Shen Qingqiu always had the ability to cause him countless problems.

He tiredly said: “...Shidi. With things having reached this stage, why do you still not put the slightest bit of effort into thinking over your own past mistakes?”

Swallowing down all his pent-up frustration, Shen Qingqiu had always been extremely reluctant to admit his own faults; in front of Yue Qingyuan especially, there was no way he’d ever speak up. Shen Qingqiu spitefully replied: “What mistakes have I made? Zhangmen shixiong, please tell me, if Luo Binghe isn’t a bastard then what is he? You just wait. He won’t be satisfied just from dealing with me alone. If a big storm hits the cultivation

world in the future, my only mistake will have been that I didn't stab him to death immediately, back then."

Yue Qingyuan shook his head, as if he'd already expected this kind of response, and didn't bother to admonish him over it. With matters already being what they were, any sort of admonishments would be pointless to make.

He suddenly asked: "Did you really kill Liu-shidi?"

Shen Qingqiu hadn't the slightest desire to look at his face as they spoke.

But he still couldn't help lifting his eyes to glance at Yue Qingyuan's expression.

He paused for a moment, then suddenly pulled his hands out of Yue Qingyuan's grasp, and sat up from the ground.

Yue Qingyuan said: "You were always saying you'd kill him one day. But I never thought you would truly do it."

Shen Qingqiu said coldly: "Aren't you thinking it now? He's already been killed; doesn't Zhangmen shixiong feel it a little too late to come here criticizing this Shen? Or were you hoping to cleanse the sect of me?"

Yue Qingyuan said: "I am not qualified to criticize you."

The look on his face and in his eyes was tranquil to an extreme, so tranquil that Shen Qingqiu for some indescribable reason found himself flying into a rage out of shame: "Then what are you getting at!?"

"Shidi must once have considered, if in the beginning you had not treated Luo Binghe the way you did, all the events of today would never have come to happen."

Shen Qingqiu let out an involuntary laugh.

"Why must Zhangmen shixiong say such ridiculous talk? What's happened has already happened – even if I considered it a thousand times, *ten*

thousand times, there would never be any *what if*, no *in the beginning*—there are no opportunities to save this situation!”

Yue Qingyuan slightly raised his head.

Shen Qingqiu knew his words were knives stabbing into the pit of his stomach, and at first had been taking endless delight in that; but upon seeing Yue Qingyuan kneel distractedly there on the ground, staring at him with a blank look on his face, his calm demeanor and upright bearing completely obliterated without a trace, looking as if in the blink of an eye he'd aged by many years, a strange feeling suddenly welled up within his heart.

It was probably pity.

For the utterly unflappable, eternally calm and composed Cangqiong Mountain sect head Yue, to cut such a sorry figure in this moment, to look so weak—it really did make him feel a little pity.

This feeling of pity brought along with it the sudden sense that a years-old knot of frustration that had been building up in Shen Qingqiu's chest, had finally been cleared away.

He delightedly thought, Yue Qingyuan really had shown him the utmost benevolence.

However much guilt he may have been hiding in his heart, he should have finished paying it all back long ago.

Shen Qingqiu said: “You should go. Let me tell you, even if I got to do it all over again, it would still have come to this same result. I have vicious inclinations, I'm filled with resentment. Now Luo Binghe wants me to die a painful death, and I have only myself to blame.”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Do you still hold hate in your heart, at this moment in time?”

Shen Qingqiu roared with laughter: “I’m only really happy when others are suffering. What do you think?”

Yue Qingyuan lifted up Xuansu, the flat of the blade resting against the palms of his hands, and held it out before his eyes: “If you still hold hate. Then unsheathe Xuansu, and take my life.”

Shen Qingqiu scoffed: “Yue-zhangmen, kill you here? Do you think the criminal charges Luo Binghe gave me aren’t enough? Besides, who do you think you are? You think I’ll stop hating if I kill you? I’m beyond redemption, there’s nothing I *don’t* hate. Don’t blame this Shen for so rudely ridiculing you, but for Yue-zhangmen to consider himself the cure, you really think too highly of yourself!”

He was humiliating him to a painfully blunt degree, yet Yue Qingyuan refused to retreat, seeming not to understand his words, or perhaps as if he’d gathered up all his courage as he called out: “Xiao Jiu, I...”

Shen Qingqiu shouted: “DON’T CALL ME THAT!”

Yue Qingyuan slowly lowered the sword in his hands. After a long while, he took Shen Qingqiu’s hand again, ceaselessly sending him spiritual energy and relieving his wounds.

It was as if his courage had been scattered in pieces; Yue Qingyuan didn’t speak another word for the rest of their time afterwards.

In the end, Shen Qingqiu said: “Zhangmen shixiong has my gratitude for the generous gift. Now get out of here. I’d better not ever see you around me again.”

Yue Qingyuan attached Xuansu back at his waist, and just as he wished, slowly walked out.

If it’s possible for you to escape this disaster, then go as far away as you possibly can, Yue-zhangmen.

From today onwards, you shouldn't have any more connection with a thing like Shen Qingqiu.

(7)

Shen Qingqiu used his one remaining eye to stare at the cellar entrance. He didn't know how many days he'd been staring, when Luo Binghe finally arrived.

Despite being in a damp and gloomy cellar, Luo Binghe still looked as elegant and handsome as ever, untainted by even a speck of dust. As he stepped over the blackened bloodstains on the floor, he said in a clear and charming voice:

“Sure enough, Yue-zhangmen made it to his appointment as scheduled. It's all thanks to Shizun for writing such a sweet and deeply sorrowful blood letter. Otherwise there would have been no way for this disciple to so easily find success. I'd originally hoped to bring Yue-zhangmen's body back with me for Shizun to see, but those arrows were dipped in an odd poison, you see; when this disciple came closer, just the slightest touch, and Yue-zhangmen...aiya, I had no choice but to bring home his sword instead, to act as a souvenir for Shizun.”

Luo Binghe was trying to trick him.

Luo Binghe was a sinister, shameless little cheat with a mouth full of nothing but lies, he'd already told enough lies he could bury a man in them. So this time definitely had to be another of his crafty deceptions.

Luo Binghe sat down in the chair off to the side. This had always been his regular seat of honor during those times when Shen Qingqiu was wailing and screaming in pain. He scraped at the swaying tea leaves in his piping-hot cup as he gave his assessment: “The famed Xuansu was truly a sword befitting a hero, and one worthy of Yue-zhangmen. Although, this sword has something much more mysterious about it—Yue-zhangmen's cultivation has truly opened my eyes. While Shizun enjoys his later years

here, if he finds he has nothing to do, he is very welcome to consider pondering over this sword. It really is incredibly fascinating.”

Shen Qingqiu didn't understand.

In Huanhua Palace's water prison, at their final meeting, he'd used his talent for harsh words and malicious sarcasm to the best of his ability, telling Yue Qingyuan to get lost, and Yue Qingyuan had done exactly that. Shen Qingqiu felt he wasn't likely to have taken up that blood letter's invitation. No-one would step into such an incredibly bare-faced trap, as long as they could think with a level head.

He still didn't understand.

Wasn't he not going to come?

Luo Binghe was reasonably satisfied with the results, all smiles as he said: “Oh, right. Although Shizun's blood letter was deeply moving, it was unavoidably rather too careless and casual. It was half-heartedly written for this disciple under great pain, after all – this disciple understands. Therefore, as a show of sincerity, I specially attached a pair of other things to it.”

Shen Qingqiu understood. These “other things”, referred to the two legs that had once been attached to his body.

This was really too funny.

He'd once spent his every waking moment hoping that he would come, and he never did. Here he hadn't had the slightest expectation for him to come, and yet he'd done exactly that.

The corners of Shen Qingqiu's mouth turned upwards in a cold smile: “Ha. Haha. Yue Qingyuan, oh Yue Qingyuan.”

Luo Binghe's feelings had originally been something approaching cheerful, but at that odd laugh, he suddenly felt strangely unhappy.

He asked in a mild voice: “What are you laughing for?”

Shen Qingqiu continued to laugh, ignoring him. Luo Binghe reigned in his own self-satisfied expression, and spoke with rapt attention: “Shen Qingqiu, you don’t think feigning madness will actually work on me, do you?”

Shen Qingqiu enunciated each word in his reply: “Luo Binghe, you’re a bastard, did you know that?”

A stillness immediately fell over the room.

Luo Binghe stared at him, and Shen Qingqiu stared right back.

Suddenly, the corners of Luo Binghe’s mouth twitched upwards, his right hand caressed Shen Qingqiu’s left shoulder, and he pinched.

There was a terrifyingly ear-piercing scream.

Blood spurted like a waterfall from the break where Shen Qingqiu’s left arm had been; he screamed as he laughed, gasping for breath as he said: “Luo Binghe, hahahaha...oh Luo Binghe, you...”

As far as Luo Binghe was concerned, tyrannizing Shen Qingqiu had originally been an incredibly satisfying affair. Shen Qingqiu’s screams could bring him such pleasure that it felt as if he were walking on air. But this time, for some reason, Luo Binghe didn’t feel all that content.

The rise and fall of his chest grew increasingly more violent. He kicked Shen Qingqiu over, the kick so strong it sent him rolling across the floor, leaving a trail of blood behind him.

This was also how Luo Binghe had ripped off his legs back then, as if ripping off an insect’s limbs. After that initial hellish pain, the sensation no longer felt real.

On the contrary, Shen Qingqiu became able to articulate his words more distinctly than before, speaking in a clear and orderly manner: “Luo Binghe, it is thanks to me that you have today, so why are you not thanking me – in fact, quite the contrary, why are you so incapable of telling good from bad? You really are a thankless little bastard hahahaha...”

The violent rage passed as quickly as it came; Luo Binghe suddenly turned calm, flashed a sinister smile, and softly whispered: “You want to die? You can’t expect it to really be that easy. Shizun, after all the evil things you’ve done throughout your life, hurting those hostile towards you, hurting those with no malice whatsoever towards you, barely clinging to life and still able to throw a zhangmen in with the lot—if you don’t die a little slowly, get a chance to suffer all the misery everyone else did, how else could you make it up to them?”

He waved a hand, tossing the broken fragments of the Xuansu sword onto the floor.

Upon hearing that sound, it was as if Shen Qingqiu’s throat had been cut by an intangible sharp blade, his laughter stopping immediately.

Beneath the dishevelled hair and bloody face, a single eye burned like a white flame at night. He tremblingly pushed himself towards the broken sword.

There was nothing left.

Nothing left but a sword.

He had single-handedly facilitated Luo Binghe’s today, and now who had single-handedly created this outcome for him?

Yue Qingyuan was never supposed to have an end like this.

In order to come to a decades-late appointment, to fulfill a completely useless promise.

A broken sword and a dead man.

It shouldn’t be like this.

Threads of blood extended outwards; just when they were about to converge together, they slipped away again.

Bamboo Song

For a long time now, Zhuzhi-lang had known itself to be a disgusting monster.

Even in the southern border, where such creatures ran rampant, it could still be called a freak among monsters.

Back then it wasn't called Zhuzhi-lang – it had no name at all. Normally, upon seeing a half-man, half-snake thing crawling across the ground, nobody would bother to think of giving it a name. And even if they did, the demons of the southern border would much rather kick it a couple times, or poke at its tail to see whether or not the thing had a weak spot, and whether it would die if they managed to hit it.

Its daily itinerary was incredibly simple: Crawl, look for water, crawl, look for food, crawl, get into fights with other beast-shaped demons.

Although it didn't look like much, when it fought, it proved to not be very weak at all. On the contrary, not only was its body soft and nimble, but its disgusting appearance would often make its opponents feel unwell, causing them to be distracted in battle.

As a result, this ugly and troublesome thing was incredibly unwelcome in the southern border.

Even an educated nobleman like Tianlang-jun, upon meeting it for the first time, scrutinized it for a spell before earnestly saying: “How ugly.”

The black-armored generals standing silently in attendance behind him obviously didn't reply. Seemingly complaining to no-one in particular, Tianlang-jun repeated to himself: “Much too ugly.”

The meaning behind his emphasis on this statement was beyond clear, and it shrank back in response. Despite that, it had the strange feeling that this respectable nobleman's criticism didn't contain any actual revulsion within the words. It had seen its fair share of hateful looks over the years, and this man's expression didn't look like them at all.

Tianlang-jun gracefully half-crouched his body, staring at it, as he said: "Do you remember your mother?"

It shook its head.

Tianlang-jun said: "Oh. That's fine. If I had a mother like that, I'd probably wish I didn't remember her myself."

It didn't know what to say. Of course, even if it did it wouldn't be able to say anything, as it was only capable of making a low hissing noise.

Tianlang-jun smiled, and said: "Although, there are some things I should still tell you. Your mother is dead. I'm her older brother, and I came to see you according to her final wishes."

Demons were cold-blooded. They could talk about the death of blood relatives with a perfectly relaxed attitude, waving away the topic with just a single airy sentence.

It didn't have any real feelings in regards to this news, blankly nodding its head on force of habit.

Tianlang-jun appeared to have grown bored, and dully said: "All right. I've completed her final wishes. These are all your subordinates. From now on, this region belongs to you."

The "subordinates" he referred to were the few hundred black-armored generals forming a dense mass behind him. Although these things had no minds of their own and therefore couldn't think, they also didn't fear pain or death, couldn't get tired or stop, and were capable of forming an all-conquering army; and now they'd been casually handed over to a half-man, half-snake monster.

He stood up, brushed nonexistent dust off his legs, turned around and left. For some mysterious reason, after some hesitation, it slithered along after him.

Tianlang-jun turned to look back at it, perplexed: “What are you following me for?”

The snake man didn’t dare make another move. Upon seeing this, Tianlang-jun began to walk again, and it began slithering behind him once more.

Tianlang-jun stopped, baffled: “Do you not understand what I’m saying?”

After repeating this two or three times, Tianlang-jun decided he might as well ignore it, minding his own business as he walked on with hands behind his back. The snake man, meanwhile, awkwardly “followed” behind him.

Tianlang-jun had a unique rank, a respectable bloodline, and a status beyond the ordinary, so he naturally had quite a few enemies. During its journey following him, the number of small-fry who came to cause trouble numbered too many to count. Even though Tianlang-jun clearly didn’t need anyone to help him, it would still put its all into fighting these enemies to the death, offering its meager fighting strength as contribution to him.

After this had happened a good number of times, Tianlang-jun could no longer afford to ignore its presence.

He got a better look at the snake man, whose body was covered all over in cuts and bruises, and gave his assessment: “You’re still very ugly.”

The snake man shrank back, hurt. Tianlang-jun then smiled: “And you’re stubborn, to boot. That’s not very charming at all.”

In all the time it had followed him, no matter how many difficulties and obstacles it came across, it had never once shrank back – but faced with this not-at-all gentle evaluation, it suddenly felt the urge to turn around and run...or crawl, as it were.

Unexpectedly, in the next moment, Tianlang-jun's bare hand came down upon its head, and he sighed: "So ugly and stubborn, I can't watch anymore."

A bizarrely warm-yet-cold feeling flowed gradually through all its limbs and bones.

But when had it ever had limbs?

Very quickly, the snake man realized that at some point unbeknownst to it, its deformed body had grown fully-formed limbs. Ten fingers, something he'd always seen as elaborate and beyond his reach, now grew on his brand-new hand.

This was a teenager's body. Around fifteen or sixteen years old, fair-skinned, slender, healthy, complete. Tianlang-jun moved his hand away, his pitch-black pupils reflecting the image of a pale-skinned young man.

Tianlang-jun cupped his chin, saying: "I think this way should look a little better. Do you have any objections?"

He opened his mouth, wanting to speak. He'd finally gained human form after all this time, and yet his tongue and mouth refused to listen to instructions. As soon as he opened his mouth, letting out a slightly delayed single syllable, a rush of warm liquid slipped out from his eyes.

Although Zhuzhi-lang held the firm belief that nothing his sovereign did could ever be wrong, he secretly felt that the man might mentally be a little slow.

For a long period of time after getting Tianlang-jun's tacit acceptance to follow by his side, Zhuzhi-lang still didn't have a name.

Tianlang-jun rarely gave orders to those around him, nor did he have any need to call his name, and so they muddled along like this for many months.

Things finally came to a head one day when he wanted to look for a human realm poetry anthology. After searching everywhere to no avail, and with no alternative but to call someone over to help, he suddenly remembered there was a very forgettable nephew in the corner of the study.

But after the initial “Hey”, he realized he had no idea what to say next. Tianlang-jun frowned in thought, then asked: “Did I never ask you your name?”

He honestly replied: “Sovereign, this subordinate has no name.”

Tianlang-jun was perplexed: “How could you have no name? That’s strange. What am I supposed to call you then?”

He said: “My liege may call me however he sees fit.” He then walked over to a bookshelf, pulled out the poetry anthology which Tianlang-jun had shoved in at random after finishing it earlier, and presented it before him with both hands.

Tianlang-jun was very pleased, taking the book as he said: “Not having a name isn’t too big a problem, we’ll just have to give you one.” He lowered his head and carelessly flipped through a whole page, picked a phrase, and said without thinking, “I’ll call you Zhuzhi-jun then.”

He had good eyesight, and cast a glance over at the line.

Under green willows by a calm-flowing river, I hear a youth sing above the water.

Sunrise in the east and rain in the west, the road is as cloudy as it is clear.

A love poem. He shook his head.

Tianlang-jun said: “You don’t like it?” He held out the book, “So picky. You can choose one yourself, then.”

He didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, saying, ” Sovereign, only nobility can be addressed this way.”

Tianlang-jun said: “You’re very particular, despite your young age. Fine, I’ll call you Zhuzhi-lang then.”

He never put much thought into anything he did. Carelessly giving him a life, carelessly giving him a name. Carelessly, allowing “Zhuzhi-lang” to be born right here and now.

However absent-minded he may have been, however much he may have appeared to treat matters as no more than child’s play, this was still his Tianlang-jun, the man for whom he would face any difficulty, happily risking life and limb to serve.

Little could he have imagined that Tianlang-jun was also thinking, *maybe this nephew of mine has been a snake for too many years, it’s made him a little stupid.*

He refused to call him Uncle, insisting on calling him Sovereign. He wouldn’t go live the free and unfettered life of a suzerain in the southern border, insisting instead on coming out here to do odd jobs and run errands. He’d refused a perfectly good name and rank, insisting on putting himself down a level.

He really was kind of stupid. But having a mind that didn’t work well was something that stuck with you for a lifetime, and one you could do nothing about; might as well let him do as he pleased.

Tianlang-jun was really extraordinarily fond of anything with any relation to humans.

He probably thought demons were a cold and vapid bunch. The way he looked at the human race was with a passion bordering on weird, his mental image of them almost exaggeratedly beautiful. Every time he went out, the place he’d visit most often was the borderland. When he crossed the boundary, the time he’d be gone could range from anywhere as short as having a cup of wine and listening to a storyteller, to as long as taking a scenic tour for a year and a half without a single qualm.

Tianlang-jun ought to have hated being followed. His black-armored generals would often get sent out by the hundreds or thousands. But Zhuzhi-lang for one thing didn't nag, and for another didn't get in his way all the time; he'd just follow quietly behind, so it wasn't much different from him not being there at all. Occasionally he'd help pay a bill or run an errand or something, and he was very convenient and considerate as well, so Tianlang-jun didn't have any real reason to avoid him.

Even when meeting that Maiden Su, the two didn't object to him following beside them. There was an unspoken mutual agreement between them to treat him as if he really were just a snake incapable of understanding human language or words of love, and so they went about their business as if there were nobody else present.

There was only one time Tianlang-jun ever opened his mouth to chase off Zhuzhi-lang, and went as far as to use the words "Fuck off" in saying it. This could be considered one of the crudest things his sovereign, who had always aimed to be gentle and refined, had ever said aloud.

Bailu Mountain.

Zhuzhi-lang wasn't there to see what exactly happened when Tianlang-jun and Su Xiyan first met, because at the time he'd gone off to answer Tianlang-jun's request, standing in line to buy a well-known writer's latest work.

He hadn't been at all curious in the beginning. But from that point on, Tianlang-jun spent a very long amount of time in this sort of state:

When he was acting as a snake-shaped transportation tool, Tianlang-jun spoke up from atop his head.

"According to the playbooks I've read, human realm maidens are all tender and soft, considerate and agreeable; so I thought *all* the maidens were like that. It seems I've been hoodwinked. You shouldn't look at too many of these sorts of things, Zhuzhi-lang."

The next time, the sovereign – who had entirely forgotten his earlier warning “not to look at too many plays” – spoke up again while watching a play with keen interest.

“Do I look too weak to lift anything? Or like I’m too poor even to afford the trip home?”

When Zhuzhi-lang was doing his laundry, Tianlang-jun crouched gracefully beside him, and opened his mouth once again.

“Zhuzhi-lang, what do you think of my face? Isn’t it handsome? Generally speaking, shouldn’t people who see someone like me immediately become the spitting image of young women whose pure hearts have sprouted a yearning for love?”

Zhuzhi-lang shook open the clothes he’d just wrung dry, used a bamboo pole to hang them up, and deferentially agreed with him, while inwardly thinking how he’d also seen a good number of that mess of playbooks together with his sovereign. He didn’t know what other people might be like, but the way the sovereign acted, it was really more like the lovelorn sixteen-year-old young girls in the stories.

So he couldn’t help being curious.

In Zhuzhi-lang’s imagination, a maiden who went in and out of a deserted, demon-infested city on her own, who told Tianlang-jun to stay out of her way at a nice safe distance if he was going to play music and sing while she chopped down evil spirits, who when done chopping would toss three silvers to Tianlang-jun as fare for the trip home—if she wasn’t tall, strong, and beefy, then at the very least she must have a good bone structure and an ominous glint in her eye.

But when he actually met the culprit who’d triggered Tianlang-jun into tormenting him for days with his self-philosophizing, Zhuzhi-lang discovered that she wasn’t quite what he’d imagined.

Tianlang-jun liked visiting the human realm. Visiting the human realm required spending money. And he never remembered to bring money. So it

was up to Zhuzhi-lang to remember for him. But he didn't have any money sense, was unfamiliar with the idea of moderation, and whenever he was overtaken by feelings of grandeur his spending would reach extravagant levels; Zhuzhi-lang was unable to restrain him, and with their funds spilling out like a river, even carrying mountains of gold and oceans of silver on his back did not make it any easier to deal with the situation. Finally there came a time where they found themselves embarrassingly short of money.

Just when they were abashedly considering spending the night on the street in this foreign land, a tall, slender, black-clothed, sword-wielding young woman wandered aimlessly by.

Tianlang-jun said: "Halt."

As she was brushing past, that woman slightly raised an eyebrow, mouth ticking upwards in a mocking hint of a smile, and did indeed halt.

Tianlang-jun said: "When you come across injustice on the road, should you not draw your sword and rush to offer aid?"

The other replied: "Drawing my sword is a possibility I may consider, but if you wish me to loosen my purse strings then this humble one respectfully declines. You still haven't paid back the three silvers I loaned you to go home with last time."

Tianlang-jun said: "Didn't I? It's only three silvers. All right, if you just lend me three more silvers, you can buy me for three days."

This was met with a definite rejection: "Sire, you appear too fragile even to carry a pole or lift heavy objects, unused to working your four limbs and unable to tell the five grains apart. What use could I possibly buy you for?"

Having been watching this whole time, Zhuzhi-lang honestly said: "Sovereign, I'm afraid...this person considers you too costly."

Tianlang-jun had been given the cold shoulder. This was fine, sometimes his own serving girls and guards would secretly ignore him for a little while too, especially when he was passionately and expressively reciting poems

aloud. But that shouldn't lower his value so much that a three-silver price had people turning away.

Tianlang-jun said: "All the rest aside. Do you mean to say that my face isn't worth even three silvers?"

The woman choked at that, examined his face for a moment, then said with a smile: "Hm, it is indeed sufficient."

And with a careless flick of the hand, she tossed him a shiny gold ingot.

From then on, Tianlang-jun's expenses in the human realm became like a broken floodgate, increasingly free and unfettered to a point that was devastating to watch. He'd found a golden mountain to lean on; Zhuzhi-lang just needed to pull out his empty wallet and put on a somewhat embarrassed expression, and without a second thought he'd go happily off to knock on that mountain's door.

Zhuzhi-lang had the feeling there was something wrong with this scenario, like something had gotten mixed up.

Why was Su Xiyao so much like the rich and profligate young nobleman of illustrious birth in the plays?

Why was Tianlang-jun so much like the sheltered runaway daughter of a wealthy family, unfamiliar with the ways of the world?

And why was he himself so much like the small and cautious dowry maid serving by her young mistress's side?

Zhuzhi-lang had tried getting his sovereign to take note of this mix-up in their positions, to recover his dignity as a demon lord; however, Tianlang-jun was taking great pleasure in this relationship where he was provided for like a kept mistress. The blind passion he'd once held towards all of humanity, was now poured entirely onto a single person.

Su Xiyan really was a cold-hearted but indescribably wonderful person.

When they met, she'd take them in search of all sorts of valuable objects, and all sorts of interesting places. Banned books and handwritten copies which Zhuzhi-lang couldn't manage to collect no matter how hard he tried, unusual magical fungi which grew in hidden karst caves, ephemeral lakes with water that flowed like liquid crystal, prostitutes whose names had yet to be widely known, but who played exquisitely passionate tunes on the pipa. When they didn't meet, she'd disappear without a trace for anywhere from ten days to half a month, and they couldn't find her no matter how hard they tried.

Calm and collected, not showing a hint of infatuation, never mentioning yearning. Having her own plans, and watching with the cool eye of a bystander.

Because of that half-snake bloodline, Zhuzhi-lang had a sort of natural animal intuition, which gave him the vague feeling that this person's approach was an incredibly dangerous thing.

She wasn't enchantingly alluring like a stereotypical demon woman, but instead was deadly earnest, fully concentrated, and looked to be intellectual and polite. But she really did just *look* to be "intellectual and polite". Zhuzhi-lang couldn't say he'd be able to make it out alive if he tried to fight her for real.

Beneath her refined appearance was arrogance and indifference, schemes hidden in ambition. As the person second in power at Huanhua Palace, her high position allowed her to command thousands. And the cultivation world which Huanhua Palace and the rest of the four great sects belonged to had been sworn enemies of demonkind since time immemorial. As far as they were concerned, Su Xiyan was indeed a dangerous character.

Zhuzhi-Lang gave a detailed report of the information he'd obtained to Tianlang-jun, and yet Tianlang-jun wasn't concerned in the slightest.

Once he became infatuated with a thing, he'd forget all around him, staking everything he had on that one thing. It wasn't that he didn't know the

details of the matter, but that he never held the slightest bit of suspicion.

And the price he paid for “not suspecting”, was to be suppressed in the dark sunless space beneath Bailu Mountain for well over ten years, without any chance to free himself.

“I want to kill humans.”

This was the one line Tianlang-jun had repeated most often over the past decade. Whereas the Tianlang-jun of before had loved humans most of all, and had never once killed one.

Without a powerful source of demonic energy to support his human form, Zhuzhi-lang shed his skin and returned once more to his half-snake body. Whenever he saw him crawling with difficulty back and forth across the floor, Tianlang-jun would throw out a “Fuck off”.

“The way you crawl is terribly unsightly,” he’d say.

Zhuzhi-lang would then quietly wriggle away, look for a place outside that was safe from both sun and moonlight, and continue practicing the crawling he was no longer accustomed to doing.

His sovereign’s temper had turned unimaginably bad, yet Zhuzhi-lang couldn’t manage to even get up the energy to feel angry or aggrieved.

When Tianlang-jun said “Fuck off”, it meant he wanted him to fuck off back to the demon realm, fuck off back to the southern border, fuck off anywhere at all, as long as he didn’t stay around Tianlang-jun.

Tianlang-jun couldn’t tolerate others seeing him in such a low and sorry state, unable either to truly live or die. From birth he had been the most respected noble heir of the demon race; he’d never suffered for his actions, was forever calm and graceful, rejected any vulgar things that might hurt his image, and was even slightly mysophobic. He didn’t like ugly things, but in reality, the him of right now was uglier than anyone else in the land.

Covered all over in blood, locked beneath seventy-two metal ropes and forty-nine layers of talismans, unable to do anything but watch as his own body gradually began to stink from rot, and with his mind extremely clear despite it all, so that he couldn't even faint if he wanted to. That bunch from the cultivation world had been unable to kill him, so they'd instead thought up every possible means to torment him while still alive. Even Zhuzhi-lang's grotesque half-snake form might possibly have looked a little better than Tianlang-jun under these circumstances.

Zhuzhi-lang after reverting could no longer speak, and so Tianlang-jun began talking to himself. Almost half of every day would be spent repeating the dialogue and songs from those plays. Sometimes Tianlang-jun would sing on and on, only to stop so suddenly it was as if his windpipe had been cut. Zhuzhi-lang would know then, this must have been one of the plays that Su Xiyao had taken them to see.

But after having paused for a while, Tianlang-jun would suddenly start up again, singing louder than before as he finished the rest of the song. The touching melody, sung by a hoarse voice in a dark and deserted ravine, was drawn out for a long time. Long and mournful.

Zhuzhi-lang couldn't talk, couldn't tell him "Stop singing", couldn't raise his hands, couldn't cover his ears to stop himself from hearing that voice, and because of this became ever more aware of what it meant to be "helpless".

If you're broken-hearted, if you're suffering, why must you keep forcing yourself?

All he was able to do, was to persist day by day, carrying water from a subterranean lake little by little on a leaf in his mouth, and use it to wash the wounds on Tianlang-jun's body which would never be able to heal.

For over a decade, they didn't have the slightest idea of Luo Binghe's existence. Rather than successfully seizing power and position as they'd expected, Su Xiyao had vanished without a trace; they couldn't find hide

nor hair of her. Even in the long period of time after finally seeing the light of day, they still had no idea.

So when Zhuzhi-lang saw that face for the first time at the southern border, he was so surprised he even forgot to do the work he'd been sent out here for, and after a short skirmish, went straight back to report to Tianlang-jun.

Thus came the battle at the sacred mausoleum.

After Shen Qingqiu had been spit out and properly settled down, Tianlang-jun watched Zhuzhi-lang as he assiduously fanned the charcoal, saying: "Do you think he's more like me or like her?"

Zhuzhi-lang knew perfectly well which "he" was being referred to here. He replied: "You already said it yourself, sovereign. He's like his mother."

Tianlang-jun shook his head, smiling: "Trying so hard to act cold-hearted..."

In reality they both knew, Luo Binghe's yearning for and dependence on others, his pursuance of justice without a second thought, and that single-minded obsession from which he refused to look away, were all much more like Tianlang-jun.

Tianlang-jun rested his chin in his hand, looking at the sleeping Shen Qingqiu as he sighed: "But he's much more fortunate than I was."

It truly was fortunate that the person Luo Binghe refused to let go of was someone like Shen Qingqiu. At the very least, Shen Qingqiu surely wouldn't gather the entire cultivation world to suppress Luo Binghe beneath Cangqiong Mountain.

Plus, there were only two people in this world who had ever looked upon Zhuzhi-lang's repulsive other form without a hint of disgust. One was Tianlang-jun, and the other was Shen Qingqiu.

Tianlang-jun said: "How about it? Would you like to take this piece of fortune for yourself?"

Zhuzhi-lang stared for a good while before finally realizing what Tianlang-jun meant, and immediately turned bright red: “Sovereign!”

Tianlang-jun said: “Take it, take it. We’re all demons here, what’s there to fuss about? Besides, you’re only cousins, the previous head of the Mobei clan took his own little brother’s main wife without bothering to hide anything at all.”

Zhuzhi-lang said: “I don’t have any such intentions!”

Tianlang-jun said: “Then why are you blushing?”

Zhuzhi-lang said with restraint: “Sovereign...if you didn’t have me collect so many of those books, or hadn’t made me look at them with you, or maybe even stopped reciting aloud and forcing me to constantly review them, your subordinate would absolutely not be blushing right now.”

Because of that he constantly had all sorts of strange things echoing in his ears, and couldn’t with a clear conscience look straight at Immortal Master Shen.

He understood why Tianlang-jun always loved mocking him like this. Behind the teasing, there was also a sense of probing and egging on.

From the first day he was freed from Bailu Mountain, Tianlang-jun didn’t have any plans to keep this body for long, nor did he have any intent of considering what he’d do in the future.

But upon meeting Shen Qingqiu, Tianlang-jun felt as if a weight had been lifted off his shoulders. He thought: “My foolish nephew finally has someone to take over when I’m gone.”

That slow-witted Zhuzhi-lang could only revolve his life around others, never giving any thought to himself. If he could find someone new to follow, then his prospects in life wouldn’t be so bleak after Tianlang-jun tormented himself to death. He felt that Shen Qingqiu was a pretty good

choice for a partner. Regardless of what definition you put on the partnership.

Wrapped in this puzzling sense of relief, Tianlang-jun became increasingly more unrestrained and free with his use of demonic energy, his body corroding and declining faster by the day, often dropping an arm or finger or something. Zhuzhi-lang was hard-pressed in his search for methods of mending it.

This time he was attempting to sew the limbs back together with needle and thread. Tianlang-jun allowed him to hold his arm, needle pricking in and out, as he said: “You’ve always had a very good intuition.”

Zhuzhi-lang replied with an affirmative. Tianlang-jun said: “Between me and Luo Binghe, how do you think things will turn out?”

There was a long silence before he unhurriedly said: “You don’t need to say anything, I know. I’m guaranteed to lose.”

Zhuzhi-lang bit off the string and knotted it.

Tianlang-jun half-jokingly said: “You might as well start following Peak Lord Shen from now on. If he can cover for Luo Binghe, he shouldn’t have a problem adding you under that cover too.”

Zhuzhi-lang said: “You should sleep, Sovereign.”

Tianlang-jun kept talking nonsense: “Aren’t you heading to Peak Lord Shen’s tent tonight, to pull out those passion threads? You heard when I asked him if he’d dual cultivated with Luo Binghe earlier today; the way he acted, you could tell at a glance that he hadn’t yet. You know what I mean when I say the early bird gets the worm, don’t you?”

Zhuzhi-lang pretended not to listen, instead bending down to take off his boots. But his hands came up empty – Tianlang-jun bent his legs, boots pressing down on animal hide, as he earnestly asked him: “What do I need to do in order to strike a blow to your self-esteem, so that you’ll lose confidence in me and take your leave?”

Zhuzhi-lang said: "I've seen too many plays and books, this scene isn't a novel one anymore. You will never be able to break this subordinate's self-esteem. So go to bed, Sovereign."

Tianlang-jun said: "I don't want to sleep so soon. You hurry on over to Peak Lord Shen's tent, I'll come by to check in on the two of you soon after."

Zhuzhi-lang helplessly replied: "Sovereign, you're really too willful." Pestering endlessly, indulging in the wildest fantasies, putting out nothing but rotten ideas.

Tianlang-jun said: "Haven't I always been this willful, all these years? So how about it, are you ready to consider leaving me?"

Today's sovereign seemed almost as if he were drunk, his ability to leave people wavering between laughter and tears now multiplied by ten. Zhuzhi-lang shook his head, reached out to grab five or six times, finally caught hold of his boots, and stubbornly pulled them off, repeating: "Go to bed, Sovereign."

After getting pushed down onto the bed and forcibly tucked in, Tianlang-jun gave his assessment: "You're becoming increasingly more like a nursemaid."

He let out a sigh: "Do you think your uncle's only playing with you? You won't tell me to stop, neither will you look for your own means of retreat. Zhuzhi-lang, the way you are, whatever will you do about your future?"



"It turns out I really can't hate humanity after all." So Tianlang-jun said to Shen Qingqiu.

To tell the truth, upon hearing this, Zhuzhi-lang actually felt a little happy for him.

His sovereign had finally admitted to his true feelings, which had never actually changed; he no longer had to force himself.

Amidst clouds of dust and falling rocks, Tianlang-jun murmured: “Ai, Zhuzhi-lang, the way you are now really doesn’t look very good at all.”

There was actually no need to grumble about this. The monster thought, it still had that little bit of strength left, enough to hold on a while longer, so it could keep its sovereign from dying along with it. He didn’t need to worry about the view being less beautiful when dying together with it.

There was an explosively loud noise as Maigu Ridge turned to dust, and a giant snake dropped down towards the shimmering silver Luo River.

Shen Qingqiu hadn’t actually heard all of what Tianlang-jun said; there’d been another quiet line at the end, which only Zhuzhi-lang had heard.

He said: “But, why is it so difficult, to be fond of someone?”

At the time Zhuzhi-lang was unable to squeeze out a smile, nor could it speak. All it could do was thoughtfully flick its tongue, getting snake saliva all over Tianlang-jun’s face.

It thought, *it really is difficult.*

But, no matter the difficulty, it can never make one’s heart stop feeling that fondness.

“What are you daydreaming about, you dunce! You’re supposed to get to work!”

The Great Airplane spat out the foxtail he’d been holding in his mouth with a “ptooey”.

He mentally pointed a thousand middle fingers and a thousand words starting with F in the direction of a certain fiendish Anding Peak shixiong, then turned around with a face wreathed in smiles, bashfully running to join the rest: “Coming!”

X-shixiong spat: “All you know how to do is goof off.”

Older-than-average outer disciple Shang Qinghua, physically 17, followed the rest of the group at an exasperatingly slow pace, looking in all directions as they unloaded goods off the ship and onto the dock.

That’s right, the Great Airplane – these days you could call him Shang Qinghua.

Shang Qinghua, the nasty little man from the harem novel he’d personally written, the treacherous spy, the cannon fodder/logistics guy who’d spent his whole life industriously working for Mobei-jun, only to get whacked the minute his cold-hearted boss was done using him.

Though actually, at this point in time, he was still an outer disciple getting bullied around by everyone else at Anding Peak; he wasn’t the head disciple, and hadn’t changed his name to join the Qing generation.

Anding Peak was in itself a very put-upon peak.

The peak lord was basically like the head of a housekeeping services center, put-upon; all the disciples then were like unpaid hourly workers, equally put-upon; the outer disciples didn’t even need mentioning, seeing as how they were at the very bottom of the food chain, the most put-upon of them all. Everyone there was ill-tempered, and those with seniority bullying those lower than them in the ranks was the normal course of operations.

Shang Qinghua would occasionally curse to himself, *just wait until I get that peak lord position, then you'll all see if I...hehe.*

But he quickly waved away these vain delusions.

Think a minute, getting the peak lord position=having assistance from the demon realm=Mobei-jun's your boss=final conclusion: Get brutally wiped out by the boss as soon as he's done using you.

It obviously wasn't worth it.

If Shang Qinghua could follow his own desires, he'd throw off his clothes, roll up his bedding, go rushing down from Cangqiong Mountain Sect, escape the cultivation world, and run off towards the free life of a pauper. He had every confidence he could manage to live a pretty good life just relying on the pile of info he'd gathered while researching for a transmigration harem novel back in the day, like how to make soap, glass, abacuses, etc. HAHAAHAHAHAHA!

But, if he even so much as thought up the idea—

[Rules violation, penalty points.]

Fine, so he'd he'd transmigrated into his own harem novel, but why wasn't he the protagonist?

Alright, so he could live with not being the protagonist, but why was there also a gods-damned system or whatever!

Everything was the fault of the guy who'd started that thread, if the antis hadn't started arguing nobody would've gotten hurt. And that Peerless Cucumber, may he be cursed to never be in a position to use his cucumber.

Shang Qinghua moved box after box of heavy books from the ship onto a handcart, then harnessed the horse, still silently and ceaselessly cursing.

In cultivation novels, you should normally be able to deal with trivial matters like transporting goods with just a wave of your hand. At the end of the day, this was all his own fault; he'd just happened to write some kind of

low fantasy setting, where the coolies all had to do real actual work, and in the end it turned out what he'd actually done was dig a hole for himself.

Alright so the truth is what he really wanted to say was: Qingjing Peak could really fucking torment people!

Nobody was better than them at causing trouble! If you helped the immortal maidens of Xianmei Peak transport cosmetics or hairpins or earrings or new clothes or whatever, sure it was a little tiring, but at the very least it left you feeling happy on the inside. Pain on the body, fluff in the heart. But what was up with acting as porters for Qingjing Peak!?

Every time they purchased anything, that was a few hundred catties of books, forcing these Anding Peak members to huff and puff as they descended the mountain to collect them, then huff and puff their way back up the peak with the delivery. Which was all well and good for *them*, their butts not leaving their chairs, their fingers not leaving their strings, just sitting around as they waited for the goods to show up at the door.

Stop pretending you're so XXX'ing aloof, if you've got skills then go down the mountain and pick up the stuff yourselves!

The other outer disciples were also complaining: "Those disciples from Qingjing Peak have clearly shown they look down on our Anding Peak, and here we are having to do their grunt work over and over again."

Someone indignantly said: "That Shen Qingqiu especially takes himself way too seriously, he sticks his nose so high up in the air I'm amazed he can see what's in front of him."

"Even if that Xiuya sword of his has something of a name to it, the way he acts is still much too arrogant."

"Heheh, he's willing to even pick fights with Baizhan Peak's head disciple Liu Qingge, there's no way he'd care about nobodies like us."

"With the way those Baizhan Peak folks act, and with the temper Liu Qingge has, how haven't they beaten him to death yet?"

“There’s no way they could, you think Yue-shixiong would just stand by and let them go at it? With him around, Liu Qingge will never get a chance to murder Shen Qingqiu.”

Another outer disciple who, like him, had joined Cangqiong Mountain at a late age, spoke up with a sour voice: “I don’t know how that Shen Qingqiu managed to get picked as head disciple anyway, what with him having joined up so late. Everyone says he’s on friendly terms with Yue-shixiong, but I’ve never once seen him visit Qiongdong Peak, and whenever he meets Yue-shixiong it’s always with a fake aloof look that’s stiff as a corpse; but it doesn’t seem like they’re on *bad* terms with each other, either.”

Shang Qinghua silently kept his mouth shut, feeling unbearably stifled.

Ai! I really wanna gossip, I want to take the plot I set up that died in the womb and throw it in all your faces! Nobody knows more about these dusty old matters than yours truly, the amazing guy who single-handedly created this world!

The party’s muttering caused resentment to soar, getting angrier the more they talked, envy and hate mingling together without any actual target to argue with. Shang Qinghua stayed withdrawn as he drove the cart, getting by with a laugh or two whenever anyone talked to him, prudently making sure he didn’t add a single word to the conversation. They might be enthusiastically pouring out their sufferings right now, but in the future there was always the chance they might secretly rat out the others who’d complained today. Gluttony might give a moment’s pleasure, but if one of these days somebody reports you, and you find the other peaks’ disciples all turning their gazes on you, that’s when you’ll have to take the consequences. People’s hearts are sinister, it’s important to protect yourself!

The road after the rain was bumpy and full of potholes, the cart swaying back and forth with each turn of the wheels. Amidst the crooked rocking, the system prompted with a jingle:

[Mission, prepare.]

The moment he heard this, Shang Qinghua's face scrunched up like a chrysanthemum.

He said with an obsequious smile: 'System-da'ge, all these messages you announce, aren't they short to kind of a deceptive degree? Why don't you say clearly what this mission's supposed to be? How am I supposed to prepare? What am I preparing? You can at least give me a tip, can't you?'

The system reticently said: [You understand.]

Shang Qinghua: '.....'

I don't understand!

At that moment, there was a *clank*, and the cart suddenly stopped moving, as if it had been blocked by something on the ground.

The outer disciples atop the cart and those following behind all jolted along with it. Leaning unsteadily from side to side, they'd already been sizzling with anger to begin with, and at once began slapping the rails as they hurled their abuse: "You dunce, you can't even drive a cart properly! Go on, what're you stopping for!"

Shang Qinghua didn't know why the cart had suddenly jammed up either; he bemusedly jumped down, took a glance, and immediately felt his soul leaving his body from terror.

The reason the cart's wheel had stopped moving, was because it had gotten stuck in a pothole in the ground. The water in this puddle had iced over, forcefully freezing the wooden wheel in place.

Intangible cold air was wreaking havoc on the atmosphere around him. The winter was cold, but Shang Qinghua's heart was even colder. He shivered as he raised his eyes.

A shadow in a black cloak was currently walking slowly towards them. Tall yet slender, it appeared to be the figure of a youth.

The system finally added a few extra words for once:

[Opponent's current anger points: 1000.]

[Mission objective: Survive.]

[End of tips, good luck.]

The Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky had a bad habit of chopping up his outlines.

Before setting pen to paper and officially writing it out, he'd first plant a suggestion in his writing, observe which way the wind was blowing in the comments section, and use that to decide whether or not to keep that part of the plot.

For example, Shen Qingqiu got "mansluts need no explanation" over 10k times, and so became a tragic victim of his outline chopping.

Oh, and Bing-ge's dad got hit even worse, to the point he never even made an appearance.

The advantage to this was that he was serving his readers, thus ensuring at the very least that his subscribers wouldn't all jump ship and fall to their deaths in the pool.

The bad part of it, meanwhile, was that the foreshadowing he'd originally put down was left to rot, there were plotheoles all over the place like a road full of potholes, and if you had the slightest interest in pursuing plot, the tiniest bit of good taste, a somewhat harder-to-deceive reader would end up bombarding him in abuse.

Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky was often rather depressed over it himself. Because honestly he didn't like constantly writing all these crazy nonsensical plot twists either, especially when those plot twists were all slaps in the face of a bunch of villains whose IQ couldn't even reach the quota. Sometimes he wanted to try portraying a three-dimensional, multi-

faceted cannon fodder too, to show that he too had a basic understanding of human nature, and wasn't a total lost cause in the pursuit of literary ideals.

But readers didn't buy that. His living expenses couldn't be guaranteed.

So compared to readers and the cost of living, human nature and literary ideals were worth jack shit hahahahahahahahaha!

Getting back to the point. It's exactly because of this bad habit of his, that many original details were lost, never to see the light of day. For example...

When Mobei-jun first caught Shang Qinghua!

It was obviously never mentioned in the main text. The main plotline of the novel was about Bing-ge overflowing with wild arrogance as he ferociously domineered all before him, nobody cares how this piece of shit cannon fodder became a spy.

But this world had automatically patched up that missing portion. Consequently, the Great Airplane completely lost his prophetic advantage as the author, so when the plot actually began to play for real, he was actually late by a good few beats before getting in the groove!

X-shixiong drew his sword (which as an Anding Peak disciple he'd never get to unsheathe even once in 800 years), and shouted with a powerful voice: "What evildoer dares approach!"

The crowd of fellow disciples was stirred to excitement, one by one unsheathing their swords after him: "You dare show yourself before Cangqiong Mountain Sect's dis..."

Mobei-jun was evidently in an extremely bad mood, not even letting them finish the entrance lines customarily given to cannon fodder; he audibly cracked his knuckles.

Icy arrows swept the sky like a gust of wind, and heads fell plopping to the ground.

Shang Qinghua was simultaneously screaming and roaring on the inside: *That's terrifying! But also really hot! Seriously fcking hot!*

But no matter how jaw-droppingly, awe-strikingly, earth-shatteringly hot it was, if he was destined to get killed by this guy in the future, Shang Qinghua was still absolutely not doing it!

Against all expectations, X-shixiong pushed his shoulder: "Hurry up and move!"

Shang Qinghua felt as if his heart were being fried and toasted, but at the same time he felt extremely clear-headed, arms and legs sticking as firmly to the cart as a piece of chewing gum: "To do what?"

X-shixiong: "To eliminate the demon and defend proper ways, to right wrongs according to Heaven's decree!"

Why don't you go first then? Shang Qinghua said: "After you, shixiong!"

X-shixiong was indignant: "If I tell you to go then you go, don't talk so much nonsense!" With the combined help of the others, they all worked together to pry and kick Shang Qinghua off the cart. Shang Qinghua knew perfectly well, this bunch of outer disciples wanted nothing more than for him to stall Mobei-jun just long enough for them to make their escape. His mind was clear as crystal, his position as resolute as it could possibly be, firmly occupying his base of operations with no intention of moving as he tearfully mourned: "Don't do this to me, shixiong! We've been classmates all these years, do you really have the heart to use me as cannon fodder at a time like this!"

X-shixiong began talking irresponsibly in his terror: "What cannon fodder? If you take down this demon sorcerer you're sure to earn great merits, you'll enjoy a meteoric rise in success, this is the only way out for us outer disciples, standing right before your eyes at this very moment!"

Shang Qinghua could feel himself losing his grip on the cart, and said in a heartrending tone of voice: "I'm going then. I'm really gonna go!"

Right as he finished speaking, he was forcefully peeled off the cart, and thrown to the ground.

He was blocking the path right in front of Mobei-jun's boots; his sword was still half-sheathed; his heart still hadn't properly decided whether or not to draw it.

Mobei-jun let out a grim laugh, an icy blue flashing across his eyes. Before you know it, Shang Qinghua had plopped down and embraced his thigh.

All the shixions: “=□=”

Mobei-jun: “= =”

Shang Qinghua was down on one knee: “My king, please allow me to follow you all my life!”

Mobei-jun wanted to kick him off, but Shang Qinghua's sticking power was too strong. Trying to slap him dead was even harder. He was like a gecko on a wall, nimbly crawling this way and that, while still somehow managing to stick to that thigh.

He couldn't help growing really angry at this.

Upon seeing that he had such a unique ability in his skillset, Anding Peak's outer disciples were overjoyed, throwing the goods off the cart as they dashed away at top speed. Shang Qinghua had only just started cursing them out in his head when, barely three seconds later, he heard a series of screams coming from up ahead.

A great number of ice threads, thin as silk, had pierced through all their chests. Silvery light danced wildly as blossoms of blood splashed in all directions.

Upon seeing this development, Shang Qinghua's grip on Mobei-jun's thigh became as firm as steel. He began blabbering: “My king, please take me under your wing. I'm really useful!”

Mobei-jun's body seemed to tilt for a moment, before he said: "Oh? What use do you have?"

"I can pour tea and carry water and do laundry and make beds...no wait." Shang Qinghua considerately gave his analysis, "Look, my king, I can be a spy for you at Cangqiong Mountain, pass on information to you, help demonkind in achieving the magnificent feat of dominating the human realm."

Mobei-jun chuckled: "An outer disciple, and one from Anding Peak at that. If you were to be a spy, how many months or years would it take to achieve this magnificent feat for demonkind?"

Shang Qinghua sheepishly said: "Discrimination between peaks, something like that, isn't a very good thing to do, I think."

How come even *demons* discriminated against their side of the mountain range? Plus the discrimination against the idea of "Anding Peak" was even greater than the discrimination against "outer disciples"...that was unfair, seriously unfair!

Just as he was weeping bitter tears, impossible to disentangle, insisting on submitting even unto death, Mobei-jun abruptly—collapsed.

Shang Qinghua was still clinging to his thigh; when Mobei-jun toppled over, he was almost crushed beneath him, and hurriedly let go.

He crouched there for a while in a daze, before suddenly realizing—Mobei-jun had come here injured, hadn't he?

No wonder he was making such a sour face, in such an angry mood, and so easy to push as well!

Did he just happen to accidentally jab the injury? Sometimes a slip of the hand could be a good thing!

Shang Qinghua cautiously moved closer, inspecting him carefully.

Just as he expected, on Mobei-jun's lower back, around his right kidney or thereabouts, was a thin wound the length of a finger joint. A little sharp golden point protruded from the wound; you could vaguely tell that it was made of golden filigree, with a complicated design, its edges shaped like flower petals.

Something as flirtatious as this must be Huanhua Palace's Linghua Throwing Star, no doubt about it!

This sort of weapon was something the Great Airplane as an author had made up on the fly; the throwing star was small and light, with a bit of anesthetic applied to it, making it difficult for the target to realize something had invaded their body. If they made too great a movement, the throwing star would gloriously "bloom", growing six razor-sharp petals which cut into the target's innards.

Sounds a little familiar, doesn't it? Like it clashes with a certain demon realm organism's design, right? No problem, it's an easy fix, this can be explained as the Linghua Throwing Star having been invented by a Huanhua Palace predecessor who barely managed to escape the demon realm, and based its design on that strange organism called "Passion Thread". In short, don't mind little details like this!

End of voice-over, pulling forcefully back to the main subject.

In other words, this pure-blooded demon rich kid, who was very likely to kill him in one blow sometime in the future, right now had not only been stabbed in the kidney by Huanhua Palace, but had also been heavily anesthetized.

By the looks of things, Mobei-jun had just fought his way out of Huanhua Palace's encirclement. Demons all held very serious grudges, and Mobei's clan had always held grievances against Huanhua Palace; their gaining the greatest number of casualties at the Immortal Alliance Convention encirclement later on, was in fact Mobei-jun's revenge against them. It fit perfectly with Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky's setting.

While Shang Qinghua muttered to himself in the privacy of his head, his face was wreathed in smiles; he searched around on the ground for a good while, picked up a rock the size of half a head, weighed it in his hand – it was pretty heavy.

One, two, three, and he made a pose like he was going to smash it down onto the unconscious Mobei-jun's head.

There were no warning notices or intercepting noises from the system.

Shang Qinghua relaxed. No warnings, which meant: It was okay to kill him!

“My king, oh my king, this is the will of Heaven, so don't go blaming me.” Shang Qinghua made an entirely insincere prayer, raised his hands, and struck!

—Hitting the brakes right before the tip of Mobei-jun's perfect nose.

Actually, the character of Mobei-jun held a special significance for him.

You could say, Mobei-jun was the type of man Great Airplane dreamed of becoming. Powerful, cool, doing what he wanted regardless of what others said, just like how every child had at some point in their youth dreamed of becoming like Ultraman.

How could he just look on as he killed Ultraman with his own two hands!

Shang Qinghua took a moment to sigh.

After he was done sighing, he incredibly shamelessly thought, *if I don't watch then that solves the problem.*

So he turned his head away, and raised the rock up high.

—No good, he still couldn't do it.

Shang Qinghua tossed the cumbersome weapon aside with a thump, his eyes bright and full of expression, practically ready to throw himself onto

Mobei-jun's body.

This wouldn't do, it wouldn't do at all, the more he looked the more irresistible that face seemed to become.

Honestly, that fair-skinned bishounen look Bing-ge had going on wasn't really his type. The Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky only gave the protag this configuration in order to let the stud horse have a more complete hardware setup; even stallions needed to be cultivated in a scientific manner. And scientific research had shown that women were most partial towards men whose appearance was more pretty and refined, or even a little feminine.

The protag couldn't avoid getting flamed, and you could even say Bing-ge was picking up a new hater for every two fans he got. But Mobei-jun was different. Side characters were there to be loved, and Mobei-jun had practically never gotten any bad press.

This character was created entirely based on his own personal preferences. As a character secretly favored by the author, Mobei-jun embodied the ideal male aesthetic from a male viewpoint, according to Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky's scholarly opinion. No need to ask why Luo Binghe didn't embody his ideal male aesthetic, Luo Binghe's main purpose was to satisfy his desire to act like a pretentious prick, and (this part should be crossed out) his sexual desire.

Even the current teenage Mobei-jun, who hadn't completely filled out yet, was still perfectly in line with his "deep eyes, prominent nose, ample heroic spirit, and matchless cold arrogance" eleven-word description of his beauty.

This, was the beautiful man of his dreams!

The deadly stone weapon was raised and lowered, lowered then raised – this was the first time in Shang Qinghua's (post-transmigration) life that he'd had to face such a difficult and life-changing decision.

Finally, Shang Qinghua decided: He'd go rent a room!

He'd go to an inn and rent a...er, he'd find lodging.

There were bodies strewn all over the place here; Shang Qinghua hesitated a moment, dumped Qingjing Peak's heavy and useless burden off the cart like he was dumping a pile of garbage, then lifted Mobei-jun onto it, face-down, to cover that face he couldn't handle looking at.

Returning to Cangqiong Mountain wasn't an option for now. They wouldn't realize anything had happened all that soon either, because this trip had been predicted to take seven days, and only two days had passed so far. To unfailingly stand guard by the side of a young demon prince during a time when his body and mind were weak from the attack he'd suffered, what a great opportunity to win affection points. Shang Qinghua thus consoled himself as he huffed and puffed and pushed that cart off in the direction of the city.

The money spent on renting a room, was the secret stash Shang Qinghua had been carefully saving for himself over the past few years.

The current him was just an average, ordinary outer disciple, lacking the freedom to keep accounts or misappropriate public funds. Renting a room already hit the limit of his economic status. So as a matter of course, it was a single-person room. In that room, again as a matter of course, there was only a single bed. Whose bed this was, once again didn't need asking.

Of course it was for himself!

Shang Qinghua lay spreadeagled on the bed for a while like a stiff corpse, then after he'd finished stretching his muscles, got back up again and lifted Mobei-jun onto it.

This was a must. Mobei-jun was already in a foul and irritable mood from being injured; once he woke up to discover he was lying on the floor or left in a chair, death would be inevitable. If he wasn't careful then he'd be getting indiscriminately rewarded with a cartridge of ice spikes.

Shang Qinghua had bought some ointment as he was passing by a medicine shop earlier; taking the demon race's unusually tenacious vitality into

account, no matter how big a hole you poked in him it'd eventually grow back if you left him alone, but seeing as he'd already decided to hug the guy's thigh, then he must know to abandon all reserve in displaying his sincerity. The Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky boasted himself as an honest, genuine little villain, and looked down upon those hypocrites who were obviously hugging thighs, yet still insisted on acting pretentious! He boldly scooped out a big lump, stopped up that hole in Mobei-jun's kidney, decided he'd stopped it up well enough, rolled Mobei-jun over again, put him in a sleeping beauty pose with his arms crossed, took a moment to appreciate the perfect face he'd created in his mind, and then finally used his hands as a pillow to sleep on the outer edge of the bed.

The summer nights were stiflingly hot, opened windows offering not even a hint of a cool breeze.

After tossing and turning for half the night, he'd finally managed to doze off, only to suddenly get a kick in the bottom that left him sprawling on the ground.

Shang Qinghua was nearly scared out of his wits by this kick.

He frantically crawled under the table, then turned his head with a panicked jerk to see Mobei-jun sitting straight up on the bed, his blue eyes so bright it was as if he'd overcharged his batteries and was on the verge of exploding.

Shang Qinghua had prepared his lines well in advance, putting on a well-rehearsed tone of relief as he said with great emotion: "My king, you're finally awake—"

Mobei-jun remained unmoved, watching him with a cold gaze.

Shang Qinghua: "Do you still remember who I am?"

The other man ignored him, but Shang Qinghua didn't feel the slightest bit awkward, even secretly delighting in the possibility that he might have lost his memory, and said unprompted: "Er, we met on a byroad earlier. I said I wanted to follow you all my life, my king, as your..."

Mobei-jun interrupted him: “What were you doing hugging me just now?”

“...personal cotton-padded jacket...” Shang Qinghua stared blankly a moment, “What did you say? What did I do to you just now?”

“You were hugging me.”

Like a bolt from the blue, he suddenly came to a realization.

This damn day had been hot as an oven, Mobei-jun’s physique just happened to be cool in temperature, and in his somnolent daze; he’d subconsciously leaned in the direction of that refreshing cold, feeling cooler and more comfortable the closer he got. So *that’s* why he’d dreamed there was a giant popsicle, and had happily clung to it like an octopus with all four limbs, crying tears of joy as he licked it.

Shang Qinghua cautiously peeked at Mobei-jun’s face and neck, didn’t see any peculiar watery shine, and couldn’t resist saying a prayer to the lord Buddha. He very carefully said: “Your body is icy cold, so I was afraid you might be dying, and ended up hugging you.”

At that, Mobei-jun scoffed: “Fool. I’m naturally like this, the colder my body is the better my condition. It isn’t as if I’m a human, where cold means death.”

Shang Qinghua was continuously observing him for hints on how to act, and upon seeing his expression soften, was immediately all smiles. He was just about to try taking advantage of this moment to crawl out from under the table, when Mobei-jun suddenly regained his icy cold appearance: “I dare you to try moving again.”

Shang Qinghua promptly didn’t dare move, pathetically clinging to a wooden leg, curled up like a hamster beneath the table.

Mobei-jun said: “What is your objective?”

Shang Qinghua shamelessly said: “I don’t have any objective, besides wanting to follow you all my life.”

Mobei-jun acted as if he didn't hear that: "You're an outer disciple of Anding Peak."

Shang Qinghua by now kept getting the feeling people were putting an emphasis on those two words of "Anding Peak", bringing with it an overtone of discrimination; fearing the other would decide he was useless and directly exterminate him, he poked out his head: "Listen to me my king, I'm still young, I've still got chances to ascend..."

"Get back in there!"

Shang Qinghua promptly retreated to his safe zone.

Only when Mobei-jun was satisfied with the distance did he continue: "You assisted me, in order to gain 'chances to ascend'?"

He really was proud and arrogant, refusing to use the weak-sounding verb "rescue", and instead changing the wording to the more supplementary "assist". Shang Qinghua pretended to laugh stupidly.

"No"? The degree of credibility was lower than 3%. "Yes"? Mobei-jun quite despised those kinds of petty characters who lacked any strength of character; this was the reason why he hadn't thought twice about killing the original Shang Qinghua back in the original work, because from the very beginning he'd had no plans to leave the guy alive. Why rush to lose affection points by shamelessly admitting it?

Luckily Mobei-jun had come to a conclusion a while ago, and had already slapped Shang Qinghua with a label of "willing to lick boots and sell out his own sect in the interest of saving his own neck", so he didn't really need an answer; he snorted coldly, then lay back down again.

Shang Qinghua waited there for a long time, not moving a single step forward.

Could this be considered a provisional acceptance of his defection? Or...did he faint again?

In the end, Shang Qinghua still couldn't get up the courage to rashly approach, curled up under the table, and carelessly made do for the night.

After a night of tossing and turning, Shang Qinghua woke up the next morning to the official start of a back-breakingly busy day.

In the morning alone, Shang Qinghua bore the burden of running up and down the stairs over twenty times, and changing out the bathtub water seven or eight times.

This water was for treating Mobei-jun's wounds, since of course his icy boss had it a little easier when soaking in water. He couldn't soak for even half a shichen before a perfectly good tub of water would get turned into broken bits of ice. Shang Qinghua withdrew into the corner, chewing on the rations he always had on-hand as he watched Mobei-jun undress, greatly admiring that muscly figure he'd yearned for even in dreams.

He watched and watched, then suddenly realized Mobei-jun had stopped undressing, having chosen instead to stare at him in kind of an unhappy manner.

Shang Qinghua chewed a bit more, then rushed to eat a few more bites, in case Mobei-jun suddenly ordered him to hand over his rations.

Mobei-jun asked him: "Bored?"

Shang Qinghua hurriedly replied: "Not bland at all, this is sweet."

Before he could take another bite, a few shadows came flying to cover his head.

Thus Shang Qinghua was no longer bored, as he had to do his new master's laundry.

That's right, the young demon prince had come out with only the one set of clothes, and could you really call them wearable now, covered in holes and

blood and sweat as they were? They naturally needed sewing, mending, washing and drying.

Low fantasy wuxia worlds were just this unromantic, dismal, and hellishly realistic!

Shang Qinghua swore, if he ever got the chance to go back to being the Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky, the next book he wrote would be a high fantasy genre, the kind where imagination ran wild and science was thrown to the dogs, where you could weave a shirt out of clouds and cut the moon to make a belt, and all physical labor could be resolved with the crook of a finger, so there'd never again be a need for as sorrowful an existence as Anding Peak!

After considerately mending the little hole in Mobei-jun's kidney area, wringing out the clothes and hanging them up to dry inside the room, Shang Qinghua felt his behavior today had been exceptionally good.

So once night fell, he carried this mysterious bit of self-confidence with him as he bashfully tried to climb onto the bed. Before he could even touch the bedside, history repeated itself, and he was kicked right off again.

He sat on the floor, tears in his eyes, his voice even trembling at the ends of his sentences: "...My king, if you don't let me lie on the bed, what if you get cold at night, or thirsty, or hungry, or want to roll over...what'll I do then?"

Mobei-jun raised an eyebrow: "That's easy to solve."

He then ordered Shang Qinghua to go find a rope. One end was tied to his finger, the other end was tied to Shang Qinghua's...

Finger?

Of course it wouldn't turn out that nicely, it was just on his neck is all.

Shang Qinghua lay on the floor like a stiff corpse, thinking to himself that this guy's life was really fucking worse than a dog's...the only comfort he

could think of to reassure himself was that at least Mobei-jun wasn't a pervert, and the other end hadn't been tied to his (beeeeeeep), because *that* would've been just plain inhuman.

Only four days of such bitter hardship had passed, but Shang Qinghua truly felt those days stretch out like years. Even at night he was plagued by endless nightmares.

In the middle of the night, Shang Qinghua was sound asleep, and had another dream.

This time he dreamed he was still in the real world, sobbing in front of the computer, while a fiendishly tough-looking giant of a man stood by his side, violently hitting his face with a barbed cucumber that looked like a particularly hairy calf, and roaring as he thrashed him: "What kind of piss-poor garbage are you writing here!"

Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky tried to dodge that cucumber like his life depended on it, doing all he could to defend himself: "I haven't written anything in a long time. Don't be like this, Cucumber-bro!"

Peerless Cucumber: "Then hurry up and update already!" He put a rope around his neck as he spoke.

In the midst of extreme suffering, Shang Qinghua struggled awake to a tightening sensation around his neck. He gazed over in the direction of the pull, and saw Mobei-jun lying on the bed, tugging the rope on his hand at a mechanical frequency.

Shang Qinghua weakly said: "Is there anything you want, my king?"

He asked a couple times before realizing that Mobei-jun wasn't purposely messing with him. In fact he was acting totally unconsciously, just uncomfortably tossing and turning, and upon finding something in his hand, had seized it in a daze to let off steam. Sadly for Shang Qinghua, whose neck was now being pulled on, these few tugs were nearly enough to make his eyeballs pop out of their sockets.

Mobei-jun was frowning, still rolling restlessly around. Shang Qinghua quietly tiptoed over to the bed, looked at the light sheen of sweat on his clean white brow and the faint heat coming off his clothes, and understood.

Mobei-jun's kidney might have *looked* like it was just a tiny injury not worth worrying about, but in reality the situation was actually kind of serious, and he'd just been stubbornly enduring it without saying anything. Add to that the fact that ice demons naturally disliked hot weather, with the time now being midsummer, and it's quite possible this injury was currently manifesting changes similar to inflammation or infection.

With his kidney healing this slowly, maybe he needed some Shenbao to strengthen it or something!

The Mobei clan were fine as long as they had low temperatures, so without that low temperature he had no choice but to create one. Shang Qinghua muttered to himself "He's got some GD bad sleeping posture", then resignedly headed out, not caring if he bothered people by knocking on their doors in the middle of the night, and got two palm-leaf fans, a basin of water, and two clean towels. Upon returning he gave Mobei-jun a rubdown, applied a wet towel to his forehead, took a fan in each hand, and started fanning for dear life.

He yawned incessantly as he fanned, fanning until his own eyes were bleary, and in that moment of half-wakefulness, he thought he saw Mobei-jun's eyes were open. Those ice-blue eyes were bright and cold under the light of the moon, like a pair of strange and beautiful cat's eyes.

This was truly terrifying to see. Shang Qinghua quivered, his dog eyes widening, but upon taking another look, Mobei-jun's eyes were clearly shut.

He next awoke to the realization that something was really wrong.

Shang Qinghua had been overcome by the heat last night; he'd waved and waved those palm leaf fans, and next thing you know he'd fallen asleep on

the bed. That was a real close one – it's a good thing Mobei-jun hadn't woken up yet, or else he'd have gotten his brains kicked out!

Shang Qinghua hurriedly jumped off the bed and laid down in his own piece of territory below the bedside.

After a while, there was the slight creak of movement on the bed, and Mobei-jun sat up. Shang Qinghua mentally sighed, he'd barely managed to make it – if he'd woken up just a minute later, this room would have turned into a bloodbath.

The next day, having received His Majesty King Mobei's gracious permission, he was finally delivered from oppression, able to go out on the street to shop.

Actually what happened was he'd clung to Mobei-jun's thigh and tearfully lamented: "My king, I'm out of rations, my cultivation's not the best I can't eat when I feel like it or skip when I want like you can, if you don't let me go out to buy food I'll die of starvation in this room and then you'll be stuck smelling my rotting corpse..."

He went to a corner stall and ordered a bowl of thin porridge to drink. The porridge was clear as water, to the point he could see his reflection in it – his appearance was that of a storm-battered young virgin, thin and haggard after being ravaged by another.

Just as he was wallowing in his sorrowful misery, he suddenly heard what sounded like someone calling him shidi from behind. He turned his head to see four or five celestial-looking young boys, swords on their backs, robes fluttering lightly in the breeze, wearing solemn expressions as they walked towards him.

Fellow disciples, they were fellow disciples from Cangqiong Mountain Sect!

That's right, seven days had already passed, this was the organization sending people to come looking for him!

Shang Qinghua's eyes were brimming with tears of excitement as he tremblingly reached out a hand: "Shixiong, oh Wei-shixiong!"

The boy at the head of the group had a face that always seemed to imply it was smiling even when it wasn't; he had two swords hanging from his waist, one long, one short; his sleeves were billowing like they'd been filled by the cool breeze; it was Wanjian Peak's Wei Qingwei-shixiong. Upon seeing Shang Qinghua rush out, he opened his arms to receive him, moved: "X-shixiong, you...what's happened to you? It's only been a few days, how did your appearance change so much? You're barely human anymore!"

"....." Shang Qinghua choked back his tears, embarrassed. "That's probably because I'm not X-shixiong."

Right now he just wasn't eating well and had gotten a little thinner, how could you call that barely human? *Plus I've wiped down every sword on your Wanjian Peak's sword testing platform over three times each, and every time you even have me sweep your room while I'm at it, and cook your meals while I'm at it, and feed the pangolins too, how could you forget my face so quickly!*

Wei Qingwei said: "Could you not tell I was joking? What, wasn't it funny? Oh right, Shang-shidi, how come you're the only one I'm seeing here? Where's everyone else? How come you all are taking so long to get back, did something happen?"

"Er Wei-shixiong I see you're still a big fan of corny jokes. The others...the others..."

This close-quarters combat had come about too suddenly; Shang Qinghua was unable to make up a flawless story on such short notice, and was forced to resort to pale-facedly swaying a couple times, then collapsing to the ground with a thump.

In his current weakened state, there was no way anyone would suspect him pretending to faint.

As he was playing dead, he felt Wei Qingwei squat down to poke his face. A few others said: “Shixiong, he fainted, what do we do now?”

Wei Qingwei kept poking as he said: “What else can we do? Let’s drag him back for now.”

Qiongdong Peak.

There were corpses arranged in rows outside of the main hall. The Anding Peak outer disciples who’d left the mountain to retrieve goods that day were all lying here, not a single one missing aside from Shang Qinghua.

Shang Qinghua was kneeling before those corpses, tears splashing onto the floor.

There was nothing he could do about it. It was hard to get by in this cultivation world, and for a guy like him who naturally lacked what it takes, it just wouldn’t do for his tear glands not to be a little more well-developed. Otherwise he wouldn’t have been able to put on the “inconsolably heart-broken to the point he can’t speak properly” act he did in front of all the peak lords just now.

After the peak lords finished asking questions, the atmosphere turned heavy, and they moved into the hall for a discussion. All of a sudden there was the sound of a sword tassel and jade ring ornament striking together, as a boy in the Qingjing Peak uniform unhurriedly approached.

This boy had fair skin, slender brows, pale lips, and a somewhat unkind appearance. His black hair was tied back properly with a light green ribbon, and he carried a long sword in his arms. It was no other than that acrimonious bringer of bad omens, one of the prodigies of Qingjing Peak, the most outstanding scum villain of his generation within *Prideful Immortal Demon Way*—Shen Qingqiu.

Shen Qingqiu finished examining the bodies, then carelessly asked: “Did that demon tell you to deliver any words, or an object of some sort?”

Shang Qinghua stared blankly for a moment, overwhelmed by the fact that he'd actually willingly spoken to him of his own accord: "No?"

Shen Qingqiu had a habit of keeping his chin slightly raised, so whenever he looked at people it often appeared as if he was looking askance at them. Whenever Shang Qinghua talked to him, he always felt like he was being looked down on, although he didn't really care if that was the case, since he was used to it already...

The expression on Shen Qingqiu's face was like a smile but not a smile: "Well that's strange. Seven or eight people all dead, and if they didn't have any sort of message they wanted you to deliver to us, why would they leave you as the sole survivor?"

Shang Qinghua blinked, tears spilling once more from his eyes: "That's... uh..."

This time Shen Qingqiu really was smiling: "Shang—shidi. Exactly how is it that you were able to escape unscathed, and return to Cangqiong Mountain?"

This absolutely couldn't be given a sloppy answer.

This world's Shen Qingqiu, the bastard, was based on his original design. Unlike those 40 IQ cannon fodder paper dolls, he was incredibly difficult to deceive. If he slipped up around this guy and got reported on, his life as a spy would be ended before it even began.

After playing dumb and smiling stupidly for 30 seconds, a lightbulb lit up over Shang Qinghua's head, and he immediately began to stammer: "That...might be because..."

Because he kneeled without the slightest hesitation?

Because he called out "My king" with a loud and earnest voice?

Because he directly and efficiently abandoned his dignity?

Shen Qingqiu waited patiently, and was rewarded with a bout of heart-rendingly violent coughing.

Shang Qinghua coughed so hard tears were surging out of his eyes. Shen Qingqiu took a step back at that, a disgusted look on his face.

Everything has its weakness, so watch who I'm gonna summon to deal with you!

Sure enough, five seconds later, Yue Qingyuan's voice sounded from behind him:

“Qingqiu-shidi, the ways of demons have never followed any rhyme or reason, and Shang-shidi went through great difficulty to escape catastrophe; even if you have questions to ask, it wouldn't be remiss to allow him time to recover first.”

There he is! God-Level Summon Beast/Good Guy/Future Zhangmen/Yue Qingyuan has arrived on the battlefield!

Shang Qinghua silently began to count.

Shen Qingqiu raised his hands: “Alright, alright. The things I say are unpleasant to hear, so I'll stop talking. Please go ahead, Yue-shixiong.”

1 HIT.

Yue Qingyuan said: “Anding Peak's disciples originally left the mountain in order to help handle Qingjing Peak's affairs, shidi you shouldn't be so stingy in giving sympathy...Shang-shidi why are you coughing even worse than before, do you need me to go get Qiancao Peak's Mu-shidi to check on you?”

2 HIT. Shang Qinghua shed tears of gratitude as he shook his head at Yue Qingyuan. Continue the count.

Shen Qingqiu sneered: “Each of the twelve peaks has their own office to control, each has their own talents. Anding Peak has always done this sort of work; why must Yue-shixiong make them sound so put-upon, as if in all

Cangqiong Mountain only Anding Peak has work to do? Furthermore does shixiong believe they truly bear the burden as willingly as all that? Or that those cursing us behind our backs are in the minority?”

3 HIT.

The patient expression on Yue Qingyuan’s face stayed the same from beginning to end, but when he tried to speak again, Shen Qingqiu immediately said: “Stop. My thanks to Yue-shixiong for the instruction, Qingqiu will listen again someday in the future. I’m leaving.”

4 HIT. Get!

He just knew it, when these two talked to each other, it was absolutely guaranteed they’d part on bad terms within five lines of dialogue!

It wasn’t until Shen Qingqiu had walked away with the Xiuya sword in his arms that Yue Qingyuan turned to look at him again: “You must have been startled, Shang-shidi.”

Shang Qinghua hurried to reply: “I-I-I’m fine...”

Compared to the troubles and exploitation he’d suffered the past few days, a tiny fright wasn’t even worth noticing!

This incident turned out to be a blessing in disguise, because afterwards, maybe to placate Shang Qinghua or something, Anding Peak’s peak lord promoted him into an official novice disciple.

Shang Qinghua happily sang all the way back to the great dorm building to pack his things, then went to report at Idler’s Dwelling on the highest level of Anding Peak.

That’s right, you didn’t misread that. Anding Peak’s disciples, the guys who spent their entire lives bustling about like overworked serving girls, lived in a dorm that was actually named “Idler’s Dwelling”.

Idler my ass! Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky swore that when he first came up with this name he absolutely hadn’t meant the slightest ridicule,

but looking at these two words now, he could profoundly feel this world's enormous malice.

Shang Qinghua found his own little room, carrying the double burden of both mental and physical exhaustion, persevered in laying down his bedding, turned around to pour himself a cup of water, looked back, and saw someone already lying on the bed.

The new teacup he'd received from the administrative office fell out of his hand in a very cliché manner. His legs went weak, almost sitting his butt right down on the floor: ".....My king."

Mobei-jun rolled over to face him. He was expressionless, his voice cold as ice: "Follow me all your life, hm?"

Shang Qinghua was close to tears with terror.

He'd actually followed him back. He never would have expected...no, strictly speaking it didn't count in the never-would-have-expected category—"Shadow Reappearance-no-Jutsu", this was the special technique he'd originally developed for Mobei-jun so that he could show up to help Bing-ge kill people, start fires, and whatever other shady activities needed doing!

Shang Qinghua started babbling non-stop: "My king, let me explain. When I went out that day, I was originally planning to just finish my congee and go back, but who would've thought, fate decided to mess with me, and I ran into a shixiong I know pretty well. I was afraid he'd ask too many questions and I might let something slip, if he took people with him to go start trouble with you my king then that'd be no good at all. Plus your injury is no longer in serious condition, so after turning it over in my head I decided to suffer in silence and follow them back here, then find a chance to act in the future..."

The hand Mobei-jun was using to support his temple appeared to have gotten tired, and he switched hands.

"He told you to come back, so you followed him back, just like that."

Shang Qinghua said, aggrieved: “What else was I supposed to do? Refuse to submit even unto death? Get into a fight with them? I can’t do that, putting aside the fact I can’t beat them, the more important thing is that I’m supposed to be your spy, how could I have a falling out with Cangqiong Mountain this early in the game?”

Taking advantage of this vigorous burst of energy, he struck while the iron was hot: “Reporting to my king, I’ve now already become an inner disciple, wouldn’t you say that’s great drive? Don’t you think there’s room for more promotions?”

Boot-licking. This was boot-licking to the extreme.

However, no matter how much kissing up he appeared to be doing on the surface, the Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky was all sunny springtime in his heart. He’d always held a firm belief:

- 1, To be beneath a man’s knees is as precious as gold (the sequence there is correct);
- 2, A man’s tears aren’t lightly given, and what better time to give them than now?

These two great standards of life told him that, in times of need, licking a few boots didn’t matter all that much. Looking at it from another angle, Mobei-jun was a character he’d created, which from an author’s point of view was equivalent to his own son. A dad being a little more accommodating to his son, a little more loving, naturally wasn’t anything to write home about. As they say, children are their parents’ past-life debts...

A series of muffled thumps could be heard from inside the room. Afterwards, Shang Qinghua (who still ended up getting a good beating) hugged his knees, curled up in a chair, and skillfully used his Ah Q spirit to carry out self-restoration of his injuries.

Mobei-jun – having finished limbering up his muscles – lay back down on the bed, stretched, rolled over with his back to Shang Qinghua, and said in a level and somewhat sleepy voice: “We’ll continue this tomorrow.”

.....

There's a continuation!?

Shang Qinghua had the sudden urge to start screaming as loudly as he could so that the entirety of Cangqiong Mountain would be summoned to die together with him.

Of course, an urge was an urge precisely because it could often be kept in check, and not actually carried out.

Mobei-jun didn't even take off his boots, lying just like that on the brand new bed he hadn't slept in even once; Shang Qinghua was crushed beyond belief.

"My king, this is Cangqiong Mountain."

A pillow overflowing with killing intent flew in his direction, hitting Shang Qinghua so hard he grimaced in pain.

Shang Qinghua picked up the pillow, tactfully saying: "My king, this is my bed."

Mobei-jun raised one finger and waved it.

His elegant and noble voice spoke one word: "Mine."

Understood.

Because he in his entirety belonged to Mobei-jun, that meant his things were also Mobei-jun's. Naturally, this included the bed.

As for whether the same rule worked in reverse? At a time like this you'd use the Gian theory: Your things are my things, my things are still my things.

Shang Qinghua angrily rolled off his chair, quietly cleaned up the broken shards of the teacup by his feet, and began humming the tune "I lie on the

floor while you sleep on the bed, I eat chaff while you drink meat soup”, as he rearranged his new room.

At least he’d graced him with a pillow, last time there hadn’t even been that. Might as well be satisfied with what he had, hug that pillow, and go to sleep.

Today’s Shang Qinghua was once again as diligent as a cheerful honeybee.

After sleeping in Idler’s Dwelling for three days, Mobei-jun had once again quietly disappeared.

Only then did Shang Qinghua profoundly understand how unreasonable this cheat was that he’d given Mobei-jun—three days. In three days, there’d been no warnings, no suspicion, nothing at all! There actually hadn’t been a single person to notice that a demon had strolled right onto Anding Peak and started living there, ordering around a future elite (logistics) disciple and working him like a horse!

Like in Song of the Emancipated Serf, an emotional Shang Qinghua recklessly enjoyed his freedom for a while, all the way up until he received the mission handed down from Anding Peak’s old peak lord.

Although Anding Peak’s missions were never anything more than odd jobs, the only difference between them being whether you were fighting in the rear or struggling on the front lines, it was still hard to avoid feeling anxious the closer you were to dangerous creatures.

For example, rushing out to deliver blood enriching medicine capsules right when Baizhan Peak was in the middle of a vicious fight against resentful spirits, no matter how you looked at it a mission like that was horrendously savage!

Luckily Mobei-jun was pretty good at covering people.

Shang Qinghua originally thought he'd already forgotten about him, but to his surprise, there were quite a few times where he'd fallen into difficulty only to be given a helping hand from a passing bizarre creature that couldn't be anything other than a demon, thus saving his insignificant life.

...This could really be counted as meaning "Be a good member of my gang and I'll have your back", right?

Shang Qinghua couldn't help thinking, hugging thighs or whatever was actually pretty useful, and an essential survival tactic.

Otherwise there's no way he'd still be alive today!

While we're at it, the taciturn and concise Boss System had transmitted a new order to Shang Qinghua: Become Anding Peak's head disciple within three years.

Aside from needing to be on his best behavior under Mobei-jun's "caring attention" when performing missions outside, in order to become head disciple, he had to do a lot of thinking within Cangqiong Mountain as well.

Taking into account what everybody knows, that cannon fodder and side characters in *Prideful Immortal Demon Way* have an IQ of only 40, what you might call their realm of conscience was probably around this level:

Say Anding Peak's old peak lord already had Head Disciple A, who was exceptionally excellent (excellent=proficient at everything including serving tea and doing laundry and folding blankets to the point you could call him an official member of housekeeping services), and one day the old peak lord wanted A to cook twelve delicious pastries to send to each of the other peaks. What Shang Qinghua needed to do here, was to sneakily scatter a pile of salt or sugar on those pastries A had so carefully baked, thus making them totally unpalatable. Repeat the process three times. OK, the old peak lord's finally completely lost faith in his former best disciple.

Just think about it: If you can't even bake a good pastry, what else are you good for?

At this point, Shang Qinghua just had to show off his amazing cooking skills a few times, and he'd be able to successfully take the position!

This is what you call: IQ too low, strike where the sun don't show. If you can't be the best, then do your worst.

Having a plot so retarded it makes readers cuss it out like crazy is also a kind of success!

There were countless scenes like this in *Prideful Immortal Demon Way*, and the year-round grand occasion of its readers rising up to roast it could even be said to be a big spectacle in Zhongdian's book review forums. And the one who roasted most fiercely was that Peerless Cucumber guy.

Having thought up to here, Shang Qinghua couldn't help sort of missing his little comrades and this dear friend from the book review forums.

Oh, how he missed the heroic bearing with which he'd tirelessly roar, "Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky, it's exactly because of these ideas of yours that you're nothing more than a third-rate harem novel writer"!

However, contrary to what he'd hoped, the worries only multiplied after he became Anding Peak's head disciple.

For example, back when he was an outer disciple, he'd never have had the opportunity to leave the mountain on a mission together with Shen Qingqiu and Liu Qingge.

This was a special prize he must've collected a few fucking lifetimes' worth of bad luck in order to win.

Cangqiong Mountain placed a lot of importance on maintaining friendships with one's peers, and so it was common practice for a few head disciples to be sent out at regular intervals to work as partners in some low-level task. This time the division of labor between the three was very clear. Liu Qingge was the frontline thug. Shen Qingqiu was center, in charge of feigning civility, making sneak attacks and backstabbing, and fanning himself in a show of how cool he was (All of this is crossed out).

As for Shang Qinghua?

Naturally he was in charge of driving the carriage, making reservations at inns, and carrying things, as well as all profit and expenses accrued over the course of this trip. Logistics, you know.

If only it was really that convenient.

“It says that at night, if you poke your head out to look into that well, you’ll see your reflection smiling and waving at you from inside, before it suddenly reaches out to pull you in and drown you. Sometimes you’ll even see dead loved ones...ahem, Shen-shixiong, Liu-shidi, you guys...could you listen until I’m done talking at least...”

Shang Qinghua put down the dossier.

Shen Qingqiu always had a book stashed up his sleeve, so that he could – anytime, anywhere, sitting or standing – act like a pretentious prick off by himself, and was currently leaning beneath the shade of that old banyan tree, displaying his mastery of the phrase “Wisdom in hold, elegance in mold”. Liu Qingge, meanwhile, had already moved to stand by the side of that well, and was sticking his head in for a look.

Liu Qingge wanted to get this done in as short a time as possible so as to avoid spending any more time coexisting in the same party with Shen Qingqiu, whereas Shen Qingqiu wanted Liu Qingge to finish the hard labor and get lost as soon as possible; both sides were equally unwilling to disgust themselves by approaching the other, each of them holding their own considerations, and neither of them was listening to him do his utmost duty in explaining their current mission.

Liu Qingge lifted his head, and said: “None.”

Shang Qinghua understood. What he meant was “My reflection wasn’t waving and smiling at me from inside”. He spread out his hands and said: “Well...how about, we have Shen-shixiong give it a try instead?”

Shen Qingqiu put away his book, exchanged it for a folding fan, and sauntered over to the side of the well: “Step aside, please.”

Liu Qingge had already “stepped” a good 10+ steps away before he got there. Shen Qingqiu carelessly glanced into the well, also seeming not to reap any success.

Shang Qinghua flipped noisily through the dossier: “Well that’s strange, it clearly said that’s how it was here...”

Unfortunately for him, no matter how loudly he turned those pages, it wasn’t loud enough to cover the malicious sound of Shen Qingqiu’s voice: “We’ve both tried it now, so doesn’t that make it your turn?”

Sure enough, even the monsters in this world all bullied the weak and feared the strong. When the other two looked, they didn’t see a single damn thing, but when it came Shang Qinghua’s turn to try, of course he’d be able to see his own reflection stroking his hair coquettishly within the well.

Without another word, Liu Qingge clapped his hand on the hilt of his sword, unsheathed Chengluan, and aggressively and violently stabbed it into the water of the well.

After a moment’s silence, the well water’s tranquil surface began to churn and bubble. Shang Qinghua tactfully retreated as far as he could, drawing to a safe distance. There was the sound of ghastly wailing, and then a great quantity of cotton-like souls came gushing out!

Liu Qingge smashed the mass of women’s heads biting after him, and said: “Retreat!”

According to convention, the moment a fight broke out, if Anding Peak’s disciples weren’t playing support then they ought to get their butts far out of the way, staying wherever was furthest from the heat of the fight. Sadly Shang Qinghua made a mistake in his assessment this time, and didn’t get his butt quite far enough away, his path in either direction turning misty white from the resentful spirits surrounding him. With matters already

having reached this point, he had no choice but to use his special ability—showing the whites of his eyes, he collapsed on the spot.

Playing dead would forever be a tried and true technique!

In the midst of the battle royale, Liu Qingge and Shen Qingqiu's backs inadvertently came up against each other, causing the two to simultaneously show looks of revulsion; at this same moment, Shen Qingqiu had already offhandedly shot out a blast, which brushed Liu Qingge's shoulder as it flew past. Angered by this, Liu Qingge immediately shot a return burst.

He'd really done it this time, because now the main forces in this battle completely stopped paying attention to the enemy, and started fighting each other instead. Shen Qingqiu cursed: "Have you gone blind? Where are you aiming!?"

Shang Qinghua lay on the ground, eyes still rolled upwards. He'd seen perfectly clearly, there was a ghostly white shadow floating above Liu Qingge just now, and Shen Qingqiu's shot had passed over his shoulder to scatter it. As he watched their spat get increasingly worse, to the point they were nearly seeing red, he could no longer bother playing dead, and sat up to weakly shout: "Don't fight, you guys. Liu-shidi, you've got it all wrong, just now Shen-shixiong was actually..."

Shen Qingqiu threw out a hand, and a series of deep cracks exploded in the wall next to Shang Qinghua's head, dust and rocks showering down around him.

Shen Qingqiu said in a chilly voice: "If you want to die then do a thorough job of it, don't get back up midway."

Shang Qinghua didn't say another word, falling back and continuing to focus on lying stiff as a corpse.

After sealing the well monster and every last one of the resentful spirits it had collected into a recovery vessel, Shang Qinghua guided the carriage over, only to have Liu Qingge walk down a different road without a single

glance towards them. Shang Qinghua hurriedly said: “Liu-shidi, where are you going?”

Liu Qingge humphed: “I don’t journey together with people who mount sneak attacks on their fellow disciples.”

Shen Qingqiu clapped his hands and said with a smile: “That’s perfect, because *I* don’t wish to journey with brainless musclebound oafs. Shang-shidi, we’re going.”

He gave Shang Qinghua’s shoulder a squeeze, and Shang Qinghua grimaced and howled in acquiescence. After finally struggling free of that evil grip, he ran after Liu Qingge, and urged him: “Liu-shidi, your shixiong has a word of advice for you. Don’t go training on your own if you can avoid it, it’s easy to get a qi deviation that way.”

Before Liu Qingge could reply, Shen Qingqiu over on his end knocked on the carriage pole with the handle of his fan. Shang Qinghua hurriedly rushed back.

The whole journey, he kept staring at Shen Qingqiu as he drove.

Shen Qingqiu had originally been leaning against the carriage and reading a book, but the look on his face grew darker the longer he was stared at, until finally he narrowed his eyes: “What are you looking at me for?”

Shang Qinghua shyly and timidly said: “...Shen-shixiong, actually I wasn’t planning to tell you. But seeing as you’ve so earnestly asked me, then I’ll just...you’re holding your book upside-down.”

“.....”

Shen Qingqiu’s face turned red for a split second before he suddenly got up, unsheathing his sword.

“D-d-d-d-d-don’t be hasty!”

This guy Shen Qingqiu had incredibly thin skin, and if you undermined him to his face, he’d remember it the rest of your life. Shang Qinghua kind of

regretted that momentary urge to tattle. But for someone like Shen Qingqiu, who'd refined his pretentious act to the point of perfection, to actually hold a book upside down—it seemed what happened earlier must've gotten to him pretty bad.

Of course it would, he'd gone through great difficulty to do something good for once, only for things not to turn out like he'd hoped. If you're dissatisfied then just tell Liu Qingge straight-up, say *I was trying to help you just now*, but he refused. If you're unwilling to say it then let me help explain for you, but he couldn't put aside his pride; was that embarrassment? This guy could seriously think in circles, tormenting himself.

Shen Qingqiu shot him a venomous look, causing Shang Qinghua's back to be soaked in cold sweat.

It was a long time before Shen Qingqiu sat back down again, resheathed his sword, tried hard to calm himself, and said with a smile that didn't reach his eyes: "Shang Qinghua, could you please shut up?"

Shang Qinghua had an itch he was unable to suppress, and raised a hand: "Can I say one more thing?"

Shen Qingqiu rubbed his temples with his right hand and gave a short lift of his chin, signalling permission granted. Shang Qinghua looked at him very seriously, and said the most meaningful and heartfelt line he'd ever spoken since first getting pulled by an electric current into *Prideful Immortal Demon Way*: "If in the future you come across someone having a qi deviation, you mustn't panic, nor should you rush to save them without thinking things over beforehand. You absolutely have to stay calm, go out and call for help, don't take action on your own. Otherwise, you'll undoubtedly end up more of a hindrance than a help, making things worse than they were before, after which you'll give yourself up to despair, unable to turn things around the rest of your life, with regrets you can't wash away even if you throw yourself into the Yellow River!"

Shen Qingqiu couldn't make heads or tails of what he'd said: "If someone else has a qi deviation, what business is it of mine? Why would I panic, and

why would I bother helping?”

Shang Qinghua’s face had “I *knew* you’d react like that” written all over his face, and said: “Anyway you just make sure to remember that.”

Once Shang Qinghua became peak lord, he was finally freed from having to blatantly toady up to people.

His busy life was still as busy as ever, but at least he’d upgraded from overworked serving girl to imperial palace butler, which could still be considered rapid progress.

Word was that Qingjing Peak’s draconian master had gotten sick. After he recovered, Qiongding Peak quietly opened a secret meeting.

Qiongding Peak’s side hall. Of the twelve peaks, eleven peak lords had gathered.

Yue Qingyuan seriously said: “Do you all get the feeling that Qingqiu-shidi has...been rather strange, the past few days?”

A number of peak lords agreed one after the other. Liu Qingge solemnly said: “He’s been more than strange.”

Qi Qingqi whispered: “He’s practically turned into a different person.”

It was at this point that a travel-worn Shang Qinghua stepped into the side hall. These past few years, Qiancao Peak’s dragonbone cantaloupe seeds had been selling pretty well outside, and he’d been running around doing marketing for a good few months by now. Having been dragged into some mysterious meeting the moment he got back, he still wasn’t quite clear what was going on, and rubbed his hands together as he said: “Er, I haven’t seen Shen-shixiong in a while, could all of you give me a general idea of how he’s being weird?”

Yue Qingyuan said: “He’s able to calmly and tranquilly talk with me for a full shichen.”

“.....” Shang Qinghua said, terrified, “Oh dear gods! That’s really weird! That’s seriously very weird!”

Normally there was a dead knot tied between these two. If this knot wasn’t untied, there was absolutely no hope of them ever getting on good terms with each other. That earlier thing with them always parting on bad terms within five lines or less was the normal state of things; having a shichen’s worth of calm and tranquil interaction, this was far beyond the level of fantasy!

Liu Qingge said: “In the Lingxi caves, he...gave me a hand.”

It was here that Shang Qinghua suddenly remembered, that’s right, in this part of the timeline, Liu Qingge should already have been taken out by Shen Qingqiu’s botched attempt at helping, so how could he still be healthily sitting at this meeting!?

Could it be that the reminder he gave Shen Qingqiu back when they fought the well monster had actually been useful?

The others continued summarizing the various abnormalities that Shen Qingqiu had recently shown, like how he’d gotten himself injured in order to beat back an unscrupulous demon girl, or how he’d stood up to defend a beloved disciple...the look on Shang Qinghua’s face was starting to distort the more he listened.

He turned it over and over in his mind, but no matter how you looked at it, this kind of self-sacrificing character design was severely OOC!

He couldn’t resist saying: “Hold up. He...hasn’t been possessed, has he? Wei-shixiong, how about that sword testing platform at your place, has he gone there?”

Wei Qingwei’s Wanjian Peak sword testing platform had a strange sword called “Hongjing” which no one had ever been able to remove from its sheath; as long as anything in the category of evil spirit got near it, the sword would automatically unsheathe itself. If Shen Qingqiu had really been possessed by some impure thing, they only needed him to come near

the sword testing platform, and Hongjing would inevitably erupt in warning sounds.

However, Wei Qingwei said: “He went there three times, and even tried unsheathing it three times, but there wasn’t a hint of activity.”

“There is no ghostly energy on his body.” Yue Qingyuan slowly said, “I can’t sense any signs of him having been possessed.”

Qi Qingqi spread out her hands: “If it *was* possession, it wouldn’t make a bit of sense. After all, possession must have some sort of plot behind it. These past few days he’s just been idling his time away, even more leisurely than he was before.”

There was a period of discussion, but they were unable to reach an agreement. Finally, Mu Qingfang said: “It doesn’t necessarily need to be possession; in my opinion, it’s possible that this is Shen-shixiong’s old problem acting up again.”

The peak lords all looked at each other.

What this “old problem” was, everyone understood without need for explanation.

Shen Qingqiu’s character was aggressively ambitious and arrogantly proud; this wouldn’t be the first time he’d been impatient for results, and it was quite possible that he’d snuck off to secretly practice austerities again, only to get a qi deviation.

Mu Qingfang continued his analysis: “I’ve heard a good number of cases in the past, in which someone would have a large rock smash into their head, or receive an intense shock, sometimes losing some of their memory because of it. So having a qi deviation which causes your past personality to change drastically, isn’t entirely impossible.”

Yue Qingyuan said: “Is there still possibility of recovery?”

Qi Qingqi scrunched up her nose: “Zhangmen shixiong, don’t tell me you *want* him to remember, and return to his old...manner of conduct?”

Yue Qingyuan was startled: “Me? I don’t know, myself.”

He seriously said: “The way he is now is rather nice...it’s just, if he’s able to remember, then remembering would still be best.”

Another peak lord spoke up, puzzled: “In the past he’d never give a proper greeting when meeting Zhangmen shixiong or his fellows, he never paid any of us a visit, the way he spoke was like a needle hidden in silk, his attitude was eccentric, there wasn’t anything good about him. The way he is now is much better.”

Yue Qingyuan gave a faint smile, but didn’t say anything in reply. Mu Qingfang awkwardly said: “When I wrote him the Without a Cure prescription at my last visit, I took the opportunity to examine him. But there aren’t any main threads to take hold of, so it’s difficult for me to take action – I’m afraid the only option may be to let nature take its course.”

Having reached a verdict of “Qingjing Peak’s peak lord has lost his memory, everyone rejoice and spread the word”, the meeting was adjourned.

After this meeting, Shang Qinghua felt that, in light of this unusual occurrence, it was necessary for him to conduct an investigation (on the side while delivering funds to Qingjing Peak).

Before his investigation, the first place Shang Qinghua went to was Baizhan Peak.

In the normal course of events, following Cangqiong Mountain’s order of seniority, Qingjing Peak ranked second while Baizhan Peak ranked seventh, so after delivering to the first-ranked Qiongding Peak, he should have followed in number order and delivered to Qingjing Peak next. But first of all, Shen Qingqiu was way too hard to please, and Shang Qinghua always had to rack his brains thinking of exactly how to talk so as not to offend

him; second of all, Baizhan peak was fond of fights and battle, so sending their funds first helped put Shang Qinghua's mind at ease.

How exactly did it ease his mind? Well you see, it's sort of like the peace of mind you get from paying the protection fee to one of those privately-owned businesses with the fake shop fronts, the ones that rule over an area...

The person who came to greet him was Liu Qingge's shidi Ji Jue, who was just as friendly as ever; both sides exchanged a few casual words, and after finishing their exchange, Ji Jue said: "Take care then Shang-shidi, I'll be heading back to the training grounds."

Shang Qinghua saw from his expression that the guy didn't seem particularly willing to let him leave so quickly, and asked: "Liu-shidi's been stopping over at Baizhan Peak pretty often lately. Has a shidi had a great increase in level or something?"

Liu Qingge spent most of the year outside looking for people to fight, and with no one on Baizhan Peak who could make a good opponent, he would only return once a month at most. Whenever Baizhan Peak showed up in droves at Qiancao Peak for treatment, that was when you knew he'd just come back. But recently, the threshold at the main gate of Qiancao Peak had practically been trampled to pieces by those show-offs from Baizhan Peak, they were getting hard-pressed for funds, and Mu Qingfang had come looking for Shang Qinghua every few days or so to ask for a loan; he found this strange, wondering if maybe Baizhan Peak had come out with some rare and extraordinary talent capable of holding their own against Liu Qingge, and so thought to ask this question.

Ji Jue gloomily replied: "It isn't about anyone from our peak. It's Shen Qingqiu."

Shang Qinghua hadn't had the slightest hope of getting any sort of earth-shattering answer, smiling and nodding: "Oh, Shen Qingqiu huh...*Shen Qingqiu!*"

After digesting the tremendous weight of the information these three characters brought, Shang Qinghua nearly ascended to the heavens from pure terror.

Shen Qingqiu? At Baizhan Peak? And on Baizhan Peak's training grounds? What was he doing? Was he getting one-sidedly beaten up by Liu Qingge? No, based on his enmity-gathering skills it'd have to be getting ganged up on—what if this got him killed? He was an important scum villain! If he got beaten to death who would they send Bing-ge to for abuse!?

Ji Jue: "...What's that look for, Shang-shixiong! Don't look at me like that, we haven't killed anyone! Shen Qingqiu's still alive, nobody's done anything to him! You should be asking what *he* did to *us*!"

And so, Shang Qinghua jogged with him all the way over to the training grounds.

To his surprise, Liu Qingge and Shen Qingqiu really were politely and properly sparring atop the basalt rock stage.

Liu Qingge's movements were a lot slower than usual; rather than sparring, it might be better to say he was feeding moves. The expression on his face seemed reasonably calm too, without any of his former murderous spirit.

Just at this moment, Shen Qingqiu's sword struck air, he frowned, and his left hand moved ever-so-slightly.

Shang Qinghua immediately felt his heartstrings stretch taut; he could see Ji Jue's face turn cold with fear as well out of the corner of his eye, looking as if he was about to call out on impulse.

The two shared a look, their hearts linked as one.

Ji Jue had lingering fears from previous trauma, and said in a low voice: "I keep getting the feeling Shen Qingqiu's about to pull out a poison-coated concealed weapon or something."

Shang Qinghua strongly shared this feeling: “Great minds think alike!” It seemed Ji-shidi had a thorough understanding of this character. As expected of Shen Qingqiu’s old foe, who’d once got into a fight with him in a brothel and caused both peaks to greatly lose face...

Shen Qingqiu withdrew Xiuya, standing thoughtfully. One, he didn’t give a blisteringly cold smile, and two, he wasn’t looking askance at anyone; seeing him like this, with a warm and gentle expression on his face, he actually did kinda give off the impression of a modest and elegantly refined gentleman.

Shortly, Shen Qingqiu said: “I don’t understand.”

Liu Qingge casually twirled his sword as he said: “Which part do you not understand?”

A disciple next to Ji Jue suddenly moaned: “Heavens, he doesn’t understand again.”

Another disciple quietly said: “I...I can’t take anymore...my stomach hurts so I’m withdrawing early...”

Ji Jue hurriedly replied: “Shidi wait for me, I also...”

Shidi pushed him back: “Stay here! Didn’t you just get back!?”

On the stage, Shen Qingqiu said: “Those moves just now, if I used my right hand to attack you with my sword, and my left hand to create a blast of spiritual energy, then found an opportunity to hit your lower abdomen with it, I would still have a chance of winning.”

Liu Qingge scoffed: “Impossible.”

Shen Qingqiu insisted: “It’s possible.”

Liu Qingge: “If you could have won, why didn’t you try it?”

Shen Qingqiu indifferently said: “Isn’t this a spar? It would be rude of me to attack you for real.”

Liu Qingge didn't continue bantering with him, instead turning to the crowd below the stage: "Someone come up!"

The person he picked out at random headed onto the stage with an expression like that of a fearless soldier heading off to his final battle, faced off against Liu Qingge while following Shen Qingqiu's stated approach, and was immediately sent flying by Chengluan's sword qi.

Only then did Liu Qingge sheathe his sword, turning to Shen Qingqiu as he said: "See that? It wouldn't work."

Shen Qingqiu opened his folding fan, waving it at chest height as he smilingly said: "I saw it. Liu-shidi reacts too quickly. You're right, it wouldn't work."

Ji Jue quietly complained to Shang Qinghua: "Every time he says 'I don't understand', Liu-shixiong will call up somebody to demonstrate, and won't stop until he understands..."

No wonder Baizhan Peak's injured had only grown in number lately, making Qiancao Peak as busy as a marketplace.

Shang Qinghua had only one thought.

That guy Shen Qingqiu was absolutely doing this on purpose!

After they left the stage, Liu Qingge continued to train (viciously beat) the Baizhan Peak disciples. Shen Qingqiu and Shang Qinghua exchanged greetings, and headed down the mountain together. As they were stepping out of the main gate, Ji Jue came carrying two burlap sacks, saying they were gifts for Shen Qingqiu and Shang Qinghua.

Shang Qinghua didn't understand why he was getting a present, and opened the sack to peek inside, only to see a pair of bloody hairy things huddled inside: "What is..."

Ji Jue said with a stony expression: "These are short-haired monsters Liu-shixiong brought back from hunting, which he heard taste very good; feel

free to take them back to your peaks to try cooking them yourselves.”

Short-haired monsters? Short-haired monsters? Did he write a monster like this? It was edible? Are you serious!?

Shen Qingqiu also looked incredibly doubtful as to the edibility of these things: “You shouldn’t have...”

Ji Jue said in a monotone: “Shixiong says, this is the return gift for the tea leaves Qingjing Peak sent last time.”

Tea leaves? They even sent tea leaves!? What did this count as? A mutual gift exchange!? Shang Qinghua mentally swore a mile, while on his face he wore a smile: “Judging by what you’ve said, it seems I’m benefiting from association with Shen-shixiong. But I wonder what kind of good tea leaves those were?”

Shen Qingqiu affably said: “They were picked from my first disciple Ming Fan’s family tea field. As for how good they are, won’t Shang-shidi find out if he stops by Qingjing Peak for a taste?”

Shang Qinghua brazenly said: “Then I’ll try benefiting from my association with Liu-shixiong as well.”

And so, each dragging a burlap sack behind him, they chatted aimlessly as they walked up Qingjing Peak.

The moment they entered the main gate, a peaceful wind brushed their faces, birds trilled delicately – it was noticeably different from the outside world. The two stepped across a ground carpeted in soft green fallen bamboo, feeling incredibly refreshed.

For some reason, Shen Qingqiu was in a very good mood, looking not the least bit like he’d just lost to Liu Qingge; on the contrary, he leisurely gave him praise: “Liu-shidi’s swordsmanship truly isn’t bad.”

Shang Qinghua couldn’t help reminding him: “Shen-shixiong, how...many times did you lose?”

Shen Qingqiu thought a moment: “Hm? Oh, you mean this morning? Around seven or eight times, I suppose.”

Then how are you so calm!?

Shouldn't you be gnashing your teeth with the face of a weeping beauty (.....) and quitting the scene in extreme sorrow as you leave to go into seclusion for three months swearing you'll get a rematch?

You've gone OOC, you know that? Could you show a little more respect to your job!?

Shen Qingqiu rapped his fan handle against the back of his neck: “Losing against Baizhan Peak’s peak lord, isn’t something I can do anything about. It would be better to say that winning would be the more abnormal conclusion.”

“.....” Shang Qinghua felt like it was no longer possible to communicate with him.

He’d lost his memory. No doubt about it, he’d definitely cultivated himself into a qi deviation and lost his memory. For this image of brotherly love and harmony to actually appear between Shen Qingqiu and Liu Qingge—dear gods, maybe in another few days, Shen Qingqiu and Luo Binghe could even start flirting with each other!

This terrifying picture had only just flashed through his mind when he saw a white figure rushing this way. Something sticky suddenly threw itself into Shen Qingqiu’s bosom.

That thing, which had melted like a puddle of goo, called out: “Shizun!”

Shen Qingqiu was almost thrown onto his back from this tackle; he tilted, leaned against a thick bamboo stalk for support, and just barely managed to stand firm again, to see Shang Qinghua expressionlessly watching like a detached bystander.

You can't blame Shang Qinghua for having a stiff expression. Seeing that little junior ladykiller with both arms wrapped around Shen Qingqiu's waist like a diamond hoop, he'd almost blurted out "Bing-ge" just now!

Shen Qingqiu stiffly fanned himself with one hand as he awkwardly said: "Call out if you want, but you mustn't drag out your words when you do. Throwing yourself on people all day, with your shishu here at that, whatever will you be doing next!"

Luo Binghe very slowly let go, stood up straight, first politely greeted "Shang-shishu", then said: "This disciple has been waiting here for Shizun to return ever since finishing morning lessons, and momentarily forgot himself for happiness..."

Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky's heart was on the verge of collapse.

Luo Binghe switched to pulling on Shen Qingqiu's arm: "Shizun, why were you gone for so long today?"

"There were a lot of people today."

Seeing the leisurely and contented smile on Shen Qingqiu's face, Shang Qinghua couldn't help guessing how many times he "hadn't understood" today, and how many times he'd gotten Liu Qingge to "demonstrate" for him.

Luo Binghe took the burlap sack from Shen Qingqiu's hands as if it were the natural thing to do: "May I go with you next time?"

"That all depends on how much you're progressing with your swordplay." Shen Qingqiu casually continued, "I don't know what kind of creature is in that sack, but your Liu-shishu says it's edible, so see if you can skin it and find a way to make it palatable."

You're treating Bing-ge like your personal cook—only the heroine can eat the protagonist's cooking, can you stick to your part please—forget it, Shang Qinghua didn't have the energy left for this.

“Yes sir.” Luo Binghe cheerfully agreed, shaking the sack, when the thing inside suddenly began to struggle.

“Shizun, it’s still alive!”

After arriving in Bamboo Cottage’s parlor, a pile of Shen Qingqiu’s disciples surrounded the unknown creature from the burlap sack and took turns poking at it; every poke caused that short-haired monster to let out a plaintive cry of grievance, making them endlessly excited as they clicked their tongues in wonder: “Shizun, it really is alive!”

“What do we do now? Do we still kill and eat it?”

“We shouldn’t, I feel bad for it...”

Shang Qinghua put great effort into ignoring this group of little disciples sitting all over the floor, keeping his head down and sipping his tea, his innermost soul twitching in pain.

Last time he came here, he remembered all the disciples had the most bitter and resentful looks on their faces, standing straight as pines and sitting stiff as bells, each carrying an ancient text in their hands, reciting wherever they went in voices like they were chanting incantations, their normal conversations carrying the kind of cadence you’d hear from someone quoting classics. But looking at them now...was this still the same Qingjing Peak renowned for its great number of insufferable yet highly cultured youths?

The whole place was practically an institute for children with ADHD.

Shen Qingqiu said: “If it’s alive then we might as well raise it.”

Ming Fan immediately opposed this: “No, we’re better off eating it. We’ve never raised one of these before anyway – we don’t know how much it eats, and changing its water and walking it and everything would be really troublesome too...”

Ning Yingying pouted: “That’s enough, you wouldn’t be the one raising it anyway, Shizun would obviously give it to A-Luo to take care of.” She raised her head to ask, “Shizun, where did you get this odd creature from?”

“Baizhan Peak’s peak lord sent it. As a return gift for the tea leaves.”

At that, Ning Yingying whined: “Shizun, I don’t like Baizhan Peak, they’re so annoying...last time they bullied A-Luo just because their swordsmanship is better than his, and even chased him around and hit him...”

Shang Qinghua thought to himself: *That’s perfectly normal. Baizhan Peak’s ill will against Luo Binghe is completely natural, it’s the kind of instinctive reaction that single-celled organisms will have towards hidden evil elements.* This wasn’t meant to diss Baizhan Peak; Shang Qinghua himself was a fan of theirs.

After Ning Yingying finished complaining, she demanded: “Shizun, you need to teach them a strict lesson, for our sake!”

“Pfft—” Shen Qingqiu choked on his tea, turned to Shang Qinghua, and said with a polite smile, “Ahem...this child doesn’t know what she’s saying. There should be harmony and friendly affection between our fellows in the sect, how could we go about giving ruthless chidings at the slightest provocation?”

Shang Qinghua repeatedly agreed, returned an equivalently forced smile, and drank his tea like his life depended on it.

Little miss Yingying, your shizun doesn’t need to do anything, because Liu Qingge has already taught them a real tragedy of a lesson. Though the truth is that Shen Qingqiu had been in charge of the “harmony and friendly affection”, while Liu Qingge had taken charge of the “strict lesson”...a true display of the false gentleman’s true character!

Shang Qinghua felt deeply gratified; Shen Qingqiu really had lost his memories due to a qi deviation, but he was also still the same sinister Shen Qingqiu!

Right at this moment, Luo Binghe brought the tea leaves, entering the parlor to hand them to Shang Qinghua. Shen Qingqiu said: “Here you are shidi, we are indebted to Anding Peak for your continuous care and consideration...”

But there was still a stubborn Ning Yingying squatting on the floor, who emotionally said: “Shizun, you’ve got to get revenge for A-Luo!”

“.....” Shen Qingqiu was at the end of his patience: “Yingying, go play outside.”

Luo Binghe hurriedly said: “Please don’t bother getting revenge or anything. It’s just that this disciple cannot compare to the others in skill, making Shizun and Qingjing Peak lose face.”

Shen Qingqiu consoled him: “Your foundation isn’t very good is all, so it falls short at the moment. You need only be diligent in your studies, and in time, I’m sure you will have surpassed them all.”

Ming Fan disdainfully said: “*Him* surpassing Baizhan Peak would take a hundred years at least.”

Ning Yingying was greatly angered by this: “If you look down on our Qingjing Peak and A-Luo so much, why don’t you just go climb up Baizhan Peak, and see if they’re willing to take you!”

Shen Qingqiu put a hand to his forehead: “Didn’t I tell you to go play outside? Why are you all still here? Binghe, hurry and get them out of here, I don’t want them making fools of themselves here.”

“Yes Shizun. But in the end is this to be eaten or raised?”

.....

Shang Qinghua felt like he was on the verge of a heart attack.

What the hell was up with this Shen Qingqiu-brand caring teacher and Luo Binghe-brand loving daughter!

Don't you heckin' tell him that Shen Qingqiu going to Baizhan Peak to tease people really was revenge for Luo Binghe!

This tableau of parent-child love...ptooey, respect between husband and wife...ptooey, conjugal bliss, was even more fantastical than seeing Shen Qingqiu and Liu Qingge peacefully comparing notes together. If things went on, for all he knew they really *could* start flirting with each other sooner or later. Bah, if it really came to that, he'd personally swallow three catties of piping hot shit.

After swearing that vow, the Great Airplane thought carefully for once in his life; he'd never been great at idioms, and the few he knew had all been used on describing Liu Mingyan's good looks. The ones used with the greatest frequency were "soft breasts trembled" and "delicate to the touch". Using "conjugal bliss" here should probably be right, right? Yeah, looking at it literally, it probably wasn't wrong!

At that time, the Great Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky, who was working so industriously in the struggle for existence, did not yet know that scum villain Shen Qingqiu had already been switched out for matchless flamer Peerless Cucumber.

Thinking back to those days, when he'd been flamed excessively harshly by this gentleman, he'd occasionally blurted out a curse, maliciously praying that no matter how peerless his cucumber was he'd never get the opportunity to use it; but unbeknownst to him, on a certain level, this curse had actually come true.



Bing-ge had been in a really bad mood these past few days.

Shang Qinghua could understand. As a harem protag who in the original work had been capable of single-handedly overthrowing the world, he currently had gotten Shen Qingqiu in his clutches and locked him away—and he really was just keeping him locked away. Just locking him away, not doing anything else.

Can you believe it!? Even he, the original author, couldn't bring himself to believe it!

If the current Bing-ge could still be controlled by his pen, following the doctrine that "letting the protagonist feel good is letting the readers feel good", he'd most definitely first let Luo Binghe do Shen Qingqiu a few hundred times or so, just repeat that over and over like flipping a pancake (there was absolutely none of his resentment towards Peerless Cucumber in here. Absolutely none.) without repeating tools, positions, or places. Once that pancake was cooked through then things would be smooth sailing from there, cook it long enough and naturally they'd have cooked up some feelings...

Comparing that to the current Bing-ge's plain, hardworking, three-year vegetarian lifestyle, Shang Qinghua felt increasingly sorry for his beloved son.

As a result, there wasn't anybody with a brain who dared go up and embarrass themselves at a time like this.

Everyone in the underground palace's meeting room was busy minding their own business. Sha Hualing was mending that huge immortal binding net of hers which Shen Qingqiu had exploded, occasionally peeking a glance at Luo Binghe and unresignedly chewing her lip. Mobai-jun sat at the western end of the table, eyes lowered and on the verge of nodding off, while Shang Qinghua was so bored he was incessantly shaking his leg from nervous energy.

He seriously did have nothing to do, and hadn't wanted to come to the meeting room. But this was demon territory, and if he didn't follow as close as he could to Mobai-jun, it was quite possible he might get swallowed whole by some other foreign creature.

He was just thinking of crawling over to Mobai-jun's side of the table, risking a vicious beating in order to beseech his boss to find somewhere with a lighter atmosphere to doze off in. That was when Luo Binghe suddenly said a single word.

“If.”

Every demon in the room pricked up their ears at once.

Luo Binghe said: “If your hearts held special feelings toward a certain person, how would you go about letting him know your intentions?”

Poor Ice Brother!

This was him turning to anyone or anything in a crisis!

While he’d been very reserved with his question, was there anyone listening who couldn’t tell that he was asking for love advice here?

To think he’d actually brought this to his subordinates for a serious discussion. Indeed, people (demons) shouldn’t date, because the moment they do their IQ will drop in a straight vertical line.

Of course, nobody would pull the rug out from under his feet and expose him directly, but this question was too...contrary to the demons’ usual style, and for a little while, there wasn’t actually anyone answering. Honestly the answer was so simple that any average human could easily tell you, if you like somebody then just tell them straight-out. But there wasn’t a single “average” in the room, and aside from Shang Qinghua there weren’t any “humans” either.

Mobei-jun thought over it, but it’s unclear what his thought process understood “special” to mean, as he said: “Beat him thrice a day?”

Luo Binghe raised one hand to signal him to stop, and wisely said: “You don’t need to answer anymore.”

Of those present, the only one with an advantage in regards to gender who might be good at these kinds of issues was Sha Hualing, and so the rest all swept their gazes over in her direction. Miss Sha, who was extremely popular in the original work, had “WTF why do I have to give this kind of advice to the guy I want to get for myself” written all over her face, drew

her rather attractive countenance into a frown, and finally managed to pull out a dull one-liner: “Why does my sovereign not ask Meng Mo-qianbei?”

“Luo Binghe said: “I already did.”

Shang Qinghua knew better than anyone what kind of piss-awful reply Meng Mo could have given. The guy was definitely on the “get your kicks first” team, just like him!

Shang Qinghua couldn’t help letting out a laugh despite all intentions otherwise.

Sha Hualing was just stewing in her dejection with no way to vent, and seizing this moment, flared up in anger: “How outrageous! Who do you think you are, not only daring to muddle your way into the meeting room, but even causing a disturbance when the sovereign is discussing important matters!”

A problem like this...couldn’t be called discussing important matters could it, plus he’d only just kinda chortled, could you really call that “causing a disturbance”?

Considering this wasn’t the first time Sha Hualing had thrown petty criticism his way, Shang Qinghua by this point could take it calmly and indifferently, sit earnestly in his spot, and pretend he was no more than a lump of air. Sure enough, Mobei-jun was entirely indifferent to the scene. Upon seeing that she was being ignored, Sha Hualing resentfully wrung her hands as she said: “Sovereign, Mobei-jun is always bringing him along wherever he goes, never once bothering to avoid suspicion, and now he’s even brought him into the meeting room – how exactly are we supposed to regard this?”

Luo Binghe was equally indifferent: “You see him every day, haven’t you gotten used to him yet?”

Sha Hualing was nearly ready to faint.

This was the first time in months that Bing-ge had offered an opinion on his existence! Shang Qinghua suddenly felt a burst of “My son noticed me he noticed me hahahaha” and mentally jumped for joy. Unexpectedly, Luo Binghe then looked at him and said: “Since you laughed, would that mean you perhaps have something to say?”

“.....” Shang Qinghua didn’t know how to explain it in just a few words.

Sha Hualing let out a “Ha!”, then said: “The sovereign asks a very good question. Being as he is so familiar with Shen...with humans, I’m sure he must have terrific ideas and opinions to offer. We are all happy to listen with respectful attention.”

Shang Qinghua turned his head to look back at Mobei-jun sitting behind him, saw that he sure enough showed no signs of wanting to help him out of this mess, steeled himself, and firmly said: “...Well that’s...of course I have something to say! The secret to success lies in one word—’cling’!”

“Just as the virtuous woman fears a clingy man, and the brave warrior fears a delicate woman, as long as your efforts are thorough, even an iron bar can be ground down to a fine needle. Even if he’s as straight as an embroidery needle, you can bend him into a paperclip!”

Sha Hualing said: “What’s all this nonsense about straight or bent, stop using dialect from the human realm. Sovereign, I think he’s just deliberately complicating matters!”

But Luo Binghe had gotten completely into it, muttering: “So I’m still not clinging enough? Do I need to cling harder?”

Shang Qinghua continued to gabble non-stop: “To cling is a major guiding principal, but aside from this one word of truth, there is another extremely important point you must keep in mind. Gentlemen, it must be borne in mind that a woman’s love originates in worship, whereas a man’s love originates in pity. The woman’s case we won’t discuss for now, since I believe there isn’t any woman who wouldn’t be subdued by the sovereign’s peerless divinity, unnatural grace, and sincere affection, so we’ll only be discussing a situation involving a man. If you want a man to understand you

– I mean your eminence – or if he understands milord’s intentions but gives no response, then what must one do? That’s easy enough, there isn’t any man who doesn’t like a small, weak, cute, and meek partner. Now what does it mean to be cute? What is cute is a person or thing which can evoke feelings of tenderness in someone’s heart, so this partner must definitely be very lovable and...”

With all this combined flattery and nonsense flying around, everyone in the room turned to sneak a glance at Luo Binghe sitting on the seat high above them: He showed a gloomy expression, his eyes were a violent red, there was a murderous aura flowing around him – he was a living example of the word Untouchable (unsatisfied). The distance between him and the words small, cute, meek, lovable, etc. was practically like the opposite shore of a great river.

Sha Hualing couldn’t resist making a sound of disdain.

Shang Qinghua promptly shut his mouth. Luo Binghe massaged his temple: “Go on.”

Having now received consent, Shang Qinghua continued his analysis. He maliciously said: “Let us use Shen Qingqiu as an example. This man is straight...what does straight mean here? Oh, a straight man is normal...not to say that your eminence isn’t normal. He puts great importance on the dignity of his position as a teacher, and teachers all like interested and obedient students, so if you want him to like you, the first step one must make is to obey...”

All the assorted demons in the room were practically shocked stupid by his blabbering.

Sha Hualing: “How presumptuous can you be! Do you mean to have the sovereign a-a-act pitiful, and obey his every word? His eminence is the magnificent ruler of the demon realm, how could he do something as shameful as that!”

That’s right, that’s exactly what I mean!

Shasha just turn around and look at that thoughtful look on your sovereign's face, does he look like he thinks this sort of thing is shameful?

After an impassioned and lengthy flood of eloquence, by the time Shang Qinghua ended his near-twenty minute love consultation, Sha Hualing had already strangled him to death with her eyes a million times; so the moment Luo Binghe left, Shang Qinghua hurriedly moved over to where Mobei-jun was, seeking asylum in getting as close as he possibly could.

Mobei-jun looked askance at him: “So what you mean to say is that if you want a man to like you, the most effective method is to act pitiful?”

Shang Qinghua thought for a moment, “In theory, that’s about right?”

Mobei-jun reached out a hand.

Shang Qinghua was under the impression that he was going to be beaten again, and promptly covered his head with his hands. But the pain he expected didn’t come. All Mobei-jun did was knock lightly on the top of his head.

Then he got up, looking like he was in a pretty good mood, and walked out of the meeting room.

Although Shang Qinghua couldn’t make heads or tails of what had happened, he couldn’t withstand Sha Hualing’s burning hot glare from off to the side, and hurriedly rushed after him.



In the end things had still devolved into chaos.

Exactly like how he’d planned it in his original outline, Maigu Ridge exploded into innumerable bits of sand and rock, scattering through the air like so much dust.

He’d tried his hand at heroing for once, rescuing the flightless Mobei-jun on the way.

When he grabbed that hand in mid-air, Shang Qinghua could clearly see the astonishment and disbelief swirling in his eyes. He could understand that. Mobei-jun must have firmly believed that Shang Qinghua was following him purely in order to protect his worthless life, that his greatest uses were nothing more than flattery, boasting, and giving Mobei-jun a target to vent on, and that if they were to actually come across any danger, he'd absolutely be the first to get his ass out of there. To be honest, Shang Qinghua himself had believed the same thing. In fact, he was willing to bet that he was even more astonished and incredulous at this turn of events than Mobei-jun was.

Ever since then, maybe because of the service he'd rendered in protecting his master and his overall good behavior, his wage, benefits, treatment, etc all improved, and he was even given permission to go back to see his old home at Cangqiong Mountain.

Yue Qingyuan, that wonderfully magnanimous man, had even let bygones be bygones and let him return to Anding Peak to continue being a nominal peak lord, and these past few days in Idler's Dwelling, Shang Qinghua was for the first time so free that he was falling apart from lack of things to do.

After cracking open a catty of melon seeds, he suddenly realized that the system hadn't said anything in a very long time.

Shang Qinghua took initiative for once in poking the system, which then gave him an earth-shattering response: [Objective achieved. Now downloading Return Home attachment.]

Shang Qinghua: '.....'

After a moment, he began to wildly shake the (not actually existing) system's shoulders: 'Objective achieved!? Return Home attachment!? What Return Home attachment!? Is it the one I'm thinking of? Huh? Boss System, this is the first time you've said so many words, why don't you say a few more, I'm begging you, say something!'

System: [The original design of *Prideful Immortal Demon Way* has been basically achieved, the romantic plotline has deviated slightly, objective

achieved. The attachment for returning to your original world has finished downloading, would you like to run the Return Home program.]

He approved of the part about the original design being achieved, all the plotholes that needed filling had been filled, but the “romantic plotline has deviated slightly” part couldn’t be right, Bing-ge had gone and turned gay, how could you call that a “slight deviation”? Sigh, fine, okay, the truth is in his original design Bing-ge didn’t have a romantic plotline and was doomed to be forever alone and never aging until he faded into eternity, so if you insist on adding a line then sure why not it doesn’t matter, but all that nonsense aside...did this mean he could go back to his original world!?

Shang Qinghua’s cheeks were streaming with tears.

He hadn’t written anything in a very long time. He missed that screenname Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky and its evenly-matched collection of both fans and haters; he missed all those flammers in the book review forum; he missed those filthy rich people who tipped him; he missed the constantly-crashing pos laptop he’d started using in first year of university, and the huge archive of movies and things on its hard drive. And the spectacular heap of instant noodle boxes sitting behind his spinny chair, with the brand new flavor he’d bought at wholesale price and never got a chance to taste.

The system popped up a dialogue window: [Attachment download complete. Would you like to run the file?] After which came two differently-colored buttons.

[Yes]

[Remind me next time]

Shang Qinghua impulsively moved to press that red button on the left.

But for some reason, he held back his arm.

To be honest, he didn’t really have any close relatives over there.

His parents divorced when he was very young, each going their separate ways, and had long since started their own entirely new families. They'd occasionally meet up for a meal or a family get-together, but regardless of which side it was, he'd always felt as if his presence was incredibly jarring, taking polite bites of food, politely laughing along with the conversation, acting even more politely than when eating with actual strangers.

Although his father was his legal guardian, when they were apart, aside from the occasional phone call during the new year or at holidays, asking if he needed any money, they didn't have any other interaction. Sometimes the man would even forget to ask if he needed money, and he never tried to remind him. No matter where he was, or who he was talking to, the thing he was best at – and used to – doing, was to keep smiling along.

He was an adult, after all; letting them pay his college tuition was something he couldn't do anything about, so when it came to living expenses he'd figure something out on his own.

And it was while he was “figuring something out” that he inadvertently registered an account on Zhongdian, and started writing stories.

In the beginning it was purely just a way to let off steam; he wrote whatever he felt like writing, and though it was unendurably bad, to the point that posting it was in itself a problem, it somehow managed to garner positive reviews from a particular crowd.

One time he suddenly got the urge to change his style, see if he could save that subscription which editors had already lost interest in, and so created the smash hit *Prideful Immortal Demon Way*.

Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky had achieved supreme enlightenment. He'd found his means of survival.

The more he wrote the less he went out, and the less he went out the more he wrote. As a typical damn otaku, any positive connections or people he got along with were all online, set apart all over the country. He didn't have any friends like Mobei-jun back then, and it was highly unlikely he'd ever get another like him in the future.

Wait a minute.

Mobei-jun? A friend?

He'd actually put down Mobei-jun as a "friend"!?

Shang Qinghua was frightened by his own thoughts, hurriedly went to grab another sack of Qiancao Peak's specialty dragonbone cantaloupe seeds, devoured three catties' worth to help himself get over the shock, then went straight to bed.

When Mobei-jun rolled him up, bedding and all, and dragged him down from Anding Peak to the demon tribes' northern border, he'd just finished eating his melon seeds and fallen asleep with their salty flavor permeating his mouth, dreaming that he was furiously eating the three catties of warm shit he'd promised all those years ago. He was frozen awake.

Mobei-jun threw him onto the ground; in the face of the northern border's knife-like snowstorms, his silhouette and expression looked sharper than ever.

Although he was very handsome, incredibly handsome, Shang Qinghua was already so cold he didn't have the excess energy to appreciate that handsomeness; the moment he opened his mouth to butter the guy up with some flattery, his tongue practically frosted over, and so he smartly shut his mouth, pulled the blankets tight and shivered as he picked himself up off the ground.

Up ahead there was a blockhouse made of ice and snow sticking up out of the ground; Mobei-jun walked towards it without a by-your-leave, and Shang Qinghua hurriedly followed after.

The great doors of the ice-brick blockhouse rumbled as they opened and closed, after which they passed down a long flight of stairs; they didn't meet a single soul until they came near one of the bedrooms, where a few guards and demon maids were all holding their breath in fear.

Shang Qinghua took a peek at Mobei-jun's face, which – while still as proud and cold as it always was – had also gained something of a solemn and respectful look about it.

He couldn't help opening his mouth to ask: "Er, my king, how long do we have to stand here?"

Mobei-jun's head didn't move, eyes turning to look in his direction: "Seven days."

Shang Qinghua was bowled over by that answer.

Forget it, he was probably going to head back and continue shooting airplanes soon. Might as well use these seven days to bid a proper farewell. After all, once he went back, there'd be nobody to give him occasional beatings, or order him around to do hard labor or laundry or menial chores.

After standing for a while, he felt himself getting increasingly colder.

The Mobei clan's domain really wasn't a place human beings could live; Shang Qinghua continually ran around and hopped in place, in order to avoid getting frozen into an ice sculpture. As Mobei-jun watched him, something resembling a smile seemed to flash through his eyes for a short moment.

Mobei-jun reached out a hand, pinched one of Shang Qinghua's fingers, and said: "Be quiet."

The cold all seemed to be absorbed away through this small area of contact. Shang Qinghua felt that, while he was still cold, it was no longer as hard to bear as before.

But it was difficult to avoid his increasing regret over his imminent departure. It was getting increasingly harder to let go.

Thinking about it, aside from having a relatively bad temper, somewhat poor survival skills, kind of a spoiled attitude, and a bit of a fondness for hitting people, Mobei-jun hadn't treated him all that badly.

Especially now, the benefits weren't bad, and neither was the pay. Even if getting beaten up was a common occurrence, he was the only one who could give those beatings, no-one else was allowed. Plus recently he hadn't been beating him much, either.

Shang Qinghua began to seriously worry about his seemingly already-twisted view on what it meant to live happily.

If he really did go back, if Mobei-jun suddenly got the urge to beat somebody up but couldn't find him anywhere, when he imagined that situation, he actually felt a lonely sort of sadness welling up inside him.

Suddenly, the bone-chilling cold returned to his body.

Mobei-jun said in a chilly tone of voice: "Go back where?"

It was here that Shang Qinghua realized, in his moment of painful emotion, he'd accidentally spoken his thoughts out loud. He was really gonna feel the "pain" now!

Mobei-jun tightened his grip, practically breaking his forefinger: "Now you're saying you want to leave?"

Shang Qinghua's face contracted in pain as he hurriedly said: "No no of course not, I didn't mean now!"

"Not now?" Mobei-jun asked, "What did you tell me before?"

I'll follow my king all my life. It was practically a catchphrase, he'd said it so many times. But he hadn't thought anyone actually took it seriously, you know?

After a long silence, Mobei-jun said: "If you want to leave, then go right now, this instant. There's no need to wait the seven days."

Shang Qinghua stared blankly, startled, before saying: "My king, I'm really going, from now on we'll never be able to see each other again."

Mobei-jun looked down at him as if he were gazing down at an ant from nine million feet up in the air, and replied with a question: “What makes you think I’d care?”

Although Shang Qinghua had spent years training his thick skin to be impervious to criticism, he still shrank back for a moment at that gaze and the line that came with it.

He’d wanted to explain a little more, but the situation had developed to a point beyond his expectations.

Mobei-jun said: “Get out.”

His body suddenly flew backwards, smashing into a wall of ice hard as steel.

The sharp pain numbed his back for a second, before spreading throughout his insides.

Mobei-jun hadn’t even lifted a hand, or even bothered to send a glance his way. A warm and coppery-tasting liquid quickly rose up in Shang Qinghua’s throat.

Getting beaten around a bit by Mobei-jun was practically a daily affair, and he was often told to “get out”, so he ought to have been used to this treatment; but never before had Shang Qinghua ever felt such an intense level of loathing and anger.

Just like the countless times before, he picked himself up off the ground, quietly wiped the blood from his mouth, quietly gave an obsequious smile which nobody bothered to notice.

He stood for a while, then made another attempt to speak, only for Mobei-jun to shout loudly as if he could bear it no longer: “GET OUT!”

Shang Qinghua promptly got out as fast as he could.

Honestly speaking, even if nobody could tell what he was thinking, he still felt a little embarrassed.

About his earlier momentary thoughts of “Mobei-jun” and “friend”.

Shang Qinghua slowly walked up the stone steps; every last one of the guards and demon maids who’d originally been inside had also been chased out, and ran much faster than him as they swarmed out of the icy blockhouse. It was the same cold weather as before, but the circumstances had changed significantly compared to when he first arrived.

It was at this moment that a crooked figure came down the stairs. Shang Qinghua turned his head, just in time to make contact with a pair of cold peach-blossom eyes as they passed.

Although this pair of eyes hadn’t actually “seen” him, per se, Shang Qinghua still shivered at that glance, his heels sticking like glue to the steps.

He furtively turned to follow the person back in.

With the underground blockhouse’s garrison guards expelled from the premises, there wasn’t a demon to be seen. Mobei-jun likely believed that he’d also gotten out of here like he’d been told to, and wouldn’t have anticipated that he’d come back; Shang Qinghua thus made it all the way back to the hallway in front of that bedroom without being noticed. He stopped here, climbed one of the pillars lining the hall (thick enough you’d need three people to encircle it) up to the rafters, and sat down in a spot where nobody could possibly see him.

But while it’s true that nobody could see him from this position, he also couldn’t see anyone himself, fuck!

Mobei-jun’s indifferently cold voice could be heard, seemingly struggling to restrain his anger.

He said: “Why have you come here.”

An unfamiliar young man’s voice said with a laugh: “My nephew is succeeding the throne, so I’ve come to drink a celebratory cup – is there anything wrong with that?”

Mobei-jun didn't reply, only letting out a humph; after a long moment he finally said: "What is there to drink in celebration for."

The other voice spoke up again: "In seven days, you will be the genuine Mobei-jun. Is that not something worth congratulating?"

Shang Qinghua now understood who this was, and which scene this was that had gotten delayed to today by the messed-up original plot.

Fuck his life. Things weren't looking good for Mobei-jun.

This unexpected visitor was Mobei-jun's youngest uncle, Linguang-jun!

And the one lying in that great chamber must be Mobei-jun's father, whom he'd probably barely seen more than a couple times since he was born—or his corpse, anyway.

According to the setting he wrote, each generational sovereign of the Mobei clan would leave 70% of their power to pass down to the next generation's successor. This moment was extremely crucial. And in the scene in his original work, Linguang-jun had picked this crucial moment, on the final day of that critical juncture during which Mobei-jun digested that power, to launch a sneak attack. Because the first legal successor was originally Mobei-jun, Linguang-jun did not have the qualifications to inherit this power; he couldn't take it by force, because the ancestors would not acknowledge one who obtained it through illegal means. But if Mobei-jun died *after* officially succeeding to the throne, he would be the only remaining member of the Mobei bloodline, and when that time came, he'd be able to receive that 70% power with all-too-much glee.

According to the original story, there should have been a Bing-ge on the side as a wolf in sheep's clothing, casually playing escort, so after Mobei-jun succeeded to the throne he'd have a perfectly logical means of extortion. But the original world's Bing-ge had at this moment shamelessly run off to torment his shizun – just think about it, where would he find the time to bother paying attention to things over here? So the person Mobei-jun brought back with him, for some reason turned out to be the absolutely useless Shang Qinghua!

Shang Qinghua tore wildly at his hair: *My king you, y-y-you, why the heck did you bring ME back with you!? I'm the weakest guy you could possibly find, do you really think I have what it takes to protect you? In a dangerous situation like this you should look for your most reliable agent, your most awesome ally! Even if Bing-ge's stuck so tight to his shizun that you'd have an easier time prying old gum off a school desk, you could at least have borrowed a few thousand of his black-armored generals! No matter how hopeless things are you shouldn't find me, any skills I've got outside of serving tea and doing laundry and folding clothes doesn't even count as amateur level!*

Without the undefeatable halo and unkillable body he'd personally bestowed upon the protagonist, in that fatal moment seven days from now, Mobei-jun...

Linguang-jun said: "Did you really not bring anybody along with you, during as significant a time as this?"

"....." Mobei-jun coldly replied, "I didn't."

Linguang-jun chuckled: "You originally did, didn't you? I saw him. As I was arriving, I just happened to run into someone walking out – it must have been that...that Anding Peak Lord they say was your follower? Did he anger you somehow? He was in quite a sorry state. Listening to the rumors, I'd actually thought your temper had improved."

For a long time, nobody spoke.

Linguang-jun laughed again: "All your uncle did was ask a little question – why are you looking at me with such an unfriendly face?"

Mobei-jun bluntly replied: "I desire you to leave."

"Those words of yours are a blow to my demon heart. Unfortunately, our clan's rules never said that the succession ceremony didn't allow others to spectate, did they? Besides, I'm your father's little brother. If you weren't around, the one standing here waiting for his inheritance would undoubtedly have been me."

Mobei-jun seemed to realize it was impossible to drive him out, and didn't say another word on the matter. Linguang-jun, meanwhile, was immensely pleased with himself, not knowing when to hold back: "Ai, you've certainly changed, now that you're all grown up and about to become a suzerain. You were much cuter back when you were little."

Shang Qinghua wiped cold sweat off his brow at the sound of this familiar line, feeling slightly embarrassed at having written a character so lacking in shame. To think this little uncle actually had the nerve to bring up his childhood!

Mobei-jun had been motherless since childhood, and the person nearest and dearest to him was this young uncle of his, who wasn't that much older than him. However, because these two brothers of the older generation had some trivial issues and emotional disputes between them, Linguang-jun just couldn't bring himself to like this nephew of his; one time when no demon else was paying attention, he coaxed this well-behaved little nephew right out the front door, threw him into the human realm, and let a heap of thug cultivators chase around this completely uncomprehending, terrified-out-of-his-mind little demon who'd trip and fall every few steps he ran, frenziedly hemming him in for a good few days.

Mobei-jun's age back then was only about equivalent to a four-year-old human child. If it weren't for the fact his father suddenly realized a couple weeks later that his son hadn't been following his brother around these past few days, and casually asked about him in passing, it's possible Mobei-jun would have been locked away in the Huanhua water prison until he literally died of fright. For a demon of that age, the disorderly gang of shouting humans that had surrounded and chased him might as well have been a group of carnivorous monsters. Just imagine how a human four-year-old child would react to getting dragged into a nest of devils, and you've basically got the right picture.

The previous Mobei-jun had a heart as great as a basin—the Sichuan Basin kind of basin. He'd managed to take his son back in the end anyway, and the kid was scared but hadn't actually died; he therefore didn't take the incident to heart, just lightly chiding his brother before telling them to keep "getting along" from now on.

After the dirty and dishevelled Mobei-jun was brought back home, he refused to speak to his former favorite uncle ever again. As time went on, he became increasingly more serious with age, until finally he was unwilling to speak with anyone at all, and held an implacable hatred for any kind of betrayal on top of that.

After mentally reviewing the overly melodramatic backstory he'd created for this cold and detached young noble, Shang Qinghua took a moment to do some soul-searching. The main thing to question here was whether setting up demons as naturally cold and indifferent might've been too cruel. The second thing to question was why he hadn't tacked the line "The succession ritual doesn't allow irrelevant bystanders, not even if they're direct family members" onto the setting. As such, during this current period of time in which Mobei-jun mourned the dead and waited for his inheritance, he was unable to find either the time to leave, or a justifiable reason to drive away Linguang-jun.

Shang Qinghua continued this state of simultaneously soul-searching and trembling with fear as he waited a full seven days, until finally the penultimate day arrived.

After completing the seven-day memorial, when the moment arrived in which Mobei-jun would officially inherit his power, he was very wisely late to make a move.

But sooner or later, that move would have to be made.

Linguang-jun said: "What's this? Why are you hesitating?"

Because you're standing here, obviously!

Linguang-jun said: "Could it be that...you fear I'll mount a sneak attack? How could I? I'm your uncle, you know. You shouldn't tarry, Mobei – if you don't start soon it will be too late. I'm sure you don't need me to remind you, but there won't be any second chances."

If he didn't start now, the power would naturally disperse, which would be equivalent to letting an enormous inheritance drift away on the wind; but if

he *did* start now, the clearly ill-intentioned Linguang-jun was standing just to the side, watching him with a greedy vulture's gaze. Mobei-jun's current plight had him stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Everything was advancing according to the original work, except it was lacking an invincible Bing-ge, and had added a less-than-useless Hua-di.

In the end, Mobei-jun let out a bitter laugh.

Shang Qinghua grit his teeth, took the risk of getting noticed and beheaded by a certain demon, and stuck out his head. In practically the same second that a ball of blue light flew out from within the bedchamber to envelop Mobei-jun, Linguang-jun abruptly made his move!

Mobei-jun was prepared for this, and thrust out a hand to catch the extremely sinister palm strike. But when all was said and done he was not currently in a good state for distractions, and a sliver of demonic energy slipped into the palm of his hand. The sliver of foreign demonic energy scattered throughout Mobei-jun's body; he didn't dare treat this carelessly, and had no choice but to distract himself yet again in the attempt to deal with it. Linguang-jun went wild with joy when he sensed that he'd succeeded on his first attempt, but before he could make another move, someone suddenly jumped out, dropping abruptly down from above!

Linguang-jun said with a chilly tone: "I wondered how there could still be a guard that hadn't yet been sent away. Didn't you leave seven days ago? What? Come back to defend your master? Who would have thought you were capable of such devotion."

Shang Qinghua had still been okay when he couldn't see the guy, but the minute he did he could feel his legs buckling beneath him. Linguang-jun was pretty attractive, but it was a kind of attractive that was as soft as it was sinister; those peach blossom eyes shone as coldly as poison needles, and when he smiled there was a hint of teeth – ghastly white teeth, perfect for biting into raw flesh!

Shang Qinghua forced himself to stand in front of Mobei-jun: "Firstly, who said I came back to defend my master? Secondly, who told you he was my

master?”

Linguang-jun: “Then how did you come to be blocking my path?”

Shang Qinghua said in a powerful and resounding voice: “Kicking someone while he’s down!”

His hands shook even as he kept talking nonsense, trembling as he pointed to his own face: “Just look at how badly he’s beaten me. This nephew of yours sure has a wonderful temper!”

Mobei-jun spat out a mouthful of blood behind him. It absolutely must have been from how angry he was at this.

Shang Qinghua mournfully complained: “After all these years, the number of bones I’ve broken is enough to stack their own Maigu Ridge, the amount of blood I’ve spit is enough to drown me alive. Devotion? Who the hell could be devoted to a man...a demon like this? The way he treats me, if Shang Qinghua could keep suffering that humiliation and not get his revenge, it would be an injustice to the position of Anding Peak Lord!”

While he gave this little speech, Shang Qinghua didn’t dare turn his head to see what look Mobei-jun might have had on his face. His back was practically frosting over from the cold!

Linguang-jun laughed: “Did you hear that, Mobei? You truly have my sympathy, the way you’re fated to always be sold out or betrayed. How can you lead the Mobei clan like this? If I really allowed you to succeed to the throne, with this constitution of yours, wouldn’t that put our clan in danger of collapsing at any moment? It would be better for you to listen to your uncle, leave all the important things to me, and leave with your mind free of worries.”

With his years-long desire about to be fulfilled, Linguang-jun found himself in a generous mood, and magnanimously said to him: “How would you like to go about kicking him while he’s down?”

With a chuckle, Shang Qinghua cast a fire spell, and threw it behind him.

Linguang-jun felt a burst of blistering heat assault his senses, red light dancing before his eyes. The icy Mobei clan hated flame more than anything, and this flame especially didn't appear to be any normal fire, but one ignited from magical yang tinder which Shang Qinghua had shamelessly gotten Shen Qingqiu to make for him; there was a bit of fear mixed in with Linguang-jun's loathing as he hurriedly stepped back and covered his face, inwardly astonished at this turn of events.

He thought to himself: "Who would have guessed that the rumored good-for-nothing Anding Peak Lord was actually such a ruthless character – I'd heard Mobei treated him quite well, but it looks like the little rat had just been hiding the feelings he'd been enduring all these years, if at the first chance he's decided to be so cruel as to burn Mobei to death with immortal flames. Even dying would be too easy, this fire might actually be enough to burn him into ashes! If he'd used this spell on *me* just now, I'd be in dire straits myself for a good while. Does he still have any of those terrible little tinders left on him? Whether he does or not, this man absolutely mustn't be spared."

But when he finished scheming, got his footing and looked again, he immediately flew into a rage.

Mobei-jun hadn't been swallowed in the blaze, but instead had been sheltered within the center of the clustered flames. Rather than hitting his body, the tinder Shang Qinghua threw out just now had created a great circle around him that was about ten feet in circumference; the two of them were encircled by leaping, dancing true yang fire.

Although Mobei-jun was unable to leave the circle, neither could Linguang-jun enter it. If he were to attempt a ranged attack, his ice magic would be melted by the mystic yang fire. With that in mind, this didn't appear to be an attack spell, but rather—a defensive ring!

Linguang-jun's face immediately darkened at the realization that he'd been fooled.

The malevolent demonic energy which Linguang-jun had clapped into Mobei-jun was currently running rampant throughout his body; he was

down on one knee, complexion pale and sickly, unable to put in the effort even to spare a glance to those around him. Shang Qinghua spun around him in a flurry, but was powerless to help. Linguang-jun slowly walked around the circle of mystic yang fire, sneering.

He said: “I spoke wrong just now – you’re not just devoted, you’re so loyal to the core that you’re practically willing to lay down your life. And all for this unworthy nephew of mine, you’ve merely returned to give yourself up in pointless sacrifice! The only question is, how long can this ring of yours hold out?”

This question hit Shang Qinghua right where it hurt.

He’d thrown out all the tinders Shen Qingqiu gave him in one go, and didn’t have a single backup. He squatted by Mobei-jun’s side and hysterically prayed: “Oh gods my king did you hear that, he’s going to kill me, your uncle’s going to kill me! You’ve got to hurry up and finish digesting, I really don’t know how long this ring will last!”

Suddenly, there came the roar of cracking stone, and icy flakes of dust came tumbling down from above.

Shang Qinghua’s crouch wasn’t a steady position, and he swayed along with the leaping flames.

What he saw was Linguang-jun pulling back a single hand from one of the hallway pillars and saying: “Did you think I’d be unable to get at you as long as you didn’t come out?”

He was planning to collapse the ice stronghold, either crushing Mobei-jun to death or burying him alive!

Seeing the pillar covered in terrifying cracks, and Linguang-jun about to put in a second blow, Shang Qinghua hurriedly said: “I’m coming I’m coming, I’ll be out in a moment!”

And then, like a long-suffering frog hopping into a deep fryer, he very slowly jumped out from the ring.

As soon as he came out, there was no going back in again; Linguang-jun moved quicker than lightning, grabbing hold of him: “What use is there in just you coming out? Get rid of that fire!”

The truth was that he was getting a little nervous as well. It was unclear how long it would take for Mobei-jun to suppress that thread of demonic energy, and if he managed to finish synchronizing and digesting that 70% power before the mystic yang fires went out, wouldn't today's rebellion become a farce?

Shang Qinghua said: “I only know how to start fires, not how to put them out.”

Linguang-jun: “Then make him come out!”

Shang Qinghua: “That's, uh...just look at his current state milord, even if he wanted to come out there's no way he can move.”

Linguang-jun laughed coldly, then placed a hand on Shang Qinghua's solar plexus.

He amiably said: “Then what do you think, if your heart is currently getting frozen, is it possible he might come out in a moment of impulse?”

Shang Qinghua: “If this sort of thing could be broken just based on ‘a moment's impulse’, then I suggest that milord try seeing if you can charge inside on ‘a moment's impulse’...”

He couldn't speak any more past that.

Linguang-jun softly crooned an ice incantation, turning it into a cheerfully malicious little tune, and said: “Mobei, your uncle is truly surprised that you'd have a lackey unwilling to betray you even in a circumstance like this. It would be quite a shame if you were to lose such a good dog, don't you agree?”

The area near his heart was a world of ice and snow.

Shang Qinghua's lips were turning purple as he raised a hand: "M-m-milord."

Linguang-jun: "Speak."

Shang Qinghua: "If you...f-f-freeze my heart like this, I-I-I won't be able to scream, a-a-and won't sound miserable enough, t-t-thus not reaching your goal of him moving on 'a moment's impulse'. I su...suggest that you hit me instead. I guarantee I'll put my all into screaming, the most tragic screams I can give."

Linguang-jun: "Oh. But I use a very heavy hand – what will I do if I fail to hold back, and beat you to death?"

Shang Qinghua: "N-n-no problem, I can take it. I'm used to it, your nephew's always..."

Before he could finish speaking, Shang Qinghua got to personally experience exactly how "heavy" Linguang-jun's hand was.

He hadn't used demonic energy, making this an entirely physical attack. Shang Qinghua could clearly hear the sound of every rib in his body breaking, the sound of his chest hissing like it was leaking air after he'd vomited too much blood.

When his upper teeth gave indications of loosening, Shang Qinghua thought to himself, compared to his uncle and other demons, Mobei-jun was way too fucking gentle, too kind, he was practically a little angel.

The longer he delayed, the closer Linguang-jun's impatience came to fury; he stepped firmly on his back, pulled up one of his arms, and said with a malicious smile: "Didn't you guarantee you'd scream with your all your might, as tragically as you could? Why is your mouth shut so tight that even now, you still haven't let out a sound?"

This movement brought a few extremely bad mental associations into Shang Qinghua's mind, and he hurriedly spat out the bubble of warm blood filling his mouth, loudly screaming with great sincerity.

Linguang-jun said: “Hm, not bad. But I’m afraid it’s not plaintive enough. I’ll help you.”

His shoulder erupted with the terrifying pain of muscle, skin and bone ripping apart. Shang Qinghua’s mouth gaped open, allowing the fear to drown him, and conversely was no longer able to cry out.

But this pain did not manage to develop to an irremediable level. Suddenly, his pulled-back arm fell limply back down again.

The corner of a dark blue gown churned in front of him, like a garment made of snowstorms.

Against all expectations, Mobei-jun had swept out through the ring of fire, slamming his palm right into Linguang-jun’s solar plexus!

This blow to the chest took Linguang-jun by surprise; half his chest collapsed from the force, the demonic energy surrounding him seeming to have had a great hole blasted through it, flowing swiftly outwards in a far-reaching torrent. A chill went through his mind: The power behind a single one of this brat’s blows was beyond comparison with his strength of the past, which meant that after all was said and done he’d managed to make it in time, completely absorbing the entirety of the Mobei clan’s generational power!

He was actually unafraid of even mystic true yang fire now, penetrating right through it!

Although he was resentful and unresigned, at present he feared he was nothing resembling a match for Mobei-jun; there was nothing for it but to hurriedly seal his injury with ice, transform into a gust of black wind, and rush out of the icy stronghold.

Shang Qinghua lay sprawled with his face glued to the floor; he sensed no movement for a long while, nor did anyone come to help him up, and he desolately thought: *Is he still angry? However you wanna say it I still got beaten into this shape for his sake, but he won’t even lend me a hand, this is totally inexcusable!*

And then he heard a heavy “thump”.

Shang Qinghua grimaced in pain as he struggled to complete the impossibly difficult task of rolling over.

Mobei-jun has unexpectedly collapsed again. Two figures lay in two differing positions beside a fiercely burning ring of fire, quietly, silently, keeled over.

It was here that he came to the sudden realization that maybe, just maybe, Mobei-jun *hadn't* finished absorbing that 70% power, and hadn't suppressed that thread of demonic energy from Linguang-jun either. Just now, he really had moved “on a moment's impulse”, putting everything he had into that attack, just to temporarily scare away Linguang-jun. Now Mobei-jun was totally sapped of energy, and had gotten burned by deadly mystic true yang fire to boot, so he'd...keeled over.

Even though Mobei-jun was lying very straight on the ground, unable to so much as twitch a finger, he was still putting all his strength into staring at him.

This stare was strong enough that Shang Qinghua was entirely unable to keep peacefully sprawling, and so was obliged to speak up: “Er, my king you uh, might as well stop struggling, lie down, and take your time digesting. The gradually accumulated power of successive generations of suzerains all added together, isn't something you can down in one gulp.”

That gaze still showed no hint of restraint, making Shang Qinghua feel as if he were bathing in a rain of needles, his whole body itching with nervous trepidation; when he finally managed to catch his breath and push himself up into a sitting position, he was already shaking like he had Parkinson's.

At long last he'd reached a moment where Mobei-jun could properly listen to what he said. He took a breath and said: “Uh, my king. Actually, I wasn't planning to leave at a time like this. I didn't know this just happened to be such an important moment as you succeeding the throne, honest. Something as important as that, why didn't you tell me sooner?”

Mobei-jun was using the expression on his face to tell him “If you kneel down and tearfully apologize I’ll forgive you”.

Shang Qinghua’s mouth twitched at the corners, and he continued: “To tell the truth, you shouldn’t have brought me along, I’m totally useless, only passable enough for you to use as something to smack around a bit on occasion. Just look at earlier, I got beaten up this badly, and barely managed to help you stall for a little while. That injury you gave your uncle was a serious one, so he probably won’t be coming back. And you should be pretty near done digesting too. So I’ll just...be going.”

Mobei-jun’s expression had originally relaxed a bit, but the moment he heard that last line, his gaze turned cold and sharp: “You’re leaving!? You wouldn’t dare!”

Having gotten another roar to the face when his body was still hurting all over, Shang Qinghua suddenly felt a burst of hot anger, at once slapping the ground and loudly shouting: “Why wouldn’t I dare!”

This slap naturally couldn’t scare Mobei-jun, its only result being to make a bolt of searing pain run up through his arm and shoulder, making him see stars for a moment. Anyway Mobei-jun was unable to move right now, thus giving birth to Shang Qinghua’s nasty side, and he pointed at him saying: “I might as well tell you the truth! I’ve tolerated you for a long time now, you spoiled rotten, stuck-up, vile-tempered second-generation filthy rich demon!”

This could be said to be an extremely daring move. Mobei-jun had disbelief written all over his face. Meanwhile at this moment Shang Qinghua’s years of accumulated rancor had reached the boiling point, gushing out like a geyser: “Bullying a guy like me who seems even-tempered and good-natured with low cultivation to boot must really get you off, is that it? Do you really think I’m really this...this...huh!?”

“What’re you looking at, you got something to say!? This great one’s your dad! Call me dad! I’ve just been letting you off easy is all! You wanna try that with anyone else!? Bing-ge would beat you to death no questions asked, the original goods Shen Qingqiu would connive you to death!”

“There’s nobody who’d enjoy getting beaten up every day, neither is there anybody who’d actually be smiling happily all the time when he’s getting beaten up every day! It’s not like I’m really a dog! Even with a dog if you kicked it a couple times every day sooner or later it’d learn not to get close to you!”

Mobei-jun said: “Do you want to die?”

Under these circumstances, this line didn’t have nearly the deterrent force it usually would, and Shang Qinghua said: “I don’t. Not only do I dare to leave, would you believe me if I said I dared to do other things too? Today, right here, this peak lord will pay back every beating you’ve ever given him, blow for blow!”

Mobei-jun furiously replied: “You—!”

Shang Qinghua said: “You what? Is it ‘you dare’ again? Well I’ll tell you, I really do dare right now. Take this!”

With that he rolled up his sleeves, waving his fists eagerly in front of Mobei-jun’s ashen face. Mobei-jun was shooting icy daggers with his stare, but Shang Qinghua didn’t feel the slightest bit of fear; he brandished a fist, throwing it out towards his face.

Mobei-jun instinctively turned his face away, only to feel a tightening on his skin.

It was a very unfamiliar feeling. A little ticklish, ever-so-slightly painful, but absolutely nothing like the heavy blow he’d expected.

Shang Qinghua pinched his cheek between two fingers, tugging it outwards with all his strength, and said: “How’s that, does it hurt!?”

As he tugged he thought to himself, *This isn’t what I fucking wanted to do. Hit him, come on, hit him while he can’t move. Even if I pull at his face a bit, however you look at it I’m not getting my money’s worth here!*

But there was nothing he could do about it, because after all...he still couldn't bring himself to bruise this face!

Mobei-jun's face was being pulled enough that he couldn't speak properly, but he persevered in saying: "You're done for!"

Shang Qinghua cackled: "You've got guts, to threaten me in a situation like this – your dad admires that in you."

His other hand joined in, tugging at the other side of Mobei-jun's face, one moment pulling his cheeks in opposite directions, the next squeezing him into a ball. Mobei-jun's formerly noble and elegant image was ruthlessly destroyed by that malicious pair of hands. And Shang Qinghua was still repeating: "Does it hurt yet? It hurts, right?"

Mobei-jun stubbornly refused to yield, but physical tears were something that sadly could not be obstructed through stubbornness alone, and in the end he'd been tugged at enough that teardrops formed at the corners of his eyes.

"...So it hurts now? That's right, it *better* hurt!" Shang Qinghua released his claws, saying, "Normally when you beat me, it hurts at *least* ten times more than this! So what's wrong with letting me pinch you a bit? You're so delicate!"

Mobei-jun was so angered by that derogatory line of "You're so delicate!" that his face turned pale; add to that the great mass of bruise-colored finger marks on his cheeks, and his expression was truly horrible to see.

It must be said that Shang Qinghua really was terrified – committing this impassioned offense just now had given him a moment's pleasure, but after the deed was done he suddenly feared he might be sent to the crematorium, especially seeing how when Mobei-jun's face returned to its normal shape, the expression on it was truly...truly...just looking at it struck terror into his heart, so he hurriedly brushed off his clothes and prepared to make his escape. He strode quickly away a few steps, and heard Mobei-jun shout out behind him: "If you want to keep your legs then stand straight and don't move!"

As if on reflex, Shang Qinghua once again obeyed.

He didn't dare turn his head to look behind him, saying: "My king, I'm really going."

Mobei-jun: "Shut up! Come back!"

Shang Qinghua kept right on talking: "Even if you get angry you absolutely shouldn't come looking for me. When I go back this time, you'll never be able to find me again, so don't bother putting in pointless effort. So that's it then, goodbye my king."

Mobei-jun was practically roaring now: "If you've got the guts to leave then don't let me see you ever again!"

Shang Qinghua turned a deaf ear to his yelling.

After walking a few steps, he let out another sigh: "I'm really glad I got to meet you. Honest—you're even more handsome than I imagined!"

At this moment, his high-spirited, radiantly smiling appearance looked exactly like the expression he'd had on his face in that moment he'd written this character's first appearance on-stage.

These were his true and genuine feelings towards a character created by his own hand. Thinking after the fact, this was really rather embarrassing. But with their parting near at hand, embarrassment was nothing more than a short-lived thing.

The problem was that Shang Qinghua still didn't understand, what happened to the "parting near at hand"?

How come it'd already been a month since the system released that return home attachment, and yet he was still stuck in the world of *Prideful Immortal Demon Way*, idling his time away!

Every time he poked open the system and looked at the red and green [Yes] and [Remind me next time], he'd first space out for a while, then choose the button on the right, and close the window.

Next time after next time, there sure were a lot of next times.

Shang Qinghua blamed this on procrastination. Accursed procrastination!

He didn't dare return to Cangqiong Mountain for now, as he didn't know if Mobei-jun might be angry enough to go up Anding Peak and stop people for info. But half his savings was kept in a certain cave on Anding Peak, and the other half was over at Mobei-jun's mansion on the northern border, so while Shang Qinghua may appear to have been living a carefree life this past month, the truth was he'd been scrimping and saving in his attempts to endure the hardships of his journey. If it weren't for that little bit of spiritual energy he had, he wouldn't be much different from your average homeless tramp.

After wandering for nearly a month, he actually managed to run into a certain teacher-student pair in the midst of their carefree scenic world tour.

When Shang Qinghua realized who and who this was, he couldn't help taking a moment to rub his eyes. It took half a minute for him to confirm that the young man in commoner's clothes, carrying a fishing rod and a fish hamper yet still looking impressive as ever, was Luo binghe; it took another half a minute to confirm that the one sending him a lunchbox yet unremittingly persevering in acting cool and celestial was Immortal Lord Shen Peak Lord Shen Shen Qingqiu.

You guys are out here having a happy and romantic time with your wooded mountain seclusion ero-play, while Mobei-jun got abandoned back in the demon realm, forcing me to be the one to help him out of trouble – you don't know how much I've suffered!

Despite Shang Qinghua's silent cursing, when all was said and done, seeing these two still made him really happy. Especially since he hadn't eaten a full meal in a good few days. Don't roast him over being a cultivator and still caring about whether or not he's had enough to eat, the book review

forums have roasted him more than enough already. What's so fun about not eating anyway, it's not like he's a Kuxing Peak member, he doesn't do the whole inedia thing!

Having had his country lifestyle interrupted without good cause, Luo Binghe naturally didn't look upon him very favorably; he didn't show it in his expression, but when after they'd exchanged greetings Shen Qingqiu invited him to "come inside and sit for a while", Bing-ge's face still darkened somewhat.

The two of them had very tastefully built a bamboo house in a nature-abundant area with blue waters and green mountains. The longer Shang Qinghua sat, the more he felt that they were living a really cushy life, and said from his rattan chair: "The house isn't half bad."

Shen Qingqiu waved his fan: "Just think about who built it, is it capable of being bad?"

Shang Qinghua put on a bashful face: "You guys are really living much more comfortable lives than I am. Would it be possible for me to take advantage of Cucumber-bro's friendship a bit, let me enjoy the leisurely retired life for a little while?"

Shen Qingqiu: "It's very unfortunate, but you've come at the wrong time – we were just about to have dinner."

Shang Qinghua: "Oh no, it's no problem at all. Arriving early can't beat coming at the right time, and the way I see it I've come at exactly the right time. Let me take a look at how you're eating." Saying that, he got up, walked over to what he suspected to be the kitchen, and lifted the curtain.

Luo Binghe was wearing a lightweight black shirt, sleeves rolled up high, a harsh expression on his face, as he wordlessly...kneaded dough.

He wore a look of serious concentration, his cheeks coated in fluffy white, a bit of flour stuck to his eyelashes, looking as if the object being kneaded around in his clenched hands wasn't dough, but rather—a scroll containing grandiose plans of world domination!

Nonononono—

Shang Qinghua's innards were practically exploding from fear.

Bing-ge, the harem protagonist he'd personally created, the man overflowing with wild arrogance who subdued people by the thousands.

He was kneading dough!

Making pulled noodles!

Noodles noodles noodles (infinite echo)

This was seriously a kind of terror that was impossible to describe!

Shang Qinghua silently retreated. He sat down at the table, reached out, and made to grab a cup so he could calm himself down with some tea, only to have Shen Qingqiu pull it away: "Mine."

Shang Qinghua's heart was still fluttering with fear: "It's not like you have a second cup around here, what's wrong with letting me use it a bit?"

Shen Qingqiu pointed at the kitchen: "You know perfectly well there is no second cup, which means, this is also his."

"....."

"Do you have the guts to use it? If you do then I'll give it to you."

Shang Qinghua's claw changed gears from pulling to pushing: "Please use it yourself, respected elder, I am unfortunately unable to enjoy it."

Bing-ge kept cooking. The two thus proceeded to chat for a while. After being relayed the news of the surprise event at the Mobei clan ice stronghold, Shen Qingqiu expressed doubt: "Really? That's it?"

Shang Qinghua said: "What good would there be in me lying to you about this? What do you mean, 'that's it'? This is my dignity we're talking about, of course I can't stay anymore."

“It is as you say, you’re right.” Shen Qingqiu thought a moment, then continued, “But you don’t really seem like that kind of person.”

“What kind of person?”

Shen Qingqiu replied in an amiable manner: “A person who cares about dignity, of course.”

Based on Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky’s strength of will, thickness of skin, and tenacity of life, he didn’t at all seem like he’d run away just because Mobei-jun beat him up. After all, he’d already endured all these years, why would he suddenly turn fragile and sensitive and overwhelmed with grief?

Shang Qinghua said, embarrassed: “Cucumber bro, all I’ve done is regularly sacrifice my moral integrity for the sake of upvotes and followers, and maybe become Anding Peak’s peak lord on the side; if you’re gonna discriminate against me just for that, that’d make you the one in the wrong.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Are those two reasons you gave not enough to rationalize discrimination against you?”

Shang Qinghua: “Aiyah, can’t you be a little nicer to me, a little more gentle? Seriously though Cucumber bro, when do you think would be a good time for me to go back to the modern world?”

Shen Qingqiu: “Do you really want to go back there? I didn’t realize shooting too many airplanes could actually cause your eyesight to fail, you can’t even see the question clearly anymore. Wake up, you’re clearly just waiting for him to apologize and then kidnap you back to continue giving you three light beatings a day.”

Before they could finish talking, dinner started. Luo Binghe served up two bowls of noodles.

White noodles and red soup, oily fragments of chopped green onion, neatly-stacked slices of fresh and tender meat, an absolutely perfect appearance. But Shang Qinghua wouldn’t try to sink his claws into it. There was no

need for Bing-ge to state it out loud; he just needed to give a seemingly careless glance, and Shang Qinghua understood, there wasn't any for him.

Shen Qingqiu sighed: "I did say you came at a bad time."

It was a meal personally cooked by Bing-ge's own hands after all, that wasn't something just anyone could have the qualifications to eat. Shang Qinghua had nothing to say, and so shrank back to a corner of the table, helplessly watching the two opposite him as they laid out their chopsticks.

After a while Shen Qingqiu finally could no longer bear to watch, strained a smile as he placed a piece of meat into Luo Binghe's bowl, and showed mercy: "Alright, don't tease him. Your shishu has suffered enough these past few days, there's no need to keep bullying him."

Luo Binghe moved that piece of meat to his mouth, not even bothering to look up: "There's still some in the wok."

Shang Qinghua gladly went off to grab the spatula.

He slurped down that bowl of noodles with tears brimming in his eyes. It was his first time sincerely feeling that, in this world, the one thing he could most rely on was still in fact his hometown friendship with Peerless Cucumber.

Having scrounged a free bowl of incomparably delicious pulled noodles, Shang Qinghua was already pleased beyond his expectations, and had from the start held no intentions of staying the night.

You gotta be kidding, there's no way he'd want to eavesdrop on Bing-ge's nighttime activities. Whether or not he'd be able to guarantee quality sleep was one thing, whether or not Bing-ge would cut both his ears off the next day was another.

Look at what kind of fairytale-esque life Shen Qingqiu was living, then look at what kind of life *he* was living. It drives a guy hopping mad to compare yourself with luckier people. It was just plain outrageous, *he* was the author here, he was the creator god, the kami-sama of this world,

couldn't it be a little nicer to him! Show some care for the author! It's everyone's duty to protect the author!

Shang Qinghua savored the aftertaste of the only bowl of noodles his son had ever given him as he picked his teeth with a grass root, walking down a small mountain lane.

He walked and walked, until suddenly his foot slipped.

The little lane sat right by a ravine, and Shang Qinghua had long forgotten where he'd dropped that poor sword of his, meaning he'd be unable to fly back out if he fell down there, thus causing him to give himself a big round of verbal abuse: "How could you slip while walking perfectly well on a perfectly good road? It's not like I'm a manga heroine with the pre-installed ability to trip on level ground!"

He looked up from his seat on the ground; there wasn't any unexpected and unnecessary banana peel or tree root, only a small puddle of water.

It's just that, that puddle was frozen. And there was a light frost currently extending over the short grasses around him.

Shang Qinghua frantically threw himself towards the nearest rockface, back pressed against it in search of that little bit of security.

He'd originally thought the worst case scenario was that his dillydallying and reckless inaction in regards to going back would manage to drag on until Mobei-jun finally came to find him. But when a certain someone came out from among the rocky hills and hanging vines, he realized, reality could be much worse than that.

Linguang-jun said: "Oh-ho, look at that, whoever could this be?"

Shang Qinghua gave a hollow laugh: "Oh yes! Whoever could it possibly be?"

Linguang-jun patted his head, saying: "Mobei has practically turned the entire northern border on its head looking for you – you certainly can hide,

huh?”

“Milord must be joking, whyever would I hide...”

“Right? I thought it was strange as well, what is there to hide from? You did such a greatly meritorious service back in the ice stronghold before, and yet Mobei didn’t even get the chance to reward you – what reason is there for you to be so depressed that you’d run off to such a poor little out-of-the-way area?”

“Oh no it’s nothing like that!” Shang Qinghua repeatedly waved his hands, “It’s nothing to do with me. What happened last time was entirely due to Mobei-jun’s own ability...”

This refusal of praise was out of the fear that Linguang-jun had put the greater share of the blame for the incident at the ice stronghold on Shang Qinghua’s shoulders; unexpectedly, however, Linguang-jun’s expression suddenly changed, and he said in a severe and ruthless voice: “Do you mean to say that if a contemptible, treacherous, shameless, vulgar Cangqiong Mountain dog like you hadn’t suddenly showed up to ruin my plans, that brat could still have defeated me single-handedly!?”

Agreeing would be the wrong answer, but so would disagreeing, meaning Shang Qinghua was crying to the high heavens: “How could that be possible! Mobei-jun only defeated you, milord, because he took you by surprise!”

Linguang-jun: “Are you mocking me?”

Shang Qinghua: “.....”

Now that he thought about it, that’s right, the one who’d first made a sneak attack was clearly Linguang-jun himself. He’d accidentally licked a leg instead of a boot, no matter what he said it was guaranteed to be wrong; in all the decades that Shang Qinghua had clung to thighs with an ingratiating smile, this was the first time he’d ever met such a hard-to-handle character!

He sullenly shut his mouth.

Linguang-jun sneered: “I’m sure that brat Mobei could never have imagined that I might casually bump into the one person he cannot find no matter how hard he searches. That being the case, I should make good use of you...”

Shang Qinghua hurriedly said: “Milord! If you wish to catch me to threaten Mobei-jun, that won’t be any use! I might as well tell you honestly why I ran away. The truth is that back then, when he was unable to move, I couldn’t help taking advantage of the situation to give him a beating...you know what sort of temper that corpse-face has! With an opportunity like that, you must agree it would be difficult *not* to want to hit him, right? After hitting him there was no going back, and fearing his revenge, I...ran. His looking everywhere for me is most likely because he wants to return the blows I gave. I don’t have the slightest worth in his eyes, at best I’m no more than just a convenient punching bag and attendant.”

Linguang-jun paused at that, then impatiently said: “Why are you telling me all this? Do I look like the kind of demon who’d do such underhanded things?”

That’s hard so say, your mounting a sneak attack on Mobei-jun wasn’t exactly above-board... Shang Qinghua sincerely said, “No.”

Linguang-jun: “And do I look like a *patient* demon?”

Shang Qinghua: “That I wouldn’t know. May I ask how milord wishes to ‘use’ me, then?”

“How?” Linguang-jun chuckled, “Kill you to vent my anger. You never expected a use like that, did you?”

“.....” Shang Qinghua stared blankly for a moment, then said, “There’s no need for *that*, is there, this is a waste of perfectly good natural resources is what it is! Milord you’d be much better off taking me to threaten Mobei-jun with or something, it would be such a pity if you killed me right away!”

Linguang-jun: “‘I don’t have the slightest worth in his eyes, at best I’m no more than just a convenient punching bag and attendant’. Who was it that

said this line?”

Shang Qinghua: “There’s an old saying among humans, modesty is a kind of virtue...”

Before he’d finished saying “virtue”, he suddenly threw out his hand, yelling: “*Watch my mystic true yang fire!*”

Balls of red flame came surging at them from the air, and Linguang-jun, greatly alarmed, hurriedly moved to dodge. However, the flames died out immediately upon touching the ground; they were clearly not mystic true yang fire, which was unaffected by wind or water, but were instead just a trick by that bastard Shang Qinghua!

Linguang-jun felt a surge of anger, new animosity mixing together with old grudges; he casually brushed a bit of as-yet-unfallen dew from a nearby hanging leaf, flicking it directly at Shang Qinghua’s lower body. Shang Qinghua only felt his leg go cold, but the ice bullet formed with demonic energy had already gone straight through it – he fell to the ground with a plop, unable to run.

Linguang-jun took advantage of this, stepping lightly on the other leg’s kneecap, and said: “You’re just like a cockroach, so good at running away! Why don’t I cripple both your legs, and we’ll see how you run then?”

Shang Qinghua wasn’t the slightest bit morally courageous enough to stay unyielding in the face of injury, soul practically escaping his body from fear: “MY KIIING-!”

Speak of the king, and the king appears!

An ink-blue figure appeared as suddenly as a demonic apparition. With a *crack*, two balls of black qi crashed into each other, and Linguang-jun gripped his broken kneecap, wild with anger: “You little brat, do you always have to arrive so promptly!? Can’t you be a little later!? Can’t you wait until I’ve actually stepped down before showing up!?”

Mobei-jun crushed his other kneecap beneath a foot, and coldly replied: “I can’t!”

Linguang-jun was actually pretty strong-willed; even with both his knees smashed to pieces, he didn’t scream, instead cursing more hysterically than before: “You really are the seed of that rigid-faced father of yours! Of everyone in the family you just had to be like him. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, if he robs you rob too, always trying to take things from me! If he died early why won’t you do the same! *Fuck...*”

Mobei-jun said: “Curse one more time, and I’ll send you to join him.”

Shang Qinghua was flabbergasted. Although he’d known that Linguang-jun had always deeply resented his older brother, he hadn’t realized it had grown so deep that he’d rather drop all pretense of elegance in favor of shouting abuse on the street...

Amidst the sound of Linguang-jun’s furious cursing, Mobei-jun casually lifted him, tossing him into the ravine. If a human were to fall in like that, it’d probably be the end for them, but a demon would definitely survive. Shang Qinghua didn’t bother giving any reminders to eliminate him completely. The man was still his uncle, after all, plus Mobei-jun’s father had most likely told him before that no matter what Linguang-jun did, he should still show some tolerance. Shang Qinghua absolutely didn’t want to remind him of anything at all; if he could make him forget he existed, that would be even better...

Mobei-jun brought his gaze back from the bottom of the ravine, and shouted: “Stop!”

Shang Qinghua was just about to slip away, dragging his holey calf behind him; having been unexpectedly caught by that shout, he froze on the spot.

Even a pervert getting caught in the act wouldn’t feel as guilty as he did in this moment. When he heard the sound of crushed frost and ice beneath Mobei-jun’s approaching footsteps, he hurriedly covered his face.

Mobei-jun seemed to be particularly angry today, as he wasn't the slightest bit aloof: "What are you doing!?"

Shang Qinghua awkwardly said: "Didn't you say 'don't let me see you ever again'? Now you've seen me, so there's nothing for me to do but to cover my face for now."

Mobei-jun lifted his hand, and Shang Qinghua moved to cover his head out of habit.

"....."

Mobei-jun separated his hands, pulled them straight, and – clearly at the end of his patience – said: "If I catch you doing such actions again...you will have no need to keep your hands!"

There was the tiniest bit of tooth-gnashing hatred in that sentence. Shang Qinghua reflexively wanted to cover his head again, but for the sake of this pair of hands whose keyboard typing had won them great distinctions, he forced himself to suppress the urge.

Trying to suppress it was unbearably difficult, and so he began to tremble, trembling so hard that Mobei-jun said: "Am I that scary?"

Shang Qinghua: "Uh not really, actually! It's just that I keep feeling like you're about to give me the ol' one-two, my king. Before, you know, getting beaten up or kicked around a bit didn't really matter all that much, but now you've already officially succeeded the throne – your level of cultivation can't be compared with the past, one blow from you could make raging waves hit the shore and flying rocks shoot through the clouds, I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to take that ol' one-two of yours..."

Mobei-jun said: "Shut up! Come with me, let's go!"

Shang Qinghua threw caution to the wind, clinging like a gecko to the rock wall: "I'm not going! No I mean, I *am* going! I'm going back to my old home."

Mobei-jun said: “Will you stay, if I let you hit me back?”

Shang Qinghua: “Compared to staying here so you can beat me three times a day, I’d rather...wha!?”

Hit back?

Hit *him* back?

Mobei-jun was willing to let him hit him back?

Mobei-jun was willing to let him hit him back if it’d make him stay?

This was too much of a shock; the above words were echoing endlessly through Shang Qinghua’s mind like a flight of text stairs.

Mobei-jun lifted his chin, standing straight and still, putting on an upright and unafraid “hit me however you want, I won’t fight back” sort of attitude, but he kept secretly watching him out of the corner of his eye.

Seeing a lack of any action after quite a while, Mobei-jun seemed to suddenly cheer up. Although his happy look was no more than just the tips of his eyebrows raising very slightly higher than before.

Mobei-jun said: “Not going to hit me? Your time’s run out. I won’t be letting you hit me anymore. Let’s go.”

Wait a minute I never said I wouldn’t hit you? When’d you set a time limit?

Mobei-jun’s eyebrow tips raised up that tiny bit of incredibly well-hidden joy as he grabbed Shang Qinghua and ran. Shang Qinghua immediately began to wail and shriek: “Oh gods owowow my king j-just look at me! Look at me look at me!”

Mobei-jun did in fact look at him, as well as his bloody leg.

“.....” After a moment’s silence, he tried lifting Shang Qinghua up to carry him over a shoulder.

Shang Qinghua said in a horribly suffering tone: “My king please spare me, please! If you walk the whole way with me tossed over your shoulder like this, my leg really will get crippled!”

Mobei-jun said: “Then what am I supposed to do?”

Shang Qinghua had tears in his eyes as he cautiously tried: “How about... finding me a doctor first?”

Mobei-jun clicked his tongue, turned around and left.

A cold breeze blew past, the abandoned Shang Qinghua struck dumb as a wooden chicken at the spot where he’d been left.

Was this...thinking he was troublesome?

After a short while, Mobei-jun returned, and was also pulling along a handcart he’d stolen from who-knows-where. It was only then that the wooden chicken became a live one.

The demon deputy leader himself, the magnificent and noble leader of the Mobei ice clan, condescending to pull a dilapidated handcart that clashed with his style to an extreme degree. This scene, it was awesome!

Shang Qinghua was unable to resist letting out a “pfft!”

Seeing the veins beginning to pop up again on Mobei-jun’s forehead, he hurriedly started frowning and crying out in pain. After a couple of seconds, Mobei-jun lifted him up, placed him on the cart and made sure he was properly settled.

Even though he was sitting on a wobbly old handcart, one that had been taken right off the horse from some peasant family’s yard, which previously had probably only ever been used to pull stuff like fodder, firewood, or buckets of slop, Shang Qinghua still felt proud and majestic as he rode along on it. Those who didn’t know any better might even think this was a top scorer in the imperial examinations who’d finally passed after ten years

of strenuous studies, had been granted a marriage by the emperor himself, and was currently on his joyful way to escort the bride.

This was truly the cycle of karma. When he first met Mobei-jun, he'd also used a handcart like this, carrying an unconscious Mobei-jun off to rent a hotel room!

A poem to mark the occasion: *Thirty years east of the river, thirty years west of the river. We take turns sitting on the handcart, next year we come to my home.* Haha!

Shang Qinghua was in a transcendently lighthearted mood as he declared: "I want to eat pulled noodles."

That bowl of noodles Bing-ge had made was really delicious, but there wasn't enough of it – there'd barely been any spared for him, so eating it hadn't been very filling.

Mobei-jun: "Mm."

Shang Qinghua stressed: "Pulled noodles."

Mobei-jun: "Sure."

Shang Qinghua got an inch and tried for a mile: "Made by you."

The handcart stopped moving, Mobei-jun standing still on the spot.

A faint breeze of cold air came floating in from somewhere. Shang Qinghua immediately panicked, making eyes at him as he said: "Me, I'll make it, of course it's me making it. It was just a casual comment is all, heeheehee."

Sigh. Dreams were fat, but reality was lean.

After a long while, the handcart's wheels slowly began to turn again. Mobei-jun up ahead, without turning his head, said: "I'll make it."

.....

What'd he say? He said he'd make it? Who was he? Mobei-jun. Making what? Pulled noodles.

A Mobei-jun who was willing to let him hit him, and willing to make noodles for him—was today some kind of holiday? Today was way too much!

Shang Qinghua had made a decision!

He was going to resume his old trade.

The penname Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky was going to make a roaring comeback!

So what should he write? Shang Qinghua slapped his thigh. He'd heard that Willow Lodges Sleeping Flowers's 81-volume *Springtime of our Sundering* had been selling like hotcakes. Yeah, so he'd follow the trend and write that! He himself was undeniably straight, but the market lay where the readers were, and if there was a market then he was willing to write it. Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky was a master at following trends, writing whatever happened to be popular, so there was no way this could go wrong!

The first step was to carefully pick out a good book title the masses would enjoy seeing. Something like *The Secret Annals of Qingjing Peak*, *My Disciple Can't Be This Cute*, *How Tender Is My Shizun* etc, he'd need to give that a good think. It was fine if his writing style didn't compare to that of Willow Lodges Sleeping Flowers, because what Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky sold had never been his writing style. Plus Willow Lodges Sleeping Flowers and the group Three Holy Mothers had joined forces to form a small circle, one the Great Airplane didn't personally like. All they ever wrote was just about Shen Qingqiu and Luo Binghe, their scope was way too small. If you asked him, you could totally get a lot more bold and brazen than that. For example, if you were calling it *Springtime of our Sundering*, why limit it to just one ship? Wouldn't it be a terrible pity not to write about as cool a character as Liu Qingge? Yue Qingyuan was a

grand and majestic beauty too, successful in business and Ikea to boot. Mu-shidi and Wei-shixiong were both Adonises in the public eye, you think nobody would look if you wrote a non-canon side ship?

To sum it up, as long as it was explicit enough, low-class enough (crossed out), and shameless enough (crossed out), soon enough he'd be dominating local literary circles; he wouldn't even need to sell homemade soap to be able to HAHAAHAHAHAHA!

Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky crossed his legs, as the handcart creaked and swayed along the bumpy mountain road.

The sun was setting in the west, and Mobei-jun was pulling him along to destinations unknown.

It may have been an unspeakably bad, chaotic, hideous mess, with the writing style of an elementary schooler, and more serious readers probably wouldn't be able to resist throwing the book and loudly cursing "What kind of bullshit story is this". But the Great Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky had always been great at finding excuses for his own dishonesty, and could throw out a thousand different "it's just x" to smooth things over. For example:

It's just reading a novel you know; just like in life, you're there to have fun, why take things so seriously!

It's just a drama the author wrote on a lark, everybody shouldn't have such high demands, be a little more forgiving with me!

It's just a mindlessly indulgent novel, wake up, what did you *think* you were gonna see!

It's just...

It's just.

...It's just that he really, truly loved this story he'd written.

Deep Dream Record

This wasn't the first time Shen Qingqiu had laid down to rest only to open his eyes to another place entirely, and so he wasn't flustered by the discovery, knowing he'd entered Luo Binghe's dream realm again. After floating along for a while, he made a gentle landing.

He started walking the moment he touched the ground, his movements light as if he were riding the wind and using willow trees as stepping stones. All around him was dazzling gold and jade, decorated in a gorgeous and ostentatious style, and a particularly familiar-looking hallway—this was absolutely Huanhua Palace.

Going through this hallway brought him to Huanhua Palace's main discussion hall. In the past, Luo Binghe himself would have long been waiting for him within the dream realm, but this time there was no sign of him, which was a rather strange occurrence.

There was someone in the hall, someone who looked familiar from behind; upon approaching, Shen Qingqiu was met with an even stranger discovery, and said in amazement: "Mu-shidi?"

The solemnly standing "Mu Qingfang" was a mirage within Luo Binghe's memories, and naturally couldn't hear him calling out. This shidi of his had always had a very good temper, but right now there was quite an unpleasant look on his face, as he stood there in the center of the hall.

Shen Qingqiu remembered a rumor going around the countryside not long after he faked his death, saying that Luo Binghe once captured Mu Qingfang and took him back to Huanhua Palace, forcing him to "treat" Shen Qingqiu's "illness"; this must be a scene from that time, then.

A heavy black shadow silently flitted past him, and Luo Binghe's voice sounded out: "Mister Mu."

This “Luo Binghe’s” eyes did not reflect Shen Qingqiu’s figure, nor did he show any sign that he’d noticed his presence; he, too, was only a memory, and not the man himself.

Shen Qingqiu was somewhat puzzled by this; could he have floated into a part of the dream realm that not even the great Luo Binghe himself had the time to control?

Luo Binghe’s manners and form of address could not be called disrespectful. Mu Qingfang said: “Sire, does your referring to me as Mister Mu count as acknowledging that you are no longer a member of Cangqiong Mountain, or does it not?”

Luo Binghe said: “Does it matter whether I acknowledge it or not?”

Mu Qingfang said: “If you do not acknowledge it, then why do you still refer to Shen-shixiong as shizun when you speak? If you do acknowledge it, you should have called me shishu – and why did you injure Cangqiong Mountain’s disciples, bringing me here under duress?”

Luo Binghe said: “Naturally, I invited Mister Mu here to look at my shizun.”

Mu Qingfang smiled: “Shen-shixiong died by his own hand before the multitude at Huayue City, his spiritual energy scattered in its entirety, and I’m afraid his corpse must have long since rotted away by now. Bearing these facts in mind, this Mu must conclude that there is no way to bring a man back from the dead.”

Listening to this back-and-forth, Shen Qingqiu started to break into a cold sweat.

Mu Qingfang really wasn’t in the same category as Qi Qingqi or Liu Qingge, whose personalities were unable to take even the tiniest grain of sand in their eyes and who’d explode at the slightest touch, but his replies at this moment weren’t exactly pleasant to the ears, either. Despite knowing perfectly well that nothing serious was going to happen, he still couldn’t

help sweating regardless, worried that Mu Qingfang might bring needless suffering upon himself from provoking Luo Binghe.

Fortunately Luo Binghe remained unmoved, coldly saying: “I ask that Mister Mu please examine him.”

Being under the other’s control, Mu Qingfang had no alternative but to come to Huanhua Pavilion, escorted by a crowd of yellow-clothed disciples.

The interior of Huanhua Pavilion was bone-chillingly cold; the two men crossed the threshold one after the other, the doors closing shut immediately behind them. Shen Qingqiu rushed inside along with them.

Luo Binghe tied back the muslin curtains surrounding the funereal dais. Mu Qingfang bent over to begin his examination; Shen Qingqiu also wanted to scoot closer for a look, but unfortunately Mu Qingfang almost immediately shot back up again, put down the curtains, and blocked Shen Qingqiu’s line of sight, his face contorting for a moment.

Mu Qingfang said: “What method did you use to preserve his corpse?”

Luo Binghe casually said: “Mister Mu is the peak lord of Qiancao Peak – you know better than I how to preserve a corporeal body without damaging it.”

After quite a long pause, Mu Qingfang finally dropped his attitude of tactful refusal, and said: “Your forcefully imbuing Shen-shixiong’s corpse with spiritual energy every day like this, aside from barely keeping his body from decaying and consuming a large amount of spiritual energy, is an entirely useless effort. Furthermore, if you stop for even one day, it will cause all your previous efforts to be wasted. Pardon me for saying this, but Shen-shixiong is already...”

Luo Binghe cut him off: “Qiancao Peak’s medical expertise is the best in the realm, and Mister Mu is the lord of that peak as well, so I trust you to find a way.”

Mu Qingfang said: “There is no way.”

This level of stubbornness finally used up the last of Luo Binghe's already-lacking patience; he said with an angry smile: "If there is no way then think of one. Until you've found a method, there will be no need for Mister Mu to return to Cangqiong Mountain!"

With a violent wave of his sleeve, the doors to Huanhua Pavilion were abruptly thrown open, and before the startled Mu Qingfang could react, he'd already been jolted outside, a crowd of long-waiting yellow-clothed disciples immediately rushing forward to detain him as the doors closed once more.

A cold wind blew around the room, causing the candle flames within the pavilion to sway, flickering uncertainly.

Suddenly, Luo Binghe turned in his direction and called out: "Shizun."

Shen Qingqiu's first reaction was alarm.

He thought the Luo Binghe within this memory had seen him. However, he quickly discovered, Luo Binghe was simply calling out. He hadn't had the slightest hope that anyone could answer him to begin with.

Luo Binghe stood by the doorway for a while, before slowly walking over to Shen Qingqiu's side, sitting by the funereal dais, retying the curtains, then staring, lost in thought, at the corpse's face.

He was lost in thought for a very long time. Shen Qingqiu grew fidgety from standing there with nothing to do, changing which leg he leaned his weight on back and forth and back again, and finally couldn't resist clinging to the bedside himself. If Luo Binghe was staring at his corpse's face, then he'd stare at Luo Binghe's face. They stared and stared—then Luo Binghe reached out a hand, and slowly undid the corpse's sash.

Shen Qingqiu's squatting legs lost balance for a moment.

Saying the scene was too beautiful to look at didn't really fit at this moment, because the dead Shen Qingqiu on the funereal dais...really didn't look very good at all.

From the neck down, it was all red and green like the colors of spring; in other words, livor mortis.

Luo Binghe pulled off his own outer robe, then pulled this corpse right up against his bosom, in much the way you might hug a large doll. If an outsider were to see this, they'd unavoidably either be terrified beyond belief, or associate it with a certain unpleasant word and feel hard-pressed not to vomit. But the fact of the matter was that all he did was hug it; there wasn't any improper activity going on.

Luo Binghe's chin pressed down on the top of Shen Qingqiu's pitch-black crown, one hand following the curve of his back in repeated comforting strokes. He stroked and stroked, at the same time transferring a great amount of spiritual energy. Those purple blotches of livor mortis gradually faded away, the skin once more becoming pale and clean.

This position, these actions, caused a twinge on one of Shen Qingqiu's heartstrings.

He'd just remembered. It seemed as if he'd done the same thing to Luo Binghe, before.

That was a night not long after Luo Binghe had moved into Bamboo Cottage.

It was a winter night. Cold wind whistled as it circled around Qingjing Peak's mountain forest, innumerable bamboo leaves rustling like the tide.

Shen Qingqiu lay on his side on the long bed; he hadn't yet fallen asleep, simply resting with his eyes closed. He'd been resting like this for a while, when from a separate zone behind the screen, there came a quiet and cautious creaking noise. It seemed the person in there was tossing and turning as well, unable to fall asleep.

The tossing about didn't last long before those noises suddenly stopped; someone softly and quietly got out of bed, lifted the curtain, and left Bamboo Cottage.

What was Luo Binghe doing sneaking out in the middle of the night instead of sleeping?

Shen Qingqiu certainly didn't remember Luo Binghe having any happy encounters during this part of the storyline that required him to sneak out in the midnight hours. In a moment of curiosity, he got up as well.

His cultivation was on an entirely different level from Luo Binghe, his movements both light and fast, and so, when he came up behind Luo Binghe, the boy was still totally unaware of his presence.

Luo Binghe hadn't wandered very far, neither had he gone to any shameful secret areas in search of happy encounters; he was just behind the courtyard, sitting on a small wooden stool. His shirt had already been removed, folded neatly and laid on his left leg, his right hand dipping into something in his left palm before spreading it onto his body. When he'd finished spreading and started rubbing, his mouth let out a hiss like he'd just quietly sucked in a breath.

Beneath the light of the moon, the fifteen-or-sixteen-year-old boy's body couldn't be called thin, neither could it be called robust; it was covered in greenish-black and purple bruises, and the night wind blowing at his face brought with it the light scent of medicine and alcohol.

Shen Qingqiu spoke up: "Luo Binghe."

The person he'd called out to was frightened out of his wits, jumping up off the stool, his folded clothes overturning to the ground. Luo Binghe said, stunned: "Shizun! How did you wake up?"

Shen Qingqiu stepped closer: "This teacher never slept."

Luo Binghe said: "Did this disciple wake Shizun with his noise? Apologies! This disciple only came out in order not to bother Shizun, and yet he still..."

So this child came out in the middle of the night to rub on some medicinal liquor, all because he was afraid all that tossing and turning would wake

him up. The pain must have been unbearable if it pushed him to do this.

Shen Qingqiu said: “How did these injuries on your body come about?”

Luo Binghe said: “They’re no matter! This disciple just hasn’t been practicing his austerities properly recently, and caused himself pointless extra injury.”

Shen Qingqiu attentively looked over his injuries: “Baizhan Peak’s people picked a fight with you again, didn’t they?”

Luo Binghe couldn’t bring himself to say yes, but was equally unwilling to lie and deceive him. Shen Qingqiu looked at his speechless figure, feeling a little angrier the longer he looked, and said: “What did this teacher tell you before?”

Luo Binghe said: “If you cannot win then run.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Did you do that?”

“But...” Luo Binghe said, “But this way, this disciple would be causing Qingjing Peak to lose a lot of face.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Beating up anyone they don’t like the look of, the way Baizhan Peak acts makes them no different from the hoodlums and tyrants below the mountain. If this were to be brought to light in serious discussion, who exactly would be losing face here, Qingjing Peak or Baizhan Peak? This teacher will go find Liu Qingge right now. There’s 365 days in a year, if he could find the time to spend just one day managing that bunch of juniors they wouldn’t be anywhere near this undisciplined and out of control.”

Luo Binghe hurried to pull him back: “Shizun, you absolutely mustn’t! If this disciple were to cause you and Liu-shishu to start arguing again, then I...I...” Unable to stop him, his leg limped for a moment, but upon seeing Shen Qingqiu come to a stop, he hurriedly spoke up again: “Besides, they aren’t all from the Baizhan Peak disciples. I get knocked around a lot more

than the others when I'm practicing austerities on my own, so that's how I ended up looking this bad."

Seeing how anxious he was, Shen Qingqiu softened his tone, saying: "The practice of austerities must be taken one step at a time, acting according to opportunity; how can such a thing be forced? If you ruin your foundation with excessive enthusiasm, won't you regret it the rest of your life?"

Someday he'd need to think of some way of subduing that bunch of thugs from Baizhan Peak, maybe borrow Liu Qingge's hand in teaching them a lesson, so that they'd be forced to keep their resentment to themselves.

That the seventh-ranked peak would dare to provoke the second to this extent, did they still have any respect for seniority? You think he could abide this?

Luo Binghe obediently agreed. Shen Qingqiu said: "Go inside."

Luo Binghe repeatedly waved his hands: "No. I'll be fine outside, if I go in I'll disturb Shizun's rest."

Shen Qingqiu crooked a finger, and the garment on the ground flew into his hand. He spread it out and casually draped it over Luo Binghe's shoulders: "What rest? Now that you've been seen, how could this teacher leave you out in the cold so late at night?"

The two returned to Bamboo Cottage; Luo Binghe originally wanted to return to his own bed, but Shen Qingqiu took the medicinal liquor from his hand, and motioned him towards the bed in the inner room.

Luo Binghe dazedly allowed himself to be pulled over; it wasn't until Shen Qingqiu began to undo his only recently tied belt that a blush suddenly spread across his face, and he pulled his shirt closed tight while hurriedly backing away: "Shizun w-w-w....what are you doing!"

Shen Qingqiu shook the small bottle in his hand: "Applying the medicine for you, and kneading out the blood clots."

“There’s no need, I’ll do it myself!” Luo Binghe pounced in an attempt to snatch the bottle, but Shen Qingqiu flipped the bottle in his right hand, grabbed Luo Binghe’s wrist, pulled him up in front of him, and expressionlessly said: “You—can you see which parts of your back are bruised?”

Luo Binghe shivered: “I-I can just apply it all over!”

He defiantly persisted in trying to take it back. Luo Binghe was normally the type to resign himself to adversity, always gentle and calm, making this the first time Shen Qingqiu had seen him distressed in such a manner that his ears were practically bleeding from the force of his blush; he found this amusing, thinking to himself this was most likely the child having grown up enough to think getting beaten up was embarrassing, and that needing his teacher to help apply medicine after a beating was even more embarrassing. Though he was inwardly laughing, there was a serious expression on his face as he scolded: “Don’t fuss. The medicinal liquor Qiancao Peak sends us comes in a fixed quantity each time, I can’t allow you to waste it like that.”

“I...I...”

Luo Binghe wasn’t even bothering to say “this disciple” anymore, his eyes watery with tears as he clutched his clothes protectively over his chest, looking beside himself with panic. Shen Qingqiu steered his shoulder, turned him around, quickly removed his shirt, and began smearing the liquid in that little bottle over the injuries on his back.

To his surprise, Luo Binghe let out a tiny “Ow”.

Shen Qingqiu immediately softened his touch: “Did I use too much force?”

That head shook like the wind. Shen Qingqiu said: “Then what are you crying out for? You can’t call yourself a man if you can’t even endure such inconsequential pains as this.”

Luo Binghe’s voice was quiet as a mosquito: “It, it isn’t pain...”

With his mind at ease Shen Qingqiu rubbed away for a while, then tried gently transferring spiritual energy through the palm of his hand. Luo Binghe once again let out an “Ah!”

Shen Qingqiu was puzzled: “Why are you making such a fuss over nothing? How can you be considered a disciple of my Qingjing Peak, if you pay so little attention to deportment?”

Luo Binghe said in a trembling voice: “I...I...this disciple, this disciple thinks applying the medicine is enough, there’s no need for Shizun to waste spiritual power.”

Shen Qingqiu stuck his right palm right up against the skin of his naked back, moving it slowly, and said: “Does this feel better?”

“.....” Luo Binghe didn’t reply, apparently biting his lip.

As Shen Qingqiu moved a hand to slowly and gently massage at his waist, he wondered to himself: *Is it uncomfortable then? That can’t be right. I have the right acupressure points, don’t I? And my spiritual energy should be at just the right level, not too strong or too weak. A lot of the bruises have disappeared too, so why does he seem to be suffering so much? Don’t tell me I’m...actually one of those legendary dojikkos!?*

He pulled back his hand, and a red-eyed Luo Binghe let out a sigh of relief. His relief came too soon though, because a moment later there was a tug on his hand, and he found himself pulled into a full-on hug.

Shen Qingqiu, still embracing him, fell onto the bed.

Luo Binghe’s voice sounded like he’d stopped breathing: “...Shizun, Shizun!”

Shen Qingqiu hadn’t removed his clothes, but they were only separated by a single thin layer, their hearts beating against each other. The embrace afforded a large surface area for points of contact, and a large area through which to send spiritual energy as well. He said: “Using just the strength of my palm might not be fast enough; if we stay like this for a while, and let

this teacher's spiritual veins run a few circuits, the wounds on your body should be mostly healed, which will be much more useful than your applying any medicinal liquor."

Luo Binghe struggled in his arms like a small hedgehog: "Shizun! Shizun! I smell like medicine all over!"

Shen Qingqiu's rubbing against him had set him aflame—aflame on an emotional level, that is. He gave Luo Binghe a swat on the bottom, as a reprimand, and said in an imposing manner: "What are you wiggling for?"

I'm treating your injuries here, stop acting so disobedient!

Having received a spank that was neither too light nor too heavy, Luo Binghe went stiff as a rod. A rod that was enduring torment as it roasted over an open flame.

The rod said: "Shizun...you can't do this...I-let me go..."

Shen Qingqiu said: "Luo Binghe, if you were Yingying, there would be no need for you to be so embarrassed, as this teacher naturally wouldn't treat you this way. But you aren't a girl, so what are you afraid of, that this teacher will eat you?"

At that, Luo Binghe did in fact stop wriggling, but his point of focus seemed to have gotten off-track, as he said: "Does Shizun mean y-you wouldn't treat, treat Ning-shijie this way?"

If the wounded one today was Ning Yingying, give Shen Qingqiu a hundred times the guts and he still wouldn't dare use this convenient method to treat her injuries. He only wished he could point to the heavens and the earth, displaying his pure innocence and honest heart, as he resolutely said: "Of course I wouldn't."

Luo Binghe said: "Then...then if it wasn't Ning-shijie, but another disciple who'd been hurt, Shizun you would also, would also do this..."

“.....” Shen Qingqiu said, “What nonsense are you saying? Meditate, harmonize your breaths.”

With the hedgehog in his arms finally behaving, a satisfied Shen Qingqiu maneuvered them into a more comfortable position, rested his chin against the top of Luo Binghe’s head, pulled one hand free, and swept it along the line of his back in a repeated, soothing motion.

They hadn’t been comfortable long, before Shen Qingqiu began to have trouble holding onto him.

Luo Binghe was so hot it was like he’d just come out of a steamer basket, sweating so hard that Shen Qingqiu’s thin inner robe was drenched with it.

Shen Qingqiu was greatly alarmed. It couldn’t be that his transfer of spiritual energy could cause people to run high fevers, could it!?

He made to turn Luo Binghe’s face so he could check his complexion, only to lay his hand on a thin layer of sweat, slippery to the touch. The body in his arms suddenly began to struggle as energetically as if it were a large dehydrated fish, broke out of his arms, and fell with a thud off of the bamboo bed.

And it didn’t end there – following that, there was another string of clangs and bangs that was truly terrible to hear!

Foot kicking over the stool, head knocking down the screen, Luo Binghe seemed almost to have gone mad, as he frantically rushed out of Bamboo Cottage.

Shen Qingqiu was so shocked by this outburst that he lay dazedly on the bed for quite a while in the midst of that mess, before suddenly unfreezing, leaping off the bed and running out after him: “Luo Binghe!?”

Luo Binghe had already rushed a good few yards away, saying as he ran: “Shizun, I’m sorry!”

Shen Qingqiu was exasperated beyond belief: “What are you sorry for? Get back here!”

The night wind brought with it the distant sound of his sobbing voice: “I can’t! Shizun, I can’t meet with you right now! Don’t come over here, you absolutely can’t come over here!”

What in the world had gotten into him!?

Ordinarily Shen Qingqiu’s cultivation was more than just a level above his, meaning his speed was of course much faster, but Luo Binghe seemed to have gotten an explosive adrenaline boost or something, because he was unexpectedly unable to catch him!

The two yelled at each other as they ran, and before long, the entirety of Qingjing Peak had been roused awake. Lights lit up everywhere in twos and threes, as a gaggle of lantern-bearing disciples flocked towards them: “Who’s making such a racket in the middle of the night, disturbing Qingjing Peak’s peace and quiet?”

“It sounds like it’s Shizun!”

“Nonsense! How could Shizun do something so lacking in...”

Before they could finish speaking, an expressionless Shen Qingqiu blew right past the group of disciples like a vengeful wind. In an instant, everyone went silent as mice.

Shen Qingqiu, worried that Luo Binghe wasn’t paying attention to the road in his brainless running and might end up charging off a cliff, raised his voice in a yell: “Ming Fan! Stop him! Stop Luo Binghe!”

Ming Fan, draped in a cloak, came over carrying a lantern; he focused his gaze, and wow! That damn Luo Binghe was running wildly with terror, a murderous Shizun chasing behind him—this scene, things were finally back to normal!

He said ecstatically: “Shizun! This disciple will come to assist you! Get that brat, teach him a good lesson! Come on shidis, after him!”

The disciples came flanking him from all directions, and Shen Qingqiu finally caught up to the runaway Luo Binghe. But before he could grab this brat and lift him by the collar, Luo Binghe made a last-ditch attempt to escape, throwing himself forward as hard as he could—

Water flew everywhere with a splash. Luo Binghe had actually thrown himself bodily into Qingjing Peak’s Quiet Pond.

This fall seemed to have jolted him back to his senses. Luo Binghe, soaked entirely in cold water, finally stopped moving.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Have you calmed down?”

Luo Binghe lowered his head, raised his hands, and covered them over his face. Ming Fan, meanwhile, was moved to tears.

Luo Binghe, shivering and soaked in cold water, looking like he’d just gotten a fierce beating; Shizun, arms folded as he stood opposite him, a chilly sneer on his face. Ah, what a dearly familiar scene; ah, what a nostalgic tableau!

A crowd of disciples surrounded the pond, whispering to each other as Luo Binghe sat there with his face in his hands. Ning Yingying was a young lady, inevitably taking longer to get dressed and comb her hair, and was therefore late to show; with a scene like this being the first thing she saw upon arrival, she involuntarily cried out: “A-Luo! You...what are you doing sitting in the pond? Has someone been bullying you again? Shizun, what’s going on?”

“.....” Shen Qingqiu coldly said, “This teacher would also like to know exactly who, or what is going on.”

Luo Binghe shook his head, face still covered: “There isn’t anyone. Nothing’s going on.”

Shen Qingqiu stood by the side of the pond for a while, then suddenly sighed: “Come out. What are you still sitting in there for?”

Luo Binghe continued to shake his head: “No, Shizun, I’m staying here. Just let me stay here a while and it’ll be fine...”

It was currently winter, and though it had yet to snow, if one were to let him keep sitting all night in a cold pond like this, do you think he’d really survive?

Shen Qingqiu lifted the hem of his robes, making to wade into the water and pull him out, only for Luo Binghe to hurriedly say: “Shizun, don’t come down here! The water is cold and dirty, you don’t want to get your clothes...”

In a few quick steps, Shen Qingqiu had already waded over to his side, and was now looking at him with a severe expression on his face.

Luo Binghe’s head dropped even farther, not daring to look him in the eye, and sank deeper into the water.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Could it be that you still need this teacher to help you up?”

“.....” Luo Binghe said, “Shizun, I...just let me be alone here!”

Unable to get through to him, Shen Qingqiu took a moment to compose himself, then suddenly turned to the Qingjing Peak disciples watching from the shore and said in a solemn tone: “What are you all watching for? You’re dismissed, go back to your rooms to rest.”

The crowd jostled each other, but refused to leave. Shen Qingqiu spoke up again: “Tomorrow you’re getting up at yinshi for morning classes, whoever arrives late will copy files one hundred times.”

Yinshi? But it was already choushi now! And copying files a whole hundred times!?

[TN: Yinshi is 3-5 AM, and Choushi is 1-3 AM.]

Those words cleaned out the pondside in one clean sweep the moment they came out.

Once Shen Qingqiu had confirmed there was nobody left watching, he turned around, then suddenly bent down, folding his arms beneath Luo Binghe's back and knees.

Realizing what he planned to do, Luo Binghe put even more effort into dodging within the water like a particularly floppy fish: "Shizun Shizun, don't do this, you can't do this!"

With his face splashed with water and his clothes soaked through, Shen Qingqiu used a sleeve to wipe his face, saying: "Have you not made enough of a ruckus tonight?"

Seeing that Luo Binghe no longer dared to move, he exerted a bit of strength, and lifted Luo Binghe in his arms.

The water made him rather heavy. Muttering inwardly to himself, he carried Luo Binghe back to Bamboo Cottage.

On the way there, Luo Binghe, making a pained face while lying in his embrace, said: "Shizun, I...I'd be better off returning to the woodshed."

"Luo Binghe!" Shen Qingqiu said in a strict tone, "What in the world has gotten into you tonight? The way you keep evading me and blushing, running away like your life depends on it, an unknowing onlooker might even assume this teacher had done some gravely sinful thing to you!"

Luo Binghe that night could be said to have lost face to an extreme, his image entirely destroyed.

Dark history, this was definitely Luo Binghe's dark history!

When Shen Qingqiu happened to remember this later, and brought it up to poke fun at him, Luo Binghe didn't so much as blush; he certainly had grown up, and grown a thicker skin as well, as he explained: "At that age I

was in the prime of my youth, and having the person I admire hold me in his arms, hugging and rubbing against me, how could you expect me to control myself? Having realized my own feelings, I was unable to control my body's reactions, and feared that you would notice; what choice did I have, besides embarrassing myself like that?"

Remembering the rare and genuinely bashful look that had shown on Luo Binghe's face as he relayed this, Shen Qingqiu couldn't help but laugh.

He laughed and laughed, and suddenly couldn't laugh anymore.

He didn't dare imagine what sort of emotions the Luo Binghe currently hugging his body might be feeling.

This inescapable dream was both endless and dull, just like Luo Binghe's lifestyle in Huanhua Palace.

Over the course of a day, he'd spend the majority of his time hiding away in the icy cold Huanhua Pavilion, bringing all his paperwork inside to work on.

Shen Qingqiu rarely got to see Luo Binghe doing proper work. Most of the time, Luo Binghe's behavior around him wasn't quite right, acting like a totally brainless lovesick young girl. So when dealing with important demon affairs, Shen Qingqiu always conscientiously avoided suspicion, making sure not to bother him. On the occasion that he wandered in at random, Luo Binghe would immediately lose interest in his work, toss aside the mountains of paperwork piled up on the desk, and rush over to ingratiate himself. Who would have thought that of all times it would be in this dream, where he would finally be able to get a close-up look at what Luo Binghe looked like when seriously handling official business on his own.

Shen Qingqiu liked to sit by the desk, staring curiously at his calm and solemn side profile. Luo Binghe's brows wrinkled ever-so-slightly as he skimmed the page, his writing was quick and accurate, and the comments he wrote both concise and comprehensive, using ink as sparingly as if it

were made of gold. To sum it all up, he was so deadly earnest that it was difficult to believe.

He was still maintaining old habits, persisting in making meals every day. In the morning it was beautifully exquisite little snacks, in the afternoon it was four dishes and soup, and at night there was a bowl of rice porridge. Snow-white porridge rice, green chopped onion, light yellow strips of ginger, just like that first bowl Luo Binghe ever made for him. It was served in a snowy white porcelain bowl, and left until the steam had dissipated, before Luo Binghe personally cleared everything into the meal box and carried it out.

Nobody showed any interest, as he insistently continued following bygone practices from Qingjing Peak. It was as if he were waiting for the day Shen Qingqiu would suddenly awake; when he opened his eyes, there would be no need to wait, as the food could immediately be brought out for him.

Sometimes Luo Binghe would leave for the greater part of the day; most likely there'd been disturbances among the demons, which others were unable to settle, so it was necessary for him to go resolve them in person.

He was practically never injured, but one day he came back wounded.

Luo Binghe first walked into the room, then immediately seemed to think of something, backed away quite a few steps, took off his bloodied outer robe, put a bit of strength into his hands, burned it away, and confirmed there were no other bloodstains on his person; only then did he slowly approach the funereal dais.

His expression was the same as ever, and like he did every other day, he said to the body atop the dais: "Shizun, this disciple has returned late today due to matters outside causing a delay, and so there is no porridge."

Naturally no-one replied, which made this situation feel a little...comedic.

Shen Qingqiu was caught somewhat between laughter and tears, while at the same time feeling an ache in his heart, and replied: "If there isn't any then there isn't any."

Over this long period of time, he'd already talked to himself so much that it had become a habit. They were separated by time, with Luo Binghe unable to hear him, and Shen Qingqiu unable to touch the other, but when all was said and done...he still hoped there would be some reply.

Luo Binghe stood quietly for a while, then said: "Never mind."

He turned and left, and after a while, came back carrying a steaming hot bowl of porridge. Leaving it on the table, Luo Binghe began to leisurely unfasten his belt as he said: "Liu Qingge has rescued Mu Qingfang."

Shen Qingqiu made a noise of acknowledgment.

Luo Binghe kept talking to himself: "It doesn't much matter that he did, all Mu Qingfang could do was say 'there's no way' anyway, he wasn't the slightest bit useful."

Shen Qingqiu: "You shouldn't throw shade on your shishu like that."

Luo Binghe removed his outer robe, revealing a wound on his chest that was still in the slow process of automatically healing; Shen Qingqiu recognized at a glance, this was a burn mark from Liu Qingge's sword qi. Below this new injury was another older one, though that one fought stubbornly against all reason, refusing to fade away.

Luo Binghe lay down, rolled over, and cuddled that body against his bosom, saying: "In the past Baizhan Peak's disciples would seek me out so they could beat me up, and Shizun would always invent different ways to retaliate. When will Shizun enact a proper revenge on Liu Qingge?"

Shen Qingqiu sat by the dais, saying: "There's nothing to be done, I can't beat him."

Luo Binghe said: "Shizun."

Shen Qingqiu: "Mm."

Luo Binghe: "Shizun, I can't hold on much longer."

“.....”

Luo Binghe smiled as he said: “...Really. Shizun. If you don’t wake up soon, I...can’t hold on much longer.”

But Shen Qingqiu knew, he would still hold on.

He would keep hugging that cold and lifeless corpse in his embrace, maintaining nearly two thousand days and nights of this.

A painful heartache exploded within his chest. Shen Qingqiu saw a hand reaching out, futilely trying to touch Luo Binghe’s deathly pale face. He watched as this faintly shaking hand failed to touch anything, and suddenly realized with a start – this was his own hand.

“Shizun, Shizun?”

In his delirium, Shen Qingqiu felt someone supporting his shoulders as they helped him sit up. He hazily opened his eyes to see Luo Binghe right in front of him, nervous and concerned as he stared at him: “Shizun, what’s wrong?”

Shen Qingqiu had yet to fully bring his mind back to reality, and looked at him in a daze.

Luo Binghe was made even more anxious and frightened by this. He had reached a critical juncture in his austerities today, and when sealing his spiritual awareness at night, didn’t have the spare time to control his dreams; after a not-particularly-restful sleep, he’d startled awake in the middle of the night, only to see Shen Qingqiu beside him with his brows knitted tight, cold sweat beading at his forehead, and knew that something was wrong—he must have been unable to fully restrain his power, and allowed Shizun to get caught up in a nightmare.

Fearing that Shen Qingqiu had experienced a particularly frightening dream, he questioned: “Shizun, what did you dream just now? Were you hurt?”

“I...”

Too much time had passed in that dream, and Shen Qingqiu’s soul had yet to get pulled back to his body – looking at Luo Binghe’s face, it seemed both imaginary and real, his view wavering between blurry and clear; he didn’t know what to say.

Luo Binghe was even more worried now, and raised his voice: “Shizun! Say something!”

All of a sudden, when good fortune comes the mind works well – Shen Qingqiu blinked, turned Luo Binghe’s head and pulled it downwards, kissing him.

Luo Binghe: “.....”

Although he didn’t know what was going on, Luo Binghe was cheered by the sudden kiss, his eyes widening. In a flash, he pressed down on Shen Qingqiu’s neck, actively deepening the kiss.

Shen Qingqiu didn’t stop there; with a rustle, he’d already undone Luo Binghe’s belt, grabbed his hand, and pulled it into his wide open collar, following the taut line of his abdomen, guiding it all the way to his passionately beating heart.

By now, Luo Binghe was practically overwhelmed with favor, contrarily making him afraid to act too impulsively, his movements turning cautious as a result.

However, in his moment of hesitation, Shen Qingqiu had already flipped their positions to press Luo Binghe beneath him, and roughly ripped open his inner robe.

Luo Binghe gasped somewhat unevenly, supporting Shen Qingqiu’s waist, a light blush rising on his cheeks as he stammered: “Shizun...what’s gotten into you tonight?”

Shen Qingqiu bent over him, and said in his ear: “I think I’m...especially fond of you tonight.”

Luo Binghe instantly went rigid from head to toe.

He suddenly got up, trapping Shen Qingqiu between his arms.

After sucking in a soft breath, Luo Binghe said: “Shizun, I...might not be able to be gentle.”

Hearing the forced calm in his voice, Shen Qingqiu laughed aloud: “You say that as if your being gentle would mean I wouldn’t hurt.”

Not waiting for Luo Binghe to show any sort of expression, Shen Qingqiu stretched out his arms.

“I’ll endure the hardship gladly.”

Return to Innocence

Upon waking up from sleep, Shen Qingqiu lazily rolled over, only to realize he couldn't feel the usual arm wrapped firmly around his waist.

Morning light filtered in through the window, and he used the sleeve of his inner robe to shield his eyes; this movement alone was enough to remind him that his waist was sore, his back hurt, and his arms had lost all strength. A light tearing feeling could be felt from a certain area down below, as well as the peculiar sensation of a sticky, greasy liquid after it had dried.

After messing around all last night, he was really feeling the consequences this morning. Shen Qingqiu found it strange that Luo Binghe hadn't gotten up early to help clean him up and make breakfast while he was at it, so he said in a hoarse voice: "...Binghe?"

Nobody answered. An increasingly confused Shen Qingqiu made the effort to open his eyes, lowered his head, and saw a little head with silky soft black hair.

"....."

This little head was delicate and pretty, with a natural blush dusted across fair-skinned cheeks, long, shiny black eyelashes that were as fine as they were dense, eyes shut tight in sleep, and lips that glowed a faint pink. The child was curled into a ball, huddled against him like a kitten, and was even using his own arms as a pillow.

Although the size wasn't quite the same, although he looked to be only five or six years old, although...there weren't any more althoughs, even if he shrank another size, Shen Qingqiu could absolutely recognize at a glance—this was the great protag's face!

A quiver ran through his body, his voice even changing: "Luo Binghe!"

He'd originally wanted to pinch his arm to see if the pain would wake him up, but the moment he shot up, aches, pains, and general soreness transmitted from his underside, leading Shen Qingqiu to stiffly lay back down again. The little curled-up Luo Binghe's eyelashes trembled, and he gradually awoke.

There was a red mark from his arm covering half his face; squinting to see a dishevelled Shen Qingqiu sleeping next to him, he reached both arms towards him, a posture that was clearly asking for hugs, as he said: "Shizun..."

This voice was both soft and sticky, so young and tender it was practically dripping water – as such, he stiffened the moment he opened his mouth.

A pair of large eyes stared at a pair of small ones.

After a long period of mutual chaos, the two finally cleared up their current situation.

To begin with Luo Binghe had recently reached a critical juncture in his cultivation, and according to reason, he should have been keeping his heart pure and free of desire, the better to avoid hitting any setbacks. Unfortunately he was unable to keep control last night, and after fooling around for a night, he'd finally! Had a qi deviation.

Shen Qingqiu didn't have the slightest problem accepting this, because this part of the plot had existed in the original *Proud Immortal Demon Way*. Of course, Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky hadn't written this scene with the goal of earning *moe* points, but because a Luo Binghe who'd turned into a child could openly walk right into all sorts of places a grown man never could – exactly what kind of places we'll leave to your imagination. Plus with him being so small, it was even easier to tear down the ladies' defenses, from there initiate intimate contact, and then when they least expected it, steal their hearts in one fell swoop!

Because this scene had taken so long to show up, he'd actually thought it'd been cut from the storyline; who would have known that it was just unable

to arrive on time?

Shen Qingqiu put a hand to his forehead: "...How much power do you have left?"

Luo Binghe said: "Less than ten percent."

There was a somber expression written all over his puerile face, which not only failed to make one realize the seriousness of the situation, but in fact looked incredibly...funny.

And so Shen Qingqiu unkindly—laughed.

Once he was done laughing, he straightened his countenance and said: "Ahem, only ten percent left? Alright then. We can't stay in the demon realm any longer."

The number of men and monsters Luo Binghe had offended was far from a small one, so naturally at a time like this the farther they ran and the deeper they hid, the better off they'd be. Shen Qingqiu's first thought was to hurriedly grab Luo Bingham and make a run for it.

Having made up his mind, he made to get dressed and out of bed. Unexpectedly, all he did was straighten up, and then came another moment of face twitching.

Usually after they did the deed, Luo Binghe would take advantage of his being sound asleep to carry him to the hot spring and clean him up, but now Luo Binghe could at best hug one leg, unable to even nudge it a bit; he crouched anxiously to one side, eyes brimming with tears.

"....." Shen Qingqiu consoled him, "Forget it, it's fine, I'll do it myself."

The natural hot spring which Luo Binghe had dug in the underground palace came up to Shen Qingqiu's chest at its deepest point; if he were to throw Luo Bingham in there, he'd be totally submerged in an instant. Shen Qingqiu had no choice but to carefully hold him in his arms as he sat on the

round rocks by the side, and repeatedly warn Luo Binghe to sit still so as not to slide down.

He was just about to give himself a quick cleansing when he suddenly saw Luo Binghe striving to reach for the limestone off to the side, with the intent of helping him grab the box of honey locust soap atop it, and failing miserably to grab anything at all.

This sight reminded him of Luo Binghe when he first came to Cangqiong Mountain to become a disciple, carrying a small cloth bag with patches on it, huffing and puffing as he squatted in the ravine, digging that hole. Shen Qingqiu watched for a while, and couldn't resist pulling him down into his arms, then expressionlessly pinching and kneading his face.

Under his ravaging, Luo Binghe choked a bit on a few mouthfuls of water; his skin had been steamed a light red to begin with, but after some splashing, he turned directly into a lump of pink. In a surge of emotion, Luo Binghe subconsciously grabbed hold of Shen Qingqiu's wrists, moving out of habit in an attempt to press him down onto the rocks.

Although Shen Qingqiu very considerately went along with this, lying down to let him "press", Luo Binghe's pretty little face immediately darkened.

A body like this...pressing him down a thousand or a million times wouldn't be the slightest use!

He couldn't do anything!

Watching as Luo Binghe's face changed from red to pale, then from pale turned dark, Shen Qingqiu was practically about to hurt himself from trying so hard not to laugh: "After so impetuously tormenting this teacher last night, you've certainly received retribution today haven't you?"

Luo Binghe brokenheartedly said: "It was Shizun who first seduced this disciple!"

Hearing that caused Shen Qingqiu's face to redden, inwardly ashamed; he straightened his expression, then suddenly let go. Taken by surprise, Luo Binghe slid into the water, sending a string of bubbles floating to the surface.

According to Shen Qingqiu's desires, the first refuge he thought of was naturally Cangqiong Mountain. But Luo Binghe was so against it that he'd rather die than go back.

Just think about it, right now his physical strength had taken a blow, so he would surely be looked at by everyone there, and Liu Qingge would absolutely be among that watching crowd.

So Shen Qingqiu made a compromise, and took him to the human realm.

They say a great recluse hides himself in the city, so they chose an exceptionally busy town. They would stay here while they waited for Luo Binghe to restore his strength, and find some way to pass the time. Shen Qingqiu was so bored his bones were itching for something to do, so he casually schemed himself a position at the biggest academy in town.

Luo Binghe was naturally unhappy with this. First of all, he didn't like Shen Qingqiu accepting other disciples. Was that bunch of disciples at Qingjing Peak not enough? Did he really need more!?

Second of all, he liked even less being treated as Shen Qingqiu's son. Especially when going to sleep at night, he was allowed to kiss and hug all he liked, but he couldn't actually do what he really wanted to, and even had to hear Shen Qingqiu ridicule him by calling him things like "good boy" and "good baby", making him increasingly...resent his inability to meet expectations!

Today when Shen Qingqiu came back from the academy, he found that Luo Binghe had brought out a stool, and was sitting there waiting for him at the entrance of the house with a cold and unreadable look on his face.

If this were the adult version, the sight would naturally make one's courage shrink and their legs shake, but who let him be the wrong size right now, making it so that all he could do was make people unable to resist reaching their evil claws towards that face of his and give it a good pinch. No matter how arrogant and unapproachable he tried to appear, the crowd of little chirping sparrows surrounding him showed no signs of stopping; they'd built a good number of dirt forts around his stool, and would occasionally encourage him to join them in building more.

These were all the neighbors' young children; from the first day this duo moved in, they'd totally fallen before the protagonist's charm halo, and desperately clung to him, refusing to leave no matter how hard he tried to chase them off. Luckily they were all afraid of Shen Qingqiu, as there was no child who didn't fear their teachers, so the moment he returned they scattered like actual birds.

Shen Qingqiu then elegantly reached out his evil claws, preparing to give Luo Binghe his daily pinch. At this moment, a sudden series of voices loudly called out "Mister Shen!" from behind, and a few richly dressed, graceful figures stepped into the yard like they owned the place.

Shen Qingqiu looked behind him to see that it was some of the more energetic local housewives; he nodded his head but, before he could speak a word in greeting, the one at the fore had already strode forward, grabbed his arm, and started dragging him outside: "Mister Shen, we've been looking for you all day, now hurry up and come with me, you mustn't keep the ladies waiting!"

Luo Binghe said in a stern voice: "Go where? What ladies!?"

Shen Qingqiu was also confused. Housewife One was startled by Luo Binghe's gloomy expression, and waved her fan as she said: "Oh deary me, to think such a small boy could have such a frightening voice. What is the little young master angry for? Mister Shen, is he sulking at you?"

Housewife Two immediately approached: "Come now, come over here little master, your big sister will give you some candy, so don't get in your daddy's way."

Luo Binghe ignored them, saying with a cold look: “Did Shi...you have plans to do something today?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “This teac...I don’t remember having any?”

Housewife One rebuked him: “Mister Shen, you know perfectly well what’s going on, do you really need me to explain it? Fine then. I have a niece at home, a marvelously beautiful young woman, and I just so happen to think the two of you would be a good match, so I’ve set up a dinner party at Chengxi Tower for your marriage interview.”

“I have a daughter as well.”

“My cousin. There’s also my cousin!”

As it turns out, any sort of event will spread quickly in a lively area, so though it hadn’t been long since Shen Qingqiu first arrived, everyone in town had already spread the news: A new man had moved in, who was not only extensively well-read, talented, of strong moral character, refined and courteous, and with a soft and mild voice to boot, but to top it off had a refined and elegant appearance, making him totally refreshing to look at.

Of course none of that matters! What’s most important here is that he’s rich, incredibly rich! He bought a grand residence just like that, how could he do a thing like that if he wasn’t loaded? He’s brought a four or five-year-old son along too, an absolutely adorable little thing you can tell has the makings of a real charmer even at that young age, he’s sure to grow into an outstanding, elegant, and imposing young man. That’s a killer catch! Anyone with a daughter of appropriate age who’s yet to be married, or anyone with a daughter who’s just been born or whose future marriage hasn’t yet been arranged, don’t think twice and go get that engagement arranged. Catch the big one or the small one, you won’t lose out either way!

Luo Binghe was so angry his face had turned green, and furiously said: “He doesn’t need any marriage interviews!”

His main lord wasn’t dead yet!

Housewife Three sashayed her way over: “Little Master Shen, are you unhappy with the idea of your father taking a new wife? Wouldn’t it be nice to have a gentle and pretty new mother to love you?”

Housewife Two agreed: “That’s right. Mister Shen, you shouldn’t coddle your son like this, I heard you even bring him along when you go to the academy, and he even insists on sitting in your lap? Now I’m not trying to scold you, but pampering him like this won’t raise any sort of good man, my own son...”

Shen Qingqiu saw Luo Binghe looking ready to blow the whole yard to smithereens with a sweep of his hand, and hurriedly picked him up as he retreated: “Ladies, your kindly intentions are appreciated. This Shen does not plan to, er, remarry. With no one at home, and a child to watch, I’m afraid I cannot accept your invitation.”

Housewife One, who had a big red peony stuck in the hair at her temples, spoke up sternly with a sense of justice: “Whatever are you saying, Mister Shen! A man should take a wife and a woman a husband – you have such a large house, how can you go without a mistress to guard it? With your moral standing and graceful looks, how is it proper for you to sit around watching a child on your own? Not only is that uncomfortable for you, it’s unpleasant to see, and just as unpleasant to hear!”

She waved her circular fan, allowing no rebuttal: “It’s decided then! Mister Shen, you’re coming with us right now; just leave the little master at home, and we’ll have someone watch him.”

Luo Binghe said with an angry smile: “I’d certainly like to see who of you can manage to go!”

He couldn’t keep up this callous and demonic charm for long before Shen Qingqiu, considerate of the lives of the town and these three enthusiastically marriage-pushing housewives, threw out a few charms with a flick of the hand, knocked the women unconscious, abandoned the residence he’d barely bought less than a month ago, and desperately made a run for it.

Naturally they could only run back to Cangqiong Mountain.

At the bottom of the long, long mountain steps, Shen Qingqiu walked upwards, holding Luo Binghe's hand.

The stair sweeper was just as diligent and serious about his job as he'd been over a decade ago, sweeping away with a broom as tall as he was; as Shen Qingqiu walked slowly up the steps, he made eye contact with the man, and smiled faintly. Just as he was going to offer a greeting, the man looked at him, then looked at the Luo Binghe he was holding hands with; his face twitched.

Suddenly, he tossed aside his broom, and rushed up the mountain steps like his butt had caught fire. That one rush took him a few hundred steps away, leaving Shen Qingqiu stunned beyond belief, a sense of pride forming itself in his heart.

As expected of Cangqiong Mountain, even a stair sweeper had such hidden talent!

The stairs were very long, and before they'd gotten even halfway up, Luo Binghe had started yawning. He currently lacked physical strength, and couldn't help tiring easily, so Shen Qingqiu lifted him up into his arms: "Go ahead and sleep."

A disciple's heart is unfathomable as the sea. Luo Binghe was sometimes happy to be carried, but other times would turn bright red and struggle to be let down so he could walk on his own. At present it seemed he was genuinely tired; huddled in Shen Qingqiu's arms, he struggled to keep his eyes open, and eventually dozed off.

Upon completing the stairway to the heavens, Shen Qingqiu stepped out into the plaza, and quickly got the feeling that the gazes around him weren't quite right, with whispers filling the area. The gaze he got from the stair sweeper was especially strange.

Carrying Luo Binghe as he walked up to Qingjing Peak, he reached the entrance of Bamboo Cottage, to see all his disciples already excitedly

rushing towards him.

The moment Ming Fan saw Luo Binghe curled up against Shen Qingqiu's bosom, it was like he'd been struck by a sudden bolt of lightning, backing up quite a few steps, while the others shoved against each other in their attempts to get a better look. Ning Yingying pushed aside the person blocking in front of her, stared at the fast-asleep Luo Binghe in Shen Qingqiu's arms, and covered her mouth: "...He's like A-Luo, just like him!"

Nonsense. Who else could he be like if not Luo Binghe!

Ning Yingying emotionally grabbed hold of Shen Qingqiu's sleeves, fervently saying: "Shizun, does he have a name? Have you named him yet!"

Shen Qingqiu: "...?"

Ning Yingying: "If he doesn't have a name, can...can I give him one!"

What the heck—

Luo Binghe moved restlessly in his arms, and mumbled: "...Noisy."

Shen Qingqiu lifted his folding fan threateningly in the air for a moment, then promptly retracted it, making a shushing motion with his hand instead. Unexpectedly, the front door of Bamboo Cottage then collapsed with a loud bang, causing Luo Binghe to suddenly jolt and open his eyes, startled awake.

Liu Qingge strode in through the entrance; Shen Qingqiu shot a knife-like glare at the sneaky Ming Fan, vainly tried to hide Luo Binghe behind his body, and said with an artificial smile: "Liu-shidi, I trust you've been well since we last met."

Liu Qingge sternly replied: "There's no point hiding."

Shen Qingqiu: "Hiding what? I'm not hiding anything?"

Luo Binghe pressed a hand against Shen Qingqiu's chest, and said: "There's no need to hide, I'm not afraid of him!"

Liu Qingge stepped closer, lowering his head to look at Luo Binghe's incredibly defiant little face; it was a long while before, seemingly resisting something with great difficulty, he turned back to Shen Qingqiu and stammered: "W-when did you, and Luo Binghe, with him..."

"With him?"

With him? With him what?

Liu Qingge seemed to find it hard to speak, so Ming Fan howled out in his stead: "When did you birth him a son this big!?"

...Boss Liu!

Airplane Shooting Towards The Sky didn't write a Green Jinjiang mpreg story!!

After very impolitely shooining Boss Liu off of Qingjing Peak, Shen Qingqiu was already in so much shock that all five senses had gone blurry: "How could a man give birth to children?"

Once Ning Yingying got the whole story cleared up and learned that what Shen Qingqiu had brought back wasn't their son, she was greatly disappointed, feeling as if all her overflowing enthusiasm and the 50+ different names she'd thought up had nothing to be used on, and pouted as she said: "It's all the stair sweeper's fault, going around telling everybody, he made us think it was real. I never would have thought that A-Luo could have qi deviations too."

You sure are great, mister stair sweeper. You move fast enough, and your imagination's certainly wild enough! Shen Qingqiu will remember this.

Ming Fan also abashedly chimed in: "This disciple thought, if it's a demon, then wanting a man to give birth to a baby wouldn't be totally impossible, you know."

Everyone behind him fiercely nodded their heads. Shen Qingqiu felt increasingly as if he were crumbling apart, and attempted to argue for reason: “Even if I did give birth, he couldn’t have grown this big in a few short months!”

Ming Fan spoke up once more: “You never know. Your disciples think that, if it’s that monster Luo Binghe’s son, even if the kid was this big at birth, it wouldn’t be totally impossible.”

“.....”

That night, Qingjing Peak’s long-missed paper-copying punishment made a triumphant return to the world.

Having with great difficulty found the time to come back to Cangqiong Mountain, and with the members of all twelve peaks finally gathered together for once, they naturally needed to get together for a meeting or dinner or something.

It had been a long time since Shen Qingqiu last got to take his seat in the second chair of Qiongdong Hall’s inner hall and put on his pretentious act; this feeling made him incredibly nostalgic.

He nodded in greeting to each of the other peak lords, exchanged a series of “Long time no see”, “I trust you’ve been well”, “You’re too kind” and the like, and spread open his fan, radiant with happiness.

Yue Qingyuan, upon seeing him, seemed to have a rather strange look on his face, but he didn’t say much, only sat down at the head seat, turned a smile in his direction, and placed the pile of files he’d been carrying onto the table; Shang Qinghua hurriedly came forward to pick up the papers, and conscientiously started passing them out.

When Shen Qingqiu took the list Shang Qinghua handed over, he casually cast him a glance. Shang Qinghua must have offended Mobei-jun somehow again, because the corner of his mouth was swollen; when he turned a pitiful smile his way, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t bear to look any longer, and

moved his gaze onto the file, which had the important points of today's discussion already delineated in a strong cinnabar red.

He only took one glance before loudly spraying out the mouthful of tea he'd only just drunk.

1. Crack down on handwritten copies of Springtime of our Sundering, Song of Bingqiu etc., prohibit circulation of any version on any occasion, regardless of whether the location is in public or private. Limit of one month to hand over the materials of their own accord, otherwise anyone found hiding or passing them around will be punished strictly with no leniency. Illustrated books receive an added level of severity.

2. Due to receiving a large number of complaints, those in charge of Baizhan Peak must reinforce management, and put strict bans on crossing to other peaks in large groups for fights.

3. We've received a small number of complaints, that Qingjing Peak must pay attention to the time when doing music practice, and avoid playing during lunch and night periods.

4. Xianmei Peak requests a reinforced and taller fence, and has applied for the fence to be electrified.

5. Kuxing Peak's connections have grown increasingly sparse over the years; they request expanded enrollment, and have applied for the right to have first priority in choosing students the next time our mountain opens to the public.

6. Peak lords must pay special attention to their respective peaks' education; our students are not allowed to use their identities as Cangqiong disciples to start public fights with Huanhua Palace's disciples when outside.

7. If encountering demons while out on assignment, do not act rashly; first make certain of their connections and the division to which they belong before deciding whether to face them as enemies.

.....

Spitting out your tea in public was an incredibly improper thing to do; however, he had no need to worry about this breach of etiquette, because after reading that first line, eight or nine of the twelve peak lords spat their tea along with him, which made his own conduct seem rather less eye-catching overall.

The discussion hall sank into a puzzling awkwardness, one which Shen Qingqiu couldn't get rid of no matter how hard he waved his fan.

What virtue and ability *Springtime of our Sundering* must have, to actually get placed first on the list. And what the heck was this add-on, what kind of a thing was *Song of Bingqiu* supposed to be!?

After the meeting was finished, a thoroughly vexed Shen Qingqiu began walking back to Qingjing Peak, but he'd barely walked a few steps when he realized a good number of peak lords were following behind him.

Shen Qingqiu said in an amiable manner: "Shidis and shimei, is it just me, or are the paths to your own peaks not in this direction?"

Qi Qingqi said: "That would be because we weren't returning to our peaks to begin with."

Shen Qingqiu had known this hurdle was certain to happen, but struggled against it nevertheless: "Why have you suddenly gotten the idea to pay a visit to Qingjing Peak? Bamboo Cottage is simple and crude, I fear I won't be able to entertain my guests properly."

"Don't play dumb, we know your bamboo house is crude, nobody's here to see you, we're obviously going to see that darling disciple you're hiding."

This bunch was energetically scheming to treat Luo Binghe like he was some rare toy; Shen Qingqiu helplessly said: "He's going to be angry."

"I'm not trying to lecture you here, Shen-shixiong, but he as a disciple actually dares get angry at you, his shizun? Have you not been disciplining

him properly?”

“That’s no good at all, whatever your relationship might be now, discipline should still be given where it’s due.”

“If he’s angry then let him be, there’s nothing to be afraid of. Luo Binghe doesn’t even have a tenth of his power now anyway, if we don’t anger him now we might never get another chance to.”

Kuxing Peak’s peak lord – due to living an ascetic lifestyle all year round – had a vigorously explosive temper, and after failing to get as high of a priority recruitment quota as he’d hoped, was in a particularly impatient mood right now: “Enough nonsense, you aren’t afraid we’ll devour what few tea leaves you have, are you! Let’s get going already.”

Shen Qingqiu had long known he’d be unable to escape this scene, and was dragged off to Qingjing Peak, exasperation written all over his face.

Why do you know so much, so clearly, it’s almost like you’re more clear on it than I am!

He could manage to hold off one or two, but if this many peak lords swarmed into Bamboo Cottage, there was no way he could stop them. The moment Qi Qingqiu stepped in the door, she broke character with a “pfft”.

Luo Binghe was lying fast asleep on the bed, the corners of the blanket tucked in nice and tight, looking exactly the same as when he’d left. Shen Qingqiu signaled with his hands to say: He’s sleeping, don’t disturb him.

Liu Qingge cast a glance inside, and couldn’t resist saying: “Why does he not look the same as he did yesterday?”

Not the same? Shen Qingqiu turned his head – he really wasn’t the same. Luo Binghe seemed to have aged two years, and now looked to be around seven or eight years old. Wei Qingwei whispered: “He’s growing well! A healthy crop!”

Qi Qingqi carefully looked him over for a while, then said: “Judging by how he’s growing, that outfit will probably be unwearable soon.”

Shen Qingqiu had yet to consider this problem, but thinking on it now, this morning Luo Binghe’s clothes had indeed been rather ill-fitted, cutting off a little short around the wrists; he hurriedly said: “Indeed, I was thoughtless. Tomorrow I will take him down to buy some new outfits.”

Qi Qingqi said: “Why buy, when you can have them readily available? All you need to do is just come up to Xianmei Peak and pull over a few girls to make new clothes for him.”

At that, a few peak lords ungenerously burst out in cruel laughter. Just imagining a group of fragrant powdered fairies surrounding a deeply resentful cutsleeve demon and twittering away, that mental image was more than enough to brighten these way-too-idle peak lords’ days. Seeing them kicking someone while he was down and laughing at his misfortune, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t bear to see Luo Binghe’s pride get swept out like so much dust on the floor, and hurried to say: “Don’t overdo it now, you should stop while you’re ahead. Come on, let’s go to the living room to sit, don’t keep standing around here watching him. No more laughing! Careful or you’ll laugh him awake.”

“You wouldn’t let us see him before, and we’re not allowed now either? Shen-shixiong is seriously no fun.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Let me save some face.”

“Alright then. Come with us to Zuixian Peak for some wine tonight, Shen-shixiong.”

“I still need to watch over Luo Binghe...”

“You used to spend all day hiding away and never leaving this one patch of land, then later you got tugged around running all over the place; since you’ve finally managed to come back here for once, you can stop with the babysitting and let’s all have a get-together. You’ve got to have some time to do your own thing after all, you can’t revolve your whole day around

your disciple.”

After quickly and with great difficulty sending away all his compatriots, Shen Qingqiu returned to Bamboo Cottage, plagued with a raging headache.

Luo Binghe was already awake, sitting at his old writing desk; his legs hung in the air, unable to reach the floor, and there was a pile of dossiers next to him that was piled higher than he was tall. He held a cinnabar pen in his hand, making notes as he checked over each item.

Shen Qingqiu watched for a while before stepping inside and asking: “What are you doing?”

Luo Binghe lifted his head: “Shizun hasn’t been back in a long time, and with no-one to manage the records, this disciple is planning to write a revised catalogue to add to the library.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “It is enough for you to properly rest and recover right now, there’s no need for you to care about these matters.”

Luo Binghe said: “But when Shizun isn’t here, I don’t have anything else to do, so I might as well get it done.”

Shen Qingqiu sat down next to him, thought a moment, and asked: “Are you unhappy, that we came back to Qingjing Peak?”

Luo Binghe smiled: “What sort of talk is that, Shizun? How could this disciple be unhappy?”

Shen Qingqiu very slowly got up, and started walking to the door. Suddenly, he was unable to take another step.

Luo Binghe had jumped from the desk and clung onto his leg, saying through gritted teeth: “...You’re right, this disciple...is unhappy!”

Shen Qingqiu said: “There you go, when you’re unhappy you should say so. If you ever have anything to say in the future, don’t keep any of it pent

up inside. If you truly dislike Qingjing Peak, then we'll leave once you've returned to your original form, easy as that. The truth of the matter is that your current situation makes frequent travel inconvenient, and if anything were to happen, Cangqiong Mountain would at least be able to protect you."

Luo Binghe said: "I like it! But the Qingjing Peak I like is *only* Qingjing Peak, not Cangqiong Mountain, and aside from Shizun and me, it doesn't have anyone else."

But. Shen Qingqiu thought to himself, *I don't think this Qingjing Peak you like, ever existed in reality...*

Luo Binghe continued, depressed: "Shizun, is it true that being with me, means you've lost a lot of chances to do your own things?"

Shen Qingqiu laughed in spite of himself: "You certainly were a good actor earlier, pretending to sleep. You've got sharp ears, too – how much power have you regained?"

Luo Binghe said: "Shizun...the reason I didn't want to come back, wasn't because I dislike this place. It's because...you're too easily snatched away when we're here."

He said in a melancholy tone: "If it was the previous me, I'd still have a little confidence that I could take you back, no matter what it took. But with the current me, I really think...I wouldn't be able to win a fight against the others."

Shen Qingqiu knocked on his head, saying: "What would I want you to fight for? There's no need to fight over me, Shizun will follow you on his own."

The appearance of one's conversation partner really was incredibly crucial. If this was the adult version of Luo Binghe, even if you put a knife to his neck, Shen Qingqiu would be unable to say something so blatantly sappy, but seeing as this was a mini version he could hug to his bosom, one which was willing to cling to his leg and throw tantrums in hopes of comfort, Shen

Qingqiu consequently didn't have the slightest mental pressure to prevent him talking.

Luo Binghe lifted his face, looking at him with a tender and loving gaze.

A perfectly happy couple, a perfectly lovely scene, a subtle fragrance floating through the air, the atmosphere was the best it could possibly be. One couldn't help feeling overwhelmed with infatuation.

Luo Binghe's tear-filled eyes burned ever brighter, before he finally could no longer restrain himself, pushing Shen Qingqiu down onto the bamboo bed and throwing himself atop him.

He sprawled across Shen Qingqiu's chest, a pair of big eyes staring at a pair of little ones.

Shen Qingqiu: "Uh...you can...continue."

Continue all he liked, he wouldn't be able to do the one thing he wanted to...

The expression on his face was filled with unconcealable sympathy.

After a long while, Luo Binghe's still-childish voice finally let out a roar of bitter hate at the world which had so tried his patience.

Springtime of our Sundering, Song of Bingqiu

“Wait, first calm down for a moment.”

Luo Binghe, wedged between Shen Qingqiu’s legs, moved his body forward a bit more: “But this disciple saw something very interesting today, and may not be able to calm down for a few days. What’s to be done then, Shizun?”

Having finally cultivated back to his original form after over a month of recovery at Cangqiong Mountain, Shen Qingqiu knew for a fact that today could not possibly end well, yet still calmly said: “That’s easy enough. Whatever it was, you bring it here for this teacher to give it a look, and the two of us can investigate it together. Before that, you should change to a more normal position, and speak properly.”

Luo Binghe nodded, directly ignored that last line, and said: “Alright, then I’ll let Shizun have a look.”

He then leisurely pulled a thin booklet from out of his shirt.

That booklet was brightly colored, looking at first glance to be incredibly gaudy and tasteless, and familiar as well.

Shen Qingqiu was still staring doubtfully at it when Luo Binghe flipped it open, straightened his posture, and began to read it aloud with a clear, distinct voice.

“...Once night fell, Luo Binghe lay on his bed, tossing and turning restlessly about. Used to sleeping upon the cold floor of the woodshed, his suddenly finding himself lying on a bed conversely made it difficult to sleep. Especially as the shizun he so yearned for in his thoughts was lying not far from him, separated by only a single folding screen, a single muslin

curtain. The pampering and attentive concern of day seemed to play right before his eyes, and there was a feeling as if a sinful ball of fire was pressing down within his belly, burning ever stronger, leaping ever higher...”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

Luo Binghe didn’t bat an eyelid, continuing to recite: “...Luo Binghe felt his way onto the bed, loosened the belt of Shen Qingqiu’s inner robe, groped within the cloth, and felt fine, smooth skin, the flesh and bone pliable yet tough. Caught in wild fascination, his mind muddled, the belt in his hands was also torn in two...”

Shen Qingqiu cast a glance to the belt on the floor which Luo Binghe had so restlessly torn apart, and felt himself getting goosebumps all over; he’d actually been left speechless!

Luo Binghe put away the booklet, looked up, and said in a perfectly serious tone of voice: “According to this, this disciple lost his virginity the night he moved out of the woodshed. With the flames of passion rising high, and lascivious thoughts coming to the fore, he groped his way to inner room of Bamboo Cottage late that night, doing this and that to a shizun who’d been suppressed by nightmares and was unable to move; they were inseparable in loving affection, all the way to daybreak.”

What the heck!

If he remembered right Luo Binghe was only 15 years old back then!

This was devoid of conscience!

Completely deranged!

Luo Binghe flipped through again as he spoke: “The ‘Luo Binghe’ in this book may be more bold than this disciple, and more willing to act, but the feelings he holds towards Shizun are about right.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “If you were really this ‘willing to act’, this teacher cannot guarantee he would not have taken your young life.”

Luo Binghe leaned down to kiss his earlobe, hot breath brushing against his ear, and coquettishly said: “Shizun, weren’t you the one who said we should investigate? You could at least give it another look.”

He didn’t dare to look, if he blinded his titanium dog eyes there’d be nowhere to change them out!

Luo Binghe chuckled: “You don’t want to look? Then let this disciple read it aloud to you.”

There was a cadence to his tone as he said: “After the night when Shizun lost his virginity to ‘Luo Binghe’, he gave this disobedient disciple a ruthless chastisement, and had a mind to drive him from Cangqiong Mountain Sect, but ultimately could not bring himself to go through with it, instead treating him with cold indifference until the Immortal Alliance Conference, when a sudden occurrence of fantastic events separated the teacher and his disciple; when they reunited after a few chapters of turmoil, ‘Shen Qingqiu’ was finally caught head-on by ‘Luo Binghe’. Come on Shizun, look, this part in Huanhua Palace’s water prison is written quite brilliantly.”

Shen Qingqiu was unable to resist him, and was actually a little curious as well, and in a moment of lost control, cast a sidelong glance out of the corner of his eye.

This one glance was enough to shock him so hard he was thoroughly toasted.

[Springtime of our Sundering, 37th Calamity: Stirring Passions in the Water Prison

Shen Qingqiu shook his head, his words inarticulate: “Luo...Binghe, let... let me go...”

Luo Binghe gripped his buttocks, kneading them, then pulled them apart, forcefully revealing the hole which had been ravaged countless times, and said with an evil grin: “Shizun, could you ever have imagined all those years ago, that there would come a day when you would cry for me to release you?”

Shen Qingqiu sobbed uncontrollably: “It’s already swollen...you can’t put it in anymore...”

It was indeed badly swollen, and was nearly unbearable to look at. The circle of bulging red flesh was so swollen it shone, closed impenetrably tight, looking incredibly difficult to break through. A bit of pity arose in Luo Binghe’s heart, but he quickly remembered Shen Qingqiu’s appearance when abandoning him long ago, felt a surging wave of hate, and callously thrust himself in; he could only bury less than half inside, and already found it exceptionally difficult to continue. Because of the swelling, the flesh of that hole was hotter and wetter than usual, but was also even more narrow and tight.

Tears stained Shen Qingqiu’s beautiful face as he drew in shaky breaths, in such pain from the penis’s forceful penetration that he sincerely wished he were dead. But such thoughts were to no avail; with his hands tied, all his struggling and wriggling was futile, as there was no way for him to free himself.]

Shen Qingqiu: “.....” *Frick, what the flying french fried fishsticks is this!*

Who in fuck’s name is this tear-stained beauty! Who’s this demonically charming, violently impetuous piece of work supposed to be!

The one who cries hardest every time we get in bed is clearly Luo Binghe, okay!

Look at the author’s name: Willow Lodges Sleeping Flowers. You can tell just from hearing it that they’re nobody good, anyone who follows Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky has gotta be the same kind of trash.

Finished reading, Luo Binghe gave his assessment: “If it were this disciple instead, I absolutely couldn’t do something so forceful. Shizun just has to knit his brows slightly, and this disciple would immediately be unable to act – how could I reach a stage of such bitter tears and still refuse to rest? The way this scene is treated lacks fidelity somewhat.”

This didn’t just lack fidelity...it was OOC. Boundlessly OOC!

What damn Springtime of our Sundering! This was no more than an RPF shocker hentai doujin that was so OOC it crossed horizons, and it actually managed to get this popular! No wonder he always used to hear the girls say that the more shocking the fic was, the easier it’d become a hot commodity in the community!

Wait no that’s not the main point here...Shen Qingqiu cursed whoever wrote this porn and whoever composed that perverted song to never get it up ever again! Incels! That’s what they get for fapping all their lives, they can fap ‘til they die and never find a wife!

Luo Binghe said: “For what reason is Shizun’s face changing so quickly between pale and red? The plot after this has even more unconstrained ups and downs, truly worthy of applause. Although during those five years, I respected Shizun’s body as if it were that of a saint, and never dared do anything the slightest bit profane, but being as this is just a booklet sold on the streets, there’s no harm in looking at these novel little scenes for a laugh or two.”

Shen Qingqiu cast his eye onto the chapter title: *Springtime of our Sundering*, 49th Calamity: Five Years of Empty Waiting.

What the actual shit.

No way, no way, no way! This title!

Not even letting off the gates to the new world! They didn’t have to go that hard on the kinks, did they!?

The facts proved that Shen Qingqiu had underestimated how low a bar the author of *Springtime of our Sundering* actually had.

[Although Shen Qingqiu knew and felt nothing, there in the flickering candlelight, his brows were dark and his lips were red, dying him in a layer of spring colors.

Luo Binghe placed those soft, weak hands upon the back of his neck before moving to kiss him, making it look as if Shen Qingqiu had awoken, and moved of his own accord to wrap his arms around Luo Binghe's neck and return the kiss.

The curtains dropped to the floor, moving without any wind; in the course of their desperate lingering touches, disheveled clothing fell tiredly to the floor. From the ceaselessly rocking silk muslin came the low sound of Luo Binghe's gasps.

Shen Qingqiu sprawled lifelessly against Luo Binghe's body, locked in an embrace by those firm and solid arms. His nipples had turned bright red and swollen from sucking, like a pair of tiny ripe fruits. His buttocks were covered in purple handprints. The fleshy hole down below had been fucked to a ripe red, and was still softly clinging to the half-hard male rod inside it, the space between his buttocks glistening with a dripping wet, watery sheen.]

Shen Qingqiu was crying from shock.

To think they could even take it this far! Challenging not only the three views but the very boundaries of morality!

He'd heard tell that mpreg fics were really popular on Green JJ dear heavens please absolutely by all means do not let *Springtime of our Sundering* have an mpreg plot please and thanks!

Quickly flipping through the pages, what immediately followed was another earth-shaking bolt from the blue.

[Springtime of our Sundering, 55th Calamity: Heavenly Demon's Sinful Blood

With their chests pressed close together, Luo Binghe could feel the smooth and delicate skin of the man in his arms; soaked in the water of the mountain spring, it was sleek with glistening water.

He embraced Shen Qingqiu without a word, lowering his head for a deep kiss, sometimes biting and lightly tearing at his lips, sometimes pushing his tongue deep inside, wreaking havoc and tangling within his mouth.

Unwilling though Shen Qingqiu may have been, he was helpless against the heavenly demon blood making mischief within his belly; his body lacked any strength, and after being kissed breathless, his chest was heaving irregularly, nipples rubbing against Luo Binghe's muscles, gradually standing erect. Before he realized his legs had been pried apart, and Luo Binghe suddenly charged in.

Although the two had been wildly making love for an entire day, and Shen Qingqiu should long since have gotten used to Luo Binghe's gigantic object, this sudden intrusion was still incredibly painful. Especially because the moment that flesh rod stabbed open his intestines, warm spring water took the chance to come pouring in as well; that mouth down below drank in no small amount of water, and the legs suspended on either side of Luo Binghe's waist immediately clamped down, his intestinal walls shuddering ceaselessly along with the movement. Luo Binghe could feel that little hole squeezing and sucking, gaining incomparable pleasure from the sensation, and vigorously kneaded Shen Qingqiu's buttocks, getting him to relax as he adjusted their positions.

Before long, Shen Qingqiu had caught his breath, and said in tearful reproach: "...Get lost!"

Luo Binghe laughed: "Shizun's mouth is quite harsh in its scolding, yet your body won't obey you."

Shen Qingqiu clenched his jaw, unwilling to resign: "...If you hadn't fed me that poisonous blood...how could I allow myself to be so humiliated by

a thankless wretch like you...”

Under the heavenly demon blood’s control, he could do nothing but obediently part his legs further and relax his lower hole, the better for Luo Binghe to fuck him. The flesh of his hole held gently onto Luo Binghe, sucking softly. Shen Qingqiu’s gasps for breath grew increasingly disordered, wishing to cry but unable to find the tears; he pursed his lips under those ruthless thrusts, low whines leaking from his nose. Luo Binghe held his bottom with a hand, ensuring that their hips stayed inseparably interlocked, while the other hand slapped Shen Qingqiu’s perfectly round and snowy white buttocks with a force that was neither heavy nor light, thrusting in with each slap, causing Shen Qingqiu to feel ashamed and resentful to an extreme.

After finishing a round, they barely rested a moment before Luo Binghe exited the water, carrying him. Upon leaving the water, threads of cold air entered Shen Qingqiu’s body, the movement of his limbs shrinking back towards himself causing his lower hole to contract as well. Luo Binghe spread his naked body upon a large piece of limestone by the hot spring, much as if he were offering up a sacrifice. They embraced together under the open sky.

The limestone was icy cold, making Shen Qingqiu wriggle the moment he lay upon it. His skin was fair and clear; having just gone through a round of fierce love-making, and being steamed by the spring water, his body was suffused with a gorgeous pink throughout, rippling wet night-black eyes going slack; he was both exhausted and sleepy, fully discouraged, and turned his head away, refusing to look at his traitorous disciple Luo Binghe.

Luo Binghe, wedged between his legs, lifted his pure white calves up onto his shoulders and pushed his manly tool inside all at once, before once more beginning to thrust at a leisurely pace. Shen Qingqiu’s inner walls were pushed to their limit with every inch, the shaft ruthlessly rubbing past them. The folds at the mouth of his fleshy hole were also spread flat from the action.]

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

Drug r*pe corpse r*pe forced r*pe, they have every kind you can think of, is the author having a lot of fun...

Luo Binghe said: “Honestly, I never considered that heavenly demon blood could have this sort of use as well.”

Shen Qingqiu stayed silent. After seeing how low a bar the original *Prideful Immortal Demon Way* had, it’s not as if he hadn’t thought about it before. It’s just that he’d never expected there would come a day when he saw this method being written about *him*.

Shen Qingqiu said: “...We’ve learned something.”

Luo Binghe nodded: “We’ve learned something.”

He then continued: “Seeing that we have, this disciple can’t let our newly gained knowledge go to waste, can he?”

Shen Qingqiu admonished him: “Luo Binghe, while this teacher may permit you...but I never gave you permission to play out all these different methods.”

Luo Binghe was taken aback for a moment, before saying: “Oh. This disciple understands.”

He had a somewhat dispirited look on his face, but didn’t insist. This time, it was Shen Qingqiu who found himself feeling uncomfortable.

Luo Binghe had never made any requests before in this respect; because he was so utterly bad at it, he was always very careful, to the point he gave off the impression he was acting based on Shen Qingqiu’s mood. Now he’d gone through the trouble of finding teaching material, picked up a little confidence, and was hoping to experiment a little with him, just to get a bucket of cold water poured on his hopes and dreams...

Shen Qingqiu fidgeted in his seat; after a long while, he finally lifted up his fan, blocking his face, and reservedly said: “How do you want to do it?”

Luo Binghe was immediately full of energy, excited at this wonderful opportunity. The sight made Shen Qingqiu quietly happy for a moment as well, thinking to himself that at worst he'd be sacrificing some self-respect to play with him the one time – they'd already done it before anyway, what did he still need that respect for?

Just to be safe, he ignored the pulsing veins in his forehead, picked up *Springtime of our Sundering* and hurriedly flipped through it, didn't see any overly unrealistic positions or peculiar play styles, and felt somewhat relieved. But upon turning around he found to his surprise that Luo Binghe was earnestly holding up an even thicker volume, face wreathed in smiles as he came closer, saying: "What are you holding *that* book for, Shizun?"

A silent Shen Qingqiu looked at the cover of the volume in Luo Binghe's hands; it was that famous up-and-coming series, the one so honored as to stand alongside *Springtime of our Sundering* as twin heroes beneath the crackdowns, *Song of Bingqiu*. Author: Three Holy Mothers.

Luo Binghe said: "This book has more things to teach and in greater detail, if we put them into action we'll master them quickly. This disciple has brought a flagon of flower wine which was created according to the method it gave, so today we can see if using it has as great an effect as the book tells us."

It looks to me like this one's got even lower standards!

Whatever the case, Shen Qingqiu knew, this flagon of wine was definitely not here to be drunk.

Wait a minute, if the tools were already prepared beforehand, then was that pathetic act earlier just put on to mess with him!?

Luo Binghe lifted Shen Qingqiu's hips, maneuvering him into a position with butt stuck high in the air and waist sunk downwards, bent into a soft curve, back facing him.

This was the condition for Shen Qingqiu's accepting his request. If he insisted on playing according to the book, then it had to be from behind, or else Shen Qingqiu would truly have nowhere to place this thin-skinned face of his. Luo Binghe had always been stubborn about "doing Shizun from the front", but first of all he was impatient to put what he'd learned into actual practice, and second of all the books spread the popular science that the person on bottom could more easily obtain pleasure through doing it from behind, so he happily agreed.

He picked up that flagon of rare high-quality wine, aimed its slender mouth at the spot of tightly closed pink at Shen Qingqiu's backside, and slowly squeezed it in.

The flagon had a neck which was slender at its tip and thicker farther down, meaning that entry was easy, but the farther it was pushed, the tighter that hole squeezed it. Ice-cold wine poured with a gurgle into his intestines, the unwelcome irritation causing his flesh to fiercely contract; Shen Qingqiu tightly gripped the bedding beneath him, eyebrows knitted tightly.

He could hear the splash of the wine as it poured into his stomach. The swelling feeling in his increasingly heavy underbelly became more and more noticeable. Shen Qingqiu couldn't help saying: "Enough..."

Luo Binghe obediently stopped moving at his word, but the flagon's long neck was still stuck into his buttock.

This wine had a light flavor at first taste, but the kickback was fierce. Before long, Shen Qingqiu's anal passage was burning painfully. Nothing he did could relieve this simultaneous pain and itching feeling, so he shifted his arms, crawling forward a little ways.

Luo Binghe didn't stop him this time; the flagon mouth left his anus with a pop. He immediately squeezed his hole tightly closed before the wine could flow out, but following that, he had no idea what to do.

If he were to let the wine drip out from his backside right in front of Luo Binghe, that would be too shameful for words. But he'd barely crawled for

a moment just now and already couldn't take anymore, afraid that the slightest movement would make him unable to keep his behind in check.

Luo Binghe came down over his body, one hand playing with his pointed, light red nipples, teeth nibbling at a smooth shoulder. The other hand lifted up his weak and aching bottom before moving to support Luo Binghe's tool; the hot, hard tip poked against his backside almost like a threat, aligned itself with that little hole, and ground against it a couple times.

It seemed he really had learned quite a lot from that accursed booklet... Shen Qingqiu was uncomfortable from his teasing, hands entangling themselves in the sheets beneath him, a thin layer of sweat beading on his skin.

Just as he was starting to get distracted, in a moment of inattention, the other's long tool pushed forward, splitting open his tight-shut hole.

In an instant, Shen Qingqiu went totally soft from his waist down to his legs. The arms struggling to support his upper body also couldn't hold on any longer, and collapsed. The only good news was that Luo Binghe's considerable size had fully stuffed his insides, keeping the wine firmly stopped within Shen Qingqiu's stomach, with no danger of leaking.

Getting this thing stuck all the way into him still hurt. But there also seemed to be something a little different within this pain.

The wine rubbing against his inner walls was making the entire passage burn, feeling swollen, hot, and wet. Once Luo Binghe began to thrust, the point where their bodies met was unable to prevent liquid from trickling out like overflowing nectar with each outwards turn of that tender flesh, the movements creating a ceaseless wet squelching noise that made him flush with embarrassment. His itching prostate deep in the depths of his underbelly was tingling unbearably, desperately longing to be crudely drilled into and ravaged, but the tip of that mushroom-like head only ever poked that little area of flesh with a force that was neither soft nor strong, causing Shen Qingqiu to anxiously wriggle his waist, unable to resist pushing his buttocks backwards.

This feeble movement was caught mid-action by Luo Binghe; he paused a moment, panting for breath, and happily said: “Shizun? Does it feel good? Am I doing well!?”

He thrust at lightning speed, the slightly red transparent wine leaking out from their coupling point in ever greater quantities. The space between Shen Qingqiu’s pale buttocks was getting fucked so hard there was liquid splashing everywhere. The fine liquor and his disciple’s penis created a spectacular mess within his belly, dashing ceaselessly against the inner walls. Shen Qingqiu was being pressed so hard that his knuckles turned white, gripping the sheets for dear life, and shutting his eyes tight in battered exhaustion.

Luo Binghe unforgivingly repeated himself: “Does it feel good? Does it?”

Shen Qingqiu quietly said something which he couldn’t quite catch; he bent down to listen carefully, sending that object down below even deeper in the process.

Shen Qingqiu felt a burst of swelling pain in his tailbone, and sighed: “... Face...face...”

The strength of the wine had cooked Shen Qingqiu’s entire body red; he looked like he’d been steamed in the liquid, even his breath emitting a clear, sweet smell. Luo Binghe couldn’t resist turning his head to kiss him, the tip of his tongue plundering the other man’s mouth, and feeling as if the fluids inside all carried the rich flavor of wine.

“Shizun.” He said, “Do you want to see my face?”

Shen Qingqiu barely noticeably nodded his head.

Luo Binghe said: “You’d better be sure about this. Doing it from the back was Shizun’s request to begin with. If you want to change to the front...I’m afraid it won’t be that easy to turn back again.”

The hot breath from his low husky voice wound around Shen Qingqiu’s ear; confused and disoriented, Shen Qingqiu dazedly clenched his backside.

Luo Binghe suddenly pulled out, roughly flipping him onto his back in a position that left him helpless and open to ravaging.

Shen Qingqiu's smooth, fair cheeks blushed a light pink, his eyes and the tip of his nose a particularly violent red, a few teardrops hanging from his lashes. Luo Binghe kissed them away one at a time, one hand softly and tenderly toying with the soft outer rim of his hole, the other hand supporting his back as he helped him up. He gently said: "Shizun...look."

Shen Qingqiu was guided by the chin, looking down to see that the base of his own pale thighs had been made a total mess from wine and semen. The area between those ample mounds of flesh appeared as if it had been fucked into a blooming flower, swollen so badly as to have grown another size, the inner walls flipped outwards, pathetically twitching as it spat out some white gunk.

"....." Shen Qingqiu was unable to speak, and subconsciously raised his hands to cover his eyes.

Luo Binghe peppered his cheeks in placating kisses as he thrust inside once more.

Shen Qingqiu felt another burst of burning pain. With Luo Binghe no longer supporting his back with a hand, he fell back, black hair scattering across the bed, fingers powerlessly digging into the taut muscle of Luo Binghe's back, and arched his neck.

After a round of full, powerful thrusts, the wine in Shen Qingqiu's stomach had already mostly spilled out. His inner walls, washed inside and out with the strong alcohol, were currently in the best possible condition, perfectly warm and elastic, sensitive and soft, but also guarded and unsure, wanting to put all their strength into squeezing and sucking the intruding foreign object, while simultaneously fearing the thing might break the thin walls with its rubbing. Wet noises emitted from the watery hole with each thrust; Shen Qingqiu's legs tangled around Luo Binghe's waist, the inside of those satiny smooth thighs stroking against his skin, toes curling, expression intoxicated.

The scent of wine drifted through the room, a tipsy feeling permeating the air. Shen Qingqiu was indeed...drunk.

But before he could be so drunk that he lost consciousness, Luo Binghe woke him up.

Luo Binghe lifted his buttocks, and stood up from the bed.

Shen Qingqiu sank downwards with his own weight, that male rod immediately pushing aside layers of soft flesh, and jabbing against a certain point very deep inside. This blow was nearly enough to push his heart up and out of his throat, like a sharp sword punctured through his body, making him wriggle like his life depended on it. But with his entire body now held aloft in the air, the most ferocious wriggling could only cause the invading object to be embedded even more inseparably in his hole, allowing his traitorous disciple's thing to grow exponentially in size within his body, filling him so full that he was close to vomiting.

And even scarier still, Luo Binghe began to walk.

This position made Shen Qingqiu take Luo Binghe's penis incredibly deep inside. With every step, that tool stayed stuck inside, subtly stirring and shifting within his body, yet never failing to enjoy the massage it received from the contractions of Shen Qingqiu's fearfully trembling inner walls. Aside from having it stuck in way too deep so he felt like vomiting, he was also afraid of falling down.

Shen Qingqiu really couldn't take any more, and disjointedly stammered: "H-hold on...it's too deep...Bing...Binghe put, put me down..."

Luo Binghe nibbled his earlobe, murmuring in a slightly gasping voice: "Shizun...it's not deep enough...it's still not enough..."

Shen Qingqiu's belly was full to bursting, and he said through his discomfort: "How much deeper do you want...where are you trying to reach!"

Having thrust to his heart's content while carrying him, Luo Binghe pushed him down onto the table. Shen Qingqiu's upper body was pressed right up against the table's surface, his hands trapped behind his back, legs weakly touching the ground.

His bottom was stuck on the edge of the table, impoverished door opened wide, pressed up against Luo Binghe's repeatedly assaulting crotch, causing the table to sway ceaselessly from knocking against it.

Shen Qingqiu, face pressed against the table, felt a hard object going in and out from between the center of those twin mounds, which was already a great struggle, and his legs up to his buttocks were shivering, making him nearly unable to stand. But Luo Binghe's hands were still cupping that pair of snow-white buttocks, pressing into their cleavage, enjoying the overwhelming pleasure of getting simultaneously squeezed by both his intestinal walls and buttocks.

Shen Qingqiu could only tell that the feel of that foreign object between his thighs was tormenting him to an unprecedented degree; the continuous rubbing and slapping against his buttocks didn't hurt, but it was still very embarrassing. Before long, Luo Binghe changed to yet another method of play. Each time he'd only pull out a tiny bit, then shove it back in with even greater strength, the flesh of the buttocks in his hands squeezed so hard between his fingers that they'd changed shape. Shen Qingqiu sprawled across the table, that tender fleshy spot in the depths of his inner walls burning from this water torture-like technique, both sore and itching, bringing him near to madness – but he was stuck firmly where he was, unable to move as he took in everything Luo Binghe had to give him.

Luo Binghe was worthy of being called a top student; once he obtained teaching materials, he copied them mechanically without any attempt at originality, which really made things unbearable for the other party!

He wanted to cry but couldn't form the tears, whimpering weakly: "... Exactly...exactly what else have you looked at..."

Honeymoon Record

After Qingjing Peak had sheltered devil incarnate Luo Binghe for a couple of weeks, the disciples finally could take no more of his harassment, and begged on their knees for Shen Qingqiu to take him along to “avoid the limelight for a while”.

Ning Yingying whined: “Shizun, I hate Baizhan Peak. Hate hate *hate* them! They’re all so boorish, they’ve broken our main gate many times now!”

Ming Fan tearfully complained: “Shizun...this time it really wasn’t me who told them ! This disciple swears it, please believe me!” He cast an anxious glance over to Luo Binghe, then proposed, “How about you let out Luo-shidi to hold a few educational exchanges with them? They won’t come back to bother Qingjing Peak anymore once they’ve had their fill of fighting!”

Luo Binghe was totally unmoved, indifferently saying: “I’ve barely had the time to discuss proper business with Shizun, where would I find the space to exchange anything with that bunch of wild monkeys?”

Shen Qingqiu waved his fan in silent reservation.

So his idea of “discussing proper business” was actually just researching new dishes, cleaning Bamboo Cottage’s tableware and furniture, and pulling tricks to get some loving without regard to time and place, huh...

Ming Fan had tears streaming down his face as he wailed: “Shizuuuuun can you pleeeeeease just gooooo Anding Peak’s people aren’t willing to help us fix the main gate anymore, every time it’s this disciple who has to travel a few hundred li up and down the mountain and pay out of his own pocket—”

Shen Qingqiu was pestered beyond endurance by his bawling.

In the end, with Ming Fan’s eternal gratitude and Ning Yingying’s reluctance, he finally – in a show of great mercy – did a good deed, and

moved his honored self out of Qingjing Peak.

So this old man was really rather depressed.

Hells, what had this damn world come to!

A certain Shidi L allowed his lackeys (.....) to beat their way up through Shixiong S's door, and didn't even pay compensation when they were done beating;

Shixiong S suffered economic losses, went to Shidi X's department requesting appropriation of public funds, but Shidi X refused to ratify the request;

Disciple M not only did not devote his altruistic spirit to the collective, but actually chased his master off the mountain.

This was seriously backwards!

Luo Binghe looked like he was having a great time, however. As long as he was stuck to Shen Qingqiu, it didn't make a difference where he went; in fact, not having a bunch of eyesores wandering around his vicinity every day was a lot more to his liking.

He hugged Shen Qingqiu's arm, happily saying: "Shizun, where should we go next?"

Shen Qingqiu cast a glance down at the other man's position wrapped around his arm, unable to bear looking straight at him.

This was really...getting more and more shoujo.

The two of them looked just like a pair of little girls going out together hand-in-hand to pick mushrooms. ㄟ(ˉ▽ˉ) ㄟ(ˉ▽ˉ)┐

Shen Qingqiu ROFL'd at his own man-made shocker. He replied with another question: "Is there anywhere you'd like to go?"

Luo Binghe thought on it, and said: “How about we go to the places we went in the past, and see how they’ve changed now.”

And so, the two came to their first stop after getting “chased out” of Cangqiong Sect: The town of Shuanghu.

They originally could have arrived in under an incense stick’s time if traveling by sword, but Luo Binghe got who-knows-what weird idea into his head, and insisted on dragging him onto a carriage.

If they were riding then that’s what they’d do, Shen Qingqiu didn’t care either way. Unexpectedly however, after they’d both gotten into the carriage, Luo Binghe kept staring at him with one of those shyly expectant looks (the kind you thought you were hiding very well but really it was written all over your face).

The inside of the carriage wasn’t exactly spacious, so Shen Qingqiu had nowhere to hide, and felt his hair standing on end from the heat of that gaze.

Is this...a hint that he wants to have car sex?

Don’t even think about it, this teacher won’t agree to it!

This really is backwards!

Luo Binghe stared at him for quite a long while, but upon failing to see any particular expression from Shen Qingqiu, who clearly showed a lack of any mutual understanding, he slowly lowered his head.

He poked his fingers together, saying in a somewhat disappointed voice: “Does Shizun...not remember?”

Shen Qingqiu realized, his daily mental activities these days could pretty much all be started with an ellipsis or two.

He said: “Remember? Remember what?”

Frustration mixed in with Luo Binghe’s disappointment: “Back when Shizun took all the Qingjing Peak disciples down the mountain to train, and

you allowed me to ride together with you...”

To think Luo Binghe could so clearly remember such distant ancient history!

Whereas Shen Qingqiu had almost completely forgotten it.

Luo Binghe sighed: “So you really don’t remember.”

Put under this comparison, Shen Qingqiu couldn’t help feeling guilt; he motioned for Luo Binghe to lean closer, rubbed his face in an action equivalent to giving him a piece of candy to eat, and said: “Shizun momentarily forgot, I’m sorry.”

Luo Binghe was perfectly contented by the sweet, the corners of his mouth turning upwards as he replied: “Mm. Shizun has shown me far more kindnesses than this, so how could you remember each individual one?”

.....

Could you not visualize him as such a loving Holy Father? He really did just purely forget it, he couldn’t accept this halo!

On the main street at Shuanghu’s town gate.

The two were leisurely, casually wandering around the street. Amidst the dazzling rows of peddlers lining each side of the road, a gorgeously decorated flag floated in the breeze.

Shen Qingqiu’s gaze was first attracted by this flag, then moved downward, landing on the face of the stall owner beneath it, at which point what was originally a “faintly discernible there-yet-not seemingly courteous and kind but actually cold and distant”-style smile immediately froze on his face.

Luo Binghe was absurdly astute, and immediately said: “What is it, Shizun, is there someone you know?”

The crowded little table beneath the flag appeared to be a traveling fortune-teller's stall. Behind the table sat a gracefully pretty young woman; with an incredibly flirtatious fling of her hair, she lifted her beautiful head, made eye contact from a distance with Shen Qingqiu, and immediately made a face like she'd swallowed a catty of white arsenic.

But as soon as she moved her gaze to land on the face of Luo Binghe by his side, her feelings of adoration towards this type of appearance promptly transcended all else, her eyes emitting dazzling light on the spot as she took the initiative of calling out to them: "I trust that you've been well since last we met, immortal master!"

Shen Qingqiu said: "It's been a long time. Madam has an even more graceful bearing than in previous years."

That good-looking lady was none other than Madam Meiyin.

She waved away the infatuated male customers around the little table, making some space for them, and smilingly said: "Milord looks radiant with happiness nowadays, how have you been? Have each of this lowly one's previous words come about as predicted?"

Though her mouth was speaking with Shen Qingqiu, her eyes were seductively staring in Luo Binghe's direction, doing exactly what it sounds like. It had been a long time since he'd last been reminded of it, but thinking back now to the fated marriage Madam Meiyin had predicted for him back then, the key themes: Younger than him, outstandingly gifted, first-class good looks, always accompanying by his side, deeply devoted... Shen Qingqiu realized with a start, not a one of them had missed the mark!

He said: "Madam's calculations were accurate; you have this Shen's great admiration. But you seem to have forgotten to tell me something important all those years ago."

She'd said so much, embellishing her words to high heaven, and yet she hadn't told him *Shen Qingqiu, your fated marriage partner is a mother-fudging man!*

Luo Binghe blinked his eyes, saying with a smile: “Shizun, it appears that the relationship between you and this lady is not a shallow one.”

Although there was a smile on his face, Shen Qingqiu felt his gums ache at his words.

Speaking of which, Luo Binghe and Madam Meiyin originally should have been a pair that engaged in countless illicit one-night stands together, but now they were sitting opposite each other with matchless integrity, looking deliberately ambiguous, each saying their own part; this scene really was seriously weird. He gave a hollow laugh: “It’s very shallow. Very shallow. It’s been years since we last met, and I never expected we would meet again while traveling the country – to think that Madam would have taken up this sort of work in the town of Shuanghu.”

Madam Meiyin humphed: “That would be all thanks to that immortal who came together with milord to patronize this one’s humble home last time.”

Luo Binghe suddenly said: “Which immortal?”

Shen Qingqiu’s smile froze a second time.

Madam Meiyin resentfully voiced her complaint: “Don’t blame this one for criticizing people’s faults behind their backs, but back then I kindly received you as guests, and didn’t show the slightest bit of unfair treatment towards the two of you, yet that other one thought it fit to come right out and collapse half my cave the moment he arrived, scaring away a good half of my sisters. The few times we met again after that, he didn’t show the slightest hint of mercy – in all my years, this is the first time this one has ever met such a defensive, heartless, unromantic, unkind man who knows nothing but how to fight and kill. Pah!”

You’ve been spat on, Liu Qingge. You’ve actually been spat on!

There was only one person capable of such violent behavior, yet Luo Binghe still seemed unsure about something, looking at him: “Shizun, was it Liu...shishu? When did you and he go out on your own?”

Watching as the veins in his forehead began to faintly twitch, Shen Qingqiu cleared his throat: “That was an event that occurred...during the time you weren’t around.”

Luo Binghe’s fingers dug deeply into his palm, saying: “Could Shizun tell this disciple in detail, exactly what you, Liu...shishu, and this beautiful succubus were doing when you got together?”

Shen Qingqiu was already an old hand at coaxing him, with steps proceeding as follows:

First calmly say: “Not as beautiful as you.”

Then, ensure before Madam Meiyin’s twitching smile: “We really didn’t do anything.”

If he’s still unconvinced, repeat the steps above.

Madam Meiyin seemed to think there wasn’t enough fuel on this fire, and added from the side: “I’d scattered some succubus captivating perfume before I left, but considering that man’s cold, frigid personality, it likely didn’t amount to anything serious.”

What sort of thing succubus captivating perfume was, you could tell just from hearing the name. Springtime medicine is what!

Luo Binghe’s face changed color in a burst of displeasure: “‘Didn’t do anything’?”

...In all honesty, they really hadn’t done anything. It hadn’t even reached the level of helping him fap!

Luo Binghe said in a voice that was both grieved and resentful: “This disciple was cutting his way through hardships in the abyss, while Shizun was in a land of verdant hills and clear waters, enjoying himself with another man...”

What the heck was “another man” supposed to be, couldn’t he call him a colleague or sect-fellow like a normal person?

Shen Qingqiu waved his fan, looking incomparably upright and honest as he humphed: “What do you mean by enjoying myself? One person, in a mountainous area running wild with demons, kicked another person into an ice-cold water hole, causing him to catch fever from the soak; what, if anything of this incident is worth your jealousy!”

“That’s it?”

“That’s it.”

Madam Meiyin bit her nail, hatefully saying: “What water hole! That was this one’s beloved rose pond...”

The Chen residence.

Seeing as they’d come to the town of Shuanghu, they naturally needed to find something to do. The trip couldn’t go without helping the people eliminate evil or something.

After some asking around, it turned out that the Chen residence was once again the victim of strange events.

A few years back the extremely evil Skinner Demon was hiding within the master’s estate in the form of his beloved Die’er; after getting killed, the wing in which she’d once lived hadn’t had a single moment of peace, the sounds of wailing and howling arising every night, leaving the residents panic-stricken for years without a resolution.

Landlord Chen was already old and gray-haired at seventy years old, but still as ambitious as ever. Several years ago he had – for better or worse – a single Die’er to support him, but now he had one on each side, a pair of beautiful concubines. His wild love of female charms hadn’t been the slightest bit impaired by the Skinner Demon once having concealed herself by his side.

This elderly man was getting on in years, but his memory was still going strong, knowing upon meeting Shen Qingqiu to give a loud shout of

“Immortal Lord Shen”.

“Immortal Lord Shen’s” aloofness was the same as it had been all those years before. It wasn’t until he was asked about the young master beside him that the corners of his lips finally turned ever-so-slightly upwards, and he genteelly replied: “He is my young disciple from our previous visit.”

Landlord Chen said with a smile: “No wonder he looked vaguely familiar. Seeing milord and your beloved disciple just now, I was suddenly reminded of how many years have passed.”

The exchange of conventional greetings was naturally handed over to Luo Binghe, who’d returned once more to being the little secretary in charge of all his affairs. Shen Qingqiu happily stood to one side, silently putting on his pretentious act.

Seeing cool, wildly tyrannical, swaggering lord of the demon realm Luo Binghe acting as patient as a loving daughter, Shen Qingqiu inevitably felt light as air, in a wonderfully good mood, and the gaze with which he watched him couldn’t help being ever-more loving. Meanwhile Luo Binghe felt the need to look back at him with every other sentence, and with this glance was unable to look away again. And so this teacher-student pair made eyes at each other right in front of a bunch of strangers for a good long while before Shen Qingqiu abruptly came to his senses with a start.

What level of PDA was this!

On the way to the wing, Luo Binghe kept wanting to hold his hand. Shen Qingqiu firstly worried about onlookers, and secondly had a mind to tease him, so he refused to let him take it. Throwing both martial moves and skills into this battle, if a cultivator or somebody from the demon realm happened to catch sight of this teacher-student pair using the special techniques of their sects and bloodlines for inappropriate horseplay (fooling around), the only way they could react would be to spit blood to the high heavens.

No one dared go near the rumored haunted wing, so it was naturally extremely quiet. The courtyard was still the same as it was before,

completely unchanged, aside from the particularly thick yin energy. Upon seeing that they were finally alone, Luo Binghe immediately cozied up to him; he slowly embraced his waist from behind, laying his chin on his shoulder, and softly probed: “Does Shizun remember what this place is?”

Of course he remembered. It was the place where he’d first used Easy Mode, of course!

...Fine, that was a joke. There was no way he’d forget, this was the first place he’d ever cheated Luo Binghe.

Back then, in order to protect his own life, he’d almost let the Skinner Demon smack a palm right onto the top of Luo Binghe’s skull. This had been kind of a dishonest thing to do; Shen Qingqiu felt nervous remembering it even now, and was too embarrassed to dwell on it.

Seeing his lack of an answer, Luo Binghe accused with hidden bitterness: “Shizun, d-did you really forget? This disciple feels great pain in his heart.”

Ever since the two started fooling around with each other (.....), not a day had gone by without Luo Binghe feeling these pains three-or-five-or-ten times. He was hurt if you talked an extra couple words with someone, hurt if you ate a couple less bites, hurt if you thought the bathtub was too small and made him get out of your bath...he suffered pains like they were broad beans. They’d come with a snap, and be gone again just as fast.

But standing at this former “scene of the crime”, Shen Qingqiu was plagued with guilt, and couldn’t help softening a little bit, mad roasting demon withering right when it was about to come online. He reached up behind him to pat Luo Binghe’s cheek: “Don’t throw a tantrum. Shizun will answer one of your requests today. So let’s put that aside for now and finish the business with whatever evil thing is here before we do anything else.”

Luo Binghe cheered up: “Really?”

“When has your shizun ever...” Shen Qingqiu managed to shut his mouth before he could continue, avoiding the tragedy of giving himself a slap in

the face. Whether he said “when have I ever tricked you” or “when have I ever cheated you”, they both amounted to the same thing.

“If Shizun says so, then...” Luo Binghe blushed, and pulled out length upon length of red rope.

Hello immortal binding cable, goodbye immortal binding cable!

Seeing Shen Qingqiu’s face reveal a look of outrage, Luo Binghe didn’t press, instead letting out a sigh, lifting his head up to look at the sky, and saying in a faint voice: “From the day we escaped peril under the Skinner Demon’s hands, I’m not sure why, but this disciple kept having strange dreams for many nights.”

Uh, what did he mean by strange dreams. Was it the kind of dreams where you had to wash your underwear after waking up?

What the heck! To think he’d even been Luo Binghe’s instructor in sexual enlightenment during puberty. The subject of a person’s sexual enlightenment was an extremely important part of their lives – even if it wasn’t a busty big sister, at the very least it should be a gentle, elegant, and physically frail girl next door, right? Luo Binghe’s life really was too tragic to put into words, if the one who’d given him his sexual enlightenment was actually somebody with a handle...gotta give him a few tears of sympathy.

But however sympathetic he may be, he still wasn’t going to give in. Although moral principals were a thing he didn’t have much left of anyway after all of Luo Binghe’s cajoling, any little bit he could pick up off the ground was still a bit that counted. *And more importantly could you get the actual work done first please, there’s a ball of black mist condensing behind you. It’s here, it’s here!*

Luo Binghe seemed not to notice, continuing to mind his own business as he said with distress: “Even now, this disciple often finds himself disturbed by the same dream.”

The part about it happening in the past he could believe, but bringing it up to the present, the idea of Luo Binghe – who could control his dreams

however he desired – being “disturbed”, was a lie that went far beyond shameless, not just shameless but self-confident to boot. Shen Qingqiu placed a hand on the Xiuya sword, chuckling: “So?”

Luo Binghe didn’t even turn his head: “So, I...”

That mass of black mist reached the end of its patience, and roared: “& *% ¥#@&! Are you guys blind, can’t you see me!?”

This voice was so familiar, so dear to his heart, Shen Qingqiu asked: “Die’er?”

The black mist reprimanded him: “Forget that Die’er Hua’er stuff, I am me, I’m the Skinner Demon who once had this place living in terror!”

Shen Qingqiu was speechless.

Wasn’t this the little monster he’d killed with one palm in that primary stage quest...who would’ve thought the rumored resentful spirit was just this guy. Not forgetting to disturb the people regardless of whether you’re alive or dead, you can’t get more cautious and conscientious than that!

The black mist puffed out a blob of black smoke; Shen Qingqiu reckoned in the spirit’s point of view, it was the equivalent of spitting a mouthful of saliva. It said: “How dare the licentious pair of you run over here and whisper sweet nothings to each other right in front of my eyes, not even noticing when death is near at hand!”

Luo Binghe furrowed his brows, and asked Shen Qingqiu: “Shizun, are we directly killing it or restraining it for interrogation through torture?”

Shen Qingqiu wanted to see how much stupider it could get, and raised a hand to signal that he not move just yet. The black mist let out a noise of surprise, floating a little closer to Shen Qingqiu: “You look kind of familiar.”

Of course he looked familiar. The man who murdered you is standing right before your eyes, and your only reaction is to suspiciously say “Hey you

look kinda familiar”. How many years had it been, it’s got to have been over a decade, and yet under the formidable influence of Easy Mode, not only had Die’er’s IQ not gone up a single decimal point, its ability to remember had dropped a lot too!

Shen Qingqiu cleared his throat, and said in reminder: “This Shen...is the peak lord of Qingjing Peak.”

“.....”

The black mist exploded: “Shen Qingqiu! So it was you! Then who’re you supposed to be!?”

“You know him too.” Shen Qingqiu barely had the heart to say, “He was also present at the time.”

The black mist thought for quite a while, before saying with a flash of realization: “It’s that little brat disciple of yours!”

“Hahahahahahaha!” After finally remembering, Die’er couldn’t stop howling with laughter, “Shen Qingqiu, good and evil will always be rewarded, this is karma coming back for you! To think you’d actually get... heheh’d by your own disciple. What an offense to public morals! How contemptible! I always knew someone would enact heavenly justice on you one of these days!”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

But. As an evildoer demon, who was met with retribution, and smacked to death by someone’s palm of heavenly justice, you aren’t really suited to say something like “good and evil will always be rewarded, this is karma coming back for you”, right?

It kept laughing and laughing, and then a fantastic sight emerged. As if a great wind were blowing away a mass of kitchen smoke, the black mist gradually began to dissipate. When it was down to the last wisp, it was still sighing in satisfaction: “Retribution, yes, retribution! Shen Qingqiu, you’ve finally met your retribution. Serves you right, I can die with no regrets!”

...Did it just attain enlightenment? Ascend? Get released from its suffering?

Wasn't its requirement for finally "dying with no regrets", just a little too low...

Plus even if Luo Binghe was annoying, it hadn't reached the level of "retribution" had it!

The yin energy in the courtyard quickly dispersed. Luo Binghe said: "Shizun, why don't we continue?"

Shen Qingqiu's mouth twitched; he looked at Luo Binghe, who was still holding a pile of immortal binding cables, and actually found himself at a loss for words: "What do you want to continue?"

Luo Binghe said: "Didn't Shizun say you would answer one of my requests today? So, my request is, could Shizun condescend to cooperate for a little while, and let this disciple gently tie these immortal binding cables on you, so we can do it once while bound, allowing the dream to become real, and me to resolve a years-long desire, after which this disciple...can die without regrets!"

.....

Although Die'er had already serenely passed on in a moment of inexplicable self-satisfaction, Shen Qingqiu still felt as if the Xiuya sword couldn't be sheathed again so soon.

He expressionlessly walked towards the exit. Luo Binghe moved to block his way: "Shizun, you promised."

Shen Qingqiu indifferently pushed away that hurt-looking face.

Luo Binghe complained: "Shizun, don't treat me like this again."

What're you crying for, even if you cry it won't be any use. Don't embarrass people outside!

Sure enough, as far as this little beast was concerned, any softheartedness or sympathy or whatever was all purely unnecessary.

He was taking back what he'd said before. Luo Binghe really was his retribution!

100 Casual Questions for Misters Luo and Shen

Questionnaire subjects: Luo BinghexShen Qingqiu.

Questionnaire presenter: Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky.

Questionnaire provider: System.

Shooting Airplanes Towards The Sky's system had issued a quest.

A quest in the form of a strange questionnaire.

He couldn't tell what exactly this questionnaire was trying to investigate, and the farther down he read, the more unbearable the questions were to look at.

But, however unbearable they were, he still had to collect some points didn't he!?

After abandoning his (near non-existent to begin with) dignity to plead with Boss Shen, Shen Qinqiu finally reluctantly agreed to bring the dog, no wait, the *disciple* he'd raised along with him to complete this questionnaire.

And so, below is Airplane live at the scene.

Shang Qinghua: "Could you please give your names?"

Hearing this question the moment he sat down, Luo Binghe raised an eyebrow, saying with irritation: "If you don't even know our names, what else are you going to ask?"

Shang Qinghua: "How old are you?"

...To tell the truth, Shen Qingqiu didn't actually know exactly how old this body was. He lifted his chin in Shang Qinghua's direction and said:
"Shouldn't you know that better than me?"

Shang Qinghua twirled his writing brush, thinking to himself that he'd never thought about this before either, so he might as well make something up – he thus filled in a number with a couple careless strokes of the brush.

Shang Qinghua: "What is your sex?"

Having started with three retarded questions in a row, Luo Binghe already felt it beneath him to bother answering, and Shen Qingqiu couldn't endure any more either: "We've been sorted into Green JJ's BL channel, what do you think?"

Shang Qinghua silently crossed out the next 30+ similar rubbish questions on the questionnaire, then started up again with: "May I ask what your character is like?"

Shen Qingqiu thought a moment, then said: "It's alright I suppose. This Shen should probably still be considered the type that's easy to get along with."

Luo Binghe said: "I don't know."

Shang Qinghua: "What about each other's character?"

Shen Qingqiu listed them off one by one: "Crybaby, a maiden's heart, love-obsessed, chuunibyou, incredibly sticky."

Luo Binghe's eyes flickered with a wet sheen, a little hurt by this apparent cold shoulder, but still obediently answered the question: "Shizun's character is the best, of course. He's gentle and strong and considerate."

Shen Qingqiu: "....."

Suddenly he felt kinda bad, what the heck!

He cleared his throat with a couple coughs before modifying his previous remark: “This boy’s character honestly isn’t too bad. One of his strong points is particularly hard to come by. He does what he’s told, that’s enough.”

Luo Binghe’s cheeks reddened.

Shang Qinghua drily continued: “When did the two of you meet, and where?”

He already knew the answer to this one!

Luo Binghe said: “The first time I met Shizun, was when I’d just passed Cangqiong Mountain’s entrance examination...”

Shen Qingqiu was somewhat uncomfortable at this, as the one Luo Binghe met back then wasn’t him, but the original goods – and it wasn’t a particularly great memory, either.

He waved his fan: “Pass, pass!”

Shang Qinghua: “What was your first impression of each other?”

Luo Binghe continued reminiscing, saying in a light voice: “An aloof and remote immortal beyond the reach of mortal man.”

Shen Qingqiu told it as it is: “A little baozi.” With the makings of a lady-killer, to boot.

Shang Qinghua: “What’s one thing you like about each other?”

Shen Qingqiu said with a benign gaze: “He’s well-behaved enough.”

Luo Binghe smiled: “I like everything about Shizun.”

Shang Qinghua: “What do you dislike about each other?”

Luo Binghe decisively said: “Nothing.”

Shen Qingqiu was a little moved by how resolute and decisive his answer was, and returned the favor with a matching: “Nothing.”

If he really did say he disliked something or other, and caused him to cry in front of an outsider, that would be a huge loss of face...

Shang Qinghua: “What do you call each other?”

Luo Binghe dully turned his head: “Shizun, these questions are really strange. What exactly did we come here to do?”

Shen Qingqiu calmly replied: “Be a good boy, Binghe. It’s just a formality. Think of it as saving your Shang-shishu’s life.”

Shang Qinghua: “What do you wish the other would call you?”

Luo Binghe turned red.

Upon seeing that bashful reaction, an ominous premonition rose up in Shen Qingqiu’s mind, and he waved his hand, saying: “Pass! Pass pass pass!”

Shang Qinghua, sensing a possible breaking point, decided to heckle: “What’re you passing for! If you keep passing every question like this, what’ll there be for me to ask? Bing-ge...shizhi, go ahead and say it!”

Luo Binghe cast a worried glance to Shen Qingqiu, and said in a quiet voice: “Just like how ordinary married couples call each other.”

Shang Qinghua immediately said: “Boss Shen, did you hear that, Bing... shizhi wants you to refer to each other like husband and wife. Husband, hubby, dearest, pick one.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “You shut up.”

Shang Qinghua: “If you were to compare your partner to an animal, what would he be?”

Luo Binghe instantly replied: “Siberian crane.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “I can’t think of an animal. I *do* have a plant, though. A black lotus.”

Luo Binghe was puzzled: “Shizun, do lotuses also come in black?”

Shang Qinghua: “If you were to send your partner a present, what would it be? What sort of present would you like yourself?”

Luo Binghe said: “Shizun needs only say the word, and I’ll give him anything he wants.”

Shen Qingqiu honestly said: “There doesn’t seem to be anything I particularly want.”

As the lord of a peak, there really wasn’t anything very difficult to get his hands on. Thinking of it that way, it really felt as if he were wasting a mountain of hoarded gold.

Luo Binghe said: “In that case I want Shizun not to pay attention to anyone else, and accompany me for three days.”

Shang Qinghua licked the tip of his brush, muttering: “Why not just have him accompany you for a lifetime?”

Luo Binghe shook his head: “Shizun would be unhappy.”

Shang Qinghua was stupefied by the sight of him being overwhelmed with sadness like a betrayed housewife, whereas Shen Qingqiu was completely unperturbed: “Silly child, you’re imagining things again – why would this teacher be unhappy?”

Shang Qinghua: “To what extent has your relationship developed?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “We’ve done everything we should, and everything we shouldn’t as well.”

Luo Binghe was hurt: “Why would there be anything we shouldn’t do? Don’t tell me that Shizun thinks we...shouldn’t be doing it?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “No. If a thing really shouldn’t be done, this teacher won’t allow you to do it.”

Shang Qinghua: “Where was your first date?”

Luo Binghe said: “The Huanhua Palace water prison.”

Shang Qinghua: “.....”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

Bing-ge, you call that a date!?

Shang Qinghua: “What was the mood between the two of you at that time?”

Luo Binghe: “Not very good.”

That wasn’t anywhere near something you could use “not very good” to describe, okay!

Shang Qinghua: “What is a place you often go on dates?”

Shen Qingqiu rested his chin in his palm: “When I open my eyes, he’s the first thing I see. When I close my eyes, I still see him in my dreams. Does this count as dating all the time?”

Luo Binghe gently and cautiously said: “Would Shizun find that bothersome?”

Shen Qingqiu rubbed his back, saying: “Not at all. You’re just overthinking things.”

Shang Qinghua thought to himself, *Dating Bing-ge – no, dating Bing-mei is really fricking tiring!*

It’s barely been a few questions, and Boss Shen’s coaxed him three times! How many times must that glass heart of his keep shattering and getting glued back together before it’s through!

It’s such a pain!

Shen Qingqiu’s basically like a child-rearing kindergarten teacher!

Shang Qinghua: “Which of you was the first to confess?”

Luo Binghe: “Me.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Of course it was him.”

Shang Qinghua: “At what times does your partner leave you at wit’s end?”

Shen Qingqiu spread out his hands, helplessly saying: “When he starts endlessly weeping there’s nothing else I can do.”

Luo Binghe said: “The moment Shizun gets angry, I’m at wit’s end.”

Shang Qinghua let out a “mmhm”, shaking his leg, and inwardly ridiculed them as he noted their answers: *As expected, they really are exactly like a kindergartner and his teacher!*

Shang Qinghua: “When the two of you are together, what makes your heart race most?”

Luo Binghe earnestly said: “When he pats my head, and when he instructs me.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Er, when he tearfully begs me for something I suppose.”

Luo Binghe continued: “Also when he scolds me, and when he hits me...”

He was acting very intoxicated, while Shen Qingqiu acted very used to it.

Shang Qinghua quietly added a note next to Luo Binghe’s name: Incurable Do-M.

Shang Qinghua: “Have you lied to your partner before? Are you good at lying?”

Right after asking this question, he confidently wrote the words “Pathological Liar” after Luo Binghe’s name.

Luo Binghe said: “I have. But I’ll never do it again!”

Shang Qinghua: “Have you quarreled before? What sort of arguments were they?”

Shen Qingqiu sighed: “We argued quite terribly. Thinking back on it now, I’m not even sure what it was for – it could honestly all have been avoided.”

Luo Binghe indignantly said: “What do you keep asking all these questions for? You’re just making Shizun unhappy without any good reason.”

Shang Qinghua spread his hands: “My mistake.”

Shang Qinghua: “How did you reconcile afterwards?”

Shen Qingqiu waved a hand as he said: “Papapa’d to save the world!”

Shang Qinghua: “Is your relationship publicly known or a secret?”

Shen Qingqiu asked in return: “Have you heard of *Springtime of our Sundering?*”

The questions after that went on a mad rush to ever lower standards.

Shang Qinghua cleared his throat: “May I ask if you are the gong or the shou?”

Luo Binghe was puzzled: “What does that mean?”

He honestly didn’t understand, whereas Shen Qingqiu was pretending he didn’t understand, waving his fan as he said: “Who knows what it means, pass pass pass.”

Shang Qinghua: “How was this decided?”

Shen Qingqiu thought for a moment: “I don’t know myself, it was just inexplicably decided this way. Probably...because I felt pity for him?”

Luo Binghe doubtfully said: “I still don’t understand what is being asked.”

Shen Qingqiu patted his head, his words sincere and heartfelt: “It doesn’t matter if you don’t understand. You don’t lose anything regardless.”

Shang Qinghua: “Where was the first place you experienced intimacy of the flesh?”

Shen Qingqiu was about to reply, when Luo Binghe rushed in: “Qingjing Peak.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Mai...”

Luo Binghe interrupted again: “Qingjing Peak, Bamboo Cottage.”

Shen Qingqiu thought to himself, *alright, Luo Binghe isn’t going to acknowledge such a failure of a first time. If he says Qingjing Peak then*

Qingjing Peak it is, there's no reason to argue it, he can say what he wants, I won't correct him.

Shang Qinghua: "What were your thoughts at the time?"

Shen Qingqiu didn't answer.

If he were to be honest, it could only be summed up with three words: "Ow ow ow", which in front of an outsider would be too much of a blow to Luo Binghe's reputation.

Luo Binghe dispiritedly said: "Shizun is truly great. But I'm greatly useless."

Shang Qinghua: "The morning after your first time, what was the first thing you said?"

Luo Binghe: "Shizun, breakfast is ready."

Shen Qingqiu: "Don't say another word, first put your clothes on!"

Shang Qinghua: "How often do you have intercourse each month?"

Shen Qingqiu was outraged: "Who has the free time to calculate something like this? On top of that, why have the questions been continuously progressing in a very strange direction?"

Luo Binghe seriously said: "By my approximation, it's once every three days. If Shizun is in a good mood, occasionally he will allow me to touch him once in two days."

Shang Qinghua bit the shaft of his writing brush, jotting down the record as he muttered to himself: "This is unnatural...according to my setting, he should be able to do it uninterrupted from the beginning of the month to the end without any problem, shouldn't he?"

Shang Qinghua: “Under normal circumstances, in what location do you perform intimacies of the flesh?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “He has a stubborn attachment to Bamboo Cottage.”

Luo Binghe nodded with a smile: “Mmhm.”

Shang Qinghua: “What is a location in which you’d like to try (beeeep)?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “We’d be doing it regardless, who cares where it is.”

Luo Binghe unhurriedly said: “Baizhan Peak.”

Silence filled the room.

Luo Binghe calmly appended: “The Baizhan Peak training grounds.”

Shen Qingqiu =□=: ...*Fuck!*?

Shang Qinghua =□=: *Is he throwing away his life or his shame!?*

Shang Qinghua: “Do the two of you have any agreements for when you (beeeep)?”

Luo Binghe: “If it hurts he has to tell me. He has to.”

Shen Qingqiu: “No crying!”

Shang Qinghua: “I have to ask, did you two not understand the implication behind the word ‘agreement’?”

Shang Qinghua: “Do you approve or oppose the idea that, if you cannot obtain a person’s heart, you will at least want to obtain their body?”

Shen Qingqiu disapproved: “That’s a loser’s...a failure’s way of thinking.”

Luo Binghe said: “Without the heart, what use is the body?”

Shang Qinghua was beyond sad: Under his pen, Luo Binghe had undoubtedly been an exceptional stallion who pursued nothing more than his desire to (beeeeeep), and the number of girls he'd r(beeeeeeeep)d had definitely been in the double digits...

He knew that in this weird world Luo Binghe had become a gay guy, but how the heck had he fallen, one step at a time, to his current level!

Shang Qinghua: "If your partner were to be r-cough-aped by a thug, what would you do?"

This question was far beyond unrealistic.

Shen Qingqiu was speechless for a good while, before saying: "Who would be so depressed as to go rape him..."

If they're looking to die couldn't they look for a more poignant and nice-looking way to do it?

Luo Binghe gathered his sleeves, and leisurely said: "Make them into human swine, throw them into the endless abyss, then take my time to slowly concoct some other ways to play with them for ten years before killing them, I suppose."

Shang Qinghua: "If a good friend were to say to you *I'm real lonely, so just for tonight, please...* and requested intimacy of the flesh, what would you do?"

Luo Binghe apathetically said: "I don't have any friends that shameless. I don't need friends."

Shen Qingqiu lowered his head to blow at the tea leaves in his cup, took a sip, and said: "I don't have any either."

Luo Binghe suspiciously said: "Really? Liu...shishu wouldn't do this sort of thing?"

Tea sprayed all over the floor.

Shang Qinghua came back from changing out of his tea-sprayed clothes, and continued the questions.

“Do you feel you’re good at making love? What does your partner think?”

Shen Qingqiu let out a hollow laugh. Luo Binghe teared up. Upon seeing the worried expression on his face, looking miserable beyond words, Shen Qingqiu took pity on him, turned to Shang Qinghua, and angrily said: “Are you intentionally poking at his sore spot? Pass!”

Shang Qinghua picked his ear with a finger: “It’s all my bad regardless.”

Shang Qinghua: “Are you interested in S&M?”

Luo Binghe said: “Now what’s *that* supposed to be? Shizun, why are there more and more things I don’t understand?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Oh. This is asking you whether or not you like me hitting you, whether you like me scolding you, or whether you might feel anything if I stuck you with needles or burned you with fire.”

Luo Binghe looked noticeably bashful as he replied in a soft voice: “As long as Shizun does it, there is nothing this disciple would not enjoy.”

Shang Qinghua understood clearly now, and took up his brush with a flourish: “Luo Binghe is very interested in S&M!”

Shang Qinghua: “What is something relatively painful about intercourse?”

Luo Binghe: “Too small.”

Shen Qingqiu: “Too big.”

Shang Qinghua inwardly cursed the teacher-disciple pair for both being equally shameless, and took up his brush with a flourish: “Figure it out yourself!”

Shang Qinghua: “Has the shou ever actively attempted seduction before?”

Shen Qingqiu pointed at himself: “Me? Do I look like that kind of person to you?”

Shang Qinghua mumbled: “Hard to say. To be honest you looked pretty straight, too...”

Shang Qinghua: “Where do you like your partner to kiss?”

Luo Binghe said: “The forehead, fingers, lips, anywhere.”

Shen Qingqiu helplessly said: “Actually...this boy can’t kiss, he only knows how to bite.”

Shang Qinghua: “What is the best way to please your partner during (beeeeep)?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Praise him for making progress?”

Luo Binghe said: “Not crying.”

Shang Qinghua’s brush flew across the page, absent-mindedly adding: “Boss Shen sure has low standards.”

Shang Qinghua: “What do you tend to think during the act?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Who put out this questionnaire? Do they have any experience at all? At a time like that nothing’s going to go through your head besides white noise.”

Shang Qinghua: “Do you remove your own clothes or does your partner help undress you?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “If I let him do it, I wouldn’t have many clothes left to wear.”

Luo Binghe attempted to justify himself: “Shizun, how could I control my strength at a time like that?”

Shang Qinghua: “About how many times a night?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “How many times? No, I mean, is there really anyone who’d go to the effort of counting this?”

Shang Qinghua turned a page, but before he could ask another question, Luo Binghe – who’d long-since lost his patience – smiled grimly: “If you really want to know, all we have to do is count today, and come back to tell Shang...shishu afterwards!”

Shang Qinghua: “Last question! It’s really the last question! What is the one thing you most want to say to each other?”

The teacher-disciple pair exchanged glances.

Shen Qingqiu waved his fan as he said: “That’s it for today Binghe, we’re going home to eat.”

Luo Binghe obediently replied: “En, alright.” He threw an arm around Shen Qingqiu’s shoulders, kicked the door open and left. A great gust of wind entered the room, blowing Shang Qinghua’s just-written questionnaire pile all over the floor. The corner of Shang Qinghua’s mouth twitched incessantly. He squatted down, picked up a few pages, and after a long time, suddenly fell to his knees.

“Cucumber bro you traitor...that wasn’t ‘the one thing you most want to say to each other’ at all! My quest...aaaahhh Boss System don’t be so quick

to deduct points, there was only one question left that I hadn't finished asking is all! *Cucumber bro did me dirty!*"

Marriage Chronicle

Shen Qingqiu, waving his folding fan, walked a ways before suddenly realising that the person who'd been stuck to him like glue this whole time had unaccountably stopped keeping pace with him. Upon turning his head, he saw Luo Binghe stopped in his tracks, lost in thought as he stared at something.

Shen Qingqiu found this odd: "Binghe? What are you looking at?"

The call brought Luo Binghe back to his senses with a slight jolt, and he said: "Shizun, I..."

Shen Qingqiu was even more baffled, walked back, and gazed off in the direction Luo Binghe had been looking. What he saw was a large number of people bustling excitedly in front of an average-sized residence, crowded around a pair of newlyweds dressed all in red with their faces hidden from sight, all heading noisily into the courtyard.

Because the street was noisy with people to begin with, he actually hadn't noticed that there was a pair of newlyweds holding a wedding over here.

There were two little serving girls standing in front of the house as well, carrying baskets and offering celebratory sweets to passersby on the street, their voices clear and loud: "Taste a bit of happiness!" "Taste a bit of happiness!"

Shen Qingqiu's first thought was a very fun-spoiling one: "Could it be that this household is plagued by goblins?"

But whichever way he looked at it, he couldn't see anything wrong; just when he was about to ask, Luo Binghe walked up on his own. The two little serving girls had never seen such a handsome man, and upon looking up were both stupefied by his appearance, forgetting even to offer their candy. It was Luo Binghe himself who calmly took it from their hands.

Having obtained their wedding sweets, a perfectly satisfied Luo Binghe returned to Shen Qingqiu's side and said: "Let's go, Shizun."

Shen Qingqiu nodded his head.

The two walked a ways side by side; Luo Binghe was still playing with those two round, red paper-wrapped wedding sweets in his hand, and turned his head to look again at the jubilant, bustling residence, still with that thoughtful look on his face.

Shen Qingqiu said: "Is something wrong with that house?"

Luo Binghe was jolted out of his thoughts, saying: "What is Shizun referring to, by 'something wrong'?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "If there's nothing wrong, then why have you been paying so much attention to it? It isn't as if you're fond of sweets."

Luo Binghe suddenly understood his concern, and smiled: "It's nothing, just enjoying a bit of the cheerful atmosphere."

The way he said it was surprisingly earnest. Shen Qingqiu couldn't help smiling slightly as he replied: "This teacher does not remember you believing in such things. Could it be that you've never seen a couple get married before?"

Luo Binghe said: "I actually have seen it before, but I'd never considered that this sort of thing would ever have anything to do with me."

Shen Qingqiu found that odd: "You never once thought that you might marry some young lady in the future?"

Luo Binghe shook his head. Shen Qingqiu found this greatly unrealistic, and said: "Truly? Not even the slightest passing thought?"

Whatever you might say about him, Luo Binghe—the *previous* Luo Binghe was a harem protagonist, how could he not have looked forward to fine prospects in his future at all? Plus if you were to follow Airplane Shooting Towards the Sky's shitty tendencies, this "fine prospect" wouldn't just be

marrying a beautiful girl, but should instead involve simultaneously marrying beautiful girls numbering at least in the triple digits—of course, Shen Qingqiu knew that the current Luo Binghe wouldn't, but how could he not have even thought about it before, or thought that it was none of his concern?

Luo Binghe considered the question for a moment, then said: "If we're talking about the past, then I really never thought about it before."

Shen Qingqiu took note of that "past" mention, and teased without thinking: "Then do you mean to say, this matter concerns you now?"

Contrary to expectation, this time, Luo Binghe didn't reply.

After that scene, it could be his imagination, but Shen Qingqiu kept feeling as if Luo Binghe these past few days had been particularly energetic at night, and his elderly waist, butt, and legs had been suffering more than usual.

Once every two months the two of them would return to Cangqiong Mountain to "visit the family"; because of this, nobody on the mountain was surprised upon seeing them again, all enthusiastically munching on dragonbone cantaloupe seeds as they came up to surround them.

Qi Qingqi said: "Oh? Who's this? Isn't this the peak lord of Qingjing Peak? You're back again? What a rare visitor!"

Shen Qingqiu: "That's right."

Qi Qingqi: "Have you brought any demon tribe local specialties this time around? Aside from that one beside you."

Shen Qingqiu thought to himself: "Luo Binghe clearly grew up on human realm soil, I'm pretty sure he doesn't count as a demon tribe local specialty." He said: "Even if I did none of you would want to eat them, so I simply didn't bring any."

Suddenly he saw a young man dangling something from his hand as he walked over, and said: “Liu-shidi it’s good to see you again, I...*what is this!*”

Liu Qingge expressionlessly caught the dying creature Shen Qingqiu threw back at him, and tossed it over again: “A short-haired monster. To eat.”

Shen Qingqiu threw it over to him again, saying: “I’m not eating that! We’re still raising the one you gave me a few years ago, it’s become impossibly large and spends every day gnawing at the bamboo on Qingjing Peak. I don’t want another one!”

The two tossed it back and forth for quite a while, the short-haired monster screeching incessantly as it flew through the air, before Wei Qingwei said: “Shen-shixiong, I think you should take it – if this pair of short-haired monsters are a male and a female, you can put them together, and they might start gnawing at each other instead of the bamboo.”

“And what do I do if the two are both male?”

“.....”

In the past at times like this, back when Liu Qingge first walked over, Luo Binghe would have begun emitting an ice-cold aura, with all sorts of mocking and ridicule as he let loose his hostility; but today he seemed to be a little perturbed, standing totally silent by Shen Qingqiu’s side, and Shen Qingqiu found himself contrarily feeling somewhat unaccustomed to it.

Not only was he unused to it, but everyone else was too. The fellows of Cangqiong Mountain sect could chat up a storm whenever they got together, the tiniest trifle able to have them in chaos for half the day, yet today’s greetings were especially short; normally they’d also plan a time to all go to Zuixian Peak for dinner, but seemingly due to the strange atmosphere around Luo Binghe, nobody brought it up today. Before they all broke up, Qi Qingqi pulled Shen Qingqiu off to the side, and said: “What’s wrong with your disciple?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “What do you mean, what’s wrong?”

Qi Qingqi said: “Your disciple today is, erm...did you guys have a fight?”

Shen Qingqiu said: “No.”

The expression on his face stayed calm and collected, but the hand gripping his fan tightened just a bit.

Qi Qingqi said: “Oh, if you didn’t that’s good – I just get the feeling your disciple’s acting weird today, like he’s stewing over something.”

Shen Qingqiu had noticed this as well.

The whole way back to Bamboo Cottage, Luo Binghe continued to be in this odd state.

Shen Qingqiu had just sat down on the bamboo bed, when suddenly there was a loud noise from the doorway. He rushed out from behind the screen to find Luo Binghe prone on the floor, with Ming Fan, Ning Yingying and the rest all standing dumbstruck to one side.

Shen Qingqiu went to help up Luo Binghe, saying: “What happened?”

Luo Binghe said: “Noth...” Before he could finish, Ming Fan loudly spoke up: “Shizun, Luo Binghe tripped over the doorsill!”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

Luo Binghe tossed a glare at Ming Fan, who shrank back in terror. Shen Qingqiu hurriedly said: “Everyone go back to your dorms, and prepare for tomorrow’s morning reading.”

After shutting the door to Bamboo Cottage, Luo Binghe silently sat down by the table. Shen Qingqiu looked at the red patch on his forehead from smacking it against the floor, let out a sigh, and said: “What’s been the matter with you these past few days?”

Luo Binghe continued to stay silent.

Shen Qingqiu said: “Be good and stay in your seat, this teacher will get you a hot compress.”

He turned and headed to the basin, but just when he’d wrung out a strip of cloth, he suddenly heard a loud noise from behind him. Alarmed, he turned his head, only to see that Luo Binghe had ended up on the floor again.

Shen Qingqiu had incomprehension written all over his face, and worried that his inability to stand or sit properly might be due to dizziness, rushed over to his side: “Are you...”

To his surprise, right upon rushing over, Luo Binghe reached out and grabbed his hand, saying: “Shizun, will you marry me?”

A crack appeared in Shen Qingqiu’s expression.

Luo Binghe noticed the abnormal look on his face, and hurriedly said: “Shizun, if you don’t want to be married to me, I can be married to you instead!”

Seeing Shen Qingqiu’s lack of reply, Luo Binghe’s voice turned wooden, and he repeated his question: “Shizun, would you be willing, to...”

The trembling of his Adam’s apple grew worse by the moment, his voice trembling slightly along with it, as he said: “...get married...with me?”

Shen Qingqiu still hadn’t said a word, and the light in Luo Binghe’s eyes gradually began to die out.

After a long time, he said in a hoarse voice: “If Shizun isn’t willing, I...I...”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Wait.”

“You...” He went silent for quite a long time, before saying: “So you, these past few days, all your strange behavior, was because, you wanted to say this to me?”

Luo Binghe gazed fixedly at him, and carefully nodded twice.

Shen Qingqiu felt strangely as if the phrase that followed was rather difficult to voice: “Could this be considered you...asking...asking?”

Luo Binghe took the initiative to help him say it: “Your disciple is asking, for Shizun’s hand in marriage.”

Shen Qingqiu: “.....”

He sat by the table and buried his face in his right hand, not knowing what – if anything – he should say or do.

He ought to find this absurd. Although he and Luo Binghe had been in a confirmed relationship for all this time, he’d never considered that Luo Binghe would really, how should he say it...propose to him, in this manner.

Heavens, proposing, using this word on a young man like him, this was really too frightening!

Plus, in his attempt to say these few words he’d probably practiced countless times in secret, he’d gotten so nervous he ended up entirely out of character, acting odd, unable to so much as speak, even tripping over the threshold when stepping through a door, and to top it off he stuttered upon finally saying it.

And yet, he actually didn’t have the slightest urge to ridicule him, nor did he want to verbally reject while his body told the truth—that’s right, Shen Qingqiu realized to his alarm, the scariest thing about this, was that he was actually, just a little, happy.

Luo Binghe was clearly still nervous; his Adam’s apple bobbed, and seeing Shen Qingqiu remove his face from his hands, seemingly wanting to speak, immediately said: “Shizun if you don’t want to, then there’s no need to answer this question of mine! Even, even if you don’t answer me I’ll understand what you mean. You absolutely mustn’t say it aloud, it’s not a problem, if you find it troublesome you can just ignore me and be done with it. You can think of it as me telling a joke, it’s fine...”

Shen Qingqiu was so angry he swung his fan at Luo Binghe's head with a *whap*, saying: "Fine my ass!"

Having gotten a fan strike to the head, Luo Binghe rubbed the spot, blinking; he clearly didn't understand why he'd been hit. And Shen Qingqiu was angered beyond belief by the innocent look on his face.

Just now he'd been feeling secretly happy, but then the next moment this boy had to come out with a "It's nothing, no need to answer me, just pretend I was joking"!

Shen Qingqiu was made abruptly indignant by that last line, swinging his arm to deliver another blow with the fan: "Is this the kind of thing you can joke about!?"

Luo Binghe obediently took the beating, then said in an apologetic tone: "I was wrong..."

Shen Qingqiu said: "Of course you were wrong! To think this teacher was almost about to accept you just now!"

"I..." Luo Binghe was going to apologize again, when he suddenly froze, then cautiously asked: "Shizun, what did you say?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "Nothing at all."

Luo Binghe turned anxious: "Shizun!"

Shen Qingqiu let out a sigh, not speaking, and raised a hand to motion for Luo Binghe to approach.

Luo Binghe went as signalled, only to see Shen Qingqiu motion towards him again; being beyond familiar with his bodily movements, he was able to understand his meaning with no need for verbal commands, and obediently poured a cup of wine. After that, Shen Qingqiu took the wine pot, poured himself a cup as well, and had Luo Binghe take up his own cup.

Luo Binghe said: "Shizun, this...?"

Shen Qingqiu picked up the cup he'd poured himself, and wound it around Luo Binghe's arm.

In an instant, a humongous burst of vitality and radiance burst out upon Luo Binghe's handsome face.

His hand was shaking so hard he could barely hold his cup, his arm trembling to a frightening extent. Shen Qingqiu's arm was intertwined with his, and was practically about to spill the wine in his cup all over his chest from being shaken along with him.

Luo Binghe said: "I-I-I thought...I thought..."

Shen Qingqiu expressionlessly said: "You thought you would certainly be rejected, is that right."

Luo Binghe: "....."

Shen Qingqiu said: "That's why you said you didn't want to hear my answer. Because you thought you would certainly be rejected."

Luo Binghe said: "...I'm so anxious."

He looked straight into Shen Qingqiu's eyes as he spoke: "Shizun, that day, didn't you ask whether I really hadn't thought of that sort of thing before? I really never had."

Shen Qingqiu said: "You're allowed to."

What's wrong with thinking about it, it's not as if thinking about it is a crime, and besides, what if a little thinking could really make it come true!

Luo Binghe said: "Because when I was little I thought that nobody would like someone like me, so I never imagined that anyone would be willing to have me."

Shen Qingqiu said: "You went off the mark there..."

“Later,” Luo Binghe continued: “I had Shizun. Even though Shizun was clearly already by my side, I still, couldn’t help getting anxious. Thinking about when you would leave me. I didn’t know what to do, I wanted to become stronger, wanted to become better. But I still felt as if that wasn’t enough. I still...couldn’t keep myself from feeling afraid.”

Shen Qingqiu made eye contact with him as well, and after a long time, stroked his head, sighing: “Oh, Binghe.”

Luo Binghe said: “I also don’t know what to do.”

Shen Qingqiu said: “Then do whatever you want to do.”

Two shichen later, the two sat opposite each other on the bed, rustling as they undressed.

Luo Binghe really was deeply obsessed; he’d immediately pulled out two sets of bridegroom outfits from who-knows-where, and started coaxing and pestering Shen Qingqiu to wear one and go another round with him, doing the bows, exchanging wine, consummation, the whole shebang. Shen Qingqiu thought to himself, *after putting on these wedding clothes we’ll still have to take them off again later*, and inwardly found that funny, but ultimately still went along with him.

He’d honestly never imagined that Luo Binghe would actually be quite the traditionalist, a fact which made him feel amused, at the same time that he felt love for the man, and inadvertently he began to treat it seriously as well.

Luo Binghe had stripped halfway out of his own red outfit, before turning his gaze to Shen Qingqiu and losing the ability to move. Shen Qingqiu said: “Binghe? What’s wrong?”

Luo Binghe earnestly said: “Shizun, you look really good in red.”

Shen Qingqiu was fair-skinned, and when dressed in wedding garb, his face reflected a bit of the dark red shade of his clothing, adding some color that made him look unreasonably more dazzling than usual. The gaze with

which Luo Binghe looked at him was also more infatuated than usual; Shen Qingqiu was taken slightly off-guard by this, and cleared his throat. Although Luo Binghe always tended to talk like this, he still felt rather embarrassed.

He said in a reserved tone: “You also look very...good in red.”

Far from just good-looking, he didn’t believe any girl out there could look at a groom this handsome and manage not to cry and beg to be taken as his wife. He was going to give another couple compliments when Luo Binghe pulled out a length of snow-white silk fabric, and devoutly spread it out on the bed.

“.....” An ominous feeling welled up within Shen Qingqiu’s mind as he asked: “What are you doing?”

Luo Binghe replied with embarrassment: “Your disciple heard that this is a custom for any newly married couple’s wedding night...”

Shen Qingqiu felt goosebumps rising all over before he’d even finished speaking.

He didn’t mind any other customs or traditions, but to apply this particular tradition to him was incredibly weird!

Luo Binghe hurriedly said: “Shizun, your disciple swears he won’t really make you bleed!” His face reddened as he continued: “I just want to follow every step in the ceremony as closely as possible, like a real husband and wife...”

Shen Qingqiu sweatdropped, and said: “Such unnecessarily elaborate rules, you might as well forget them.” He made to remove that white cloth, only for his eyes to meet Luo Binghe’s tearful gaze.

The one thing he couldn’t stand was for Luo Binghe to look at him like this, making it impossible to go through with the action regardless of the circumstances. After a good while, he helplessly squeezed out a few words:

“But according to what you’ve said, even if you place this, it won’t be of any use...”

Luo Binghe said in a hurt tone: “But, if we drop this important item, this important step, how can it still count as consummation?”

“.....” Shen Qingqiu said: “Alright alright, if you really insist, go ahead and place it.”

Luo Binghe immediately embraced him, burying his head in the crook of his neck, and hummed: “Shizun, you’re so good to your disciple.”

Shen Qingqiu forced himself to stay calm: “So-so, I suppose...”

As they talked, he got the feeling the hands embracing him had started heading in an inappropriate direction.

In a few quick movements Luo Binghe had removed all of Shen Qingqiu’s garments and left him totally bare from head to toe, leaving only a pair of snow-white socks on his feet.

Although this teacher-disciple pair had already done it countless times, as far as someone with a personality like Shen Qingqiu’s was concerned, no matter how many times they did it there were still some parts of his pride that just couldn’t be overcome. As he watched Luo Binghe’s body press down upon him, Shen Qingqiu had a moment of slight nervousness, turning his head as he closed his eyes, and felt a pair of hands land upon the inner skin of his thigh, making to spread his legs apart. At first there was still a bit of resistance, but it wasn’t long before they obediently parted.

A finger was brought to his lips, and Luo Binghe said in a soft voice: “Shizun...”

Shen Qingqiu opened his mouth slightly, allowing Luo Binghe to send the finger inside, and delicately licked it. Because he still had his eyes closed, the feeling of that slender finger in his warm mouth teasingly turning his soft tongue was even more distinct. One finger wasn’t enough, and after a moment, a second was squeezed in. Seeing Shen Qingqiu try his best to

take them deeper and get them wetter in his mouth, Luo Binghe's gaze shone, and he pulled the fingers out, stretching them below Shen Qingqiu's body.

After some tender care, that tight-shut, lightly-colored hole in the hidden valley between Shen Qingqiu's legs became dripping wet and shiny with liquid, looking soft to the extreme. Luo Binghe covered his body with his own, careful not to crush him. Shen Qingqiu could feel a hard and hot round tip press against the most hidden part of his lower body, his hole taking in less than half of that sinister object's head, and could even feel the powerful pulsing of the veins upon it.

Luo Binghe said in a deep voice: "Shizun...I'm going to come in."

Shen Qingqiu had kept his eyes closed throughout this entire process, and ever-so-slightly nodded his head; Luo Binghe's hands pressed against his waist as he sent himself forward.

In an instant, Shen Qingqiu was unable to keep himself from letting out an unbearably pained groan, and lifted his hands to grab at the arms grasping his waist.

Although he'd been mentally prepared for this, and had relaxed his body as much as he was able, it didn't change the fact that he couldn't handle what he couldn't handle, and Luo Binghe's thing didn't make it halfway in before getting stuck tight.

The person beneath him was clearly warm and soft inside, but that circle of flesh around the hole's entrance simply refused to cooperate, wringing him tight and refusing to let him go deeper – as such, Luo Binghe freed one hand, and began to gently fondle Shen Qingqiu's front end. Shen Qingqiu's male appendage received a burst of pleasure at the care it was being given, and as soon as Luo Binghe felt that he'd relaxed slightly, he took the opportunity to continue advancing inwards.

The feeling of having someone open their way into him was painful to an extreme, and Shen Qingqiu was unable to keep from arching his back,

inadvertently sending the two pale points on his chest up before the person above him; Luo Binghe's free hand then moved to knead at his nipples.

As a man, Shen Qingqiu never really liked having a place like that played with – his mind filled to the brim with a strange sense of embarrassment, and his arms trembled as they made to push away, but the moment Luo Binghe's head came down, a peculiar feeling of wetness and painful swelling arose from his right breast; in a flash Shen Qingqiu's face turned red enough to bleed, and he hurriedly tried to push at Luo Binghe's head. To his surprise, Luo Binghe took advantage of this flash of flustered distraction to sink farther, suddenly burying the entirety of his length into the spot between his legs.

Shen Qingqiu felt as if his entire body had been split in two halves by a flesh blade, an explosion of pain arising from his lower regions.

This pain had its origins in Luo Binghe's excessively huge length; when it pushed into that corridor, crushing the inner walls all the way as it went, it gave him the mistaken feeling of having an arm shoved into his lower body, and that massively plump tip was the fist, making him want nothing more than to faint dead away. But when Luo Binghe skillfully brushed against that certain spot on Shen Qingqiu's inner walls, his cries of pain changed their tune once again – Luo Binghe held onto his waist, ferociously slamming against that spot, and after hitting it a number of times, the flesh of his hole, just like the tensed muscles of his buttocks, finally softened.

Once it had softened, that spot below Shen Qingqiu became especially lovable as well. The corridor was deep and long, warm and wet; one could push deep into the heart of it, and it was powerless to resist. From Luo Binghe's angle, he just had to lower his head to see what Shen Qingqiu looked like beneath him. Eyes shut, brows furrowed slightly, it was difficult to discern whether it was pain or pleasure that tormented him. His thighs were parted, a pair of clean, straight legs folded to his chest, his snow-white socks yet to be removed, still properly worn on his feet.

This made Luo Binghe excited to an extreme.

Shen Qingqiu gripped the sheets with both hands, gritting his teeth at every blow which Luo Binghe's penis made within his belly, each one making him fear that this was going to jumble his innards from all the bumping around – but there was nothing he could do besides proactively wrap his legs around the other's waist, adjusting his own rhythm as he catered to Luo Binghe, loosening and tightening, taking him in and out. The soft flesh of his hole burned with the pain of having been torn, and he couldn't help saying: "Sss...Binghe, go easy..."

He was certain he'd started bleeding anyway.

Luo Binghe lowered his head to look, and froze entirely in place. Sure enough, a thread of dark red trickled down from where the two men were linked; it touched upon the snow-white cloth, the bright color spreading out like the scattered petals of a peach blossom.

It was quite a long while before Luo Binghe finally mumbled: "Shizun, I'm sorry...I said I wouldn't really let you bleed, and yet I still..."

Shen Qingqiu was in the middle of getting fucked within an inch of his life, and didn't have the strength to bother raising himself to see what things looked like down there; besides, he didn't need to look to know that it would most certainly be a terrifying sight to behold. What broke him more was the fact that while Luo Binghe was verbally apologizing, the slapping motions down below hadn't slowed down in the slightest. Shen Qingqiu was getting jolted up and down with how hard he was slamming into him, his bottom simultaneously numb and hurting, as he said: "Don't...don't..."

Luo Binghe said: "Don't what?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "Don't call me shizun..."

Getting called shizun when he was getting his butt spanked black and blue made him feel as if he'd put a little *too much* effort into the whole teacher thing, pouring his blood, sweat and tears into practicing what he preached!

Luo Binghe said: "What should I call you then, if not shizun?"

Shen Qingqiu whimpered: "...Anything...whatever you want...could you slow doooooown...Binghe slow down..."

Luo Binghe wrapped his arms around his waist, exerted all his strength into another couple thrusts, then said, panting for breath: "Alright, then...Shizun if you call me something different, I'll slow down!"

Lifted up like this, Shen Qingqiu could feel that humongous thing invading even deeper into his body, and said: "What...do I...call you?"

Luo Binghe stopped moving for a moment, hugging him, then said in a very reserved yet blushing manner: "W-we're consummating tonight, so what do you think you should call me, Shizun..."

"....."

Whaaaaat theeee heeeeck!

Shen Qingqiu immediately shook his head. Frantically shook his head.

Luo Binghe was still elated and expectant: "Shizun, could you try calling me *That?*"

But Shen Qingqiu shut his jaw tight, refusing to open it even when tears began seeping out the corners of his eyes. Seeing him so extremely resistant, Luo Binghe's eyes immediately filled with tears.

He said with dismay: "Shizun, we're already like this, and you...why do you still refuse..."

His voice sounded exceedingly sad. Shen Qingqiu inwardly told himself he'd never fall for this trick again, but Luo Binghe's tears really were a miraculous thing which could be summoned at will, and like a downpour of rain, began to fall.

Luo Binghe said: "Just one time, if Shizun isn't willing, say it just this once, I'll remember it, and then I'll never pressure you on it again, isn't that okay?"

Shen Qingqiu was getting his face muddled with tears up above, while his lower half was being repeatedly flogged by that thing down there – it was practically hellish.

How am I supposed to say no, with you like this?

In the end, Shen Qingqiu still decided to compromise one more time.

However, there seriously, absolutely wouldn't be a next time!

He sucked in a labored breath of air, and with great difficulty called out in a tiny voice: "...Dearest husband..."

Luo Binghe's eyes immediately lit up, and he said: "Shizun, what did you say?"

Shen Qingqiu said: "Dearest hus..." The latter half of the word was quiet as a mosquito's buzz; he sneakily swallowed it down, and changed tack to plead: "Binghe you...could you please slow down..."

But there was no way Luo Binghe was going to let him muddle his way through so easily: "Shizun, say it a little louder, I-I-I didn't hear clearly!"

His blood was boiling with how overexcited he was, causing the extent of his movements to grow greater along with it; with a few ruthless thrusts, Shen Qingqiu felt all his organs getting jumbled into a mess, and finally completely surrendered.

Shen Qingqiu's ten fingers clutched weakly at his hair as he sobbed: "... Uhh...aah...dearest, dearest husband, I'm begging you, please stop, I can't take any more...I really can't bear it..."

Before he could finish crying, Luo Binghe lifted Shen Qingqiu bodily into his arms, sitting him down in his embrace and piercing into his deepest depths, one hand supporting his bottom, the other wrapped around his waist, bouncing up and down as he said, delighted beyond belief: "My beloved wife..."

...SPAAAARE MEEEEEE!

Upon hearing this form of address, Shen Qingqiu was so embarrassed that his entire body from top to bottom – including his buttocks – tensed, and he brokenly said: “Fuck, shut up! ...I don’t want...don’t shout things like that!”

But Luo Binghe didn’t listen to his protests at all, compelling Shen Qingqiu to take his penis in and out as he hugged him, quietly saying: “You’re so good to me, Shizun...I’ve always wanted you to call me that, could you say it a few more times for me?”

A faint trickle of warm liquid flowed across his nape; he didn’t need to look to know that Luo Binghe’s eyes were definitely brimming with tears of excitement right now.

He really couldn’t handle him at all.

The two men rolled around in a tangle of limbs, their bodies soaked with sticky hot sweat. Luo Binghe’s waist and back were sweaty to the point that Shen Qingqiu’s legs almost couldn’t keep hold, constantly slipping downwards, so he had no choice but to wrap his arms tightly around his neck, closing the gap between their bodies even further as he pressed up against him, peppering Luo Binghe with passionate kisses in encouragement.

Sensing his cooperation, Luo Binghe was like a child who’d just been fed candy, so happy his eyes even lit up, his lower body exerting even more effort than before. The hard and protruding umbrella-shaped head repeatedly crushed Shen Qingqiu’s long-suffering inner walls, grinding until he finally surrendered, thoroughly abandoning the effort to grit his teeth as he cried out in a voice that was filled with equal parts pain and pleasure.

Luo Binghe absolutely loved this sound – he loved every sound Shen Qingqiu produced. As Shen Qingqiu’s consciousness began to fade, he could still hear him saying quietly in his ear: “Shizun...call me one more time...”

Upon waking the next morning, Shen Qingqiu's first thought, was that he wanted to kill himself by knocking his head against the body of that extremely well-developed short-haired monster back at Qingjing Peak.

He could honestly swear that he'd lost his entire life's worth of face last night.

There could never be another more humiliating moment than that!

Luo Binghe lay next to him, full of vitality; as soon as he noticed Shen Qingqiu was awake, he seized the opportunity to kiss him. Shen Qingqiu had the suspicion that he hadn't slept at all, just lay there staring at him all night long, so pretending to be asleep would have been useless. He tried to say something, but his throat was unbelievably hoarse, and the only sounds he made were a few indistinct syllables.

Luo Binghe gave him a kiss, seeming to be perfectly contented as he said: "Shizun, you rest up, I'll go make breakfast for you."

He was just about to get up and dressed, when Shen Qingqiu said a few unclear words – Luo Binghe replied: "What?"

By now Shen Qingqiu's face had already turned quite red, and with Luo Binghe's question, the blush became noticeably stronger. He stammered: "...I-it's nothing."

Luo Binghe wanted to relentlessly pursue this topic, but he forcibly restrained himself, and said: "I'm off to make breakfast then."

He attentively covered Shen Qingqiu with a light quilt, turned and climbed off the bed, then began picking up his clothes and slowly putting them on.

Shen Qingqiu sat up on the bed, draped in the clothes he'd pulled over him, staring at Luo Binghe's tall, attractive figure from behind; he stared fixedly for quite a while, before suddenly – almost as if possessed – muttering: "...Dearest husband?"

Luo Binghe's figure went completely motionless.

It was as if his entire body had been nailed to the floor; turning at an extremely slow speed, he said: “Shizun, what did you call me just now?”

Shen Qingqiu gaped, speechless.

“Eh?”

He wanted to try to explain something, but there wasn’t really anything to explain: “T-this teacher...er, I, uh, hm...”

That’s why they say you shouldn’t go around putting up flags, he’d only just said he couldn’t lose any more face than he already had, and then he immediately went and did just that!

This time, he hadn’t been pushed into mindless ecstasy by Luo Binghe, neither had he carelessly given in to Luo Binghe’s tears, so none of his excuses were of any use. In other words, he suddenly just, for some unexplainable reason, wanted to try calling him that, is all.

But after calling, he then became so embarrassed that he wanted more than anything to dig a hole in the ground and climb into it, or smash his head against a piece of tofu until he died.

In the end, Shen Qingqiu finally gave up the explanations, despairingly lay back down, and said in a tone of forced calm: “This teacher is hungry.”

Luo Binghe smiled and lay back down next to him, saying: “Shizun, I’m hungry too.”

“If you’re hungry then go cook something...”

It probably wasn’t a big deal, if they were a little late with breakfast on occasion.