"You're bullsh*tting me, aren't you? Chu Tianfan? Screw you!"

Even though many years had passed, the guards at the Chu Sect still jumped a little when they heard Chu Tianfan's name.

It did not matter that they knew the other party was bluffing.

To those at the Chu Sect, their fear of Chu Tianfan had seeped into their bones.

"You don't believe me?"

Ye Fan and the others were not upset with the insignificant members of the sect.

On the contrary, Gaius and Owen exchanged looks before bursting into laughter.

They were like gods who had descended into the mortal realm to be amused.

"I'll be damned if I believe a word you said! Now scram! Back then, Chu Tianfan was the number one Supreme in the Sky Ranking. Now you expect me to believe that a brat like you is him? On top of that, Chu Tianfan is already dead! How can a dead man be standing here talking to us? What? Did the man crawl out of his grave?"

The guards at the foot of Mount Chumen got upset and cursed at Ye Fan and the others, telling them to get lost.

"Hahaha!"

Gaius, along with the others, laughed out loud once again.

The men seemed utterly nonchalant as they let out their hearty laughter.

Back then, going up against the Chu Sect was like walking on thin ice.

Hence, none of them had expected that they would revisit the sect years later with such confidence.

After all, those who could put up a fight were not around to defend the sect.

Even the head of elders, the only one watching over the Chu Sect, had already been beaten to a pulp by Ye Fan.

"What are you laughing at? Get out of our sight now! Do you have a death wish or something? If you don't leave now, I'll have no choice but to— M-Mr. Tang?"

Enraged by Gaius and the others, the guards had rolled up their sleeves and were about to

get physical when Gaius sent an unconscious elderly man their way with a kick.

The man, weighing more than a hundred pounds, landed on the ground with a loud thud.

After getting a good look at the unconscious elderly, the sect members widened their eyes so much that their eyeballs almost dropped out.

"H-How is this possible? Mr. Tang is one of the top ten most powerful Supreme in the Sky Ranking. Who on earth can even hurt him? C-Could it be..."

As though they had realized something, the guards turned to stare fearfully at the person who had claimed to be Chu Tianfan.

At that moment, an insane thought flashed through their minds.

"C-Could it be... A-Are you really Chu Tianfan?"

Fear-stricken, the guards started muttering to themselves.

Ye Fan and the others did not respond to the guards. Instead, they laughed while dragging Tang Xian behind them as they strolled through the gate to Mount Chumen.

At that point, none of the guards dared to stop Ye Fan and his companions.

After all, even Tang Xian, the head of elders, had been defeated.

The guards were convinced that they would not make a difference even if they were to sacrifice themselves. We'll just be cannon fodder!

After watching Ye Fan and the others disappear from sight, they finally caved.

The guards collapsed to the ground as courage drained from them.

"God... T-The devil really has returned, hasn't he?"

Even though Chu Tianfan had disappeared for three years, the legend of him was still alive and well on Mount Chumen.

After all, for nearly a thousand years since the Chu Sect was founded, they had only been chased up the mountain once, and it was the work of one person.

That person was none other than Chu Tianfan.

Even though not everyone in the sect had seen Ye Fan, they had heard of the name Chu Tianfan.

Naturally, when Chu Tianfan revisited the Chu Sect, the sect members thought they had seen a ghost.

Just like that, Ye Fan and his companion sauntered onto Mount Chumen, for he was already more than familiar with the place.

First, he went to the Tangs and threw Tang Xian before the family.

"Grandpa!"

"Granduncle!"

"What happened?"

"Who did this to you?"

"Who are you people?"

"Who the heck are you?"

The Tangs were having breakfast when Ye Fan and the others arrived.

When Tang Xian was thrown before them, the Tangs were aghast.

However, that did not bother Ye Fan, who immediately turned around and was ready to leave after delivering the elderly man.

"Hold it right there! You're not a member of the Chu Sect, are you? You're not leaving until you explain everything!"

The strong men of the family quickly surrounded Ye Fan.

With a brush of his sleeve, Ye Fan sent the men flying, and they vomited blood.

"Haha! Do you think you weaklings are a match for the Dragon Master? If it weren't for a certain someone, he would've wiped out your entire family!"

Nobody knew the reason behind Ye Fan's mercy toward the Tangs, but Gaius had a pretty good idea why.

After all, Gaius had experienced the war in the rainforest first-hand all those years ago.

The man had been suspicious of the relationship between Ye Fan and Tang Yun for a while.

And what happened afterward only confirmed his suspicion.

"Huh? What do you mean, Gaius? Care to explain?"

Even though Owen and the others were not

nosy by nature, they were curious about matters regarding the Dragon Master.

In response, Gaius simply chuckled. "My lips are sealed..."

Ye Fan glared at the man in annoyance before turning away.

Before leaving, he reminded the Tangs, "If you don't want the old man to die, you'd better get him treated soon."

With that, Ye Fan led his group away, leaving the Tangs panicking and confused.

"I remember now. Those people... They're the b*stards from the Dragon God Hall!" Suddenly, one of the Tangs gasped in realization. A few of them had participated in the interrogation of Gaius and the others.

"Dragon Master?"

"One of those b*stards called that young man Dragon Master. Does that mean h-he's the head of the Dragon God Hall, Chu Tianfan?"

"How is that possible? It can't be!"

When the thought spread, the Tangs almost lost their minds.

However, they quickly denied the truth not long after.

"He's awake! Grandpa's awake!" shouted someone in the family suddenly.

The Tangs hurried over to surround Tang Xian, who had already regained consciousness.

After realizing where he was, Tang Xian immediately ordered, "Q-Quickly! Inform Old Master that... C-Chu Tianfan's returned..."

What?

As if struck by lightning, the Tangs froze in place like statues. They were so shocked that their pupils immediately dilated.

That was actually Chu Tianfan?

After leaving the Tang residence, Ye Fan led Gaius and the others along the mountain path toward the heights.

He only stopped when he reached a manor.

A huge plaque with the inscription "The Chu Residence" was at the gate.

Ye Fan paused for a long while there, so Gaius and the others kept unusually quiet.

They knew that the place they were looking at was of great significance to the Dragon Master.

After the long silence, Ye Fan began to move forward and enter the Chu residence.

Even though Ye Fan had been kicked out of the Chu family back then like some kind of unwanted pet, he remained true to himself.

He had finally returned to the Chu residence and was determined to enter the house with his head held high. No one can stop me now.

"Hahaha! I bet you condescending Chus didn't expect to see Chu Tianfan return!" shouted Gaius before laughing heartily.

Owen, standing just beside Gaius, immediately slapped the man in the face. "What does the Dragon Master's homecoming have to do with you? What the heck were you shouting for?"

"I was just excited for the man," responded Gaius with a chuckle.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Instead of responding to Gaius' jesting, Ye Fan simply entered the house he both missed and hated.

To the others, Ye Fan walking around the house felt like a victory lap.

However, only the man himself knew how much hardship he had had to endure to get from Jiangdong to the Chu residence.

Hence, Ye Fan was not elated like Gaius and the others.

When he stepped onto the property once again, his heart was heavy.

"Hold it right there! Who are you? What are you doing here? How dare you trespass the Chu residence!"

Like what had happened at the Tangs', Ye Fan and his companions got stopped by the guards not long after they entered the place.

Ye Fan glanced at the guards before stating calmly, "I'm the abandoned child of the Chus, Chu Tianfan. After much hardship, I'm finally home."

The man's voice was so loud that it echoed throughout the entire residence, alarming everyone in the Chu family.

"What? Chu Tianfan?"

"Who's talking nonsense?"

"I think the voice came from the door."

Nearly a thousand members of the family rushed out of their rooms and gathered at the entrance of the manor.

At first, not many Chus remembered the name "Chu Tianfan."

After all, the man was just an inconspicuous illegitimate child among the countless descendants of the family who later got kicked out.

No one would care about a nobody like that.

However, the Chus remembered him because someone named Chu Tianfan had nearly obliterated the Chu Sect years ago.

Not only did Chu Tianfan make himself known to everyone in the sect, but he also engraved his name into the memories of the women, elderly, and children of the Chu family.

It had been almost three years, which was around a thousand days, since Ye Fan's downfall, so people had stopped mentioning his name.

However, the Chus were still shocked when they heard it once again.

Even though they were convinced that whoever had claimed to be Chu Tianfan was bluffing, most of the Chus hurried over out of curiosity anyway.

"Who was it?"

"Who was it who claimed to be Chu Tianfan just now? Do they have a death wish? Don't they know that name is forbidden in the sect?"

Many of the Chus got unusually upset after hearing the name, so they cursed while searching for the person who seemingly had a death wish.

The place fell into chaos before long.

Suddenly, the crowd parted, giving way to an elderly man accompanied by a handful of people.

"It's Grandpa Shen. He's here!"

Besides Chu Yuan, Chu Shen was the most high-ranking member of the Chu family then.

The elderly man mostly kept to himself, so he rarely handled family affairs personally.

However, since most of the family leaders had left to lead the sect army to war, the burden had temporarily fallen on Chu Shen's shoulders.

"Who was the one talking nonsense just now? Show yourself! You must be in a hurry to go to hell!" roared Chu Shen with a stern face, his deep voice resounding throughout the place.

At that moment, everyone was sure that things would escalate.

All the Chus turned to look at the group near the door with pity.

"What's wrong with saying my own name, Grandpa Shen? Is that nonsense?"

Just when everybody was waiting for someone to apologize and beg for mercy, they heard a soft chuckle.

After many years, Ye Fan had finally shown his handsome face once again to the Chus.

"I-It's you!"

For a moment, the entire world seemed to be muted.

As if someone had paused time, the scene fell dead silent.

Every member of the Chu family had their eyes widened in shock, including Chu Shen, who trembled all over as his pupils contracted.

"C-Chu Tianfan? Y-You're alive? H-How is this possible?"

Chu Shen was shaking so much that he nearly collapsed to the ground.

As for the other Chus, they were just as terrified, if not more. Their faces were as pale as a sheet.

In response to Chu Shen's and the others' questions, Ye Fan simply smiled.

"I know, right? I have no idea why I didn't die back then either. Maybe fate decided that it wasn't done with me just yet; maybe Mr. Yunyang didn't appreciate how you all dishonored our family with your despicable actions, so he gave me a chance to do something about it," stated Ye Fan nonchalantly with a chuckle.

The Chus immediately despaired after listening to the man. It's him! It's really Chu Tianfan! He's returned to exact revenge on us!

"H-Hurry! Go to the Tangs now and get Mr. Tang over here!" ordered Chu Shen, who was so fear-stricken that the color had drained from him as

his lips trembled uncontrollably.

When Owen, Gaius, and the others heard Chu Shen, they cackled.

"Hahaha!"

"Do you seriously think that man can help you?"

"Not even God himself can save you now!"

"Master has already beaten Tang Xian to a pulp!"

"You can cry for help all you want, but you won't get any."

Gaius and the others then continued to laugh at the Chus.

For the longest time, the Chu Sect had given them hell and had made death seem like mercy.

Naturally, Gaius and his companions were glad to see the Chus suffer as they did, and their cackling only served to deepen the family's despair.

Tang Xian, ranked top ten in the Sky Ranking, was the most powerful sect member the Chus had with them then.

Since the man was already taken care of, the

family was at Ye Fan's mercy.

"Quickly! Let's get in formation and kill this b*stard! Since he didn't dare to come here when Chu Yuan was around, I'm sure he's not as powerful as he used to be. If we work together, we might just be able to kill him!" Knowing it would be futile to seek help, Chu Shen decided to take matters into his own hands.

The man then summoned all the capable family members and had them surround Ye Fan with the intention to kill.

"The Chu's Unrivaled Punch!"

"Demonic Slash!"

"Cloud Sun Immortal Army!"

A fierce battle broke out in an instant.

No matter weak or strong, young or old, the Chus were surprisingly united when it came to fighting Ye Fan.

Everyone unleashed their skills in a wellorganized formation.

Like wolves charging at their prey, the Chus were ready to give Ye Fan everything they got.

However, the man did not seem bothered by the

organized assault at all.

With a single palm strike, Ye Fan was able to unleash an incredible amount of power and neutralize all his enemies as if he was effortlessly knocking down a sand castle.

Like a glass shattering upon impact, the Chus' formation was easily broken.

Then, they were sent flying with blood spraying from their mouths.

All that took was one hit, and just like that, Ye Fan had defeated the mightiest and proudest family of his generation.

The man who used to be an illegitimate child had become a king.

The poor boy who was expelled from the Chu family back then had become their undoing.

After shattering the Chus' hope of defeating him, Ye Fan sneered at the family with his chest puffed out.

"Kneel before me, you insects!" roared Ye Fan in a voice as loud as thunder.

The entire Mount Chumen shook violently after Ye Fan's bellow, causing landslides and earthquakes.

As for the Chus, Ye Fan's commanding words had immediately forced them to their knees.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"Y-You b*stard!"

"You betrayed your own people, and now you're bullying us!"

"How dare you make us kneel before you!"

"Chu Yuan will never let you get away with this!"

Mount Chumen was filled with the Chus' curses and complaints.

Yet, because of Ye Fan's assertive voice that echoed throughout the place, the family was forced to bend their knees reluctantly.

At that moment, they felt nothing but shame and anger.

All those outside the Chu residence had quickly headed to the place when they heard the commotion, including the Tangs.

They had sent a large group of fighters to chase down the man after figuring out Ye Fan's identity.

As a result, a large number of warriors had already gathered outside the residence.

However, after discovering that the man was Chu Tianfan, the mighty fighter who had bested Chu Zhengliang on Mount Chumen, none dared

to challenge him.

The group simply cowered at the gate and watched the Chus suffer from afar.

That could not be helped since Ye Fan was too powerful, and none of them wished to die, certainly not for the Chus.

On top of that, they thought it was best for outsiders like them to stay out of the Chus' business.

Naturally, with so many people looking at them, the Chus felt even more humiliated.

They had always been well-respected because of the Chu Sect.

However, because of Ye Fan, they had been forced to get on their knees.

Never had the family been so humiliated since the day they established their clan.

In order to save face, Chu Shen and the others had no choice but to keep cursing and threatening the man.

Ye Fan knew there was only one way to deal with those who remained stubborn in the face of death—a good smacking!

Slap! Slap! Slap!

The man started smacking the Chus like a madman.

Whoever was the loudest would be sent flying the farthest.

Chu Shen and a few other Chus ended up with swollen faces and mouths full of broken teeth.

There was blood all over the place.

After the violent smacking, the Chu residence quickly fell silent.

Every member of the family kept their heads down timidly and dared not utter another word.

Looking at the Chus, Ye Fan approached them with however much he could remember about them.

The first person he went to was Chu Shen.

At that point, the elderly man was already severely injured. All he could do was lie on the ground and turn his bloodied face toward Ye Fan, who sat down beside him.

"This could've been avoided, Grandpa Shen. I didn't want to get physical, you know? After all, those who can actually fight aren't among you

now. If anything, you're just making me look like a bully. I didn't appreciate what you lot said just now, though. Your words reminded me of what happened when I was little. Do you remember how I sneaked into your room for the cake? After you caught me, you had me beaten until my skin was torn apart. You called me a bastard and said that I shouldn't be living under the same roof as you. You even made it clear that you'd rather feed the cake to the dogs than me. To you, I was less than a mutt. Grandpa Shen, I wonder if you've ever thought you'd see this day. Have you ever expected that you'd end up this way?" Ye Fan simply sat there as he casually talked about the past.

Chu Shen, whose face had already turned bright red, remained silent while Ye Fan continued to humiliate him.

"And you! I remember you. I should call you Aunt, right? Back when I was still living at the Chu residence with my mother, your room wasn't far from ours. I remember you had a large Tibetan mastiff. You always deliberately let the dog out so it could attack us because that was fun for you. Once, I got a chicken drumstick from Angie and went home with it. You let the dog out, and it immediately came after me. As soon as my mother saw that, she pulled me into her arms and shielded me with her body, so the dog started tearing the flesh off her back. Even now, her back is still covered

with scars. It's been so many years since. I wonder if that dog of yours is still around, Aunt," uttered Ye Fan calmly with a smile.

He did not remember much about his childhood, but there were certain incidents and people that he would never forget.

"D*mn you, woman!"

"What a ruthless b*tch!"

"Who lets a dog out to attack people for fun?"

"Maniac!"

"Master was just a child then. He had no one but his mother, yet you had no problem bullying someone like that!"

Unlike Ye Fan, Gaius and the others were furious when they heard what had been done to the Dragon Master. Tibetan mastiffs are ferocious dogs that are usually larger than wolves. How is letting a dog like that attack someone just for fun any different from murder?

Enraged, Gaius and his companions stepped forward and kicked the woman to teach her a lesson.

They also suggested throwing her into a cage full of tigers so she would know what it was like

to have her flesh torn off.

"Forget it. That was years ago. I just want to talk to them about the past. If I were anything like them, they'd all be dead by now." Ye Fan gestured for the others to back off, for he was not there for revenge. When one's at the top, many things become trivial. I couldn't care less about petty squabbles.

Just like that, Ye Fan continued to talk to the Chus he knew while the others remained kneeling.

Then, he walked around alone inside the manor and visited the place where he and his mother had used to stay before paying his respects to Chu Yunyang.

At first, Ye Fan thought the cabin where he and his mother had used to live was already gone.

However, when he looked for the cabin, he was surprised to find it exactly where it used to be all those years ago.

Unexpectedly, the cabin was not covered in dust nor surrounded by weeds.

It was as if someone had been staying there and keeping it clean and tidy.

Feeling curious, Ye Fan opened the door to

enter the cabin and was immediately stunned when he saw what it was like inside. The furnishings and items in the cabin were kept exactly the way he remembered.

Everything from his scribbling on the wall and his mother's cross stitches to his notebooks on the table remained where they were years ago.

At that moment, Ye Fan froze in place like a statue.

He felt as though he had traveled back in time and returned to his childhood.

Everything around him was so familiar that it was hard to believe he and his mother had left that place. "How is this possible? How is it that nothing changed here? Even if nobody had stepped inside, this place would've been covered in dust and cobwebs. Somebody must've been keeping it clean. Could it be Han?"

Ye Fan suspected that it was the butler but then changed his mind. Han's been hiding from the Chus. A careful man like him will never risk exposing his identity to do this. Since nobody else has any reason to do this, there's only one explanation. Chu Zhenghong is the one who's been cleaning the cabin and ensuring it stays the way it is!

With that thought in mind, Ye Fan suddenly shuddered.

As though something inside of him had cracked open, the man's eyes began to well up.

At that point, the hate he had bottled up deep inside dissipated almost entirely. It seems that Chu Zhenghong cares about Mother and me after all. Everyone expresses love in their own way, so maybe this is his way of doing it. Still, why didn't he look for us in the past ten years? Why didn't he do anything when Mother and I suffered back then?

Ye Fan had a lot of questions but no answers.

The man then stayed in the cabin and drank some wine until sunset before leaving the place filled with memories of him and his mother.

With the wine bottle in hand, Ye Fan climbed to the top of Mount Chumen, where the air was cold and the wind unforgiving.

Still clinging to life, Chu Zhengliang remained where Ye Fan had left him.

Chu Zhengliang was shocked when he saw Ye Fan.

With his shriveled eyes widened, the fragile man began to tremble violently.

"Y-Y-You..." As much as he wanted to speak, all Chu Zhengliang managed to do was repeat the same word over and over again.

Either he was too surprised, or all the years of suffering had cost him his ability to converse.

"It's been a while, Uncle Liang. I've come to spend some time with you." Ye Fan then sat beside Chu Zhengliang with the bottle of wine.

Having not seen Chu Zhengliang for a few years, Ye Fan looked at his uncle and realized that the man was no longer commanding nor burly. Chu Zhengliang had already become frail due to his age.

"Y-You..." The weak man refused to give up.

Hence, Ye Fan advised Chu Zhengliang to calm down.

"I know what you're trying to say, Uncle Liang. You want to know how I'm still alive, right? You're probably wondering if you're seeing a ghost. Don't worry because I'm going to tell you everything. As you can see, I'm alive and well.

Because of what the Chu Sect did to me, I wanted to end myself. Do you know who saved me in the end? Your brother. He took me in and kept me alive. Now that I've fully recovered, I came back for you lot," explained Ye Fan casually as if he was reminiscing about his past.

Naturally, Chu Zhengliang was shocked once again after listening to Ye Fan, for he did not think that his brother, Chu Zhenghong, would still be alive.

"I have nothing against you, Uncle Liang. Back when I visited the Chu Sect, I didn't make any other requests. I simply wanted justice in the form of an apology. However, you guys refused to even give me that. You left me no choice but to get physical. I just needed to be violent until I get an apology. After all, blood is thicker than water. Your brother is my father, so that makes us family. Still, you should never have treated Angie the way you did, Uncle Liang," added Ye Fan.

With his face suddenly hardened, the man took a sip of his wine before continuing, "Angie was so young, yet you did it anyway. Don't you feel guilty about that? If you didn't harm Angie back then, why would I imprison you on Mount Chumen to make you suffer?"

After shaking his head with a chuckle, Ye Fan

went on, "Did you think that old b*stard, Chu Yuan, would save you then? You thought wrong. The sealing technique I used is Celestial Magic, which was recorded in the Book of Celestial Cloud. No matter how powerful Chu Yuan is, he's still just a regular human being, so there's no way he can save you from this sealing technique. Heck, even I can't do anything about it now."

The chilly breeze continued to blow on the top of Mount Chumen as Ye Fan talked to Chu Zhengliang like a general who had conquered a foreign country, reminiscing about the war of the past with his old rival.

That went on for a while until Ye Fan finished his wine.

Only then did he stand up, ready to leave.

"That's enough chatting for today. I'm going to visit the forbidden grounds. After isolating himself in that place for many years, Chu Yuan reached the god realm when he emerged from there. I wonder what's on the forbidden grounds. See you later, Uncle Liang. And don't worry because I won't keep you here alone for long. Soon, I'll have you reunited with your son here. After what he took from Angie, I think this sounds reasonable, don't you think so?" questioned Ye Fan rhetorically with a smirk.

When he heard about his son, the speechless Chu Zhengliang finally broke his silence and let out a burst of scornful laughter. "Do you think you can touch my son, Chu Tianfan? What a joke! He's already mastered the Jade Eyes, which means he's now more powerful than ever. Someone who's already died once like you is no match for him. If I were you, I'd run while I still can. Otherwise, you'll die an even more gruesome death than me!"

Chu Zhengliang's hoarse voice and ear-piercing cackle sounded like the scratching of fingernails on a chalkboard.

"Is that so, Uncle Liang? It looks like you're very confident in your son. I guess we'll find out soon enough," responded Ye Fan calmly before leaving Chu Zhengliang and the man's mindless roaring.

Ye Fan felt as if he had gotten a lot off his chest when he stepped out of the Chu residence.

Undoubtedly, he had made peace with most of his past.

If nothing else, Ye Fan knew he had the once high and mighty Chu family under his feet.

Of course, that was not enough for the man because he had yet to punish the one responsible for his and his mother's pain and

suffering.

Hence, after slacking for a day, Ye Fan was ready to start dealing with Chu Yuan and the others.

Having left the Chu residence, Ye Fan led Gaius and the rest of the group to the Treasure Pavilion, a place of importance to the Chu Sect.

For hundreds of years, the sect had been keeping almost all the treasures they had gathered from all over the world deep inside the Treasure Pavilion.

Ye Fan was not about to leave empty-handed after visiting the sect, which was why he decided to raid the place.

"Hold it right there! This is the Chu Sect property. You're not allowed to be here without a handwritten permit!"

Standing guard outside the Treasure Pavilion were eighteen well-trained warriors who were sitting cross-legged on a large stone.

They guarded the place as though they were the Queen's guards defending the royal palace.

In response to those men, Ye Fan simply chuckled. "You want a handwritten permit? My fist will give it to you!"

The man would rather not waste time, and since Gaius and the others were too injured to fight, he had to take the guards out himself.

With his Dragon God Body fully activated, Ye Fan charged at all eighteen of the guards with his iron fists.

"This guy has a death wish!"

After letting out a roar, the guards all cast the iron chains in their hands almost simultaneously.

Ye Fan turned sideways to dodge the attack.

However, the chains did not fall to the ground after passing by Ye Fan. Instead, they were weaved into a net, ready to ensnare the man.

Obviously, that was a Comprehensive Array Attack.

The guards would have easily subdued a regular Supreme fighter with the move, but unfortunately, they were up against Ye Fan, who also happened to be the once famous Chu Tianfan.

Ye Fan was not afraid at all when faced with the Comprehensive Array Attack.

With the man's feet planted firmly on the

ground and golden light surging all over his body, it was obvious that his Dragon God Body had already been brought into full play.

Ye Fan grabbed the chains with his bare hands and got into a tug-of-war with all eighteen of the guards.

Even though both parties fell into a stalemate, the guards were not ready to give up just yet.

With a smack of their hands, the guards all stood up almost simultaneously to add the strength of their legs to pulling the chains.

Immediately, the net formed with iron chains tightened even more.

The combined power of the guards was like ocean waves crashing on Ye Fan.

A coordinated attack of eighteen warriors fighting in unison like that was not something to be trifled with.

Even Tang Yun, the head of the Chu Sect, was no match for the eighteen Pavilion Elders' Comprehensive Array Attack.

Gaius and the others were as anxious as they could be when they saw how critical Ye Fan's situation was, but suddenly, they heard a roar.

Then, they noticed a Thunderstripe appear between Ye Fan's eyebrows as the golden light surrounding him intensified.

In just a split second, Ye Fan released an unprecedented amount of energy and blew the guards' iron chains to smithereens.

As for the Pavilion Elders themselves, they were blown away with blood spraying out of their mouths. They all fell violently to the ground and sustained severe injuries.

"Whoa!"

"That was incredible!"

Gaius and the others were utterly impressed with Ye Fan. Master was outnumbered but managed to win the fight anyway! It didn't even have anything to do with skills. He beat the Pavilion Elders with pure energy!



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"I'm sorry!" Ye Fan said politely while saluting the eighteen elders.

Although he held a grudge against the Chu Sect, he didn't hate everyone in it.

At the very least, he didn't hate the elders standing before him.

Ye Fan had once entered the Treasure Pavilion by accident many years ago.

The Chu family had nearly beaten him to death when they had caught him doing so.

As the eighteen elders had taken pity on him, they had helped reduce his suffering by defending him verbally.

The elders wiped the blood off the corners of their mouths as they returned to their seats.

However, they no longer maintained that icycold attitude toward Ye Fan. Instead, their faces were filled with shame and respect.

"Hey, kid! If I'm not mistaken, you're not from the Chu Sect, are you? Judging by your age, I don't think you're even thirty! Am I right?" asked the eldest and most powerful of the eighteen elders.

Ye Fan simply nodded without saying anything.

The elders felt even more ashamed when they saw that.

"We have not stepped out of Chu Sect's forbidden grounds for dozens of years. Who would've thought a young and talented man as you existed in the martial arts world? If this is the level of skill you possess at such a young age, one can only imagine how terrifyingly powerful you could become in the future. Would you be so kind as to tell us your name? You are the first person to have faced our Inescapable Chain Formation head-on and broken through it."

Those in the martial arts world had lots of respect for powerful martial artists.

Ye Fan's strength and skill had impressed them to the core.

"I'll be honest with you all. We actually met a little over ten years ago, and it happened right here as well," he said with a chuckle.

"Oh? We have?" The elders all had surprised looks on their faces.

"That's impossible!"

"We would definitely remember meeting someone as young and talented as you!"

"Exactly!"

The elders shook their heads as they disagreed with his statement.

It wasn't until Ye Fan brought up the story of the Chu family nearly beating him to death that the elders recalled who he was.

"You're that kid from the Chu family? As in Zhenghong's son?"

The elders' faces were filled with surprise as they looked at Ye Fan, who nodded in response.

"How impressive... How very impressive... Who would've thought that kid from the Chu family would turn out to be so powerful? The Chu family sure is filled with talents! Chu Zhenghong was really amazing back in the day. Now, they've got a new one to take his place. As expected of the descendants of the Great Emperor. They all have the Great Emperor's blood running through their veins! By the way, have you returned to your family? Has your grandfather accepted you?"

Although the elders couldn't care less about the current affairs in the world, they knew a thing or two about Ye Fan because Chu Zhenghong had told them about it before.

"Accept?" Ye Fan shook his head and let out a

wry chuckle. "He probably hates me so much that he wants to kill me right now!"

The elders were all very surprised to hear that. "How come? Did things get that bad between you and them? Your father often comes by to chat with us. He always said he'd try to get you and your mother back into the family. Speaking of which, we haven't seen Zhenghong in many years. We thought he stopped visiting us to spar because he'd reunited with his family and was enjoying a happy life together."

Ye Fan trembled slightly when he heard that. "H-He comes here often?"

"Yeah. Your father was the most gifted martial artist I've ever seen. Well, before I met you, of course. It seems you're just as good as your father, if not better."

"Your father has been learning martial arts from us ever since you and your mother were kicked out of the mountain. He achieved the title of Grandmaster in three years and the title of Supreme in five. The speed at which he cultivates is terrifying!"

"Unfortunately, your father's heart wasn't pure enough when cultivating. His mind was filled with lots of distracting and conflicting thoughts. Had that not been the case, your father would've attained the god realm long

ago. I'm guessing you and your mother are the source of those distracting thoughts."

"Poor Zhenghong... He never received the love of his parents when he was young, nor did he have the companionship of his wife and son when he was old. He got so lonely that he'd come to talk to us every day. Now that you're all grown up and ready to start your own family, you should try to be more empathetic toward your father's situation."

"There are many things that one has no control over in life. Zhenghong may not have been the best father, but we can tell that his love for you and your mother is genuine. You probably aren't aware of this, but he'd go see you two in secret during New Year's Eve every year."

Ye Fan felt a wave of conflicting feelings surging through his heart when he heard what the elders said.

I've always hated my father the most in life. I thought he was weak and heartless for abandoning me and my mother. However, it seems I might have misunderstood him all along. All those years, he has actually been looking out for us without us knowing. I planted Han deep within the Chu family to help spy on them. Given how smart my father is, it's possible that he already knew Han works for me and the Dragon God Hall. Maybe he was just pretending

not to know it...

"All right, that's enough. We shall refrain from commenting on your family's affairs any further. Go on in. If you do see your father in the future, please give him a good scolding on our behalf. He hasn't brought us any wine in many years!"

"Hahaha!"

The eighteen elders burst out laughing as they stepped out of Ye Fan's way and returned to their seats.

The Chu Sect's Treasure Pavilion could only be accessed by those with a handwritten permit from the head of the sect and those who defeated the eighteen elders in combat.

"Yeah, I will!" Ye Fan saluted them once again before entering the Treasure Pavilion.

"Wait up, Dragon Master!"

Gaius, Owen, and the others tried to follow him, but the elders stopped them.

"What are you guys doing? I thought you said we could go in?" Gaius asked while glaring at them.

"We only allowed this young man to enter. You

guys will have to either obtain a handwritten permit from the head of the Chu Sect or defeat us in combat to gain access," replied the elder standing in front.

Gaius and the others backed off in fear instantly.

They knew they weren't as capable as Ye Fan in defeating the eighteen elders even if they were in their prime, let alone when wounded.

"You guys can just wait for me outside. I'll bring you all some herbs to treat your wounds on my way out!" Ye Fan said with a smile.

"All right, then."

Gaius and the others had no choice but to sit outside and wait for Ye Fan to return.

Just like that, Ye Fan stepped into the Treasure Pavilion, which was thousands of years old.

The first floor of the Treasure Pavilion was filled with valuable artifacts like ancient calligraphy, historical paintings, and precious antiques.

Even the missing beast heads from Yuanming Gardens could be found there.

Any of the artifacts stored there could easily shock the entire world.

However, Ye Fan had no interest in such things. He went up to the second floor.



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Things started getting interesting on the floors above.

There were books about secret techniques of martial arts as well as rare herbs and unique weapons.

To most people, those were precious items that they would probably never see in life.

Ye Fan, however, couldn't be bothered to even take an interest in them.

After all, none of the secret techniques listed there could compare to the ones in the Book of Celestial Cloud.

As for the herbs, he still had plenty of those that Duanmu Wan'er had given him.

None of the weapons there felt as wieldy compared to the ones Ye Fan had obtained from India, so he had no interest in them whatsoever.

"The Chu Sect has been around for thousands of years. Surely, this can't be the only stuff they have in store? Could it be that Chu Yuan had already taken the more precious ones with him on his campaign?" Ye Fan mumbled to himself as he casually strolled around the Treasure Pavilion.

Noticing that some of the slots were empty, he figured Chu Yuan must've taken the treasures out.

This time, the Chu Sect had mobilized almost all of its powerful members.

As Chu Yuan clearly wanted to finish things in one go, it was only natural that he would utilize the best weapons stored in the Treasure Pavilion.

After touring around the place, Ye Fan came to a halt on the floor where the herbs were stored.

He then handpicked a bunch of herbs that would help with healing.

Gaius and the others had damaged their elixir fields through years of abuse, so the herbs were essential to help get them back in fighting shape as soon as possible.

The herbs that Duanmu Wan'er had given Ye Fan were incredibly potent, but they were meant to replenish one's elemental force and had little to no healing properties.

As such, Ye Fan had no choice but to get them the herbs himself.

Having obtained the herbs he was looking for, Ye Fan was preparing to leave the Treasure

Pavilion when he sensed an unusual energy wave in the air.

"That's odd. Why is the elemental force a lot stronger here compared to everywhere else?" Ye Fan muttered under his breath as he curiously followed the energy to a corner in Treasure Pavilion.

Despite having reached a dead end, Ye Fan could still feel the pure elemental force coming from the walls.

It wasn't very obvious, but Ye Fan sensed something different about this area compared to the others.

Eventually, his gaze fell on the tiles beneath his feet.

It's coming from underneath!

With that in mind, Ye Fan bent over and gave the tiles a light tap.

It's hollow! So, there really is a hidden mechanism underneath!

Without further hesitation, Ye Fan removed the tiles from the floor and saw a long passageway where he stood.

A huge amount of elemental force came

flooding out of the hole in the floor.

Hmm... Are there truly valuable treasures hidden inside? Why would they try so hard to keep it hidden otherwise?

Feeling curious, Ye Fan cautiously made his way into the hole.

The passageway was long, narrow, and dark.

After walking through the darkness for quite a long time, Ye Fan finally saw a glimmer of light in front of him.

Ye Fan followed the light source and stepped through the opening, only to end up on a wide, grassy plain.

The grass was luxuriant, and flowers could be seen blooming everywhere.

A river flowed beneath his feet, and the sound of birds chirping filled the area.

It was like a paradise of some sort.

In front of him was a path made of stone that looked as though it would take him straight to heaven.

Ye Fan slowly walked along that path until he arrived at a gigantic door.

The door was completely black and had two dragons carved on each side. The dragons looked as though they were alive and would take off at any moment.

On top of that, the body of the door had a creepy pattern carved into it.

It looked like words from an unknown language.

Whatever that pattern was, Ye Fan found it incredibly odd for such a door to be in a place like this.

This looks so strange... What kind of door is this?

Ye Fan couldn't seem to figure it out after examining it thoroughly.

The two stone doors stood tall in the middle of a grassy plain with nothing else in front or behind them.

It was as though someone had stolen those doors and placed them here.

Ye Fan tried pushing the door down from the side, but it was planted firmly into the ground.

To his surprise, the door refused to budge even after he pushed at it with Dragon God Body.

There's definitely something wrong with this door!

Ye Fan frowned at the thought of that.

He tried recalling everything he knew about the Chu Sect but found no information about this stone door.

Even Great-grandma has never mentioned anything about this to me... Well, whatever. I'll just ask Great-grandma about it some other time!

Unable to find out anything about the door, Ye Fan gave up on examining it further.

He was about to leave when his gaze fell upon the two black dragons on the door. Right as his eyes met those of the two dragons, the strangest thing happened.

As if the two dragons had suddenly come to life, their eyes emitted a bright red light that illuminated the surrounding area.

Ye Fan's body was frozen in place when he saw the red light.

The next thing he knew, the look in his eyes had turned lifeless, and his legs had given out beneath him.

Thud!

Just like that, the Hall Master of the Dragon God Hall was kneeling on the ground like a devout disciple welcoming his god.

A loud rumbling noise tore through the area, and the ground started shaking violently as the tightly shut stone door slowly opened.

A blinding white light came pouring through the opening of the door.

In his dazed state, Ye Fan could hear a faint, ancient voice calling out to him from within.

It was as if the door of fate had just been opened.

Ye Fan's eyes were still lifeless as he got up and slowly stepped forward.

Like a moth drawn to a flame, he continued walking toward the open door.

The ground continued shaking violently as the door opened even more.

The blinding white light grew increasingly intense as Ye Fan got closer to the door.

Eventually, he arrived right in front of the door and took a step through it.

Right as the white light was about to engulf his body completely, a green beam of light came out of his chest.

The beam shot right up into the sky and went through anything in its path.

For some reason, that snapped Ye Fan out of his dazed state, and his eyes were filled with life again.

Realizing that half of his body had stepped through the creepy door, Ye Fan quickly backed away in shock.

It wasn't until he put at least a few hundred feet between him and the door that he regained his composure.

Boom!

As if it had detected Ye Fan's absence, the open stone door slammed itself shut all of a sudden.

With the blinding white light gone, the surrounding went back to their calm state.

It was almost as if Ye Fan had dreamed everything up.

The black stone door was still standing there with the two dragons on each side.

Ye Fan was the only one who knew what he had just experienced.

This door could take over my mind? What the heck is this thing? I remember my mind going blank, and I felt someone or something controlling my body!

The mere thought of what had happened earlier was enough to send shivers down Ye Fan's spine.

He then pulled out an ancient piece of jade with the word "Yanhuang" written on it.

It was the Order of Yanhuang that Duanmu Wan'er had given him.

"I thought this piece of junk was completely useless, but it saved my life just now!" he mumbled to himself.

The green light from earlier had come from the Order of Yanhuang.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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That stone door is creepy as heck! I'll have to examine it carefully when I have the time! Right now, I need to focus on getting these herbs to Gaius and the others so they can heal themselves.

With that in mind, Ye Fan quickly left the grassy plain and returned to the Treasure Pavilion.

"Do you guys mind if I take a little bit of that treasure with me?" Ye Fan asked with dozens of bags of herbs in hand.

In order to heal Gaius and the others, he had practically taken all the herbs with healing properties from the Treasure Pavilion.

The eighteen elders fell speechless when they saw the bags he was holding.

How is that a little bit?

The eighteen elders exchanged displeased glances with each other.

Eventually, the eldest one said, "Um... Isn't that a little too much? We don't usually allow people to take anything from the Treasure Pavilion. Even the head of the Chu Sect is only allowed to take a few items at a time."

The elders all had conflicted looks on their faces.

Ye Fan scratched his head and said with a smile, "My comrades are injured, so they need a lot of herbs to help with the healing. I don't want to put you guys in a tough spot, so how about you tell me what I have to do to take these with me? Shall we have another fight? If I lose, I'll return everything I took. If I win, you will let me walk out of here with my loot. That way, you guys won't be blamed for the losses incurred. What do you guys think?"

The elders all rolled their eyes after hearing his suggestion.

What the heck? He's doing this on purpose, isn't he? We couldn't stop him even with the Inescapable Chain Formation! He already broke the chain, so we'd be fighting him barehanded! There's no way we'd let him humiliate us a second time!

"Never mind, you can keep it. It's not like we can stop you anyway."

The elders could only let out helpless sighs as they closed their eyes and pretended they didn't see Ye Fan walking out of the Treasure Pavilion with the herbs.

"Hahaha! Thank you all very much! I'll be sure to bring you all some wine the next time I come over!" Ye Fan said with a smile and saluted them before leaving with the herbs.

Gaius and the others ran up to Ye Fan the moment they saw him. "Dragon Master, is this all you took after entering the Treasure Pavilion? The Chu Sect has been around for thousands of years! There's got to be tons of treasures inside! Chu Yuan and the others aren't around, so why not take everything?"

Ye Fan kicked Gaius in the back and shouted angrily, "Shut up and help me carry these back to the Joneses!"

He then threw the bags of herbs at them and stormed out of the Chu Sect's front door.

It would take him an entire night to prepare the herbal solution for Gaius and the others.

Since the area around the Chu Sect was filled with enemies, it was unsafe for them to stick around any longer.

The Jones residence was undoubtedly the safest place for them to heal.

Ye Fan spent the entire night concocting dozens of bottles of herbal solutions.

"I want each of you to get a wooden bucket and fill it up with water. Then, pour the herbal solution in and soak yourselves in it. Make sure to replace the water every six hours," he ordered while handing the herbal solutions over

to Gaius and the others.

Since Ye Fan made extra, he gave them to Michael and said, "You should soak yourself in it too. It'd take forever for those wounds of yours to heal."

Ye Fan didn't exactly like Michael, as the latter had often caused him trouble, but he decided to be a little generous as the Jones family was looking after Gaius and the others.

On top of that, Michael was Angie's older brother.

Feeling touched by Ye Fan's offer, Michael thanked him profusely. "Thank you so much for your generosity, Mr. Chu! You're so kind to me even though I treated you poorly back then! I don't have much to offer you to repay your kindness, but I will do my best to lead the Jones family and serve you in the future!"

As Ye Fan didn't like hearing such things, he ignored Michael and left after handing him the herbal solutions.

I wonder how the situation is over in China. I don't expect Huangniu to be of much use, so I sent King Folo and the others over to help out. There's only so much those guys can do to protect my disciples in Jiangdong against the Chu Sect, so the key to victory still lies in these

men I have with me right now. Let's just hope Huangniu and the others can hold out for a few more days...

As Gaius and the others started their healing process, things were peaceful over at Mount Chumen for the time being.

Despite knowing that Ye Fan was currently hiding in the Jones residence, the remaining forces in Mount Chumen knew better than to launch an attack.

As such, Michael and the others were not afraid in the slightest.

Those from the Chu Sect, however, felt incredibly anxious as they feared Ye Fan would drop by Mount Chumen again.

Little did they know that Ye Fan did actually head over.

This time, he went straight to the Chu family's forbidden grounds.

Unfortunately, Ye Fan didn't make any valuable discoveries there.

The forbidden grounds were basically a graveyard for the Chu family's ancestors.

The ones buried there were all heads of the Chu

family, starting from the first generation up until the most recently deceased one.

Feeling disappointed, Ye Fan was about to leave when the final gravestone caught his eye. Upon closer inspection, he saw that the name carved on it read: Chu Yuan.

W-What's going on here? I thought Chu Yuan was still alive? Isn't he going on a massacre all over the world or something? Why is his name carved on a gravestone here when he's still alive? Just what is this old bag of bones up to?

Although surprised and confused, Ye Fan didn't think too much about it and wandered deeper into the forbidden grounds.

At the end of the path, he came across another stone door.

It looked exactly the same as the one he had seen in the Treasure Pavilion, with the dragon statues on both sides and the carvings on the body of the door.

This time, Ye Fan was a lot more cautious. He simply observed it from afar.

He tried launching some attacks at it, but none of his attacks did anything to the door whatsoever.

What the heck is this thing? I've encountered lots of weird stuff on this trip! The Chu Sect sure is filled with mysteries!

With that in mind, Ye Fan left the Chu Sect's forbidden grounds and returned to the Jones residence to continue protecting Gaius and the others.

Meanwhile, chaos was everywhere in China as the Chu Sect's army began its invasion.

In just a few days, the War God Castle branches in provinces like Jiangbei, Jiangnan, Xijiang, Tellmoore, and Durbaine were all destroyed.

Martial artists from all over the country either died in battle or went into hiding.

Eventually, Sword Saint and the others from the War God Castle in Mount Yan came up with an idea. Instead of having the martial artists scatter all over the country, it would be even better to have them gather in Mount Yan for a final battle against the enemy forces.

Three days ago, Sword Saint, King of Fighters, and the others had issued a mobilization order to the martial arts world.

They had asked all the martial artists still alive to abandon their state and gather at Mount Yan for a final showdown with the Chu Sect's army.

Determined to defend the martial arts world of China from the Chu Sect with their lives, all the surviving martial artists in China responded to the calling.

"How are things out there, King of Fighters? Has the martial artist army gathered at the bottom of Mount Yan?" Sword Saint asked anxiously.

All the lights in the War God Castle were on, making it as bright as a beacon.

King of Fighters nodded. "Yes, most of them have already arrived. Those from states farther away are still on their way, but they should get here by tomorrow. However..."

"What is it?" Sword Saint tensed up instantly.

He hated messages with a twist because nothing good had ever come out of them.

"One of the states has not responded to the order given by the War God Castle, nor did it send any martial artists over."

"What? Which state is that? Why would they not respond to our orders when their lives are on the line? Are they trying to rebel against us?" Sword Saint asked angrily.

"They're from the martial arts world of

Jiangdong," King of Fighters replied coldly.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"What about it? Does the martial arts world of Jiangdong think—" Sword Saint stopped himself mid-sentence, and whatever anger he had was replaced by a feeling of helplessness. "It's because of him, isn't it? Well, it is his hometown, so their reaction is to be expected."

Sword Saint knew all too well that Jiangdong was Ye Fan's hometown.

Back then, the War God Castle had left Jiangdong to fend for itself when it was plunged into despair.

That was what led to the War God Castle losing its control over Jiangdong completely.

A few years later, the War God Castle tried sending people over to reclaim Jiangdong.

However, Chu Tianfan's influence in Jiangdong was so strong that the martial arts world of Jiangdong only listened to him.

As such, there was nothing surprising about Jiangdong disregarding the War God Castle's orders when it was in trouble.

"Fine, they don't have to come if they don't want to. We'll be fine as long as we have the martial artists from the other states. Jiangbei and Tellmoore have the strongest martial artists."

Since the War God Castle had lost its influence over Jiangdong, Sword Saint no longer expected Jiangdong's martial artists to defend them with their lives.

Given the size of China's martial arts world, it wouldn't really make a huge difference if they lacked the support of Jiangdong's martial artists.

Their conversation was interrupted when someone opened the castle door and shouted anxiously, "Sword Saint! King of Fighters! Bad news! W-We just received word that Jiangbei's forces suddenly changed their course when they got within eight hundred kilometers of War God Castle. They're headed straight for Jiangdong!"

Sword Saint leaped to his feet. "What? Headed for Jiangdong? Who's the martial arts leader of Jiangbei? Contact him immediately!"

"We've tried to, but we couldn't get through!" the subordinate replied.

"Then try again! I don't care if you have to call him a hundred or even a thousand times! Keep trying until you get through to him! I want to ask the martial arts leader of Jiangbei what they're up to in this time of need! Why would they even go to Jiangdong?"

The more chaotic a situation was, the higher the chances were for things to go amiss.

The War God Castle was already having a headache dealing with the Chu Sect's assault.

As if Jiangdong's martial arts world refusing to help wasn't bad enough, Jiangbei's martial artists changing course on their own worsened things even further.

Sword Saint felt as if all of China had descended into chaos that night.

"Jiangbei? Sword Saint, isn't that the where the Lu Clan is from? You know, the one Ye Fan exterminated long ago. Do you think they're headed to Jiangdong to get their revenge by destroying Chu Tianfan's grave?" King of Fighters asked.

That was when Sword Saint recalled how the incident with the Lu Clan had caused a huge commotion in China's martial arts world back then.

Not only did Ye Fan wipe the entire Lu Clan out, but he also murdered many of Jiangbei's martial artists.

That resulted in Jiangbei's martial arts world seeing him as an enemy.

Therefore, it made sense that Jiangbei's forces would try to get their revenge on Jiangdong during the chaos.

"Zhang Jiuling is the current martial arts leader of Jiangbei, right? That old bag of bones sure has gone crazy! All of China's martial arts world is on the brink of destruction, and he's leading his men to get revenge?"

Sword Saint was so mad that he trembled all over.

"Sword Saint! King of Fighters! We managed to get through!"

After making hundreds of phone calls, the subordinate was finally able to get through to Zhang Jiuling, the martial arts leader of Jiangbei.

"You've got nerve answering my call, Zhang Jiuling! Why are you disobeying orders at such a critical time? Why lead your men over to Jiangdong? What the heck are you trying to do? As the Hall Master of War God Castle, I order you to leave Jiangdong immediately! I know you guys have a grudge against the martial arts world of Jiangdong, but we can't afford to be fighting among ourselves when the enemy is at our gates! You can settle your grudge with them after this is over! Do you hear me?" Sword Saint shouted furiously over the phone.

He was expecting to hear Zhang Jiuling explain himself in a frightened voice after that.

To his surprise, Zhang Jiuling showed no signs of fear whatsoever in the face of his scolding.

Instead, he said in an unusually solemn tone, "You're Sword Saint, the Hall Master of War God Castle? I'm only answering your call to inform you that from this moment on, Jiangbei's martial arts world will join Jiangdong's and no longer take orders from the War God Castle. You have been informed."

Zhang Jiuling's voice wasn't loud, but his words hit Sword Saint like a truck.

"Z-Zhang Jiuling, do you have any idea what you're saying? Are you really going to be responsible for those words of yours?"

Sword Saint got so angry that his usually calm expression had become twisted with rage.

Had the two of them not been thousands of miles apart at the time, Sword Saint would've stabbed Zhang Jiuling in the heart right then and there.

"Hahaha! Be responsible? Who's going to hold me accountable? You? Or your War God Castle? You guys were willing to betray your own, and you can't even protect the citizens of this

country! Why should Jiangbei's martial arts world obey your orders? Allow me to remind you of an old saying in China, Sword Saint. 'Those who are just shall receive full support, whereas those who are unjust shall be left to rot.' The War God Castle did nothing to help Chu Tianfan out when he was attacked by the Chu Sect outside of China back then. You, the Hall Master of the War God Castle, just sat there and watched as our country's most precious talent was forced to dig his own grave! From that moment on, I knew you guys were a lost cause. The War God Castle is bound to be destroyed by your own hands!"

Zhang Jiuling's icy-cold laughter was filled with sarcasm and his disappointment in the War God Castle.

He used to admire the War God Castle and idolize Sword Saint and the others.

However, he lost his faith in them after witnessing the War God Castle's inaction during the battle at Eastsea.

He felt as if his faith had been completely misplaced and trampled on.

Zhang Jiuling believed there was no point in serving the most powerful martial arts organization in the country if it couldn't even protect its citizens.

As such, he decided to lead his men into Jiangdong after reaching an agreement with Lu Ziming.

They would team up with Jiangdong's martial artists to defend Ye Fan's hometown as well as the last remaining territory of China's martial arts world.

As for the War God Castle, Zhang Jiuling knew it had lost its edge and would inevitably be destroyed.

With Ye Qingtian gone, King of Fighters, Sword Saint, and Heavenly Grandmaster were the only ones left.

There was no way the three of them would be able to fend off the Chu Sect's assault on Mount Yan, so attempting to defend it would only result in death.

The last bit of hope for China's martial arts world lay in Jiangdong.

Choosing to defend Jiangdong was the only option in which the martial artists would stand a chance of surviving the battle.

"You insolent fool! How dare you talk to me like that? This is treason! You will be labeled as an enemy of the state, Zhang Jiuling!" Sword Saint yelled.

"That's enough, Sword Saint! Do you still think that the War God Castle is capable of representing the citizens of China? The only ones I'm betraying are you and the War God Castle. It's funny how you accuse me of treason when you and King of Fighters are the ones who truly betrayed the country. China's martial arts world wouldn't be in this pathetic state if you guys had done something back then!" Zhang Jiuling snapped back at him, releasing all of his pent-up anger in one go.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Zhang Jiuling's remarks were so scathing they struck Sword Saint like a hefty hammer.

"W-What did you just say?" he stammered, still unable to recollect himself. "Did you just say that... I'm the enemy of the state?"

Sword Saint had dedicated his whole life to the War God Castle. Never once in his entire life had he imagined that he would end up becoming a national shame to his own country and its people.

Throughout his life, he invested everyone's time in restoring and rebuilding China's martial arts world.

In fact, he was so committed to this cause that he was even willing to pay with his own life, yet in the end, he found little support for his unjust cause and became the enemy of the state.

If what Zhang Jiuling said was true, it would mean that the sacrifices and efforts he had made for the first half of his life amounted to nothing.

A feeling of self-pity overwhelmed Sword Saint as he staggered and almost slumped to the ground.

On the other end, Zhang Jiuling had already ended the call and instructed everyone in

Jiangbei's martial arts world to cut off all contact with Sword Saint and disregard any orders from the War God Castle.

"We will march to the east to meet those from Jiangdong's martial arts world on Mount Yunding," Zhang Jiuling pronounced with a husky voice that echoed in the deep night in accompaniment with the chilly wind.

His command elicited a strong response from the martial artists in Jiangbei.

"M-Mr. Zhang... are we really leaving War God Castle to their own?" someone asked.

"They are the emblem of China's martial arts world!" another commented.

"Yeah. The undoing of War God Castle will shatter the very foundation of the martial arts world in our country."

"There'll be no one else to support our country once the pillars of our nation are no more!"

"Exactly. This will really mark the end of the martial arts world in China!"

Many patriotic citizens among the crowd lamented the potential fate of the country, but Zhang Jiuling was not in a hurry to address their concerns.

Instead, he cocked his head and directed his gaze across the tempestuous Brighfell River toward Jiangdong, which was not far away.

"Who said our foundation will be gone?" he questioned. "Who said we will have no hope? And who said China's martial arts world will be vanquished if War God Castle crumbles? We will shoulder this responsibility as pillars of the country until the coming of the one we await. We will be the torchbearers of the martial arts world in China. Trust me when I say this—the key that dictates the fate of China's martial arts world does not lie on Mount Yan, let alone the War God Castle. Our hope will come from Jiangdong, from Mount Yunding!"

Zhang Jiuling clenched his fists, and his eyes were ablaze with passion as he spoke in a powerful and commanding voice that reverberated through the air to a distance.

Having heard him, the martial artists from Jiangdong were emboldened. They followed Zhang Jiuling and Lu Ziming's lead and crossed the Brighfell River to Jiangdong.

At the same time, on the shores of Eastsea, three notable leaders of the Chu Sect were gathered on a luxurious crew ship.

It went without saying that the person taking the lead was Chu Yuan, the Old Master of

Mount Chumen.

On his right and left stood Tang Yun, the incumbent head of the Chu Sect, and Chu Tianqi, the head of the Chu family.

"Yun, Tianqi, look at the sea," Chu Yuan said.
"There was once an ignorant man who
offended our sect, and we ended him here.
History has proven time and again that our sect
cannot be challenged."

It had been three years since the incident he had referred to took place. However, every time he traveled through this area of the waters, he would be reminded of what had happened and feel proud about it.

It made him feel as if he was an emperor who had everyone and everything under his feet.

He retracted his gaze and looked at Saspiuburg, a continent not far away.

"Tianqi," Chu Yuan called, "do you know that our ancestors and ancient masters found their roots in Saspiuburg, China? That place witnessed the glorious rise of our forefathers. The people should've acknowledged us by then, but they didn't. Hundreds of years have passed since, and we're back at this place again. This time, I will make sure no one stands in our way."

Chu Yuan sounded ambitious and confident as if conquering China's martial arts world was an easy matter.

Beside him, Chu Qitian flashed an assuring smile after hearing Chu Yuan's words.

"Grandpa, we will go forth at your command. I shall bring War God Castle to ashes at dawn and return with the heads of the pillars of China by night tomorrow," Chu Qitian uttered confidently as his eyes burned with combative spirit.

He had already decided on conquering Mount Yan before taking down Jiangdong.

Ha! Chu Tianfan! Your beloved homeland will go up in smoke soon. I guess you never expected that I will quash the people and the country you loved under my feet just three years after your death.

The haughty man's clothes flapped noisily in the air as the piercing wind blew.

The same hatred sparkled in the grandfather's and grandson's eyes, a stark contrast with the woman standing right next to them. Tang Yun looked extremely calm despite hearing the two men's ambitious plot.

She turned away and looked into the vast

waters under the ship, an inexplicable emotion that confused her budding deep in her heart.

It was as if someone really important to her had once appeared in the same place as she was, but she just could not find that person in her memory.

I should be able to recall if this person is really so important to me...

She looked puzzled.

"Are you okay, Yun?" Chu Yuan asked when he spotted the look on Tang Yun's face.

"I'm good, Master. I'm just having a slight headache," the disciple replied.

Chu Yuan's frown deepened at her answer.

"Don't worry. It'll go away with some rest. I can still fight," Tang Yun assured, but Chu Yuan was not willing to take the risk.

He waved his hand, saying, "It's okay. You don't have to participate in the attack on Mount Yan. I want you to go to Mount Kransbay with the Demonic Duo to look for something. According to our sect's ancient records, there is a prominent fighter from China who was buried at Kransbay, and among the grave goods in his tomb is the Order of Yanhuang. Bring it to me."

Tang Yun was surprised.

Chu Tianqi, too, could not wrap his head around it. "Grandpa, I think the Demonic Duo can handle this on their own. You don't have to send her."

Indeed, given the fact that Tang Yun was only second to Chu Yuan in terms of her ability, she would be a useful asset in the war against martial artists from China.

Chu Tianqi did not understand why Chu Yuan would assign her such a menial chore.

"You have no idea, Tianqi. War God Castle no longer carries the most weight in China. I mean, yes, the pillars of China are over there, but they are nothing compared to the buried item I seek. The Order of Yanhuang is worth much more than the lives of Sword Saint and the other pillars combined," Chu Yuan said.

Tang Yun finally nodded and agreed to go look for the Order of Yanhuang.

"Be careful. You might encounter unforeseen dangers at the ancient tomb," Chu Yuan reminded before she left.

After her departure, Chu Qitian asked to conquer Mount Yan, but Chu Yuan had a different plan.

"I'll go on my own. Mount Yan is not the most formidable task. There's something else I want you to do," Chu Yuan said.

For the rest of the night, time went on uneventfully for the two of them. Yet on Mount Yan in China, a massive number of martial artists had congregated.

It was a moment of life and death for them, so everyone had come forward valiantly to defend the War God Castle.

As for the fighters from the Chu Sect, they were gathered at the coast of Eastsea in wait for the war.

Instead of launching an attack, they simply stood watch and waited for all the martial artists to gather at the War God Castle.

A terrifying war was about to break out as tension filled the air along the border.

Inside the War God Castle, Sword Saint and the others had gathered martial artists from all over the country and had been contacting other countries for support.

"What did you say? King Folo and his people are not available? D*mn it! What about fighters from Remdik? What about the Order Of Kings from Western Epea?" Sword Saint questioned.

It turned out that all channels of aid were blocked because no one was willing to get themselves involved in that mess.

After all, the War God Castle's war was a lost cause, and extending help at that moment was equivalent to tempting fate.

Over at Jiangdong, when Li Er found out that the Chu Sect's troops had already reached the shores of China, he gave orders to bring Ye Fan's family, friends, and son to retreat to the mansion on Mount Yunding.



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After his trip to Jiangbei, Li Er returned to Yunzhou of Jiangdong with Ye Fan's son and kept the child in his own manor. But when he saw how the situation in China was escalating, he knew for certain that the Li residence was no longer a safe haven.

Back in the manor, Li Er was sitting on a long bench watching the child catch some butterflies when Jin Bao and Yin Bao hurried in with the latest updates on the situation.

"Mr. Li," Jin Bao informed, "armies of the Chu Sect have just arrived at the coast of Eastsea. It seems that they will launch an attack against War God Castle on Mount Yan anytime soon. The whole martial arts world is facing an imminent threat."

"Mr. Li, I believe it's time we activate Jiangdong's defense plan," Yin Bao added.

Li Er furrowed his brows. "So, things are that bad. Is war really coming to Mount Yan?"

The man could not help but feel sorrowful when he learned that the Chu Sect's army was enclosing Mount Yan and that a bitter battle would soon erupt in China's martial arts world.

Would the Chu Sect be this ruthless if Mr. Chu were still around? Our country's martial arts world would not end up in such a wretched state

if he were still alive.

"How I wish there is deliverance in such trying times." Li Er sighed.

Although Li Er and the others in Jiangdong despised people like Sword Saint from the War God Castle, Li Er was still grieved by their fate.

After all, the War God Castle was the representation of China's martial arts for the past hundred years. It was once the pinnacle of the martial arts world, yet it was reduced to such a pathetic state.

As a citizen of the country himself, there was no way Li Er was unmoved when he saw that the nation was on the brink of a collapse.

"Mr. Li, we can't afford to waste more time. The enemies are really aggressive, and their three leaders at the frontline are already right outside the coast of China. What if they decide to divide and conquer Mount Yan and Jiangdong concurrently? We will be caught unawares. It will be too late for us to do anything by then," Jin Bao and Yin Bao urged.

Seeing how dire their situation was, the two hurried Li Er to kickstart their defense strategy. However, the latter still took some more time to think things through.

He stood up slowly and looked over at Mount Yan.

"All right. Convey my orders. Jiangdong's defense strategy is officially in force."

"Right away!" the two answered.

With Li Er's command traveling across Jiangdong, the formerly quiet area was galvanized into rapid action.

Chen Ao, Lei San, and the Wang family of Horbah—the family of Wang Jiexi—received calls regarding Li Er's order very soon.

These influential figures immediately embarked on a journey with their subordinates, heading for Yunzhou.

Meanwhile, tens of limousines were spotted heading in the direction of Ye Fan's families' and friends' whereabouts to pick them up and send them to Yunzhou.

On the last night before going to Mount Yunding, Li Er visited his ancestral shrine to pay his last respects.

"As Mr. Chu had instructed, Mount Yunding Villa should be a place of hiding in times of need. Unfortunately, this day has come. We can no longer stand guard at this place. We have to

retreat to Mount Yunding with the women and children. I pray that Mr. Chu and the ancestors of the Li family will watch over everyone in Jiangdong. Help us survive this war," Li Er prayed.

Then, he brought Ye Fan's son and a few of his subordinates over to Ye Fan's grave to say their last goodbye.

When everything was over, Li Er led the group toward Mount Yunding Villa, Ye Fan's former abode. But when they arrived at the foot of the mountain, someone intercepted their journey.

"Stand right there! Who are you guys, and what's your business here? Who dares to trespass on Mr. Hu's territory? Get out!"

The gate at the bottom of Mount Yunding remained closed to the group since the guards at the entrance barred them from entering.

When the guards saw so many of them, they called for backup. And soon enough, the whole place saw a standoff between two large groups of people.

Li Er ignored them and turned toward Jin Bao and Yin Bao instead. "What's going on? Since when did the villa have a new owner?" he asked with a frown.

The two's faces paled. Since Li Er had not spent much time in Yunzhou, and the two had always accompanied him, they did not have the answer to Li Er's question either.

"Let me make a call, Mr. Li."

With just a brief call, Jin Bao and Yin Bao obtained some information about the man who was residing in Mount Yunding Villa.

"Mr. Li, it seems that War God Castle has been reining in different forces to consolidate their influence in Jiangdong. Lin Tianhu, the CEO of Tianhu Corporation, is the most powerful among the people here. He has the backing of War God Castle and maintains close ties with Mo Wuya, the son of the King of Fighters. About half a year ago, this man wanted Mount Yunding Villa for himself, so he acquired ownership of the property through some connections. That is how he ended up staying at the villa right now."

When Li Er heard this, his face fell, and a gush of fury took over him.

He had never felt this incensed before.

"Mr. Chu has only been gone for three years, and this bunch of people has already seized his former residence! It seems that these snakes really take this as their turf since I've not been

in Jiangdong often. They've really gone too far," Li Er fumed.

Although he did not raise his voice, those who were familiar with Li Er knew from his facial expression that he was infuriated.

"Hey! Are you guys deaf? I told y'all to scram! Mr. Hu is gonna kill all of you before you set foot in this place!" one of the guards shouted.

Li Er saw no reason to control himself anymore, so he charged toward the guard who screamed at them. Slap!

After striking the guard's face, he ordered, "Go and tell Lin Tianhu that I demand to see him right now."

The guard was piqued after receiving the blow. Instead of going back to inform his boss, he hit Li Er back, yet those guards were no opponents for Li Er.

"Since no one is coming out to greet us, I guess we can only go in on our own," Li Er said before beating the guards up to a pulp and leading the group up the mountain.

Lin Tianhu was sleeping soundly when a commotion broke out outside.

When he was awakened, the man put on his

jacket and went out with his subordinates.

"Who are you?" he questioned angrily. "How dare you trespass on my residence?"

Li Er went up and booted him.

"Did you f*cking say this is your residence? You are not even worthy of this place!" Li Er scowled and gave him a sound thrashing.

Lin Tianhu's bodyguards dashed forward, trying to protect him, but a few people came from behind Li Er and immobilized the guards.

"Motherf*ckers! Shoot them down! Kill them!" Lin Tianhu cried out, ordering the shooters in hiding to take down the uninvited guests.

"Green Dragon Force!" Li Er summoned.

Swoosh!

A few shadows emerged from the dark instantly, moving agilely and fearlessly as bullets rained down on them.

The tallest among them was so strong he could even deflect bullets.

Bang!

Amidst the sounds of diminishing gunshots,

the shooters dropped to the ground one after another with their heads cracked, and they were lugged and thrown at the feet of Lin Tianhu.

"W-What... Who are you guys?" Lin Tianhu was stupefied.

He had dominated Yunzhou for more than a year, yet he had never seen anyone as powerful as this before.

Li Er did not even bother replying to him. Instead, he asked his men to break the legs of Lin Tianhu's subordinates before chucking them off the mountain.

Thereafter, Li Er and everyone else stood right at the entrance of the villa, facing forward, and bowed.

"Welcome home, the son of Mr. Chu," he announced in reverence.



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