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Chapter 2044

"Welcome home, the son of Mr. Chu!" the group chorused respectfully after Li Er.

Everyone from Yunzhou stood on both sides, making way for the child.

Their voice was so thunderous it echoed through the whole mountain.

In the cheers of the crowd, a child went up the staircase leading to the villa, following a dashing woman in military uniform.

It was none other than Ye Yuyan—Ye Fan's cousin.

"Aunt Yuyan, is this the place Daddy used to live in?" the child asked.

To him, the whole place looked dreamy with the moonlight engulfing it.

He lifted his head and looked across the whole mountain before turning back toward the villa.

It never once occurred to him that his father had left him a whole "empire."

"Mr. Chu? That Mr. Chu? Chu Tianfan?" Lin Tianhu might not be a native of Jiangdong, but given Ye Fan's fame, he had undoubtedly heard of him before.





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Does he mean the King of Jiangdong? That Mr. Chu? But he's dead! He died three years ago!

Lin Tianhu had never expected to hear the name of the deceased man again. While he was still caught in shock, Jin Bao and Yin Bao went over and slapped him hard in the face until he spurted blood out of his mouth.

"You must be dumb to call your men on Mr. Li Er of Yunzhou! Mr. Chu may not be around anymore, but Mr. Li is still here. And as long as he lives, the whole Jiangdong belongs to the Chus," the two warned.

It was then that Lin Tianhu finally realized who he was dealing with.

"L-Li Er? You're Mr. Li Er of Yunzhou? I-I didn't know you were back."

Given his years of experience running Yunzhou, there was no way Lin Tianhu was unaware of the local power dynamics. He knew who Li Er was for sure.

He used to be the right-hand man of Mr. Chu. He is second only to Mr. Chu in the entire Jiangdong.

After Ye Fan passed on, Li Er retired from all affairs of Jiangdong and disappeared for years.





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Many thought that he had died at the hands of Ye Fan's enemies. That was why Lin Tianhu could do as he wished in Yunzhou, including using his influence to get this villa for himself. However, he was caught off guard when the old man who had vanished for years suddenly returned with Ye Fan's son.

Li Er looked down at Lin Tianhu apathetically. "It doesn't matter if I'm back or not. What matters is Mr. Chu's son's back."

With that said, Li Er held the child's hand and walked right into Mount Yunding Villa.

"His son? M-May I know his name?" Lin Tianhu asked.

He had heard of the legacy of that heroic and respectable man.

His whole life was a legend.

When Lin Tianhu first moved to Mount Yunding Villa, one of his motives was to be closer to the legendary figure. Therefore, upon knowing that the boy was Ye Fan's son, he could not help but get curious about him.

His father was the man who had taken the whole world by storm. His son must also be equally good. Will he usher back the past glory of his father?





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Li Er turned back and looked at Lin Tianhu and everyone present.

"Remember, his name is Chu Lin, and he will reign the world," he exclaimed in a loud voice, sending ripples of echo down the mountain.

Li Er gave him the name "Chu Lin" in hopes that the kid would eventually grow up to inherit his father's legacy, eliminate the whole Chu family, and rule the world like his father did.

Over the next few days, the whole of Jiangdong was buzzing with excitement.

Many had gathered at Mount Yunding, including Ye Fan's relatives and friends who had just arrived in Yunzhou.

Meanwhile, all the fighters from across different provinces in China had assembled at the War God Castle to defend themselves under the lead of three Hall Masters.

Despite their valorous act of fighting against the Chu Sect, their attempt to guard the castle from the attack of the sect of a thousand years of heritage was futile.

After all, the War God Castle was no more than a hundred years old.

The defenders were forced back at every point



until the army of the Chu Sect occupied the whole foot of Mount Yan.

The destruction of the War God Castle was at hand.

It was a day of a heavy downpour in Yanjing. Grey clouds eclipsed the sun like a massive stretch of an iron curtain right above Mount Yan, where piles of bodies lay at the foot of the mountain.

The soil was awash with blood as the rain beat violently on the ground.

On a day like this, the doors of the Xu residence in Yanjing were tightly shut as the killing continued outside.

Inside the residence belonging to one of the most prominent families in the area, an attractive lady dressed in a plain white long dress was standing by the window as she looked out into the rain.

Rainwater was gushing down as if there was a hole in the sky.

Suddenly, the door was flung open, and an old man hurried inside.

He went over to the lady and urged anxiously, "Ms. Xu, we have to leave before it's too late.



War God Castle is losing ground. Sword Saint, King of Fighters, and other pillars of China were all defeated. We don't even know if they're still alive. The fall of Mount Yan is imminent. Once the people of Chu Sect end the battle, they will turn against Mr. Chu's friends, so you have to leave while you can!"

The old man was Xue Renyang. He used to be one of the Dragon Slayers under Ye Fan, and he was also the man at the helm of the Xue family.

There was hopelessness and despair in the old man's voice when he tried to persuade Xu Lei to leave, and his face looked even gloomier than the sky outside.

Just as he spoke, Ye Yuyan emerged from behind him. Despite wearing a raincoat, she was still drenched because of the downpour, but she had no time to think about that. "Lei, follow us. Mr. Li sent us here to bring you to Jiangdong. Yanjing will fall into chaos once they take over War God Castle. This is no longer a safe place for you. Mr. Li said we must make sure we bring you back without a scratch. You're one of the people Ye Fan cared for the most. We can't let anything happen to you," she prompted, taking off her raincoat.

However, despite their earnest appeal, Xu Lei still stood at the window calmly.



Her slender figure looked particularly lonely against the backdrop of the rain, and indeed, she was lonely.

She used to have someone she yearned for at the very least, but the last shred of hope she had was gone when Ye Fan died.

Does life or death even matter to me now? I'm all alone here anyway. Maybe death is a better option for me. At least I'll still get to see him in death.

Xu Lei shook her head as she smiled faintly at Xue Renyang and Ye Yuyan.

"I know you guys are worried about me, but I think I'll just stay here. I need to at least safeguard Yanjing for Ye Fan. I won't let him down. He was the one who had always helped me, protected me, and comforted me when I was a kid, yet I did nothing for him. I wasn't even able to return his kindness. I could only watch him die in my arms when he was nearing his death. You know, I've always wanted to do something for him, and this is my last chance"

"But you'll die, Lei!" Ye Yuyan was so desperate her eyes turned red with tears.

"Die and death don't make much of a difference to me now. Besides, Yuyan, don't forget that Ye Fan had laid a formation in Yanjing to protect



me, so I'll be just fine," Xu Lei insisted.

Since Xu Lei had already made up her mind to stand her ground in Yanjing, she did not return with them to Jiangdong.



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"Take care, Lei," Ye Yuyan muttered as she stood outside the car, looking back at Xu Lei with tears in her eyes.

The torrential rain was still pounding on the ground when she left.

Ye Yuyan did not know why, but ever since Ye Fan left, her life had been filled with goodbyes and separation.

She had parted with Ye Ximei, Qiu Mucheng, and Xu Lei ever since that man was gone.

When he was still around, everyone would flock to his side. But in his passing, his friends and families were all scattered across different places.

Despite knowing that life and death were out of her control, Ye Yuyan was still afraid that one day, she would have to bid a permanent farewell to one of them.

Since Xu Lei had decided to stay behind, Ye Yuyan respected her decision.

Vroom!

Once she said her goodbye, Ye Yuyan left in the car that night.

The two beams of yellow lights from her car



pierced through the endless darkness until they eventually vanished out of sight.

"Mr. Xue, you should've just left with her. You're not obliged to stay," Xu Lei said to the old man beside her after sending Ye Yuyan off.

"I've lived a long and good life. I think I'd like to go on an adventure before I die," Xue Renyang replied with a smile. "As you said, I also want to defend Yanjing for Dragon Master."

"I'm sure Ye Fan will be happy to know he has so many friends who love him," she said, smiling back at him, but the smile on her face disappeared soon enough.

She picked up the phone and spoke. "I want everyone in the Xu family to gather at the family manor. Also, send some men to prepare food supplies for war. We're getting ready for battle."

Since Xu Lei had received news that the War God Castle was on the brink of falling apart, she got ready for war.

She assembled all the people she had at the manor and planned on fortifying the existing formation so they could better prepare for the coming crisis.

"Mr. Xue, you should go get ready as well. Bring all the men you have to my residence. Dismiss



the rest and let them go home. A storm is befalling us," she added, looking in the direction of the War God Castle.

Peals of thunder rayed from the thick and dark clouds above the castle in a distance, letting off a deafening noise from Mount Yan.

Xu Lei knew for certain that a bloody battle was happening there.

Once Ye Yuyan arrived at Mount Yunding Villa in Yunzhou, Jiangdong, she reported back to Li Er about the outcome of her visit.

"I see... She still can't get over Mr. Chu. Such loyalty is rare in this world today," Li Er commented.

Although he felt sorry for her, he could still understand Xu Lei's feelings because he had once gone through the same thing.

Li Er had felt dejected and lost after Ye Fan passed away as well, so he could understand that Xu Lei would rather die protecting Yanjing than live in fear and loneliness in Yunzhou.

Her only consolation in the face of a potential failure was the possibility of meeting Ye Fan again in another world.

"What is love that people are willing to die for



it? It would have been perfect if Mr. Chu had married her before he died. They would at least have a child together, and Ms. Xu would have something to live for," Li Er uttered.

Lei San and Chen Ao sighed with deep emotion.

Likewise, Chen Nan had mixed feelings as well.

Xu Lei had taken good care of her back when she was studying at Yanjing, but, of course, this was partly because of her relationship with Ye Fan.

Although they did not spend a long time together, Xu Lei left a good impression on Chen Nan.

To her, Xu Lei was like a mature and beautiful elder sister.

"Mr. Li, will Lei be okay? War God Castle is the Chu Sect's only target, right? Lei is just a businesswoman. Will they really hurt a commoner?" Chen Nan asked in a worried tone.

"I don't know. From the current state of affairs, the Chu Sect is only targeting China's martial arts world, but I'm apprehensive. Once they take down War God Castle, they might turn toward those related to Mr. Chu. Ms. Xu is his confidant, so if they really want to kill Mr. Chu's families and friends, there's no way Ms. Xu and



those around her will be spared," Li Er replied.

Chen Nan and the others were unsettled by the reply.

"D-Does this mean that there's no other way to save her?" Chen Nan's voice broke as she tried to swallow back the urge to cry.

"We can only pray that War God Castle still has a last line of defense against the Chu Sect, else death will be inevitable. Once the last brick of the castle falls, they will face us next."

Everyone's hearts sank.

Although the fighters from Yunzhou and martial artists from Jiangbei had joined forces with them, this was not enough to fight off the Chu Sect. It was difficult for Li Er and the others to foresee what was in store for them.

Suddenly, a series of rapid footsteps rang louder and louder outside until the door opened to Jin Bao, who had come running over.

"Mr. Li! The calf is still hungry and is now looking for food."

"Then just give it food," Li Er said, annoyed.

"But we've run out of food. It has eaten everything in our storehouse!"



What?

Li Er's eyes were wide as saucers. "What did you say? We have a week's worth of supplies for hundreds of people in there! How can that calf finish everything in just a day? Are you sure it's not a monster?"

Li Er was on the brink of losing his mind.

A calf had broken into Mount Yunding Villa that morning, and just as Li Er and the others were about to kill it for food, they found out that the animal could speak.

It even addressed itself as a king in a lofty manner, demanding that Li Er and his men serve it well in return for its protection over them when the Chu Sect arrived.

Li Er was dumbfounded when he came across that talking animal, and he figured he should not offend it, so he gave in to its demand for delicious food.

"Mr. Li, should we just chase it away? We can't feed a monster like this!" Jin Bao advised, but his suggestion fell on deaf ears when Li Er shook his head.

"No. The calf is no ordinary animal. Moreover, it seems that it possesses the ability to help us fight the Chu Sect. We never know what it can



do for us. We should just do our best to meet its needs—except for its demand for women."

Li Er had a gut feeling that this calf was of special origin, so he decided to keep it.

Not long after Jin Bao went off to attend to the calf, Li Er received a phone call.

His face paled, and he flopped down into the chair the next second.

"What's the matter, Mr. Li?" Lei San and the others inquired.

Slowly, Li Er lifted his rugged and devastated face and repeated what he heard. "H-Heavenly Grandmaster... He died on the battleground."

What?

His words lodged like a hammer in everyone's heart.

Not a single person who heard the news could compose themselves, especially Lei San and the others.

"So... the war is that bad..."

Although they had prepared for the worst knowing that the War God Castle would lose the battle, they still thought that given the



seasoned fighters' ability, Sword Saint and the rest would still be able to flee with their lives. Yet their understanding of the situation was upended when they found out that a Supreme of the country had just died in the line of duty.

Although the people of Jiangdong did not identify with those at the War God Castle out of their support for Ye Fan, the supreme grandmaster of China had been the anchor that stabilized the whole martial arts world in turbulent times over dozens of years.

Li Er and the rest were terrified and shaken to the core when they received news about Tang Hao's death.

To them, his demise meant that China's lifeline had been completely cut off.



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"What about the others?"

"How are King of Fighters and Sword Saint?"

"What is their situation now?"

After the initial panic, the people present inquired about the other pillars of China again.

Recently, in the martial arts world of China, only four supreme grandmasters showed up regularly.

They were Ye Qingtian, Sword Saint, King of Fighters and Heavenly Grandmaster.

After Ye Qingtian left War God Castle, there had been no news of him and his whereabouts were unknown.

Hence, facing Chu Sect army this time, the only supreme grandmasters present were the three people on Mount Yan.

If all three of them were to die in the battle, it could be said that the era of the six pillars of China was completely over.

Li Er shook his head. "We do not know anything about King of Fighters and Sword Saint, but they must still be alive. However, I fear they will not have much time left. It is evident that this time, Chu Sect intents to annihilate the entire



martial arts world of China."

Li Er looked somber.

Previously, the power of Chu Sect had swept through the world, killing many in its path.

However, the casualties were mainly masters of medium fighting caliber.

Those of supreme grandmaster levels were seldom killed.

After all, in most countries, supreme grandmasters have a very important position. In the martial arts world, a supreme grandmaster was equivalent to a head of state, the faith in the hearts of martial artists, and a symbol of a country's martial arts world.

Therefore, Chu Sect's previous strategy was just to defeat the supreme grandmasters.

Unless absolutely necessary, they would not be killed.

They did not want to arouse hatred in the country's citizens.

However, when they reached China, their killings became unrestrained.

Perhaps, that was also their way of avenging



the disaster that Ye Fan had caused to Chu Sect back then.

"What shall we do then?"

"Is there nothing we can do?"

"Are we supposed to just let the pillars of China face their death?"

In the hall, everyone's eyes were full of despair, and their hearts were full of grief.

When faced with the invasion of foreign enemies, the people of China usually come together and put aside their past grievances.

No matter what Sword Saint and his group had done before, they were people and Supreme warriors of China.

It was unbearable and sad that they should die by the swords of foreigners.

There was a long silence.

In the face of such a question, not one person in the huge hall dared to speak out.

Huh...

"If only Mr. Chu is still alive!"



"Mr. Chu alone might not be able to defeat Chu Yuan, but together with War God Castle, they can surely match Chu Sect."

"If Mr. Chu were alive, China's martial arts world would not be defeated."

After the long silence, Lei San and the others could not help but sigh and talk about Ye Fan's era again.

Back then, when Ye Fan was around, they were the ones who attacked Chu Sect.

With Ye Fan gone for just a few years now, China was falling apart.

"I think we should let Jiangbei martial artists go. Let them save War God Castle. Anyway, those old men targeted Mr. Chu and our Jiangdong martial artists before. When trouble comes, they finally realize how good Mr. Chu and Jiangdong are. We cannot just let them keep on taking advantage of us! It's time to let them go to Mount Yan and fight Chu Sect to the end!" someone suggested that the martial artists from Jiangbei should go and help War God Castle.

A few days ago, those from Jiangbei martial arts world had already arrived in Jiangdong.

Undoubtedly, when they first started arriving,



the people in Jiangdong did not welcome them.

From the time of Ye Fan's bloodbath in Jiangbei, the martial arts world of the two provinces had been at rivals.

At that point when the country was in danger, they had come to seek refuge. Hence, it was not hard surprising just how much the people of Jiangdong despised them.

However, after the discussion that Li Er and Lei San had, they decided to take them in.

Thus, a place on Mount Yunding was allocated for them to be stationed there.

The country was facing a catastrophe, so their personal grievances had to be put aside.

"The strongest in Jiangbei martial arts world are only a few Grandmasters. If they were to go, we will lose a few more lives and that won't help at all. Let me think of a way to go about this," Li Er said in a deep voice.

After saying that, he left the hall and headed for the dining hall.

"Yummy! D*mn, Chinese dishes are so tasty.
That bast*rd is really blessed to get beautiful women, good food, and great wine. This is much better than life in the cave."



At the dining table, Huangniu was still feasting, its mouth dripping oil.

It felt that it had come to the right place.

It had never tasted such good food before.

"Mr. Huangniu, what do you think of Jiangdong food? Does it suit your taste?" Li Er leaned close and asked with a smile on his face.

"Yeah, not bad. It tastes great." Huangniu was still eating.

Li Er continued, "Haha, as long as you like it, that's all that matters." Li Er laughed, and after some hesitation, he finally said, "Well, Mr. Huangniu, I have a request and I wonder if you would oblige me."

"No." Without even listening, Huangniu turned down his request.

Needless to say, these people want me to do some work. Who do you think I am? Why would I do work for you ordinary people?

"Well..." Li Er's eye twitched instantly and for a moment, he was at a loss for words.

"Well, Mr. Huangniu, didn't you say that you are here to protect Jiangdong? You have to keep your promises." Li Er spoke again.



Only then did Huangniu lift up its face. "Why? Has Chu Sect attacked?"

Huangniu was not about to do anything else, but that was something it had to do.

Ye Fan was not someone it could fool.

If I do not carry out this duty well, Ye Fan would not find a girlfriend for me.

Seeing some reaction, Li Er quickly continued, "No, no, but I have friends who are in great danger on Mount Yan at this time. They are under attack by Chu Sect, and their lives are at stake. I hope you can help bring them to Jiangdong."

"Your friends? What does that have to do with me?" Huangniu turned its head again and said with disgust, "Don't bother me with things that are not related to Jiangdong. I only promise to protect Jiangdong. Everything else has nothing to do with me."

Huangniu continued to eat.

It did not matter to the calf who lived or died. It just did not care.

Even if the world came to an end, Huangniu would not be bothered.



If that should ever happen, it would return to its cave and look for Duanmu Wan'er, that was all.

All it wanted was an easy life.

I'm lying down now, eating and drinking. Isn't this just great? You want me to go somewhere far away to save someone?

No way!

"Didn't you say you're here to protect Jiangdong, Mr. Huangniu? Protecting the folks in Jiangdong is a way of protecting Jiangdong. All those friends of mine are Jiangdong folks."

"Oh?" Huangniu raised its head again. "They are from Jiangdong? So, they are all Ye Fan's subordinates?"

Huangniu knew that Jiangdong was ruled by Ye Fan.

He had sent it to Jiangdong to protect his people.

Li Er was stunned.

Immediately, he realized that Huangniu was somehow acquainted with Mr. Chu.

Huh, it looks like the reason it comes to Jiangdong has something to do with Mr. Chu.



Li Er guessed that Huangniu was just like the great formation of Mount Yunding that Mr. Chu had prepared before he died to provide a way out for Jiangdong in case a disaster should strike.

"Yes, yes, they are all Mr. Chu's confidents, and he has always regarded them as his own people," Li Er said earnestly.

Huangniu became serious. "D*rn it! Tell me why don't you people just stay put here? Why do you have to wander to other places? Now it seems that I must really go over and save them."

Huangniu was not concerned about Li Er, but it had to do as Ye Fan instructed.

Just like what the old man in front of me said, those few are Ye Fan's confidants and favorite subordinates. If they really died in the battle, then Ye Fan would definitely hold me responsible when he comes back. Hmm... maybe he won't find a girl for me because of this.

"Okay. Tell me the location. I shall go and save them now." Huangniu got ready to leave.

Li Er was overjoyed.

At first glance, it was obvious that this Huangniu was no ordinary calf.



With its help, Sword Saint and the others might be saved.



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"Try your best to save them, but don't overdo it if they cannot be saved. There's only so much we can do to change our fate, after all. Just get it over with and return to Jiangdong as quickly as possible, Mr. Huangniu," Li Er added when Huangniu was about to leave.

Li Er was only sending Huangniu to save Sword Saint and the others out of courtesy. While it would be ideal if Huangniu managed to save them, Li Er couldn't care less if they all died in battle.

With the son of Chu Tianfan's friend as well as the elites from Jiangbei and Jiangdong all gathered in Mount Yunding, Li Er needed Huangniu back as soon as possible.

"Got it. Don't worry. You guys are protected by a very unique formation that even I would struggle to break through! The formation will be able to hold Chu Sect's army off for quite a while even if they get here. All right, I'm off!"

Huangniu patted him on the shoulder before jumping into the air and disappearing from sight.

"W-What was that creature, Mr. Li?" someone asked in confusion as they all watched Huangniu leave.

It was such a bizarre sight that they felt like



they were watching a movie.

Li Er shook his head. "I have no idea, but Huangniu doesn't seem to mean us any harm. Judging by its words, it seems to be a close friend of Mr. Chu's. It's possible that Huangniu is another layer of defense that Mr. Chu has left Jiangdong with. There really is nothing further that he can do for Jiangdong. First, he sets up a defensive formation to protect us. Now, a cow friend of his has come to protect us from our enemies. Jiangdong truly is blessed to have Mr. Chu on its side!" he exclaimed with respect and admiration written all over his face.

Lei San and the others were all moved by his words as well.

Meanwhile, War God Castle was sustaining heavy casualties from the assault on Mount Yan.

There was death and destruction as far as the eye could see.

The rivers were stained red from all the blood flowing into them.

Sword Saint, King of Fighters, and the others fought valiantly alongside the martial artists they had gathered, but there was little they could do against Chu Sect's huge army.



After a few days, Chu Sect's army managed to break through their defenses and turned the battle into a one-sided massacre.

Martial artists from states like Jiangnan, Xijiang, and Tayhaven were all slain by the powerful fighters from Chu Sect.

Unable to bring himself to watch the brutal massacre, Tang Hao charged into the fight even though he was severely injured.

Due to the huge difference in their numbers, Chu Yuan didn't even need to get his hands dirty at all.

The elders from Chu Sect and the Chu family's Dragon Guards were more than enough to take Tang Hao down.

Even if they weren't able to kill Tang Hao in a single blow, they could still wear him down over time before finishing him off.

On top of that, all Chu Sect's warriors were capable of using Comprehensive Array Attack.

With ten Grandmasters working together, they were able to go toe to toe with someone as powerful as Tang Hao.

Eventually, the elders of Chu Sect overwhelmed Tang Hao and stabbed him through the heart



with a sword, killing him on the spot.

The blood spraying from his chest was redder than the evening sun, and the sound of his body hitting the ground echoed in everyone's ears.

"Tang Hao!"

"Heavenly Grandmaster!"

Thousands of martial artists wept and screamed in anguish when they saw Tang Hao die, but he was no longer able to hear their cries.

His body was covered in red by both the blood and the evening sun.

His gigantic black hammer had lost its shine, but he still gripped it tightly in his hand.

Through bloodshot eyes, he glared at Chu Sect's army in front of him, at the bodies of his comrades beneath his feet, and at the destruction around him.

Is this how death feels like? Is this how it feels like to reach the end of one's life? Is this how it felt like for him as well when he died back then? If only I was braver back then... If only War God Castle had chosen to defend him... Perhaps Mount Yan wouldn't be destroyed like this today... That guy would always have a way. On



top of that, he has so many powerful fighters alongside him. Even Moon God of Japan would go crazy for him! I bet China wouldn't be on the brink of destruction if he were around today, but what good is there in realizing this only now? We can never turn back time, so there's no point in regretting now. Back then, War God Castle had chosen to wash their hands and left him to die. Today, we pay the price for our indifference and face our destruction as well. Like a script that has been written beforehand, everything has been set in stone and is simply progressing accordingly.

His vision grew increasingly blurry as his life slowly ebbed away.

Tang Hao saw his life flash before his eyes during his final moments.

However, his heart was filled with nothing but sadness and frustration as his gaze fell upon the ruins around him.

He loved the country and its people, but all of that would soon be crushed beneath Chu Sect's heel.

He then raised his gigantic hammer and shouted at Chu Sect's army with his remaining strength, "I offered up my heart to the people, but they remain oblivious to my sacrifices. Today, I shall make the ultimate sacrifice for my



motherland!"

With that, he cocked his head back and roared at the sky as he detonated whatever remaining Internal Energy he had left in his body.

Tang Hao, one of the six pillars of China, had exploded into a huge ball of fire on the spot.

Even in death, he was determined to take as many of his enemies down with him.

"Retreat!"

"Fall back!"

None of Chu Sect's men had expected him to go all out that way.

They were all screaming in fear and panic as they desperately backed away, but it was too late.

None of them could run faster than the speed of how a supreme grandmaster self-destructed.

Boom!

A deafening explosion tore through all of Mount Yan, knocking countless enemy soldiers off the mountain with its shockwave.

Those who were closer to the blast radius were



killed on the spot.

It was so powerful that it even killed one of the Grandmaster elders.

"D*mn it! D*mn all of these martial artists to hell! Charge, men! We must destroy War God Castle and take over China today!" Chu Sect's men who survived the explosion shouted furiously.

Tang Hao's self-destruct was not enough to change the outcome of that battle. If anything, all it did was slow the enemy's advance by a little.

It wasn't long before Chu Sect's army had regrouped and surrounded War God Castle once again.

The surviving martial artists outside War God Castle were devastated after witnessing Tang Hao's death.

Both Sword Saint and King of Fighters broke down after hearing the news.

"What? T-Tang Hao is dead?"

Sword Saint was so shocked that he just stood there like a lifeless puppet.

King of Fighters, too, had his eyes filled with



disbelief.

Tang Hao was the first pillar of China to have died before their very eyes.

Naturally, that made his death all the more symbolic to them.

China will fall once it loses its pillars!

"Mr. Tang has chosen to die by self-destructing. He chose to go out that way in order to buy all of you some time. Father, Sword Saint, you two should leave before Chu Sect's army get here! I'll hold them off!" Mo Wuya said with tears in his eyes and his body covered in blood.

He also ordered for someone to escort the two down Mount Yan safely, but Sword Saint and King of Fighters shook their heads.

"Leave? Where do we go? With Mount Yan overrun and War God Castle destroyed, there's nowhere left for us to go!" Sword Saint said with a melancholic chuckle.

After taking a moment to regain his composure, he got back on his feet and picked up his sword.

Mo Gucheng too stood up and grabbed the broken blade that he had used for dozens of years.



"Wait for us, Tang Hao! We're on our way!"

The two then smiled at each other as they opened the castle door and stepped into the chaos outside.

There's no point in retreating any further if there's no way out of here. We might as well defend this country with our lives! It's like Tang Hao said before he died. We offered up our hearts to the people, but they remain oblivious to our sacrifices. Today, we shall make the ultimate sacrifice for our motherland!



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The chilly breeze in the autumn rain gushed through the corpses and remnants outside War God Castle.

Tang Hao's body had vanished into thin air after he self-destructed. Everything around him had turned into ruins.

Sword Saint and King of Fighters walked out and stood before War God Castle. Upon noticing how ravaged the sacred ground of the martial arts world was, they were overwhelmed by sorrow and guilt.

They blamed themselves for not being able to safeguard this place.

Peace was restored in the chaotic Mount Yan as the King of Fighters and Sword Saint walked out of the building.

Upon seeing the two men coming in their direction, the martial artists, who were still putting up a fight, started bursting into tears.

They bowed before Sword Saint and King of Fighters and said, "Heavenly Grandmaster is gone..."

"He sacrificed himself to protect us ... "

Countless martial artists started tearing up and explained what happened to the two.



Sword Saint and King of Fighters were exceptionally calm because they were aware of it.

They looked at all the martial artists who survived the ordeal and gave them a faint smile. "Don't be too hard on yourself. Heavenly Grandmaster was the pillar of China. It was his duty to safeguard all martial artists, and he was passionate about it."

"He lived an extraordinary life and had sacrificed his life for a great cause. To die for what he was passionate about is a blessing, don't you think?" Sword Saint said in a calm voice as if he was an elderly wise man with a wealth of life experience.

At that moment, Chu Sect fighters had made their way to the castle's entrance.

The leader of the bunch was Anderson, an elder from Chu Sect. While Tang Xian was the head of elders, Anderson was second-in-command.

The person in charge of today's mission to destruct War God Castle was Anderson.

When they arrived at the castle's entrance, Anderson raised his hand and stopped his men from advancing.

He stood in front of the castle, glared at Sword



Saint and King of Fighters, and laughed haughtily. "Tang Hao is dead—the pillar of China has collapsed. The collapse of War God Castle marks the end of China. It's all over now!"

"Stop putting up a fight. It's not too late to raise the white flag." Anderson stared at them condescendingly as if a victor was looking down on the losers.

To Anderson, China's heyday was over. What he said was actually true to a certain extent.

He turned to Sword Saint and continued, "Honestly speaking, I thought it would be difficult to take War God Castle down since China likes to boast of its five thousand years of martial arts history."

"I'm surprised to see how weak you guys are. Chu Sect destroyed War God Castle merely by mobilizing half of our resources, and we even did it in the absence of Ms. Tang. Do you still dare to call yourself the pillar of your country? What a joke," Anderson sneered.

Despite his sarcasm, Anderson did speak from the bottom of his heart.

He was disappointed with the war at Mount Yan.



Not only was Tang Yun not involved in the war, but Chu Sect also deployed a part of their men to attack the martial arts world in Japan.

Yet, Chu Sect still managed to defeat Sword Saint and his men.

It was clear that those people were no match for Chu Sect.

Sword Saint responded, "Stop being so full of yourself. You've only defeated War God Castle but not the entire Chinese martial arts world. We've been around for several thousands of years. We might not have someone powerful now, but ten or twenty years down the road, I'm sure someone from Saspiuburg will rise like a phoenix from the ashes!"

"And the man will avenge us and crush Chu Sect. He'll lead China's martial arts world to a greater height!" Sword Saint said with great determination and a hard glint in his eyes.

Sword Saint felt helpless as he failed to protect the country, but he believed the new generation would restore his people to their former glory!

Anderson instantly let out a mirthless laugh. "Dream on! Now that we've gotten War God Castle out of the way, we'll start exterminating the entire martial arts world in China, and this will mark the end of all our people. So stop



dreaming of making a comeback!"

Anderson instantly crushed Sword Saint's and his men's spirit with merely a few words.

Sword Saint cussed, "You ruthless monster!"

He then raised his sword and charged at his opponents.

King of Fighters, too, brandished his sword and ran toward the Chu Sect fighters.

The rest of the Chinese martial artists also launched an attack on their enemy.

"They're at their wits' end now. Today will be their doomsday!"

Anderson narrowed his eyes and ordered his men, "Fall in!"

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Heeding Anderson's instructions, his men charged at their opponents.

They clasped their hands and gathered their aura.

In the blink of an eye, a terrifying aura emanated from their body.



The energy wave billowed like floodwaters, inundating the peak of Mount Yan.

Had Gaius and the others been here, they would have immediately recognized the formation. It was the Cloud Sun Immortal Army that Chu Family Protectors used when Ye Fan attacked Chu Sect!

The formation's power swept across the land.

Sword Saint and King of Fighters were both injured. Even if they combined forces now, they might not be able to take Anderson down.

Besides, Anderson and his men exuded their combined power using Cloud Sun Immortal Army.

The energy wave hit Sword Saint and King of Fighters, sending them flying and causing them to spew blood.

Anderson looked at Sword Saint and King of Fighters. "Let me ask you one last time—are you two willing to surrender to Chu Sect?"

Anderson's voice rumbled over Mount Yan, and his body dwelled in the light. It was as if he was a god who stared down at his subjects on the ground.

He had given Sword Saint and King of Fighters



an ultimatum.

Sword Saint and King of Fighters smirked with their blood-stained lips and burst into laughter.

"You conniving people from Chu Sect really think a powerful nation like China will throw in the towel and surrender to you?"

King of Fighters would rather die than give in to Chu Sect.

"Well then. If that's your decision, be prepared to face your death!"

Anderson had run out of patience.

He started gathering an energy on his palm.

The energy emanated a sharp beam and turned into a sword. In a fit of anger, he raised the sword and swung it at Sword Saint and King of Fighters!

"Father!"

"Sword Saint!"

"King of Fighters..."

"No!"

Outside the remnants of War God Castle, all



martial artists from China roared in utter despair.

But crying would not resolve the situation. Why would they need the sword for?

All of a sudden, a wrathful roar resonated from the horizons at that critical stage.

"How dare you, b*stards from Chu Sect?" The fuming roar blasted through the sky.

Soon, a large palm that had blocked out the sun descended from the sky.

A powerful open-hand strike hindered the attack of hundreds and thousands of Chu Sect fighters!

The second strike caused the Chu Sect fighters to stagger backward, and the third strike instantly crushed the Cloud Sun Immortal Armyformation!

The intense attacks forced Anderson and the other elders to retreat. In the end, they knocked against a giant rock and spewed a mouthful of blood.

"Who is that?"

"How dare you disrupt our plan? Don't you know we're from Chu Sect?"



Anderson spat out the blood in his mouth and shrieked with bloodshot eyes.

Sword Saint and King of Fighters stared into the distance. So did the other martial artists from China.

They could not help but wonder who the person was.

A gust of chilly wind swept over, creating a sandstorm.

Suddenly, a man in white emerged at Mount Yan's peak and descended like a deity.



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No one else deserved to dress in all white than the man.

Just when the man took off his white robe, everyone turned to look at him.

"The man in the dragon mask? It's you again! It seems like our master's lesson has fallen on deaf ears. How dare you show yourself again?"

Anderson and the others recognized the man right away, the man who was dressed in all white and donned a dragon mask.

He was the man who had inflicted trials and brought tragedies upon Chu Sect all these years.

Not long before, Chu Tianqi had beaten him up severely.

He thought that the man would toe the line after that, at least for some time.

However, they didn't expect him to show himself at Mount Yan.

Hence, Anderson and the others were agitated.

Nonetheless, the man in the dragon mask did not seem to pay heed to the people of Chu Sect as they questioned him.



He turned around and headed toward Sword Saint and the others.

"T-Thank you for saving my life. However, the martial arts world of China has met its downfall. It will not be honorable for me to keep troubling you. If I were to reincarnate in my next life, I will surely repay your kindness together with King of Fighters. Nonetheless, it is best for you to leave right now," Sword Saint said.

After all, Chu Sect was too powerful.

Even though Sword Saint felt indebted to the man in the dragon mask, they were not related after all. Hence, he could not let the mystery man protect China on behalf of War God Castle and offend Chu Sect.

Hence, after thanking the man in the dragon mask, Sword Saint let out a soft sigh and asked him to leave them.

The man in the dragon mask let out a chuckle. "Leave? If I lose my home country, where else would I go?"

Though it was a hearty chortle, there was a hint of melancholy to it.

Sword Saint and the others were stumped. King of Fighters also lifted his head in response.



"Y-You are..."

The man in the dragon mask did not answer. He took off his mask and revealed the somehow familiar yet strange face to the group.

"Y-Ye? Are you... Ye?"

When the man in the dragon mask took off his mask, Sword Saint and King of Fighters were stunned.

They widened their eyes in disbelief as they transfixed their gaze at the man before them.

Perhaps from shock, or even touched by the revelation, Sword Saint, who had been a stern man his whole life, brimmed with tears at the sight.

It had been three years since.

Well, almost three years.

Ever since Ye Fan's incident, Ye Qingtian had removed himself from War God Castle. Since then, Sword Saint had not heard any news on Ye Qingtian.

Before the crisis happened in China, Sword Saint had been thinking if Ye Qingtian would make a return.



However, the man had not shown himself even when Tang Hao died.

Hence, Sword Saint and the others had not harbored any hopes that Ye Qingtian would ever return.

Thus, they certainly did not expect that to happen...

After the initial shock, Sword Saint's shaky hands held on right to Ye Qingtian's arms as he patted the latter on his chest a few times. It was as if he was blaming him for showing himself too late.

"Ye, why are you only showing yourself now...
We thought that you were still mad at us and that you've abandoned War God Castle and left us to die," King of Fighters lamented.

They were finally seeing a glimmer of hope after wallowing in despair for far too long.

It was as if they were drowning, and Ye Qingtian was their lifeline who appeared right on time.

Hence, it would not be difficult to imagine King of Fighters and Sword Saint's joy.

"After all, we have founded War God Castle together. China is also my home country. No matter how mad I am at you guys, I will not sit



idly by and watch you guys get obliterated by Chu Sect," Ye Qingtian said in a low voice.

There was an inexplicable expression on Ye Qingtian's craggy face.

As he aged, he came to realize that there was no absolute right and wrong in the world.

For example, Ye Fan's incident. Was Sword Saint truly in the wrong?

Of course, judging from Ye Qingtian's perspective, Sword Saint and the others were to be blamed.

However, given Sword Saint's position, could he be truly at fault for the matter?

It was only a matter of perspective.

Besides, it had been a long time since, and there was nothing they could do to change the fact.

It was time to let go of the grudges.

At the very least, Ye Qingtian would once again fight alongside Sword Saint.

"Ye, Tang Hao..." Sword Saint's face turned red as he choked on his words.



Ye Qingtian nodded and said solemnly, "I know. Tang was truly the man. China is proud to have such a man serving the country!"

He instinctively clenched his fist. His eyes turned anguished and glinted with a murderous aura.

"Both you and King of Fighters could take a rest. Let me handle the rest," Ye Qingtian said.

He gave Sword Saint and the others another look before turning around to face their enemies.

However, Sword Saint and King of Fighters were still worried about him and said, "Ye, they're very strong... If they work together, they're able to rival the top ten supreme grandmasters on Sky Ranking."

After all, King of Fighters and Sword Saint had fought them before. Hence, they knew what the people from Chu Sect were capable of.

Despite being the strongest man in all China, Ye Qingtian was not able to rank even among the top ten on Sky Ranking.

Hence, they were worried that even the return of War God would mean nothing but another life lost at Mount Yan.



Ye Qingtian smiled and said, "Don't worry. Only a few at Chu Sect could make me retreat."

Somehow, Ye Qingtian was undeterred by the alleged top ten martial artists on Sky Ranking.

Then, Ye Qingtian strode forward to fight the army of Chu Sect alone.

"War God! It's War God! He's back! Haha, there is finally hope for China!"

The martial artists behind him were overjoyed at the sight of Ye Qingtian.

Their eyes brimmed with tears. It was as if they were drowning in the depths of despair, and Ye Qingtian was their only savior.

Some of them even kneeled as they welcomed his return.

After all, Ye Qingtian had been the most powerful protector of China all these years.

He was akin to the backbone of the martial arts world of China.

As long as he stood tall, the martial arts world of China would never fall.

"So, you're Ye Qingtian, the strongest man in all of China! No wonder so many of my elites have



fallen today. However, that is coming to an end. War God Castle is way past its prime. Do you really think you can single-handedly defeat the whole army of Chu Sect?" Anderson chided and let out a mocking laugh.

Then, he wasted no time and ordered to commence the attack right away.

"Get into formation!"

Bang!

An overwhelming aura burst out and spurred into the air.

Over a dozen Chu Sect martial artists teamed up once again.

Cloud Sun Immortal Army burst forth with an aura to destroy the world.

They dashed forward ruthlessly in Ye Qingtian's direction.

"Ye, you have to dodge! This is a very powerful formation by Chu Sect, the Comprehensive Array Attack! Both King of Fighters and I have lost to this formation. Even those ranking top ten among Sky Ranking might not be able to fend themselves off this attack!"

Sword Saint was taken aback that Chu Sect had



chosen to deploy this formation as soon as they launched their attack on Ye Qingtian.

However, Ye Qingtian was unfazed in face of the formation.

The authoritative man remained calm and composed, exuding a domineering aura.

"You have driven Ye Fan to his death back then. And now, you're trying to crumble the martial arts world of China. Let's settle all the scores today!" Ye Qingtian hissed.

He was expressionless as an immense force pooled right in the palm of his hand.

Bang!

Then, Ye Qingtian took a leap and spurred into the air.

His took the shape of his palm and manifested as a sizeable palm, covering more than half of the sky.

Ye Qingtian's palm technique was known as Heavenly Palm!

Thud!

The enormous palm fell from the sky like a mountain towering over the Earth.



The formidable palm technique came crashing down on the elders of Chu Sect.

Boom!

There was nothing to shield the elders from the attack.

His terrifying aura was like fallen leaves swirling in the autumn breeze and winter snow melting in a boiling pot of oil.

The Comprehensive Array Attack of Chu Sect shattered into pieces, fading into nothing.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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"H-He's that strong?" King of Fighters and Sword Saint were stupefied when they saw how capable Ye Qingtian was. He's too strong! How did he become so strong?

The moment Ye Qingtian attacked, he had already cracked Chu Sect's Comprehensive Array Attack. Surprisingly, Ye Qingtian had an upper hand in the confrontation, and he had only managed to rescue Sword Saint and the rest after putting in much effort.

However, both parties were then involved in a tough fight while battling each other head-on.

Moments before, Sword Saint and the others thought Ye Qingtian would struggle to gain the upper hand. They didn't expect Ye Qingtian to end up destroying the Comprehensive Array Attack.

Evidently, Ye Qingtian's strength had exceeded their expectations.

Although they knew War God for years, King of Fighters and Sword Saint were still stunned by his strength.

"Sword Saint, is Ye really that strong?" Mo Gucheng stared blankly at Ye Qingtian. All these years, Ye Qingtian had always been the strongest in China's martial arts world. Obviously, Ye Fan shouldn't be compared to him.

In fact, knowing that Ye Qingtian was a psycho, King of Fighters and the others naturally didn't take Ye Fan into consideration.

However, no matter how strong Ye Qingtian was, he was only considered one of the top fifteen in the Sky Ranking back then. Sword Saint himself was placed at around twentieth in Sky Ranking.

Hence, there wasn't a huge gap between the strength among the pillars of China from War God Castle.

At that moment, however, Ye Qingtian was showing an obvious advantage. Undeniably, Sword Saint and King of Fighters could feel the difference in their strength.

"Well, based on that attack alone, I reckon Ye should be ranked in the top ten of Sky Ranking. No... Scrap that. I think he could be ranked as one of the top five." Sword Saint was just as thunderstruck.

Besides feeling surprised, they were feeling defeated as well. Back then, these pillars of China were comrades of similar capabilities.

Now, our comrade has such superb skills while we're still stuck at around the same level for decades.

After seeing what Ye Qingtian was capable of, Sword Saint and the rest of the people in China felt hopeful once again. Finally, they found renewed hope in China's martial arts world making a comeback.

While they were feeling hopeful, the same couldn't be said for the people in Chu Sect.

After witnessing someone destroying Chu Sect's Comprehensive Array Attack, the morale of the people had taken a hit.

At the same time, Anderson and the other Grandmasters of Chu Sect were staring at Ye Qingtian warily.

F*ck! How did Ye Qingtian become so strong? I bet his strength is comparable to Demonic Duo's. At that point, Anderson was cursing at Ye Qingtian inwardly.

When Anderson was still thinking about his strategies going forward, Ye Qingtian showed no mercy. Instead, he was unleashing his wrath.

Ye Qingtian was utterly infuriated. My beloved country is getting destroyed, and the people had been massacred. The perpetrators had even killed my comrades! Today, I'm going to tear Chu Sect apart!

Boom!

Ye Qingtian struck once again.

The force was so strong that a crater formed from the impact.

With that strike, a few experts had perished on the spot, and flesh and blood had filled up the crater formed earlier.

"You b*stard! How dare you kill my disciples? I'm going to kill you!" Upon seeing that his disciples had been murdered, Anderson was enraged.

In order to launch an attack on Ye Qingtian, he endured the pain caused by his injuries and summoned all the martial artists in Chu Sect. "Everyone, heed my command! Fall in and attack! I refuse to believe that a hundred of us will fail to kill him! Ye Qingtian, do you see yourself as someone like Chu Tianfan? Do you really think you can destroy Chu Sect?"

Anderson spat out a mouthful of blood, and he looked like a maniac.

Anderson was the person in charge of attacking War God Castle. If he were to fail the mission, the head of Chu Sect would definitely seek an explanation from him. Things will get worse if that happens! Besides, I've been wanting to raise my profile within Chu Sect. This is the perfect opportunity for me to do so. I can't

possibly let Ye Qingtian destroy my dreams and hard work!

"Chu Sect Fatal Moves!"

"Hurricane Blades!"

Soon, under Anderson's commands, the martial artists of Chu Sect began their attacks on Ye Qingtian.

Waves and waves of ruthless attacks were aimed at Ye Qingtian.

Ye Qingtian, however, was unfazed in the face of those attacks. Dressed in white, he stood strong and unmoved, like a boat in the storm.

No matter how strong those attacks were, he didn't budge.

"How dare you cause chaos in China and kill our people! Today, I'll use your blood to pay homage to the heroes who had perished! At the same time, I'll show you what are the consequences of messing with the people of China!" Ye Qingtian shouted, and a wave of immense force began to form in his palm.

Ye Qingtian then transferred the terrifying force onto his fingertips.

Almost instantly, a large palm formed in the

sky.

"Heavenly Palm!"

"Heavenly Palm!"

Ye Qingtian struck his palm continuously.

The frightening power the palm packed was unleashed throughout the area.

As a result, the attacks from Anderson and the others were neutralized instantly.

"What?" The members of Chu Sect were stumped.

Before they could react, the gigantic palm soon swept over.

Swoosh!

Swoosh!

Every member of Chu Sect on Mount Yan was heavily injured.

The weaker ones were killed by the immense force of the palm on the spot, while the stronger ones spewed blood from their mouths, and their bodies were severely injured. They were all flung toward the bottom of Mount Yan.

Whoosh!

A strong gust of wind blew and shattered the rocks and stones into pieces.

Mount Yan was instantly silenced by the wind.

The members who attacked War God Castle were either dead or at the bottom of Mount Yan.

Right then, peace returned to Mount Yan.

In the end, only Ye Qingtian was still standing firm in his white shirt.

The martial artists from China who had survived the attack were all staring at him in bewilderment from behind.

They were utterly shocked, and they widened their eyes in disbelief. In fact, they were staring at him with the utmost admiration.

Ultimately, the martial artists from China quickly knelt and hailed their War God's prowess.

At that moment, Ye Qingtian's status in the hearts of the people of China had undoubtedly risen again.

He had truly become the hero of the country.

After killing all the martial artists from Chu Sect, Ye Qingtian returned to check on Sword Saint and the others.

"Y-Ye, h-how did you do that?"

"How did you suddenly become so strong?"

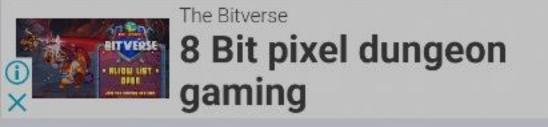
King of Fighters and Sword Saint couldn't be bothered by their own injuries anymore. Instead, they were eager to find out how Ye Qingtian had gotten so strong all of a sudden.

With a solemn expression, Ye Qingtian answered, "I don't think the both of you would want to know the answer."

"Why not? We are eager to find out! Tell us, Ye!" King of Fighters was getting impatient. He had been stuck on his level for a long time, so he was hoping that he could get some inspiration from Ye Qingtian.

After keeping mum for a while, Ye Qingtian answered, "It was Ye Fan. Back then, before he went up against Chu Sect, he had given me some tips on martial arts techniques. Besides, he had also given me lessons. If not for him, I wouldn't be this strong, and I would definitely not stand a chance against Chu Sect today."

While talking, Ye Qingtian remained expressionless.



King of Fighters and Sword Saint were totally stunned.

In fact, they no longer looked as thrilled as before.

Deep down, they were overwhelmed by mixed emotions.

"I-It was him?"

"B-But how could that be? Ye Fan was only a man who appeared later on. He had only been in the martial arts world for a few years, no? How could he know more about the martial arts than us?" King of Fighters was in disbelief.



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