



The old lady's words reverberated slowly and softly in the air.

The young woman, who had been prepared to leave, paused.

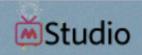
"Yun, listen to granny and have something before you leave. You shouldn't let Fan's efforts go to waste. He's been cooking for three persons this whole time that you were shut away in your training. He was worried that you might be hungry when you're done with training and insisted on saving some for you every time we were done with our meals. He worries for you more than he's ever worried for me." The old lady shook her head and sighed. Then, she turned away and headed into the kitchen to heat the dishes up for the young woman.

The young woman did not say a word as she stood frozen to her spot.

Old Madam Chu's words had sent emotions rippling through what should have been a cold unfeeling heart.

Scenes that had taken place in this old mansion during her days of recovery flashed past her eyes once more.







They were like scenes of a movie speeding past her eyes.

Her heart welled with a mix of feelings at the thought of Ye Fan.

When they had first met, she had wanted to kill the shameless scoundrel.

But that initial surge of murderous rage had faded and eventually disappeared as they had spent more time together.

In fact, she felt some measure of gratitude towards the man.

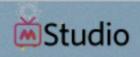
Without Ye Fan, she wouldn't have mastered the Cloud and Mist Sword Technique so quickly. She wouldn't have been able to master the Yin Yang Dragon Body as well.

She knew that Ye Fan wasn't to blame for what had happened that night.

She had been the one who had caused the entire mess. Ye Fan had been an innocent victim.

In fact, if he hadn't held himself back and controlled his urges, they would have







committed a grave sin that night.

After a long moment of hesitation, the young woman finally turned around and headed for the rooms. She pushed the door to Ye Fan's room open.

He was in the midst of a deep sleep.

His handsome features looked peaceful and at ease.

His chest rose and fell gently with every breath that he took.

She didn't wake him up. She simply gazed at him from a distance.

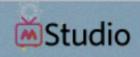
She studied the sharp features on his face.

She watched as his long eyelashes stirred lightly in the breeze.

This was the first time she studied a member of the opposite sex in such fine detail. She had never known that a man could have eyelashes of such length.

She stood there for a very long time, until forlornness and loneliness gradually showed







on her lovely face.

Emotions swelled inside her.

In that instant, she was seized by the desire to take this young man with her.

She could give him power and status and limitless glory and honor, anything to keep him by her side.

In the end, she simply shook her head and sighed.

They were from two different worlds.

She would be faced with the unstoppable forces that were her family clan and sect who would try to tear them apart if she were to bring Ye Fan back with her.

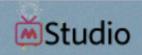
She might get him killed.

The vast and irreconcilable difference in their statuses had sealed their fates. They were not destined to be together.

She shouldn't try and fight destiny.

In the end, she decided to leave without







saying goodbye.

Before she left, she carefully removed the jade pendant that hung on her pale neck.

The blue spirit jade pendant was an amulet that her mother had left her.

She had carried it with her since she had been a child. She was going to give Ye Fan this pendant.

She had also left the Cloud and Mist Sword Technique manual with Ye Fan.

The technique was the Tang family's family secret.

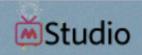
But she had a feeling that Ye Fan might be more suited to it than she was.

After placing her jade pendant next to Ye Fan, the young woman turned and headed for the door.

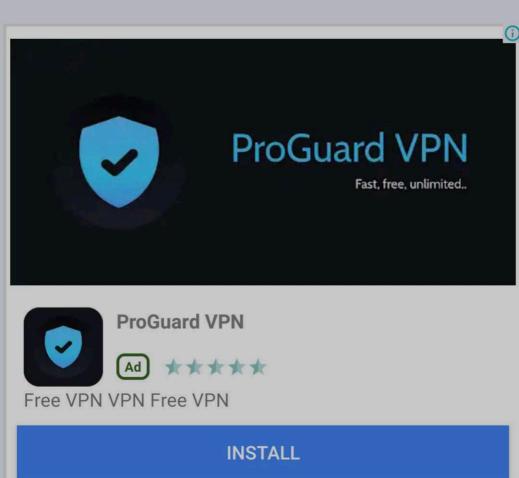
She gave Ye Fan one last look before she left.

A sliver of regret flashed across her lovely face.













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"All these years of training alone and being alone. Who would have thought that a young man would change everything?" She smiled and shook her head. Deciding that she wasn't going to linger anymore, she stepped out of the room.

Before she could leave silently, a soft voice rang out behind her.

"Are you leaving?"

Her slim form trembled slightly at the sound of that voice.

She hadn't expected Ye Fan to wake up.

Had he been awake all this while?

She didn't say a word. It was as if she hadn't heard Ye Fan at all.

She was akin to the rare snow lotus that was only found on the highest snow-capped peaks of distant mountains, cold, solitary and beautiful.

Like the snow lotus, she was distant and beyond reach. One could upon look up and gaze upon her beauty from afar.





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She stepped away from Ye Fan's room, leaving him the sight of her retreating back.

"Yu Yun, find me in Yunzhou, at the mansion atop Mount Yunding in ten days' time. I have something for you. It's a date," shouted Ye Fan as he stared at Yu Yun leave.

His only reply was the soft whisper of the breeze.

Yu Yun had left.

Ye Fan had no idea if she had heard what he had said.

They were mere acquaintances.

Ye Fan wouldn't fault her for not turning up at Mount Yunding.

"Seems like I won't have the chance to return her this favor." Ye Fan eyed the pale blue jade pendant on his bedside table, shook and smiled.

He headed for the bedside table and picked the jade pendant up.

The jade was a clear pale and unblemished





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blue. Within it swirled wisps of spiritual energy.

It was clear that this was a rare and precious gem.

The heat of Yu Yun's skin lingered on the jade pendant. The pendant even faintly smelled like Yu Yun.

She must wear it all the time.

Ye Fan accepted Yu Yun's gifts without protest and simply kept them away.

That day, Old Madam Chu was finally done with her modified prescription.

Ye Fan left the old Chu family mansion with the prescription and hurried back to the military camp.

"Great grandmother, take care of yourself. I'll come visit you again when I have the time." Ye Fan waved goodbye at the old lady before rushing off.

With the departure of Ye Fan and Yu Yun, the liveliness that had filled the courtyard faded away. The place seemed a lot quieter and a





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lot lonelier.

"It seems like I'm going to be spending my days alone again."

Ye Fan and Yu Yun's presence had filled the old mansion with a new dose of life and youth.

But they had left and their departure had left an emptiness in the old lady's heart.

She had enjoyed solitude when she had been younger.

But now that she had grown old, she seemed to prefer the company of others.

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Ye Fan returned to the Jiangdong military camp that afternoon.

He followed the instructions that Old Madam Chu had given him, got someone to purchase the ingredients he needed and hired a carpenter to build him five wooden buckets that were as tall as a grown man.

After he was done, he bumped into Lu Tian-





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He. The latter had just returned to the military camp.

"Mr Chu, please follow me. Someone wants to speak to you." Lu Tian-He appeared slightly excited.

Ye Fan wasn't interested though and said flatly, "Tell him I'm busy."

Lu Tian-He's face twitched. There was a strange look on his face as he spoke.

"Mr Chu, you can refuse to see anyone else but this man. He's the Chinese military's God of War, Ye Qing-Tian!"

What?



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#### What?

"The God of War, Ye Qing-Tian?" Something flickered in Ye Fan's eyes when he heard those words. Ripples of emotion darted across his dark eyes.

If there were anyone who could present the Chinese martial arts circle, it would be Ye Qing-Tian.

Ye Qing-Tian's name had spread far and wide not only in the Chinese martial arts circle but in the international martial arts circle as well.

He had been the one who had led the six pillars of the nation against Chu Sect's rebel forces and expelled them from the country.

Without him, the Chinese martial arts circle would have fallen into the hands of Chu Sect.

Currently, Chu Sect had gained control of the martial arts circle in numerous countries.

Those countries included Australia, which was situated in the southern hemisphere, and China's neighbor, Korea. Chu Sect had

thrashed the fighters in the martial arts circle of both countries then, so they had no choice but to submit to Chu Sect.

Chu Sect had branches set up in Australia and Korea under the pretext of upholding the integrity of martial arts and protecting the safety of martial artists in the region. In reality, these branches were the sect's means of controlling the martial arts circle in those countries.

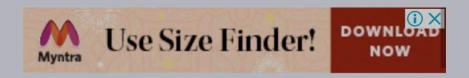
Ye Qing-Tian's contributions in saving China had cemented his reputation in the Chinese martial arts circle.

The six pillars of the nation looked to him as their leader.

Ye Fan had heard of his name when he had first begun learning martial arts.

He wasn't sure if he would be Ye Qing-Tian's match even if he were at the peak of his condition.

In fact, Ye Fan was definitely not his match now because of the injuries that he was still recovering from.



"Why would he wish to speak to me? Does he know who I am?"

Ye Fan had been deliberately concealing his true identity since his supposed death.

The Chu family was combing the entire world in search of him. Before Ye Fan recovered to his fully strength, he wasn't going to strut around as Chu Tian-Fan and call attention to himself.

If someone did know that he was Chu Tian-Fan and that he was still alive, he had to do something about it.

Ye Fan followed Lu Tian-He to meet Ye Qing-Tian.

He was curious about why Ye Qing-Tian was here. In addition, he had always wanted to meet the guardian of the nation.

He had always wondered what kind of man Ye Qing-Tian, the legendary martial artist, would be.

Lu Tian-He led Ye Fan to an empty field.

In the middle of the field stood a man in

white. He stood tall and proud, with his hands folded behind his back.

Some men would have looked as tiny and insignificant as a pebble as they stood in that field.

Yet others appeared as sturdy and daunting as a mountain.

That was because they exuded power.

The truly powerful man had no need to call attention to his strength. He simply had to stand there. His sheer presence was enough to intimidate those around him.

Ye Fan instantly knew that the man in white was the God of War, Ye Qing-Tian.

"General Ye, I've brought Mr Chu to you," said Lu Tian-He politely as he bowed. He had stopped a considerable distance away from Ye Qing-Tian upon seeing the latter.

The man in white remained silent for a long while before replying Lu Tian-He with a single word.

"Good."



As soon as he spoke, fierce winds began to howl around him.

A surge of power erupted from his person.

It was followed instantly by a loud explosion.

Ye Qing-Tian had thrown his fist forward.

His fist surged forward with a terrifying force.

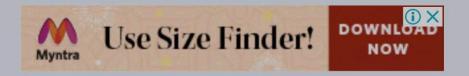
Akin to the sudden crash of a huge boulder into the ocean, his punch sent incredible shock waves rippling through the air.

Lu Tian-He's eyes widened with shock as he stared at Ye Qing-Tian's fast approaching attack.

"Heavens! Is this the true strength of the God of War? All that destructive force from a simple punch?"

One only knew how small and insignificant one truly was after gazing upon the vastness of the ocean.

Lu Tian-He had seen what the truly mighty was capable of and knew how weak he was







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when compared to these powerful fighters.

As Lu Tian-He stood there, stupefied by the sight before him, a hint of hostility appeared in Ye Fan's eyes as a crease furrowed his brow.

Ye Qing-Tian's fist was heading for him.

A severe look appeared on Ye Fan's face.

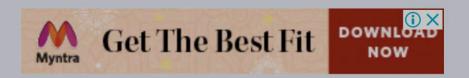
There was no time to think. He activated Invoke the Celestial Cloud inside him and called forth a surge of power that gathered in his arm.

Then, with a sudden curl of his fingers, his hand tightened into a fist and shot forward.

He did not retreat or show fear. In the face of an attack from the most powerful fighter in China, Ye Fan reacted with his most ferocious and basic instinct. He attacked!

An explosion erupted on the field as two fists collided.

Amidst the deafening thunder were the shrieks of fierce winds and the howls of shockwaves that erupted upon their collision



and surged outwards like waves of a tsunami, threatening to flood everything in the field.

Boulders fractured, then shattered into tiny sharp stones. Plants and trees were uprooted from the ground.

It was as if a hurricane had swept across the field and ravaged it.

Lu Tian-He was flung into the distance from the force of Ye Fan and Ye Qing-Tian's fists colliding.

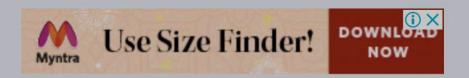
The shockwaves finally dispersed.

So did the hurricane.

Ye Qing-Tian stood proudly in the middle of the field, his hands once again folded behind his back as the hems of his white robes fluttered in the wind.

He looked like the swordsman of old—dignified, self-possessed and composed.

Ye Fan didn't seem as composed as the other man.



The force of the collision had thrusted Ye Fan backwards. A series of explosions erupted from the ground as Ye Fan stumbled backwards.

With every step that he took, the land beneath his foot fractured and split apart.

Stone and dirt rose into the air. Ye Fan finally managed to steady himself after retreating ten steps.

"Hahaha! Good! Good! That punch would have driven Mo Gu-Cheng, the King of Fighters, into taking three steps back. I can't believe that a young martial artist like you managed to block my punch and only retreat ten steps. You might not qualify as a supreme grandmaster, but you're definitely a match for the most powerful grandmaster in China." A burst of laughter rang out in the air.

The man in white nodded approvingly as he looked at Ye Fan.

His eyes were filled with approval and comfort.

"I can't believe that China's managed to get itself another rare martial arts prodigy. The



future indeed belongs to the young!" Ye Qing-Tian's laughter reverberated endlessly in the field.

He had not meant to injure Ye Fan with his earlier attack. It had been a test.

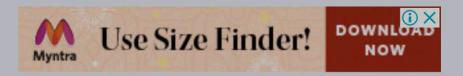
A few months ago, Ye Qing-Tian had heard about the battle at Dongchang Lake and how a young grandmaster had defeated the Japanese Sword God, Mochizuki Kawa.

Ye Qing-Tian had suspected the veracity of those rumors. But after his little test, he realized that Ye Fan was more powerful than he had expected.

He had expected Ye Fan's strength to rival that of the grandmasters who currently ranked number nine and ten in the ranking. After his little test, he realized that Ye Fan was only a step away from becoming a match for a supreme grandmaster.

Besides testing Ye Fan's true strength, he had another objective. That was to find out if Ye Fan was Chu Tian-Fan, the man who had taken the world by storm.

It was clear that he wasn't.



Chu Tian-Fan had thrashed the Japanese martial arts circle without any help. A man like him would have reached the level of a supreme grandmaster.

But the young man before him was only as powerful as a grandmaster.

The difference in strength dispelled all suspicions that Ye Qing-Tian had had of Ye Fan's identity.

"It appears that Chu Tian-Fan has truly perished in Japan," sighed Ye Qing-Tian regretfully.



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