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Ye Fan spoke with regality, his sonorous voice garnering reverence of all who heard.

It was as if he were a monarch returning to take control of his country.

He stomped on the ground forcefully.

With a loud rumble, the earth quaked. A rune appeared beneath the feet of the four greatest Dragon Slayers.

A beam of light shot toward the sky, engulfing the four men.

Soon after, Ye Fan's imposing voice reverberated through the area, "Heed my command, Dragon Slayers. Release your Qi and assemble!"

The moment the order left Ye Fan's lips, Gaius and the rest of his troop hollered and unleashed a blast of energy.

At the same time, the four men extended their arms and touched their palms to the person beside them.

In a split second, their breaths synchronized as they seemed to merge into one.

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Just then, Ye Fan surveyed his surroundings and summoned, “Thunder!”

A resounding boom shook the earth.

Strong gusts of wind swept the clouds across the sky and churned the seas.

A thundercloud drew near from the distance as if someone had lassoed it in. It was the epitome of impending doom.

Lightning struck downward.

Like a silvery dragon soaring through the clouds, the flash of light shot through the sky.

The four men were instantly enveloped in blinding white light.

Gaius and his men never imagined that when Ye Fan said he would call upon the heavens and the earth, he meant that he would strike them with lightning.

They were on the brink of despair.

Thunder and lightning ruled the skies. *How are we going to survive a lightning bolt?*

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Unfortunately, by the time they grasped Ye Fan's true intentions, it was too late for them.

The thick, heavy thundercloud descended upon them, taking them into the belly of the beast with its imaginary maw.

Excruciating pain coursed through their bodies.

Despite being Supreme martial artists, the torture was too much for them to bear as they went berserk.

“Argh!”

Their agonized howls pierced the still air of the valley.

It felt like they were trudging through hellfire; the burning sensation that overtook them drove them insane.

Multiple times, they felt like they had been pulverized by the thunderclap.

They were already on the verge of breaking down—a volt higher and they would have passed out immediately.

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However, whenever they got to the edge of that cliff, ready to plummet to their death, the lightning would weaken just enough for them to catch a few breaths before it reverted to its original intensity.

It was as if someone was manipulating the thunderclap, forcing Gaius and his men to dance perilously between life and death, oblivion and alertness.

Time ticked by slowly.

The torment continued for the four men, unrelenting and unremitting.

Their blood-curdling screams echoed throughout the mountains.

They could almost distinguish the sounds of their bones cracking under the deafening boom of thunder.

Ye Fan stood a short distance away, his expression stoic as he watched his subordinates writhe in pain.

It was as if their anguish did not faze him.

He calmly watched them pace before the doors of

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death.

However, his serenity originated not from a place of cruelty but rather from the knowledge that growth came with a hefty price—just like a piece of crude metal would have to be subjected to raging fire to be cast into a fine sword.

Pain was inevitable, but what did not kill them would make them stronger.

To Ye Fan, the four Dragon Slayers was that piece of crude metal, the thunderclap was the fire, and Ye Fan, the bladesmith.

With the Dragon Slayers as metal, the earth as the furnace, and the thunder as fire, Ye Fan would forge a sword that could conquer the world.

“Ye Fan, Ye Fan!”

Just as Ye Fan was observing the transformation of the Dragon Slayers, a sweet voice called out to him.

Ye Fan turned around to see a gorgeous woman running toward him, her pretty face filled with distraught.



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Shocked, Ye Fan hastily warned, “Junie, don't come here!”

However, it was already too late.

Junie had already reached the foot of the mountain.

Tendrils of energy emerged from the thunderclap surged toward Junie.

“No!” With a panicked cry, Ye Fan shot toward Junie like an arrow released from its bow.

In the blink of an eye, he materialized in front of Junie. With a flourish of his sleeve, he released a rush of elemental force that crashed into the thunderclap, disintegrating it instantly upon impact.

He then wrapped an arm around Junie's waist and, with a powerful jump, rescued her from the valley of thunder.

“You rascal, why didn't you stay at Xijiang as you were told? Had I not saved you just now, you would have turned into dust!” Ye Han reprimanded Junie after they reached a safe spot.

“Why are you being so mean? It's not like I knew that

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place was so dangerous.” Chastened, Junie defended herself timidly with her head bowed.

She looked like a young girl who had been bullied.

Ye Fan might be the only person to see the vulnerable side of the renowned goddess.

“Tell me, why were you looking for me?” Ye Fan's anger had dissipated quickly at the sight of the woman's forlorn expression, but he maintained a cold facade as he prompted her to speak.

Ye Fan's question brought Junie back to her senses. “Ye Fan, something's wrong,” she said with urgency. “Your wife has been kidnapped from Yunzhou. The kidnapper said that if you don't appear within the next three days, you won't even get to see Qiu Mucheng's remains.”

There was a rumble in the distance.

Ye Fan emanated an air of murderous intent that swirled around him like a hurricane.

It scattered the gravel beneath their feet and tossed the fallen leaves.



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The temperature dropped to sub-zero degrees.

In seconds, the sense of imminent danger pervaded the entire area, the tension so high that it was palpable.

Everyone had a line that must not be crossed for fear of evoking their wrath, and for Ye Fan, Qiu Mucheng was that line.

Anyone who dared to mess with her would have to face death.

It was already night at Yunzhou.

Rain poured from the heavens.

The sky grew gloomier as the rain fell harder.

Droplets of rain plopped into Yunwu Lake, forming ripples on the quiet surface.

A small boat bobbed gently in the center of the lake as it followed the motion of the undulating water.

On the board sat Qiu Mucheng, her clothes soaking wet. Deprived of an appropriate cover, her frail body trembled in the cold breeze.



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Meng Wanyu noticed Qiu Mucheng's situation from where she sat.

She covertly released her elemental force to form a dome that spanned several meters in diameter, thus encapsulating Qiu Mucheng within the energy bubble. Every raindrop that came in contact with the elemental force evaporated instantaneously, creating a mist that cast a whimsical sheen over the two women.

"Thank you," Qiu Mucheng whispered her gratitude as she glanced in Meng Wanyu's direction

"No need to thank me. In fact, I believe I owe you an apology for dragging you into this mess even though you don't deserve it, but I need to meet Ye Fan. This is the only way to lure him out," Meng Wanyu replied impassively.

"And if he doesn't come? Doesn't that mean that all your efforts are in vain?" Qiu Mucheng asked.

Shaking her head, Meng Wanyu disagreed, "Not entirely. If he doesn't show up, you, Angie and I will get to see what a ruthless person he is."

"If Ye Fan callously puts his wife on the backburner,



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then a man like this is not worth mourning over. Once my idiot of a best friend sees his true colors, she should be able to get over him quickly. After she finds closure, she'll be able to start afresh," Meng Wanyu stated matter-of-factly.

Qiu Mucheng's head drooped lower with each word Meng Wanyu uttered, overwhelmed by inexplicable dejection.

The rational part of her hoped that Ye Fan would not fall for the trap.

However, the other half of her could not help but wish that nothing would deter her beloved husband from coming to her rescue.

Qiu Mucheng was a jumble of emotions.

She was afraid to see Ye Fan appear, yet she also yearned for his presence.

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She could not bear to see Ye Fan get hurt, but the thought of being cast aside made her heart wrench.

Perhaps that was what life was about.

Poor or wealthy, diseased or healthy, each soul endeavored to find its purpose in life.

Back when Ye Fan still lived with her under her parents' roof, Qiu Mucheng's worries revolved around money and their future together.

Now that she had everything could have ever dreamed of and more, she expected to be happy and content.

However, she was greeted with the opposite.

There was a void in her heart that only Ye Fan's care and company could fill, but he was hardly around to do so.

Each stage of life had its own dilemmas and concerns.

Wealth did not promise happiness, and mediocrity did not guarantee misery.



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Those who could appreciate the little things in life were the ones who would find bliss.

The Qiu Mucheng today sat on a pile of riches, but all she desired was Ye Fan's love and care.

A successful career and a happy life ever after. *Are they too much to ask for?*

Back then, Ye Fan would pour all his time and energy into caring for Qiu Mucheng, but his efforts were unrecognized by many.

Now that he had risen to the top and gained authority over Jiangdong, he could shower Qiu Mucheng with extravagant treasures, but at the cost of his company and tender loving care.

These were lessons that could only be learned through experience.

If they could go back in time, Qiu Mucheng would rather Ye Fan stay as the unremarkable live-in son-in-law.

Perhaps it meant living a mundane life, but after going through innumerable challenges, Qiu Mucheng realized that the key to happiness was



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simplicity.

Qiu Mucheng had implored Ye Fan multiple times to let go of the wealth and revert to their quiet life.

Even so, she was well aware that going against the current was an arduous task.

Now that Ye Fan had reached the higher rungs of the societal ladder, it was hard to descend it.

There were elements that were beyond their control.

The days of peace and quiet were long gone, and the youth who had eyes for her alone now only lived in her memories.

Tears streamed silently down her face.

Qiu Mucheng could not fathom the surge of emotion.

Perhaps it was regret for her impatience toward Ye Fan when he was just an average man, or maybe remorse for taking their peaceful lives for granted.

Above all, Qiu Mucheng lamented her fervid desire to become extraordinary then.



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Had it not been for her wishes, Ye Fan would have never established Mufan Group, let alone become Mr. Chu of Jiangdong.

If they had gone down that course of life, they would not be where they were today, with their peaceful life shattered time and time again.

"What's wrong? You don't believe that he's going to show up too?" Meng Wanyu snickered when she noticed Qiu Mucheng's reddened eyes.

Her laugh was mirthless and sardonic.

"What a cruel guy. The coldest thing in this world is none other than a man's heart. I've come across too many womanizers in my life. You can accompany him through the darkest times of his life, but he'll gladly welcome another woman into his arms when he reaches the peak," she derided.

"At times, I really don't understand you stupid women. History has shown over and over again that men are not trustworthy, yet you throw yourselves at them like moths to a flame. How are they worthy of your love and devotion? The same goes for Angie! Why are you crying, Qiu Mucheng? Stop it! No one will pity you, especially not that scum. Men will feel



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no guilt or remorse over breaking your heart. In fact, they'll probably gloat over the fact that you can't live without them! You've given your whole heart to him, yet he returns your sincerity with betrayal," Meng Wanyu ranted angrily.

Her words were like spears, piercing Qiu Mucheng's heart and leaving behind a mutilated mess.

Meng Wanyu's baseless accusations made Qiu Mucheng even more upset.

"Stop it! I won't let you speak of Ye Fan in that manner. He's not like that. He's not!" Qiu Mucheng shook her head vehemently, tears streaking down her face. It was hard to tell if she was trying to convince Meng Wanyu or herself.

"You're still clinging onto that shred of hope? You still have faith in him?" Exasperated, Meng Wanyu let out a bark of laughter.

"If he really was a compassionate person, why would he be nowhere to be found when you're in trouble? If he truly loved you, would he flirt with other women in foreign countries, where your eyes can't see? If he even had a heart, he could never bear to see you suffer for three days without coming

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to your aid,” Meng Wanyu tried to hammer her point into Qiu Mucheng's head.

“Wake up! To these men, we are no more than clothes—to be worn when fancied and discarded when bored. If you die, it just gives them the perfect excuse to search for a new woman. Yet, here you are, you absolute fool, pining over a man who has no respect for you. All the men on earth are undependable and deserve to burn in hell!” Meng Wanyu vociferated, her voice climbing in decibels from the start of her impromptu speech to the end. Each word she uttered was injected with hatred toward men.

Her traumatizing childhood and the radical teachings from the internet had brainwashed Meng Wanyu into adopting misandry.

To add fuel to the fire, her best friend, Angie, had been mistreated by her father and brothers to secure monetary benefit in business, then later strung along by Ye Fan.

“Shut up! You're spouting nonsense! I trust Ye Fan; he's not like that! If he knew that I was in danger, he would come to save me,” Qiu Mucheng shrilled, refusing to believe Meng Wanyu's words.



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"I guess we'll wait and see if your knight in shining armor would actually make an appearance." With a huff, Meng Wanyu ended the conversation.

Time flew, and soon, it was an hour to midnight.

Once the clock ticked to twelve, it would be exactly three days since Ye Fan had been notified of Qiu Mucheng's capture.

"It seems like Mr. Chu is not coming."

"That poor girl, she wasted all her youth on some rubbish."

Heavy sighs sounded around Yunwu Lake as the onlookers sympathized with Qiu Mucheng's plight.

"That's right."

"To hell with Mr. Chu?' In my eyes, he's just a complete jerk. How could he let his wife be kidnapped for three days and not do a thing?"

"Heartless people like him would forever be despicable even if they had the world at their fingertips."



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"He is an embarrassment to Jiangdong!"

"I can't believe that a person as inhumane as he is ruling Jiangdong!"

The crowd grew rowdy, incensed on Qiu Mucheng's behalf.

"I knew that Ye Fan would not show up."

"He's a big shot now; he can have any woman his heart desires!"

"Who knows, he might be secretly hoping that his wife gets murdered so he can have the perfect excuse to find a new one."

Martial artists from Jiangbei stood on the bank of Yunwu Lake, surrounding the body of water. They had hurried over to witness Ye Fan's downfall.

They lost miserably to Ye Fan in combat, so tarnishing his reputation gave them a delusional sense of victory.

"Animal!"

"Ye Fan is an ungrateful b*stard."



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"I knew that Mucheng would suffer greatly for being with that jerk."

"Karma will bite him in the *ss one day!"

"When he was struggling, Mucheng stood by his side, supporting him every step of the way. But now that he's successful, he can't care less about our dear Mucheng!"

"Crude people like him should be skinned alive!"

"I should have stood my ground and forced Mucheng to divorce him back then."

Han Li and her husband felt their hearts sink as murmurs around them grew louder, the crass words screeching to their ears.

Even Su Qian had a hard time believing that Ye Fan could be so ruthless.

The people's attitudes toward Ye Fan did a 180 as they bashed him relentlessly. Every comment was a jab at Ye Fan.

After today, Mr. Chu of Jiangdong would become the laughingstock of the country, notorious for his

inhumanity.

“Ms. Xu, should we rescue her?”

Not far away, crouched at an unnoticeable corner, Xu Lei observed the commotion at Yunwu Lake. Tong Shan, Qing Tan, and other skilled martial artists stood behind her on standby.

The group grew anxious as the limit of three days neared its end.

“We'll wait a bit longer,” Xu Lei said with a shake of her head.

She peered in the distance, her gaze unwavering.

She was positive that the youth would appear.

He may be late at times, but he has never been absent!

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The clock soon struck midnight, and visibility was practically reduced to zero due to the torrential rain, but the people waiting for Ye Fan at Yunwu Lake still saw no sign of him whatsoever.

Of course, Meng Wanyu wasn't surprised by the outcome in the slightest.

The only reason she stayed till then was to have Qiu Mucheng see Ye Fan's true nature.

"It's over, Ms. Qiu. So, what do you have to say now? I told you, didn't I? Men cannot be trusted. They're all ungrateful and heartless b*stards, but Ye Fan really takes the cake! He toyed with my best friend's feelings, and now he doesn't even care if his wife lives or dies! A man like this isn't worthy of your love at all. I suggest you pick your men more wisely next time," Meng Wanyu said with a sneer as she slowly stood up and glanced at Qiu Mucheng.

Her hatred and disdain toward Ye Fan were clearly reflected in her tone, but those feelings of hers didn't really apply to Qiu Mucheng.

In fact, she even found her circumstances to be somewhat pitiful.

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Lei San, Wang Jiexi, and the others waiting beside the lake grew increasingly anxious when they saw Meng Wanyu get up.

“We can't afford to wait any longer! That crazy woman is about to make her move! Governor Han, have the snipers prepare to fire!”

Lei San and the others were forced into such a desperate situation that they believed the snipers were their only option left.

With a gloomy look in his eyes, Lu Tianhe stood up and made his way to the side of the lake. He then began accumulating the Qi in his body and got it surging through his veins in preparation for an all-out battle.

Should the snipers miss their shot, he would charge in as a last resort and try his best to rescue Qiu Mucheng.

Of course, Lu Tianhe wasn't the only one with that idea.

Xu Lei, who had rushed all the way over from Yanjing, was also ordering her fighters, “Get ready to attack on my mark! We must protect Ms. Qiu at all

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costs!”

Even Ye Yuyan, who was recovering from her injuries in the hospital, had rushed over that night.

The men from the Green Dragon Force too, had their gaze fixated on the middle of the lake.

Each and every one of them was as tense as a fully drawn bow, ready to launch themselves at Meng Wanyu if she tried anything funny.

“Listen up, everyone! Instructor Chu has given us all new lives, so we owe it to him to keep Ms. Qiu safe! We failed to protect her before, so we must redeem ourselves by rescuing her tonight, even if it costs us our lives!”

“Roger!” the members of the Green Dragon Force responded in unison.

Just like that, the various groups kept their gazes fixated on Meng Wanyu's every move.

Standing proudly above Yunwu Lake, Meng Wanyu slowly looked up and scanned her surroundings.

Moments later, her shrill laughter echoed

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throughout the area as she gloated, “Hahaha! When I first came here, I was told that Mr. Chu of Jiangdong is a man of righteousness. But now, it seems he is nothing but a coward who would leave his wife to die at the hands of her captors! How is such a man worthy of being the pride of Jiangdong? This is such a joke!”

Her tone was dripping with mockery and disdain, especially when she insulted Ye Fan.

Suddenly, Meng Wanyu tone turned ice-cold as she continued, “The three days are up, so it's about time we put an end to this farce.”

Lei San and the others assumed Meng Wanyu was going to kill Qiu Mucheng when they heard that. “Have them take the shot, Governor Han!”

“Attack!” Xu Lei shouted.

“Let's go!” The Green Dragon Force members prepared to make their move as well.

Swoosh!

Right as they were about to spring into action, a loud sound tore through the night sky in the distance.



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With the help of the dim lighting by the side of the lake, they could see multiple figures running through the shadows.

They were moving so fast that they could cover thousands of miles within seconds as they zipped past the buildings with ease.

“W-Who are those people?”

“I-Is that Mr. Chu?”

The commotion soon attracted the attention of the crowd at the scene.

Lei San and the others were so shocked that it took them a moment to regain their composure.

“Hahaha!”

“Mr. Chu!”

“That has got to be Mr. Chu!”

“Is Mr. Chu here?”

“Yeah! He has come to rescue his wife!”

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“That crazy b*tch is done for now!”

“Hahaha!”

They then rushed forward and waved excitedly at the approaching figures.

“Lei San, are you sure that's really Mr. Chu?” Wang Jiexi asked.

Given how dark it was and the speed at which the figures were moving, it was only natural that he couldn't identify them at all.

“Who else could possibly be coming at such a time? It's definitely Mr. Chu! He must've brought some powerful fighters with him! He loves showing up at the very last minute because it makes him look cooler, you see. Haha! Anyway, let's go welcome him!” Lei San replied excitedly.

The sight of Ye Fan's arrival relieved him of his anxiety as well as the burden of protecting Qiu Mucheng.

With Ye Fan around, they no longer had to worry about the huge threat that stood before them.

Lei San and the others then stood in two straight lines and bowed at the figures coming their way.

"I, Lei San..."

"I, Wang Jiexi..."

"I, Han Dongmin..."

"I, He Lanshan..."

They then continued in unison, "Welcome your arrival, Mr. Chu!"

Their loud voices boomed in the silence of the night and attracted the attention of everyone around them.

The look in Meng Wanyu's eyes gradually turned cold as she frowned at the incoming figures.

Feeling relieved after hearing what Lei San and the others said, Qiu Mucheng glanced at Meng Wanyu and said defiantly, "Hah! I told you, Ye Fan isn't a heartless person! Do you believe me now, huh?"

Meng Wanyu's face went pale, and she simply kept quiet as she had nothing to say in response.

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“Ms. Xu, shall we go welcome the Dragon Master?” asked one of Xu Lei's subordinates when he saw how calm she was in comparison to Lei San and the others.

“Let's wait a little while longer,” Xu Lei replied while shaking her head.

For some reason, she had a bad feeling as she stared at the figures that were getting closer.

Seconds later, all five figures finally arrived at the scene.

The one leading the group shoved Lei San and the others aside and shouted out loud, “Who are you calling 'Mr. Chu?' We are Grandmasters on China's Grandmaster list! We have come to Jiangdong under the order of the War God Castle to execute this woman from Chu Sect and punish the traitor of China! Where is Ye Fan? Hand him over right now!”

Lei San and the others were completely frozen in shock and bewilderment.

“A-Are these imperial commissioners?”



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“W-What's going on, Mr. Lei? Why has Mr. Chu become a criminal all of a sudden? What is this War God Castle? Why did you call them imperial commissioners?” Han Dongmin asked in confusion.

Although he had been promoted to the governor of Jiangdong, he still regarded Ye Fan as a god among men.

After all, Li Hongze had personally made a trip to Jiangdong just to award Ye Fan the title of “The Nation's Pride.”

The fact that Ye Fan received such treatment meant he had contributed greatly to the country, so Han Dongmin had always assumed no one in China would dare mess with him.

As for Meng Wanyu, he simply saw her as a crazy woman bold enough to kidnap Qiu Mucheng in order to get her revenge on Ye Fan.

Hence, Han Dongmin was very surprised to see someone marching into Jiangdong and accusing Ye Fan of being an enemy of the country.

“It's a very complicated story, Governor Han. All you have to know is that the War God Castle is the

highest authority in the world of martial arts here in China. The power they possess is similar to that of government officials,” Lei San replied with his face all pale.

Han Dongmin knew nothing about the martial arts world, but he understood the last sentence very well.

If the War God Castle represents the government of China, then it was the government that branded Ye Fan as a national enemy!

“H-How did this happen? What's going on, Lei San? I remember the government awarding Mr. Chu the title of 'The Nation's Pride' a little more than a year ago, so how did he become a national enemy now? What on earth is going on here?” Han Dongmin asked while glaring at Lei San with reddened eyes.

He was really anxious as he had risen to power mainly because of Ye Fan's help, which made him one of Ye Fan's associates to a certain degree.

It was because of the government's respect toward Ye Fan that Han Dongmin career as a governor had been smooth sailing over the past two years.

Therefore, Ye Fan losing his title would also bring forth the end of Han Dongmin's career.

I'm well aware that nothing lasts forever. I've never expected Ye Fan's glory days to go on indefinitely, but I didn't think it'd end this soon! It has barely been two years since Ye Fan was awarded his title! Is this all really going to end now?

"Please don't ask me any further, Governor Han. I'm not too sure what this is all about either. You may reserve your questions for Li Er when he gets here later."

Lei San and Wang Jiexi were both stressed out of their minds as the War God Castle's sudden intervention had disrupted their plans completely.

The two of them then turned toward Lu Tianhe in hopes that he could come up with an idea.

"Sigh... What could I possibly do in such a situation? I may have some influence in the military, but I'm just a nobody in the martial arts world. The War God Castle is the highest authority in China for a reason, you know? No one dares go against them because no one is capable of doing so. I got a little worried when Mr. Chu publicly challenged the War God

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Castle during the Jiangbei incident, but I had assumed they would leave him alone out of appreciation for his talents. Well, it looks like I was wrong about that. Seeing as these five Grandmasters have come all the way to Jiangdong to arrest Mr. Chu, it would appear that the War God Castle is determined to take action against him. I suppose that's why Mr. Chu rarely comes out these days. I used to think that the reason Mr. Chu rarely comes is that he fears the power of Chu Sect that is backing Meng Wanyu up. Now, I see that he is actually avoiding the War God Castle instead..." Lu Tianhe exclaimed helplessly.

The questions he had in his mind had all been answered.

At that moment, Li Er came rushing over looking extremely worn out.

Lei San and the others immediately ran up to him and asked, "What's going on here, Li Er? You were supposed to seek reinforcements in Yanjing, so how did you end up bringing a bunch of imperial commissioners instead?"

"Things aren't looking good for Mr. Chu. The War God Castle is serious about taking action against

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him,” Li Er replied with a solemn expression.

He had been waiting for days at the bottom of Mount Yan, but he never saw the King of Fighters, Sword Saint, or the others.

With no other choice, Li Er decided to pay off all the staff at Mount Yan for information on what was going on.

He figured the War God Castle would at least allow him to meet them due to his connection with Ye Fan.

However, Li Er was told that the War God Castle had recently held a grand meeting a few days ago. The only topic on the agenda was how they would punish Ye Fan for his crime.

Li Er knew the situation had to be serious if the War God Castle was gathering support from forces all over the country just to arrest Ye Fan.

He then returned to Jiangdong and rushed over to Yunzhou as quickly as he could.

“What happened? How did Mr. Chu end up becoming a national enemy all of a sudden? Is this

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about that incident in Jiangbei? Wasn't that already taken care of? Is the War God Castle seriously raking up old grievances?"

Lei San, Wang Jiexi, and Han Dongmin were all clueless as to what this was all about.

Li Er shook his head. "No, I think Mr. Chu has gotten himself into some new trouble. The high-ranking officials of the War God Castle are really pissed at him."

Lei San and the others shuddered upon hearing that.

"Oh, Mr. Chu... Could you please stay out of trouble for once? Even if you're not afraid of trouble, you should at least think about your subordinates here in Jiangdong..." they exclaimed with wry smiles on their faces.

The fact that Ye Fan had become an enemy of the country left them all pale from fear and nervousness.

"Where are you, Ye Fan? Turn yourself in now!"

The Grandmaster's cold voice sounded deafening in the silence of the night.

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Li Er and the others were so intimidated by the authoritative air of the five Grandmasters that they trembled while hiding in the crowd.

“You are but mere Grandmasters, and yet you dare address a Supreme by name? One would assume people of your age would at least have some manners.”

The faint voice of a woman could be heard coming from the crowd.

Lu Tianhe and his men were all frozen in shock when they heard that.

Who could possibly be so bold as to insult the Grandmasters?

Li Er turned around in response, only to realize it was the beautiful CEO of Hongqi Group, Xu Lei.

“Watch your tongue, Ms. Xu! You could die if you piss these guys off!” he warned her.

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“How insolent! Who dares disrespect me like this?”

Xu Lei's insults immediately drew the attention of the five Grandmasters.

One of them had a cold look in his eyes as he raised his hand and prepared to teach her a lesson.

It wasn't until he saw how young she was that he held himself back.

“Hmph... I'll let this slide because you're but a young lady. Just so you know, we could've punished you for disrespect!”

Despite their tendency to abuse their status as elders, the Grandmasters were still nice people and refused to punish a small fry like Xu Lei.

“Is that so? You're going to punish me for disrespect when I simply stated the facts? In that case, aren't you guys just as guilty for accusing the Unrivalled of being a criminal?” Xu Lei snapped back coldly at them.

The Grandmasters were furious when they heard that. “You... You sure have a sharp tongue, young lady! How are you related to Ye Fan? Why are you

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defending him like this? As your elder, I shall remind you that he is guilty of treason, so it would be in your best interest to stay away from him before you get caught in the crossfire.”

“Nonsense! Ye Fan has always been a man of honor, so there's no way he'd commit treason! You guys must be framing him or something!” Xu Lei shouted angrily and tried her best to defend Ye Fan.

She was about to continue arguing when Li Er ran over and dragged her to the side.

“Ms. Xu, I think you should refrain from saying too much right now. Ms. Qiu's situation is concerning as is, so we really can't afford anything to happen to you. Please don't make it harder for us to answer to Mr. Chu,” he pleaded.

That was when Lu Tianhe recognized the person in front and stepped forward to greet him respectfully, “Greetings, Grandmaster Yan. My name is Lu Tianhe. What brings you all the way to Jiangdong? You should've told me you were coming so I could make preparations to welcome your arrival!”

Lu Tianhe used to be a martial artist before joining the military.

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Being an instructor of the three armed forces, he frequented Yanjing all year round, so he knew some of the prominent figures in the martial arts world.

The elderly man standing before him was Yan Buping. He was the head of the Xingyi Sect in Jiangnan as well as the highest-ranked Grandmaster.

Although Lu Songliang from Jiangbei was similarly powerful due to his family background, Yan Buping was the head of a martial arts sect and had over three thousand disciples over the years.

All Xingyi Fist practitioners in the world viewed him as a highly-respected master, so his reputation and prestige far surpassed that of Lu Songliang's.

As such, there was no way Lu Tianhe wouldn't know who he was.

Even so, Yan Buping had no idea who Lu Tianhe was and simply arched an eyebrow as he asked, "Lu Tianhe? Never heard of you. Whose disciple are you?"

"I..." Lu Tianhe's eyelids twitched from the awkwardness of the situation.



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*Great... Just f*cking great... I just had to go greet him when he doesn't even know who I am! This old man is a lot more arrogant than Mr. Chu!*

Despite being flustered, Lu Tianhe tried his best to introduce himself patiently, "Well, you see, I'm—"

However, Yan Buping cut him off before he could even finish, "Whatever, we'll discuss your identity later. Seeing as you're from Jiangdong, you should know the situation here better than we do. I want you to go see Ye Fan and tell him the War God Castle demands his immediate presence!"

Yan Buping's voice was so deep and authoritative that Lu Tianhe went pale and silent instantly.

Despite being treated with extreme contempt, there was nothing Lu Tianhe could do about it.

After all, Yan Buping was the highest-ranked Supreme in China and a well-respected senior in the martial arts world.

Even so, Lu Tianhe would never deliver the message to Ye Fan as the latter wasn't even in Yunzhou at the time.

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On top of that, Lu Tianhe refused to play the role of the messenger.

“I'm sorry, Grandmaster Yan, but Mr. Chu is both the Unrivalled and the pillar of China. A mere nobody like me wouldn't dare to deliver such a message to him! Since this is an order given to you by the War God Castle, I think it would be best if you Grandmasters approach the Unrivalled Grandmaster directly.”

Thinking that Lu Tianhe was afraid of Ye Fan, Yan Buping reassured him by saying, “Don't worry. Just tell him this is a message from the War God Castle. Even someone like Ye Fan wouldn't dare cause trouble once he hears that. Well, unless he has a death wish, that is.”

They believed that Ye Fan would never dare oppose the War God Castle as he was the one in the wrong.

“No, I still think a nobody like me shall avoid being involved in this grand conflict of yours.” Lu Tianhe rejected his request once again.

Having lost his patience with Lu Tianhe, Yan Buping asked coldly, “Oh? I will ask you this one final time. Are you going to deliver the message or not?”

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“Why are you wasting your time and energy on this uncivilized lowlife? A crappy place like Jiangdong is bound to have tons of ignorant fools like him. All it takes is a little beating to make him behave. I, Ke Zhe, shall be the one to carry out said task!” said one of the Grandmasters as he stepped forward.

He had on a pair of military boots and looked a little disheveled, especially with his long beard.

Lu Tianhe tensed up and went wide-eyed from shock when he heard the Grandmaster's name.

K-Ke Zhe? As in, the Grandmaster ranked second on the list? Oh, my God... If he's here, then does that mean these are the top five Grandmasters in China? And here I thought the other four were just random nobodies Yan Buping had brought along to appear intimidating... Looks like I have severely underestimated the War God Castle's resolve to take action against Mr. Chu. They must really be prepared to take him down if they're sending five Grandmasters just to deliver a message! Looks like Mr. Chu's place in the martial arts world of China is gone for good now. Regardless, now isn't the time to be worrying about him. I'm in a pretty dangerous situation myself here!

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Right as Ke Zhe was about to teach Lu Tianhe a lesson, the gentle voice of a woman came from Yunwu Lake.

“Only the criminal should be punished for the crime. Gentlemen, you may take your issues up with me instead. There's no need to put General Lu in a difficult spot.”

The voice was soft yet sounded cold and authoritative at the same time.

Everyone turned their heads toward the lake and saw a beautiful woman on a small boat, slowly making its way toward them.



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Upon hearing the voice, Ke Zhe and the others turned to look.

When they saw that it was another young woman, all of them couldn't resist laughing.

“Have all the men in Jiangdong died? Why are weak women the only ones standing up for Ye Fan? Could it be that Ye Fan actually thinks that the matter will die down just because he has sent these irrelevant women here?”

After letting out a mocking laugh, Ke Zhe bellowed at the woman on the boat, “Girl, considering that you're in the prime of your youth, I would advise you to mind your own business instead.”

He threatened in an icy tone, “If you get into trouble and let yourself be soiled at a young age, your parents would be utterly devastated.”

Just as he spoke, a couple rushed out from the crowd.

“Sir, we're sorry. Our daughter is still a naive young girl that doesn't know how the world works. She didn't mean to offend you. As her parents, we would like to apologize on her behalf. We will leave right

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away and reprimand her when we're home.”

With ashen expressions, Han Li and her husband rushed to the lakeside and apologized to Ke Zhe, Yan Buping, and the other elderly men.

Although they didn't know who the group was, Han Li could guess from Li Er's reaction that the five were powerful men.

Or else, why would Ye Fan be so terrified to the extent of not showing his face?

After she apologized, Han Li ran up to the bamboo boat and pulled Qiu Mucheng out from it.

“Mucheng, let's go. We're not staying in Yunzhou anymore. In fact, we're moving out from the Cloud Mansion too. As for the position of CEO or the Queen of Jiangdong, we don't need them either. Let's just go home and continue with our lives,” Han Li asserted as she pulled Qiu Mucheng along.

She was teary-eyed when she spoke while her words were interspaced with sobs.

Although she and her husband were greedy for money and power, they still prioritized their

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daughter's safety over everything else.

After all, there would always be opportunities to make more money. Worse comes to worst, they would just marry her off to another illustrious family.

Given how beautiful their daughter was, there would be plenty of suitors who didn't mind that she had been married before.

More importantly, they didn't want to see their daughter die because of Ye Fan.

All this while, Han Li and Qiu Lei were really worried that their daughter would pass before they did.

Fortunately, Meng Wanyu hadn't struck despite the fact that the three-day ultimatum was over.

Given that Qiu Mucheng had narrowly escaped death, Han Li naturally didn't dare to put her in danger again.

All they wanted to do now was to take Qiu Mucheng as far away from there as possible.

"Mom, Dad, calm down, and listen to me..."

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Qiu Mucheng desperately tried to explain to her parents.

Unfortunately, they were in no mood to listen.

“Mucheng, that's enough. We will be leaving with you no matter what. Everything that happened was my fault because I kept forcing you to marry someone rich. However, I didn't expect you to suffer and have your life threatened after getting together with Ye Fan.”

She continued, “Now that I have realized my folly, I will stop forcing you to marry someone who is prominent. Prior to this, I always assumed that Ye Fan wasn't worthy of you. But now, I'm cognizant that we are the ones not worthy of him. In truth, we are just salaried employees who live ordinary lives. The pressure that comes from being the Queen of Jiangdong isn't something we can bear. Therefore, we don't want the crown anymore. Going forward, I'll just find you a civil servant to be married to.”

Just as Han Li expressed her thoughts, she hugged Qiu Mucheng tightly with both arms, as if she was worried that she would lose her only daughter.

The moment she finished, Han Li turned around and

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looked at Meng Wanyu before sweeping her gaze across Ke Zhe, Yan Buping, Li Er, Lei San, and the others. She then declared, “Whatever beef you have with Ye Fan or Mr. Chu, please look for him. As for my daughter, she no longer has anything to do with Ye Fan. I’m willing to sacrifice my life to stop whoever that tries to bully her or my family!”

Han Li’s words were both decisive and resolute at the same time.

After all, motherhood was capable of turning any weak woman into a strong one.

Even though Han Li was protecting Qiu Mucheng for her own selfish reasons, such as ensuring that her daughter would still be around to take care of her when she was old, it was still a feat of courage for her to speak so brazenly to the group of powerful men.

“This mad woman is really protective of her offspring.”

As Han Li’s voice echoed throughout the surroundings, Lei San and the others were stunned. Consequently, they couldn’t help but change the way they looked at Han Li and her husband.

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However, Li Er sneered, “Protective? At the end of the day, she's just doing it for her own selfish reasons. If Ms. Qiu were to die, who would take care of her in her old age? This couple is as cunning as ever.”

Having stayed by Ye Fan's side for a long time, Li Er naturally understood Ye Fan's in-laws very well.

They were both selfish and greedy. In fact, the only thing they truly cared about was their own well-being.

Despite Ye Fan's good nature, he too couldn't tolerate them and was even forced to sever their relationship.

Thus, Li Er could never bring himself to like them.

“Mucheng, let's go. We must leave Ye Fan and Yunzhou. After tonight, we will no longer have anything to do with this place and the people here.”

Grabbing her daughter's hand, Han Li led her out of the crowd.

Much to everyone's surprise, Qiu Mucheng shook her mother's hand off resolutely despite Han Li's

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attempt to protect her.

Turning around, Han Li glared at her daughter and questioned, “You foolish girl, what are you doing? We should leave at once. Are you trying to cause me and your dad to have a heart attack?”

“Dad, Mom, there are certain matters that I can hide from. But there are also matters that I cannot avoid. I am Ye Fan's wife and the ruler of Jiangdong. As of now, Ye Fan isn't around and Jiangdong is under threat. As his wife, I cannot leave this place. You should go without me,” Qiu Mucheng explained softly.

“Shut up!” Qiu Lei gave Qiu Mucheng a slap. “You idiot! Ye Fan has left you and doesn't care about your survival. So why are you still blinded by your loyalty to him? Despite being a graduate of a prestigious university, how can you not use your brains a little? By staying back here for Ye Fan's sake, all you're doing is dying for him. How can you not understand something so simple?” Qiu Lei questioned with gritted teeth.

“Now, let me ask you one last time. Are you leaving or not?”

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Without a moment's hesitation, Qiu Mucheng shook her head. "Dad, Mom, you were right in what you said before. I was born with an ordinary background where my parents are just run-of-the-mill citizens. Previously, I was ostracized within my family and encountered many obstacles at work. However, when I was at my lowest, Ye Fan stayed by my side and supported me by giving me encouragement and comfort. After that, it was he who elevated me to heights of power and riches that I would never dare dream about."

She added, "As of today, Li Er, the general, and the rest of Jiangdong respect and know me as the Queen of Jiangdong. Even if I can't bear the weight of the title, it is my duty to carry the burden still. After all, I'm his woman, the wife of the King of Jiangdong. I will be by his side when he rules or perishes together with him when he is destroyed."



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