



Chapter 1820

On the main street of Yunzhou, a dozen motorcycles with hazard lights flashing fiercely surrounded Chu Wenfei's car as it made slow progress.

Curious bystanders gathered on both sides of the street.

Chu Wenfei was pleased with the attention he was receiving. His heart swelled with joy.

*Isn't this what one strives for in life? The adoration of one's fellow men? To see the look in my parent's eyes when I return with triumph and riches makes slogging out there worth it, especially when somebody tells my parents what a good job they did in raising me.*

Chu Wenfei leaned forward, impatience to arrive home spurred by the uplifting thought. "Driver, please drive faster."

*A crowd comprising of government officials and distant relatives must have already gathered outside my parents' house. I will be met with cheers and applause when I get out of the vehicle!*

As soon as the command left his lips, the car braked with sudden violence. Chu Wenfei nearly collided with the seat before him, rudely interrupting the fantasies of basking in his glorious arrival.



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"What happened?" he demanded.

The driver pointed to the road in front, indicating that the car ahead had stopped first.

Chu Wenfei wound down the window to address the person who was driving the car in front. "Why aren't we moving?"

"Apologies, Mr. Chu. It appears that the road ahead is sealed."

Chu Wenfei chuckled. "Lin Shi is so thoughtful to have sealed off the road in preparation for my arrival. Tell them that Lin Shi is expecting me, Chu Wenfei. They'll let us pass when they hear my name." Chu Wenfei's tone barely concealed his arrogance.

*I'm becoming more and more fond of this newly-elected mayor. It's really kind of him to do all of this to welcome my arrival! It sends a strong message about my status and influence.*

However, the captain pulled an apologetic face. "It's no use, Mr. Chu. I did tell them that. They said they'd never heard your name."

Chu Wenfei's eyes widened. "There must be a misunderstanding! Why would you go through all the trouble to prepare for my arrival only to deny me passage? It sounds to me like your men need proper training."



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The captain hastened to appease Chu Wenfei's growing anger. "Please remain calm, Mr. Chu. I'll make a call. As a guest of Lin Shi, nobody will dare restrict your access to anywhere in Yunzhou. I'm sure that there's a very simple explanation for this. Hang on, I'll be back with a clarification soon, and we'll be on our way."

Wang Hu smiled reassuringly before stepping away to speak to his superior.

To his confusion, Wang Hu had consulted all of his colleagues only to find out that nobody knew of the order to seal the main road.

"That's strange. Who ordered them to do so, then? Maybe Lin Shi had ordered another department too?" Wang Hu's suspicion grew.

After pulling some strings, he got in touch with Lin Shi's secretary, whose answer was the same as the others he had heard.

"Lin Shi did not order for the main road to be blocked!"

Wang Hu was mystified by that answer.

He jerked his head up to study the men manning the roadblock. "Where did they come from?" he muttered. "Could they be bandits or kidnappers masquerading as government employees to abduct Mr. Chu?"



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Chu Wenfei emerged from his vehicle as Wang Hu was busy speculating. "What the hell is going on? Aren't you all operating under the same jurisdiction?"

Wang Hu shook his head. "I'd made some inquiries, Mr. Chu. Those men are not under the employ of our provincial government."

"Who are they, then?" barked Chu Wenfei.

"I don't know, sir."

"What are you standing there for?" Chu Wenfei chastised. "Since you're sure that they're not sanctioned by your government, what right do they have to seal off the road? Shouldn't you be arresting them instead?"

His words jolted Wang Hu to his senses.

"You're right, Mr. Chu. Don't worry. We'll handle it."

There were only seven or eight men manning the blockade.

Wang Hu had more than a dozen men under his command. With the advantage of numbers and moral superiority, they proceeded without fear and stopped before the tape.

"Who are you?" Wang Hu questioned roughly



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when they were within earshot. "How dare you seal off the road without approval and disrupt traffic within the city! Get lost before we arrest you for disruption of social order!"

Undeterred by Wang Hu's threats, the men merely replied that they were simply carrying out orders.

"Preposterous!" Wang Hu snorted, incredulous at their cheek. "Whose orders? Even the mayor gave no such order. You've had your chance, men. Now we'll do it the hard way."

*I've asked my superiors and even contacted the office of Lin Shi himself! How dare they stick by their bald-faced lie?*

Feeling agitated, Wang Hu ordered them to be arrested.

"By my orders!" A sonorous voice sounded from behind just as Wang Hu's men were about to seize the others.

Wang Hu whipped around and saw Lu Tianhe and He Lanshan approach, flanked by thousands clad in military uniforms behind them.

"By my orders," repeated Lu Tianhe, "all roads from here to Mount Yunding Villa are to be sealed and placed under military control.



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Unrelated vehicles or personnel are strictly denied access!"

"Yes, sir!" the men chorused, and the collective voices of thousands rumbled across the skies like righteous thunder.

Fully equipped with battle gear, the soldiers marched into the city via its main road toward its heart, where Mount Yunding Villa lay.

The road stretching over several miles was manned at regular intervals.

It appeared that the entire city of Yunzhou was being placed under martial law.

"What's going on?" cried Wang Hu, flustered.

Chu Wenfei was equally dumbstruck.

Even the people of Yunzhou who witnessed the spectacle were no less thunderstruck.

*Why is there an influx of armed soldiers? Are we being invaded?*

"General Lu, what about them?" One of the officers pointed at Wang Hu and his men.

Lu Tianhe waved his hand dismissively. "Have them detained. How dare these lesser men to create a scene on the day of Mr. Chu's body



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returning home? Hold them for a day and let them go after the funeral.”

Immediately, a platoon came over and escorted Chu Wenfei, Wang Hu, and the rest of the group away.

“What did I do?” Chu Wenfei stammered. “Why am I being arrested? I just want to go home to pay my parents a visit. Is that illegal? I demand to see Lin Shi. As his honored guest, I demand the right to speak with him!”



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Qiu Mucheng was thrilled at the news of Ye Fan's arrival from Mount Yunding Villa.

To celebrate his return, she put on her best dress and her favorite heels. On top of that, she wore a necklace with diamonds selected with exceptional care that sparkled brilliantly under the light.

Earrings of emerald shaped like clover swayed as she looked about her with feverish excitement.

Qiu Mucheng looked regal and elegant, befitting the queen of Jiangdong as she awaited her royal husband alongside their subjects.

"Calm yourself, Mucheng," Su Qian reminded. "You mustn't lose your cool when you see Ye Fan. Learn to be aloof like me! You should stay put and let him come to you. Show him that we women can survive without men just fine. Hold your ground, Mucheng. The entire Yunzhou is watching. Don't embarrass us womenfolk. You need to maintain your elegance and dignity instead of running into his arms the moment you see him. You'll look like a joke to everybody if you do."

Su Qian stood by Qiu Mucheng's side on the balcony of the villa, the highest point in Yunzhou.





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Su Qian felt a sense of pride and honor well up in her as they surveyed the most powerful men in the region gathered below.

*Look at me! I'm even more powerful than them!*

As much as she was enjoying her position of prestige, she was well aware that she was only there as Qiu Mucheng's guest. Her best friend was the one with the true power.

"I know," Qiu Mucheng replied. "Don't worry. I will pace myself."

As hard as she tried to keep her promise, the anticipation in her voice and the blush in her cheeks gave it away.

Su Qian sighed. "You're beyond hope, Mucheng."

Not long after, Han Dongmin led the entire Ye family up the steps of Mount Yunding.

Aside from Han Dongmin, Wang Jiexi of Horbah was in attendance. His name was once renowned in the Jiangdong region.

Not long after them, Lu Tianhe, the commander of Jiangdong defense zone, and He Lanshan arrived as well.

Upon arriving at the villa, the first thing they did



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was greet Qiu Mucheng as a sign of respect.

"I didn't expect to see you, General Lu!" responded Qiu Mucheng warmly in the perfect etiquette of a hostess. "And Governor Han and Governor He! How kind of all of you to show up. When my husband returns, I will have him organize a banquet in your honor. None of you are going home sober tonight!"

The men exchanged uncomfortable glances with one another as none of them was eager to break the news.

Su Qian observed Qiu Mucheng's interactions with the important men with admiration.

*All the influential figures in Jiangdong are here just because Ye Fan returns home. I'd thought that the mayor of Yunzhou was important enough, but his title pales in comparison to the other guests in attendance today! Mucheng has been so busy entertaining them that I didn't even get the chance to speak to her! I would complain that she's too gracious of a hostess, but I understand the need to be. She's the queen of Jiangdong, after all.*

Su Qian was overwhelmed by the presence of all the legendary figures gathered at Mount Yunding Villa, as it was inconceivable for somebody of her status to even meet the mayor of Yunzhou. Naturally, the identities of



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the men in attendance frightened her.

Reflecting upon her fear and comparing it to how easily Qiu Mucheng had struck up conversations with all the men she was afraid of, Su Qian's admiration for her childhood friend only grew.

*I remember a time when Mucheng was not taken seriously in her family. She was so oppressed that she couldn't even afford decent make-up products and was forced to live in a tiny apartment with her parents. Back then, she was inferior to me in everything from wealth to status. It only took her a few years to have risen way above my station. Even Han Dongmin and Lu Tianhe speak to her so courteously. Oh, if only things were different!*

Qiu Mucheng was still entertaining guests while Su Qian observed in silence. Her exquisite features bore traces of disappointment.

Though the friendship she shared with Qiu Mucheng was a good one, she nonetheless felt disappointed and upset that she had been left so far behind.

*She was inferior to me. How the tables have turned.*

Su Qian was also aware that Qiu Mucheng had not surpassed her through her own merit. It



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was all due to marrying a good husband.

*I'd advised Mucheng to get a divorce on the grounds of Ye Fan dragging her name down. At that time, everybody thought that she was a stupid girl for marrying a loser. It turns out I am the stupid one, after all. Why didn't I have a better judgment of character back then? If I did, I might have snatched up Ye Fan for myself. The one currently socializing with influential men could have been me!*

Su Qian allowed her imagination to run amok before resigning herself to a sigh.

*Nevertheless, the passage of time stops for no one.*

At that moment, the news of Ye Fan's return to Yunzhou was already common knowledge in the streets.

The elders of the city were proud to call such an influential character their kin.

They exited the comfort of their homes voluntarily and crowded the streets in preparation to give their beloved leader the warmest welcome they could.

Meanwhile, Chu Wenfei was sobbing on the side of the road.



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“Ye Fan again! Oh God, give me a break! What did I do to incur such wrath from you?”

The confusion on his face had turned to hopelessness as he heard that Ye Fan was returning to Yunzhou on the same day as him.

*Some people like me are destined for desolation, it seems.*

“You win, Ye Fan,” murmured Chu Wenfei as tears streamed down his cheeks.

Several old ladies in the vicinity handed him some tissue. “I understand how you feel, young man. It’s no shame to cry like that at the prospect of seeing Mr. Chu in the flesh.”

Suddenly, the ground began to rumble as a row of silhouettes appeared over the horizon.

Even from that distance, the crowd began to cheer and clap madly. Some had even dashed in the direction of the newcomers.

When the newcomers came close enough to be seen, the people of Yunzhou stood rooted to the spot with their eyes widening in shock.

“W-What’s happening?”

Chu Wenfei grew pale with shock as he regarded the sea of white ambling toward



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them.

“Here they come!”

“I hear footsteps! Many of them!”

“Hurry, Mucheng! Let's descend the mountain to welcome Ye Fan home.”

Atop Mount Yunding, Ye Ximei and the entire Ye family, who had been waiting for hours, heard the rumble that preceded the footsteps.

Overwhelmed by a sense of longing, she grabbed her daughter-in-law by the arm to meet her son.

“Slow down, Mrs. Ye!” Wang Jiexi followed suit.

Only He Lanshan, Lu Tianhe, and their men trudged behind them with heavy hearts.

Soon, Qiu Mucheng and the rest of the Ye family, joined by Ye Fan's friends, descended the mountain. They were all smiling broadly in anticipation.

The smiles froze when the newcomers came close enough to be seen.

Before their disbelieving eyes, a sea of thousands stood before them clad in mourning attire.



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The sea of white was so vast that it looked as if all of the ghosts from the underworld were let loose into the mortal realm at the same time.

In the lead were Li Er, Lei San, and Chen Ao. They were the ones to have borne the casket between them throughout the entire length of the march until arriving at their final destination, Mount Yunding.

The guilt and grief in the hearts of the casket-bearers were exacerbated by the sight of the widow.

With bloodshot eyes, they fell onto their knees before her.

"Mrs. Chu, forgive us."

"We have failed to defend Mr. Chu."



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*Thud!*

Following their lead, the sea of white fell onto their knees in a deafening anthem of reverence that echoed through the mountains.

“We are all complicit in the failure of defending Dragon Master, Mrs. Chu!”

“Please punish us as you see fit!”

The wails for forgiveness permeated the air, suddenly thick with despair.

Atop Mount Yunding, the crowd who had gathered in anticipation for Ye Fan's triumphant return looked as if they had been struck by lightning.

*Ye Fan did return, all right. But not in a way we expected.*

The wails and shrieks of grief sounding from atop Mount Yunding, which echoed throughout the city below, accompanied the citywide mourning that day.

Many were unable to accept the fact that the man from their city with such a meteoric rise would meet such a premature and unexpected end.

As torn with grief as Qiu Mucheng and Ye Ximei





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were, they were obligated to put on a brave front for the sake of the city.

After a discussion with the elders of the Ye family, members of the Dragon God Hall came to the decision to have the funeral service three days later.

The news of Ye Fan's demise spread quickly throughout Jiangdong.

The day of the funeral was a cloudy and gloomy one as if reflective of the city's residents' mood.

Throughout the grayish day, the grounds were flecked with white from the occasional snowfall.

On that day, inhabitants from every corner of the city flocked to the cemetery to lay a flower on his grave, which was soon hidden under a bed of flowers and fresh snow.

He Lanshan, Li Er, and Lu Tianhe were clad in suits with their mourning attire draped over their arms. They stood forlornly, silently paying their last respects as they watched the casket lowered into the earth.

Ye Fan's body did not lie within the casket. Rather, it was the Sword of Yunyang that he had used in life.



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Li Er and the rest watched Ye Fan fall before their very eyes, but the body was taken away before they could recover it.

It was the only way they could think of to hold a burial for Ye Fan while still preserving his dignity.

There was a suggestion before about having the funeral after recovering his body, but Li Er and Chen Ao objected to it at once.

If they were unable to recover the body, that might mean never having the funeral.

Ye Fan's suicide had been made known throughout the martial arts world.

They did not want Ye Fan to be ridiculed in death for not even having the ceremony to acknowledge it.

Li Er knew that Ye Fan was a proud man.

*As he was fond of living in style, we should respect his wishes and let him leave this earth in style.*

Of course, Li Er and the others vowed to continue the search for his body.

*The elders have said that the deceased will become a ghost trapped in the mortal realm,*



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*destined to haunt the earth for all eternity if he is not given a proper burial. Mr. Chu was forced to kill himself to protect us. We must respect him just as we would if he were still alive. It is our duty to see his burial through.*

On that day, Li Er, Chan Ao, Wang Jiexi, and the rest of their comrades from Jiangdong, Xue Renyang on behalf of Yanjing, Lu Tianhe and Wu Yang on behalf of the military, Chiike Shizuka on behalf of Japan, and thousands of Dragon Gods disciples gathered to pay their last respects.

Every single one of the mourners who was once graced with Ye Fan's kindness or those who had followed him for years knelt for a full day.

*Once the last shovelful of earth is thrown over the casket, Ye Fan will have officially ceased to exist in the world. The glorious conquests under Chu Tianfan's leadership might one day all be forgotten, but not if we can help it. Today is the last day we will be able to accompany Mr. Chu. Jiangdong will not have a leader from tomorrow onward!*

At that harrowing thought, Li Er burst into tears during the vigil.

"It's time to go home."

Li Er gazed out of the window and realized that



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it was already the break of dawn.

The vast sky was starting to lighten up in a milky white over the horizon.

Most of those coming to pay their last respects had already left. The ones who remained behind were Ye Fan's closest friends and the members of the Dragon God Hall.

Li Er was already frail. After being on his knees for an entire night, in addition to the immense emotional toil, his face had become extremely pale.

Li Xueqi, his sister, could bear it no longer. She stepped forward to pull him to his feet.

Li Er burst into a fresh bout of tears.

"Xueqi," he gasped, turning his bloodshot eyes up at her. "Mr. Chu is gone! Who am I supposed to rely on now?"

Though it looked as though Li Er was the one working for Ye Fan, the former knew very well that it was actually the other way around. It was Ye Fan's support and protection that had allowed Li Er to thrive.

As long as Ye Fan backed him, Li Er's influence and prestige over Yunzhou and Jiangdong were unshakeable.



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Though Ye Fan was in the habit of disappearing to carry out reckless solo missions on his own, he was also the one defending Jiangdong against invading storms.

Li Er was not the only one to be left vulnerable at Ye Fan's demise. Without him, the entire Jiangdong became vulnerable to regional powers.

*What if tyrants like Wu Herong or Lu Hua show up here at Jiangdong again? Who is going to defend us from them?*

Though unwilling, Li Er and the other fervent mourners were forced to leave due to fatigue.

Under the arrangements made by Li Er's family, the members of Dragon God Hall were situated in hotels.

Before departing, they were expected to convene once more to make arrangements for the future of their organization.

Xue Renyang and the others unanimously recommended Han to lead Dragon God Hall to avoid a power vacuum.

The only other people whose ranks within the organization were high enough to be considered were Han, who had remained behind in Jiangdong, and Junie.



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As Junie had departed Yunzhou after the funeral, Han remained behind.

Thousands of members of Dragon God Hall were gathered at the appointed hour. Despite the size of the crowd, it was unusually silent.

The only voice was Xue Renyang's as he reported the entire incident to Han.

When he had arrived at the part where Ye Fan was forced to kill himself, the decrepit old man gave an almighty shudder before tears rolled down his cheeks.

"After much difficulty in arriving at the country's borders, he must have felt safe to have finally arrived back. How ironic that it was within sovereign borders where he fell." Han's voice shook though his lips wore a sad little smile.

As Ye Fan's butler, he stood by his master's side longer than anybody else. Knowing him as well as he did, Han could almost perceive Ye Fan's sadness at how the latter must have felt upon arrival outside the country only to be denied entry.

*The pain of being abandoned by your own country must hurt more than a stab through the heart. How can I man represent a country that doesn't even represent him?*



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Han let out another sigh, more weary this time.

As if forgetting that he sat before thousands of Dragon God Hall disciples, Han took out a laptop and logged into a forum for the martial artists of China.

The servers were jammed as almost everybody was logged in at the same moment.

Even on other uneventful days, the banter and exchange of knowledge taking place made it a lively, albeit virtual, space to be in.

War God and Sword Saint were veterans of the forum, while the Six pillars of China served as moderators.

The founder of the forum was somebody called "Mortal Spark," who had amassed a large following.

Despite the popular opinion that Mortal Spark was a reclusive master in China, Han was the only one to know that Ye Fan was behind that username.

Over the decade since the forum's inception, Ye Fan would share details for free on the forum whenever he had a breakthrough in his training.

In the course of his studies of the Book of Celestial Cloud, he discovered several training



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methods that were suitable for martial artists in China.

Though they were not as powerful as Invoke the Celestial Cloud, it was still far more advanced than the current standards within China.

Even War God felt a pang of regret when he had first encountered the treasure trove of knowledge.

*I would have accelerated my progress to become a Supreme by five years if such resources had been made known to me when I first began training!*

Under the shroud of his pseudonym, Ye Fan had distributed the priceless knowledge online without charge. Occasionally, he would even find the time to address messages sent to him by his followers.

It had been many years since a breakthrough occurred in China's martial arts scene.

Aside from the attitude of the practitioners, the other factor was the technique employed.

Chu family members like Chu Yuan were able to outlive most mortals because of the practice of Invoke the Celestial Cloud.





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Ye Fan had modified the training pathway that was common in China toward one more suited for progress.

Though it might take more than five or ten years to truly see the results, the same might not be said for fifty years down the line.

By then, the next few generations of practitioners would have adapted to the superior syllabus designed by Ye Fan and raised the standards collectively as a nation.



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“Outsiders would assume that Dragon Master’s Operation Ablaze was for his own benefit. On the contrary, he actually launched that for the martial arts world,” Han murmured.

Even he felt injustice for Ye Fan. *Was it worth his effort?*

Ye Fan had been the most warm-hearted and sincere person he had ever met. As such, it was sad for Han to see him ending up in such a forsaken way after his glory.

It was unfortunate, but no one could be blamed.

War God Castle wasn’t obligated to shelter him, and it was understandable that the fighters of China’s martial arts world wouldn’t risk going against Chu Sect to protect him.

They doused their ember, indicating that they were not in any way acquainted with Ye Fan anymore.

Similarly, Han was devoid of hope and permanently deleted his account under the name Mortal Spark.

His ten years of unconditional support for Ye Fan ended on this very day.

With that, Mortal Spark would cease to exist



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from now on.

Han took a last glance at the account which Ye Fan had poured his time and efforts into.

On the account's main page, there was a string of words left by Ye Fan: *With high hopes, all fighters of China will be top-notch!*

This particular martial artist forum drew in thousands of visitors on a daily basis.

It was only natural that such a large amount of fighters were drawn to it since Mortal Spark, a highly revered mentor, was the moderator.

Meanwhile in Jiangbei, Livingfill, Lu Ziming was just starting up his computer so that he could log into the Martial Artist Forum and acquire the second stage of Lightning Maneuver.

Lightning Maneuver was one of the three main martial arts skills shared by Mortal Spark.

Ye Qingtian had declared it to be the most lethal attack of all.

Since the advent of this skill, the martial arts world regarded it as the epitome of martial arts, and all practitioners were required to learn it.

Not only were the martial art giants crazy about



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it, but ordinary martial artists, too, trained rigorously to acquire the skill.

What was more, some well-established martial artists even got rid of the martial prowess they once acquired in order to rebuild their foundation using this technique. They had to practically start from zero!

In the martial arts world, there was no such thing as dropping a technique and swerving to another after one had decided which path they were going to take.

The only way to do that was to go back to square one.

“Who would've thought that Chu Tianfan was actually Ye Fan? Maybe that was why he was so imperious? He even had the guts to annihilate the Lu Clan and brush Sword Saint off. Well, too bad he killed himself in the end. He was lucky that he got an easy way out.”

Lu Ziming was talking to himself while waiting for the computer's system to launch.

Years ago, Ye Fan wiped his family out, and his only son was among the perished.

On the night his son, Lu Hua, was shot dead, Lu Ziming returned to Livingfill, got rid of his martial prowess, and started his new



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cultivation.

He was cultivating Lightning Maneuver, which War God highly accredited.

*Mortal Spark is known as the most mysterious virtuoso in China's martial arts world.*

*I've been cultivating the techniques he had shared, and he never shied away from answering my queries.*

*It was plain to see that I've improved by leaps and bounds within a few years.*

*I may not be a Grandmaster yet, but with this powerful technique, I might have the capabilities to defeat one.*

*All I'm hoping for now is for Mortal Spark to reveal the techniques for the third level.*

*Once I've mastered the third stage of Lightning Maneuver, I will no doubt attain the Grandmaster stage!*

After going through the probable outcome in his head, Lu Ziming sighed.

After all, he had pushed himself to cultivate this technique so that he could take revenge on Ye Fan.



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Now that Ye Fan was dead, Lu Ziming questioned his decision. *What was all the effort for?*

“Right. Ye Fan is dead, but not his friends and family. He destroyed the Lu Clan, so now it's my turn to burn his empire down! Yes, I have to persist and continue my cultivation. Once I'm a Grandmaster and have attained the Supreme stage, I shall intrude Jiangdong. Since Ye Fan is dead, his friends and family in Jiangdong shall pay the price on his behalf!”

Lu Ziming found his source of motivation again, and flames of hatred could be clearly seen in his eyes.

After he logged into the forum, he clicked on his chatbox and opened the chat with Mortal Spark.

He wrote: *Mortal Spark, I've basically mastered the second stage of Lightning Maneuver. I still have some questions about it, though, and was hoping that you could answer them.*

Lu Ziming hit the send button after composing his message.

“Hm? What's wrong? Why can't my message be sent?”

Lu Ziming was slightly perturbed, thinking that



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it had something to do with the internet connection. He tried sending the message a few more times but to no avail.

Confused, he went to Mortal Spark's homepage.

To his horror, it was a blank space, and there was a message: *The account has been deleted.*

*What? The account no longer exists?*

Lu Ziming was about to go off his rocker.

Immediately, he created a post about the matter.

Very soon, the news of Mortal Spark pulling himself out of the forum spread like wildfire. All of China's martial artists were shocked to the core.

Someone wrote: *What is going on? Why did Mortal Spark delete his account?*

Another commented: *What should we do? Who will guide us in our cultivations for the days to come?*

Someone else questioned: *What about those supreme techniques? The Lightning Maneuver was only introduced up to the second stage.*



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Another person wrote: *The Mountain And River Blade technique was only updated up to the fourth stage.*

One comment read: *Oh no! There is no hope for martial arts in China anymore...*

Mortal Spark's unannounced departure from the forum was like a bolt in the blue, and it shook up the entire martial arts world.

Thousands of martial artists were losing their grip on reality.

When Ye Fan was gone, most of them merely felt pity for his sudden demise.

After all, they weren't at all close to Ye Fan. Besides, his reputation in China's martial arts world was nothing to boast about.

Not only did Jiangbei's martial arts world resent him, but War God Castle also deemed him a threat to its existence.

To many people, perhaps Ye Fan's downfall was something worth celebrating.

However, Mortal Spark deleting his own account was a different story.

After all, this affected the personal benefits of countless people.





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It was especially devastating to martial artists who had rid themselves of their initial martial art prowess to learn a new technique from the basics. The ones who made their offspring cultivate since a young age, too, were on tenterhooks.

Without Mortal Spark, those legendary martial arts and techniques would come to an end.

How was everyone going to cultivate from now on?

Instantly, China's martial arts world was in absolute chaos.

Even the Hall Masters of War God Castle were heavily ruffled.

"I wonder what has gotten into Mortal Spark?"

"Why did he suddenly deactivate his account?"

"Is he really going to dispose of his account that he had been running for ten years?"

"Only one-third of that Book of Fist Techniques was updated right?"

"But I was thinking of continuing my cultivation."

"Not only that, there are many more techniques



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that are yet to be updated.”

“Is that it? No more updates?”

King of Fighters, Mo Gucheng, was equally fretful when he knew of the shocking incident.

Its ripple effect was far beyond what one would have imagined and had stretched its impact to the martial arts world.

Before this, Sword Saint and the rest were expecting China's martial arts world to flourish and prosper within the next tens of years under Mortal Spark's guidance.

Now with Mortal Spark's account deleted, his hopes vanished into thin air.

“Look for him! Use every resource we have to look for Mortal Spark!”

The supreme grandmasters of War God Castle gave orders to give full measure in searching for this faceless maestro who had been secluding himself.

While China's martial arts world rumbled in a pandemonium, news of Ye Fan's demise reached every corner of the globe.

Martial artists around the world felt sorry and grief-stricken for his death.



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“Who knew someone so illustrious would have such a tragic ending?”

“It's sad, but that's life. He had his good share of crowning moments, and things have come to an end now.”

Many people were at sixes and sevens, but the majority of those, who knew about Ye Fan's passing, was just commiserative. After all, they weren't close to him, and there was no reason for them to be heartbroken for someone they barely had contact with.

Except for those in Jiangdong, China's martial artists were mostly indifferent toward the bad news, let alone those in other nations.

To them, new stars would rise after one dimmed its light, anyway.

Heroes came and went. When one's time was up, a new one would emerge and lead the world to a better future.



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Chapter 1824

It had been days since Ye Fan's death.

The sea where he ended his own life had reverted to its calm state.

The sea waves rolled, overlapped, and fell back into the waters.

Traces of the devastating fight had been washed away.

It looked like nothing had ever happened, and no one was ever there.

Birds were still chirping, and the sun never stopped rising every morning.

Ye Fan's existence or the lack thereof seemed to have no influence on the world.

In fact, the martial arts world had actually become more peaceful after his death.

As martial artists around the world returned to their normal lives, some cultivated vigorously while some indulged in the power they were holding. There were also those who wallowed in coital pleasure, contributing greatly to continuing the line of the human race.

As for Chu Sect, they were working hard to restore their base after the war.



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Chu Yuan, who went hunting down the mysterious man, came back empty-handed after scouring around for days.

He wasn't too pleased, but it wasn't something that worried him either.

The scene where innumerable swords pierced through Ye Fan's heart was witnessed by many.

Unless he was a god or deity, there was no way he could walk out of that alive.

That was why Chu Yuan gave up even though he had put in tremendous effort in the search. Instead, he focused more on recovering from his injuries.

“Chu Sect will prosper and execute all our prodigious visions! Now that Chu Tianfan's dead, no one will be in our way. Hahaha!”

Laughter reverberated on Mount Chumen.

Chu Yuan's ambition which had been subdued for a long time was finally reignited.

Meanwhile, the martial arts world in China erupted into chaos. Almost everyone was looking for Mortal Sparks, who had envisioned every martial artist in the nation reaching their full potential.



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Sadly, all searches came to nothing.

Of course, Sword Saint wasn't completely cooped up in this muddle. He was also keeping a close watch on Dragon God Hall in Jiangdong.

"These people are truly competent, and they're in great numbers. What a formidable force they are!

"Dragon God Hall lost their leader after the death of Chu Tianfan, so we should use this opportunity to persuade them into joining War God Castle, Sword Saint."

"With those capable fighters, our collective strength will multiply, and our position in the martial arts world would rise. We might even be on the same level as Chu Sect!"

Mo Wuya shared his perspective when they were discussing Dragon God Hall.

It was like a eureka moment for Sword Saint.

"That's a brilliant idea! I need capable men in times like this. After all, Chu Tianfan has fallen, and Mortal Spark, the revered maestro, is nowhere to be found. If they join us amidst this chaos, China's martial arts world would achieve more greatness!"



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Consequently, Sword Saint had Tang Hao and Mo Wuya take up the responsibility of contacting the fighters of Dragon God Hall. They were going to go to Jiangdong personally and meet the fighters.

“Tang Hao, good luck with your task! Tell them that I will grant them anything they ask for as long as they are willing to join War God Castle and be part of China's martial arts world. I would even grant them the title of Hall Master if that's what they want. Remember! You have to always show them our utmost sincerity,” Sword Saint reminded Tang Hao.

“Yes, Sword Saint!”

Tang Hao acknowledged and took some gifts before heading to Jiangdong to see the people of Dragon God Hall.

While Sword Saint was having a discussion about recruiting men from Dragon God Hall, those very men he was talking about had come to a decision to dismantle Dragon God Hall.

They initially wanted Han to take over the position of Hall Master, but he declined the promotion.

In truth, he wasn't trying to be modest. He rejected the offer because he knew that he wasn't capable enough to undertake that role.



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How would he be able to withhold the supremacy of Dragon God Hall when he was not competent enough?

Before the death of Ye Fan, Han was the advisor and was in charge of relaying messages from his boss.

No one at Dragon God Hall dared to go against his words.

Despite that, Han knew very well that the people were not actually obeying him but Ye Fan.

Thanks to Ye Fan's capabilities, Han was able to manage these formidable fighters with ease.

Yet, Ye Fan was dead, and they would need a new leader. A man like him, who wasn't well versed in martial arts, would never be able to keep these men in check.

Ye Fan's influence might still work in his favor at the moment, but it would be a matter of time before he lost control over the fighters of Dragon God Hall.

Once people were over Ye Fan's death, they wouldn't listen to Han anymore. His title as the Hall Master would carry no significance, becoming merely a meaningless rank.





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Besides that, Han wasn't interested at all in taking the helm.

He only stayed in Dragon God Hall all these years as his gesture of appreciation to Ye Fan.

What was the point of managing Dragon God Hall if Ye Fan wasn't there anymore?

Soon, people were proposing names of potential Hall Masters.

Needless to say, none of the candidates were convincing enough.

Only after a few days of discussion did they realize that Ye Fan was the only person who could manage Dragon God Hall.

That was why they wanted to temporarily dismantle it and inconspicuously look for Ye Fan's body.

Right when Xue Renyang and his men were about to leave Jiangdong and return to their homes, Tang Hao paid them a visit out of the blue and expressed his desire to recruit them.

"If you join us, I can guarantee that the standard of China's martial arts would improve by leaps and bounds. That will be the time you can avenge your Dragon Master! Also, to show our utmost sincerity, we're more than happy to offer



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one of the Hall Master positions of War God Castle.”

Tang Hao continued earnestly, “Please let me know if you have other conditions that you'd like us to fulfill. Our goal is to have you join us and work hand in hand to achieve a better future. Anything is negotiable.”

However, the fighters of Dragon God Hall didn't bat an eyelid. They merely turned around and walked away.

“Everyone, please give it some thought. As I said, there's always room for negotiation.” Tang Hao was getting anxious.

“Tang Hao, save your breath,” Xue Renyang went up to him and offered a piece of advice. “War God Castle won't be able to reign over them. They only acknowledge one Hall Master, and that's Ye Fan. Please leave as soon as possible. After all, they're not a big fan of War God Castle, to begin with.”

Eventually, having failed his mission, Tang Hao went back to Mount Yan.

To his utter shock, what came into sight when he got back to Mount Yan was a catastrophic scene. The prosperous mountain he was familiar with was nowhere to be found.



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In its place was a horrifying wasteland covered with ruins and debris.

“W-What happened? Did that m-man do this? He's h-here again?”

Both Tang Hao and Mo Wuya froze in stupefaction.

They had just left home for a few days, but the horrifying scene was what greeted them when they were back.

The silhouette of a lanky man emerged in their minds when they saw the wretched state of their base.

They couldn't imagine anyone else other than that fellow tearing this place down.

“This can't be right. Chu Tianfan should be dead, no? Could it be that he came back to life? Come on, Wuya. Let's hurry back!” Tang Hao realized how serious the situation was and immediately dashed up Mount Yan.

*Whoosh!*

The bone-piercing cold wind blew and whipped the scattered rocks into the air.

A slender figure with a sword in its hand could be seen standing in front of the hall of Mount



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Yan.

She was showered in golden specks, looking very much like a deity wafting down to earth.

An air of strong authority enveloped her, and in front of her were King of Fighters and Sword Saint. Blood trailed the edges of their mouths, and they looked as pale as ghosts. They were so badly injured that they needed to lean on the pillar at the entrance of the hall to get back on their feet.

“King of Fighters, Sword Saint, are you all right? What’s going on? Was there an earthquake?” Tang Hao shouted in confusion as he charged up the mountain.

*Swoosh!* They heard the deafening sound of a sword cutting through the air when they got to the hall.

Before they could see what was coming, a Seven Foot Green Blade lanced through the air and punctured the ground, slitting Mo Wuya’s clothing in the process.

It scared the bejesus out of him, and he fell to his knees with a loud thud.

Blood drained from his face, and he was trying to catch his breath.



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At that moment, that sword was only an inch away from his crotch.

If it had landed any closer to Mo Wuya, the line of the Mo family would have probably ended there.



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## Chapter 1825

“W-Who was that? How can someone be so strong?” Mo Wuya sat there spinelessly.

His torn clothes directed the cold wind onto his flesh.

It slowly drew his body heat off of him, but what was worse than that were his doused ambitions.

As he had managed to attain the Supreme title, there would be only a handful of fighters stronger than him in China.

Yet, a sword flung out by some anonymous figure filled his heart with despair and terror.

As a supreme grandmaster, those emotions were an absolute humiliation to his rank.

Mo Wuya had always felt that he was only a tad weaker than the top fighters, who were at the pinnacle of the martial arts world.

He assumed that all he needed to do was work hard for another ten years, and he would reach the zenith.

However, the callous reality that hit him a moment ago crushed his unrealistically high hopes.

At that moment, he finally realized that he was



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incomparable with those elites. The difference in their capabilities was simply too great.

“Moon God?” Tang Hao muttered.

While Mo Wuya was trapped in fear, Tang Hao was hit by bewilderment.

He couldn't believe his eyes when he saw that enchanting figure. At the same time, he was so terrified that his eyes almost popped out of their sockets.

*It's Tsukuyomi!* He could instantly tell who that person was. She was known as one of the two potential candidates to attain the god realm.

However, he couldn't figure out why she came to China alone for no reason.

*Why was she in a fight with Sword Saint and King of Fighters?*

“Hold on a second...” A thought hit him, and his feeling of admiration was overcast by fright, and it almost drove tears out of his eyes.

“Is she going to avenge that man by killing us?” Realizing that things had gone south, Tang Hao dashed to where Sword Saint and King of Fighter were and held them up.

“Sword Saint, King of Fighters, are you okay?”



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He was worried to the core.

Sword Saint wiped the blood off the edge of his mouth using the back of his hand while King of Fighters forced himself to stand up.

Both of them stared steadfastly at Tsukuyomi, who was standing in front of them.

"Don't worry, we're still alive," responded Sword Saint.

"Thank goodness." Tang Hao let out a sigh of relief.

He was shaking in fear a minute ago, thinking that Moon God had ended the life of his leaders, which would have been the tipping point.

"Moon God, I don't understand why you are doing this. We've never tinkered with Japan's martial arts scene, have we?" Tang Hao turned toward the lady after he mustered his courage.

"Are you also part of War God Castle?" Moon God asked coldly, ignoring his question.

Tang Hao nodded and introduced himself, "I'm known as the Heavenly Grandmaster, the third Permanent Hall Master of War God Castle. Tell me what is bothering you, and I can help find a solution to it. I'm highly respected in China's





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martial arts—”

“Then you should die too!” Moon God growled before Tang Hao finished introducing himself.

*Sching!*

The Seven Foot Green Blade that was prodded into the ground in front of Mo Wuya's crotch lifted into the air and was in Tsukuyomi's hand in the blink of an eye.

Without wasting a second, Moon God was on it. She wielded her blade at her opponent ferociously.

Her every swing released a strong and deadly gust.

“Dodge it, Tang Hao!”

“Look out!”

Sword Saint and King of Fighters were shocked to the bone, and Tang Hao was quivering in trepidation.

There was no way he could possibly dodge the attack now.

So, he summoned his Meteor Hammer, hoping to reduce the efficacy of the attack.



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However, before he could use his hammer, those gusts of death had already cut into his flesh.

His robe was torn, and there was blood everywhere.

Moon God then gave a final strike which sent Tang Hao flying.

*Boom!* His body crashed into the mountain.

Mo Wuya was so flabbergasted that he couldn't react for a minute.

*What? She crushed Tang Hao with just one strike? This can't be true! They are not in the same league!*

That shock was too much for Mo Wuya to bear, and he conked out upon seeing the barbaric attack, lying motionlessly on the floor like a log. No one knew whether he had really passed out or he was playing dead.

“Tsukuyomi, you've gone too far! Yes, all of us here aren't as good as you, but don't you forget that we're not the only fighters in China. We have War God and numerous low-key elite fighters. So you can't be too sure that you would have the last laugh if a war between our countries broke out!”



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As King of Fighters bawled at Tsukuyomi, blood was still trickling down his chin, and he had one hand pressing on his chest.

“China? Who are you to represent your country when you can't even protect your own people? Consider yourself lucky to be from the same country as Ye Fan. If it weren't for that, I would've bulldozed this mountain flat and taken your lives!” Tsukuyomi glared icily at them as her sword juddered in her hand.

The reason behind her murderous intention was crystal clear.

However, she let them go in the end.

She knew very well that that man wouldn't want her to kill them if he were here since he understood that these men were the protectors of his motherland.

After brutally venting her anger, Tsukuyomi turned around and walked toward the feet of Mount Yan.

Before she left, she took one last gaze at the piece of land, the mountains, and the rivers. “You don't deserve him,” she muttered.

*Whoosh!*

A gust of wind swept the fallen leaves into the



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air, and Tsukuyomi vanished.

What she left behind was a wretched spectacle and men with a hotchpotch of emotions.

After Tsukuyomi left, Mo Wuya regained consciousness and got up. He clenched his fists with all his might, feeling thoroughly ashamed.

“Chu Tianfan, what's so good about you? Why are so many fighters trying to avenge you after your death? Are you really that exceptional? No! I, Mo Wuya, am the most brilliant genius in China! I will one day overtake you in every aspect!”

He was boiling with wrath, and his eyes were bloodshot.

Within days, what happened at War God Castle became widely known.

The martial arts community around the world was enraptured in astonishment when they knew about the damage Moon God had caused.

Little did they expect that the ripple effect of Ye Fan's death would continue till this day, and fear encroached on their minds.

People like Fen Tian, who were involved in the



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killing of Ye Fan, locked themselves up at home, fearing that Moon God would come to them in the name of revenge.

"Shouldn't she be at Chu Sect if revenge is what she's looking for? What's the point of harming us? Moon God, if you were so skilled, why didn't you take revenge on Chu Yuan? He is the mastermind behind the death of your silly boyfriend," Fen Tian whinged, feeling bitter.

Well, he wasn't the only one who had thoughts like that.

After all, he was right about Chu Yuan being the main culprit.

If one was seeking revenge for Ye Fan, Chu Yuan was the person they should be after.

The man wasn't ruffled at all, though, as no one dared to mess with him.

However, the peace he was lolling in didn't last long.

A few days later, Chu Yuan's mother suddenly made an announcement.

"Chu Yuan is unfilial and holds no honor. He is a rake who deceived his mentors, tricked honest men, and put his kins in jeopardy.



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“In the name of the ancestors of the Chu family, I, the Grand Old Lady, declare that Chu Yuan has been dismissed from his position as the head of the Chu family with immediate effect. His name will be removed from the family records, and after his death, his body will not be allowed to be buried among our ancestors in the Chu mausoleum! Chu Tianfan's death signifies the end of the Chu family. The line ends here!”

The Grand Old Lady's declaration went viral on all mainstream online platforms.

The whole world didn't know what to make of it!

After all, the Chu family was the most affluent family in the world, and Chu Yuan was the cream of the crop in the martial arts world. Naturally, he was renowned in the global community.

The Grand Old Lady's sudden announcement and her action of striking his son's name off the family record were absolutely mind-bending.

It was a story of an internal fallout within the Chu family that had never happened before.

Tittle-tattles of the incident were everywhere. Everyone was waiting impatiently for what was about to come. To be more precise, they were eager to know how Chu Yuan would respond to



## Chapter 1825

it.

The Grand Old Lady might not meddle much with the Chu family matters, but she held the highest position in the family, after all. In other words, she was the emblem of the Chu family.



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If Chu Yuan were the emperor of the Chu family, then the Grand Old Lady would be considered the empress dowager.

An emperor who was not recognized by the empress dowager naturally lacked legitimacy.

In other words, this declaration of The Grand Old Lady directly vetoed the legitimacy of Chu Yuan to take charge of the Chu family.

If any overseas Chu family members continued to follow Chu Yuan, then these so-called Chu family members would lose the orthodox inheritance.

At least, the ancestral home of the Chu family would no longer recognize these people as descendants of the Chu family.

When Chu Yuan received that news, his usually calm countenance turned furious.

As immense rage fueled his entire being, he hit the long table in front of him with his palm.

The table was shattered instantly from the impact.

"That old woman is really vicious! This will destroy my foundation!"

Chu Yuan was furious beyond measure.





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Grand Old Lady Chu was the oldest living member of the Chu family and also the most senior member of Chu Sect.

Many decades ago, before Chu Yuan became the leader of the Chu family, The Grand Old Lady was in charge.

Within the family, she was well-respected, and her word was the law.

Even though she was a woman, the Three Families of the Chu Sect respected her leadership.

The power and dominance of The Grand Old Lady were unparalleled.

Even the powerful, wealthy, and honored patriarch of the Tang family himself would greet The Grand Old Lady respectfully whenever they met.

It could be said that during that period, the prestige of Grand Old Lady Chu in Chu Sect was unmatched.

After some time, The Grand Old Lady decided to give up her position of power and isolated herself in the Chu family's old house, ignoring family affairs for many years.

As time passed, the Three Families of the Chu



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Sect forgot the old lady's powerful influence.

After learning that The Grand Old Lady would never leave the family house, Chu Yuan's respect for The Grand Old Lady was only superficial. There was no fear for her in his heart.

This time, Chu Yuan had openly disobeyed the elder by forcing her most beloved descendants to death.

Chu Yuan had felt that even if it angered The Grand Old Lady after she found out about it, there was nothing that she could do to him.

After all, as long as he did not go back to the family house to look for trouble, there was nothing she could do.

However, never in Chu Yuan's wildest imaginations did he think that she would go this far.

She had straightaway expelled him from the Chu family.

It was as if the empress dowager had personally issued the edict to dethrone the current emperor.

Even though it was just in name, the truth was that in life, everything depended on reputation.



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Chu Yuan did not need to ponder over it anymore. After today, presumably the whole martial arts world would feel that he was notorious and no longer represented the orthodox Chu family.

“That d\*mn old hag has really pissed me off. She will be the death of me!”

Chu Yuan was hopping mad.

After dealing with Chu Tianfan, unexpectedly, The Grand Old Lady dealt him a blow.

“Chu Yuan, what is our next step?”

“Everyone is talking about us now.”

“Even the Tang family and the Jones family are looking down on us.”

“There are even rumors that the Chu family on Mount Chumen are imposters and not really Yunyang's descendants.”

“The direct descendants of Chu Yunyang, who is the ancestor of the Chu family, are in China, Jiangdong, and Fenghai...”

“The legitimacy of our Chu family on Mount Chumen has been seriously questioned.”

During these moments, the elders of the Chu



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family were all anxious, and they came to Chu Yuan to ask about their future plans.

After all, as a person grew older, the more strongly they felt about their collective identity.

Bloodlines, inheritance, and orthodoxy became more important.

Chu Yuan had angered the elder, and his name was removed from the family registry.

Naturally, those elders of the Chu family were also afraid that their names would be removed from the Chu family ancestral shrine after their death, and while they lived, their names would be removed from the Chu family registry.

At the thought of that, the elders of the Chu family panicked even more.

“Why are you panicking? The old lady has removed our names from the family tree. We can write another one. If we are not allowed into the family shrine, we shall build another shrine. As for the rumors that are going around, we can just ignore them. All you need to do now is to allow me time to practice all the martial arts secret techniques that I retrieved from the forbidden grounds this time. In this world, the strong are respected. When you master enough power, the noise of those insignificant mortals will naturally be silenced.”



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overcome. There are no hardships he cannot withstand. There are no setbacks that he cannot survive. He was unafraid of battling even Chu Yuan. Even Chu Sect did not scare him. How could he end his own life? You are talking nonsense!”

Only moments ago, Ye Qingtian was full of joy after his successful practice but now he was totally beside himself.

He kept shaking his head, repeating himself over and over again, and his emotions surged up and down like a raging tempest.

He remembered how high-spirited Ye Fan was before he went into self-isolation.

The supreme being of the Sky Ranking list, the Hall Master of Dragon God Hall, who stomped on Mount Chumen alone.

At the family birthday banquet, the world's best masters had come to wish him well.

At that time, Ye Fan was like the most dazzling star in the sky, attracting all the attention and admiration of the world.

How amazing was that!

That was not too long ago too!



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To War God, that was just the blink of an eye.

Yet, when he opened his eyes again, Sword Saint told him that Ye Fan had killed himself!

How could War God accept that?

Something must have gone wrong as everything seemed out of the ordinary.

Otherwise, there could not have been such earth-shattering changes in just a few months.

Furthermore, Ye Fan was a proud man, so how could he take his own life?

“War God, it's true. Chu Tianfan is really dead. In front of the whole world, he killed himself with a sword. We are regretful that we could not save him,” Tang Hao said with a sigh.

Following that was total silence, and it lasted for a long while.

War God froze where he stood for a long time, his body trembling, and he could not utter a word.

In the end, after God knows how long, Ye Qingtian suddenly lifted his head, gazing at Sword Saint and the others. His cold whisper was heard. “Tell me everything that happened. Exactly, what happened? Who forced him to kill



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himself!"

Ye Qingtian clenched his fist tightly, and there was blood oozing out of his palm. One could imagine the emotional roller coaster that he was going through.

Tang Hao and Sword Saint exchanged glances, and finally, they told Ye Qingtian everything without skipping any details.

After all, what happened that day was seen by every master in the martial arts world all over the globe.

It was impossible for Sword Saint and the others to hide any information even if they tried.

"Confronted with the might of Chu Yuan and the pressure of the martial arts world of various countries, he had no choice. In the end, in front of everyone, innumerable swords pierced through his heart, and he cut himself off from the world. We wanted to save him... but he had committed too many wrongs and offended too many people. The crowd just let him die. The world could not accept him anymore. Under those circumstances, there was nothing we could do. Our War God Castle could not go against the whole world." Sword Saint's words were heavy, and his tone was full of helplessness.



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War God just listened, and after hearing it, his face was full of anger and ferocity.

Finally, War God suddenly smiled sadly, his eyes full of sorrow. "So, did you all just watch, without lifting a finger, as our country's martial artist was forced to die at the country gate? From Mount Chumen to the sea of China, thousands of miles away, all he ever wanted was to go home right until the end. That was his only wish..."



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After his bout of fury, Chu Yuan gradually calmed down.

He did not want to waste time on these technicalities. All he wanted was power.

Once he had harnessed enough power to destroy the heavens and the earth, everything would be under his control.

As for the ancestral shrine, orthodoxy, and family lineage, those were unimportant!

"I, Chu Yuan, am nobody's descendant. Just wait. After today, everyone would consider me the ancestor!"

On that day, Chu Yuan's continuous roar resounded throughout the entire Mount Chumen.

When the Chu family heard those words, they were all shocked.

They only felt that after ten years of seclusion, the Chu Yuan who reemerged this time had totally transformed.

"Granduncle is so different from what he was before..." some younger Chu family members mumbled to themselves.

News of Chu Yuan's expulsion from the Chu



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family's registry caused quite a stir in the global martial arts world.

No one would have thought that the fall of Chu Tianfan would spike the fury of the Chu family's Grand Old Lady.

While the martial arts societies of various countries were discussing the matter endlessly, the warriors in China were, in contrast, unconcerned.

Under the summon of War God Castle, the country set off a wave of searching for the missing person.

All over China, everyone was searching for the former moderator of the martial arts world forum who went by the username "Mortal Spark."

Meanwhile, when the martial arts world was busy in China, a mighty and majestic figure appeared at the foot of Mount Yan.

Presumably, Sword Saint and the others had not imagined that barely after Japan's Tsukuyomi left, another uninvited guest would arrive at Mount Yan.

"Who do all of you think that this Mortal Spark is? More than ten years ago, he appeared suddenly out of nowhere. Now, his account is



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not active and invisible. It's so weird. What's his motive? What's the purpose?"

In the past few days, the King of Fighters and the others have been devastated by this incident.

Since it was related to the rise of martial arts in China, those at the top level were naturally concerned about it.

Sword Saint shook his head and stated, "This is an old senior. Hence, there should be no ulterior motives. After all, this old senior had been contributing selflessly to the forum through the years without gaining anything. Be it cultivation techniques or secret techniques; all were disclosed free of charge. Furthermore, he will explain any problems encountered by the youth in their cultivation without reservation. This is a senior who loves the country and the people. I feel that this senior may have passed away, and his family members had deleted his account on his behalf."

"Are you saying that the old senior may have f-f-fallen? Uh..." King of Fighters and Tang Hao were shocked when they heard the man's words.

If it were as the Sword Saint had stated, it would mean that those unfinished exercises and secret techniques were really the senior's



Chapter 1826

last words!

If that were the case, then the hope that the martial arts world in China had just seen arose had already died.

While their eyes were filled with sorrow and their spirits were low, footsteps were heard coming from outside the War God Castle all of a sudden.

“Hm? Who's there?”

The next moment, Sword Saint and the others were shocked, and their expressions immediately changed.

By right, if a warrior entered the Mount Yan range, they should detect the warrior's aura instantly.

However, this time, they only knew that someone had arrived when they heard footsteps. They did not sense his arrival at War God Castle prior to that.

While the three of them were still in shock, the imposing and thick gate of the War God Castle was slowly pushed open.

The sun shone in, and a figure appeared before them.



Chapter 1827

“War God?”

“Ye?”

“Mr. Ye?”

“You're out?”

Seeing him, Sword Saint and the others were stunned for a moment. The next moment, they were delighted.

Just a moment earlier, they were wary as if about to face an enemy.

However, they never dreamed that it was Ye Qingtian, the man who had isolated himself for a long time.

“Hahaha...”

“Ye, how are you doing now?”

“What have you gained during this period of self-isolation?”

“Are you confident that you'll be able to enter the top ten in the Sky Ranking?”

Without a doubt, the return of Ye Qingtian filled everyone in War God Castle with joy.

This period of time for China was an eventful



Chapter 1827

autumn.

First, Chu Yuan led the martial arts masters of various countries to invade China, and then the people of the Dragon God Hall caused a huge wave in Jiangdong, followed by Japan's Moon God storming Mount Yan.

There were too many incidents and threats, which made Sword Saint and the others feel helpless.

After all, there were too many foes for the few of them to handle.

Ye Qingtian's return was an encouragement for all of them.

"Hahaha... Naturally! Why don't we have a round of sparring? Check out the results of my self-isolation results."

War God had just ended his self-isolation and was in an excellent mood.

The feeling of empowerment was enough to drive anyone crazy.

Sword Saint and the other two exchanged glances and smiled bitterly. "Maybe another time."

"What's the matter? Not feeling well?"



Chapter 1827

Ye Qingtian frowned immediately.

It was only now that he sensed something amiss fluctuating in the auras of Sword Saint and the others. They seemed to have suffered certain internal injuries.

Sword Saint waved his hand. "We're fine. Just some injuries which are not serious."

King of Fighters, too, tried to cover up. "That's right. We were sparring and went overboard. Hence, injuring ourselves accidentally."

"We are well on the way to full recovery."

King of Fighters, Mo Gucheng laughed heartily. "After a few days, when we are fully healed, you can use us as target practice."

Ye Qingtian did not question them any further but nodded instead. "Sure. It's up to you guys. However, in a few days, I'm getting that kid, Ye Fan, to come over. We'll all get drunk together with him. Let me tell you; you'd better take this opportunity to ease up with him and pat him on the back. Trust me; if you can get into his good books, in a few years, you guys will surely be listed among the top ten in the Sky Ranking. The reason I managed to make a breakthrough this time was all because of him. He taught me a concept of martial arts and the secret techniques of a powerful move, which really



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inspired me.”

The man continued, “This guy, Ye Fan, is really something else. Not only is his talent amazing, but his concept of martial arts far exceeds old guys like us. Hanging out with him is really beneficial to us.”

Ye Qingtian could not hide his admiration and praise for Ye Fan as he kept talking.

However, Sword Saint and the others turned ashen simultaneously.

In unison, they looked away to avoid War God's gaze.

Even Tang Hao sighed several times.

War God, Ye Qingtian was very observant, and he quickly noticed something was amiss.

“What's wrong? Your attitude is unusual. Did something happen to Ye Fan?” Ye Qingtian stared at them.

“By the way, what happened to Ye Fan and Chu Sect? Has the Chu family come to apologize?”

Ye Qingtian remembered that before he retreated into self-isolation, Ye Fan had just reached the top of the list in Sky Ranking, and he had forced the Chu family to surrender and





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promise to come to Jiangdong to apologize.

Now that several months had passed, Ye Qingtian felt that the matter should have been resolved.

Sword Saint and the others were reluctant to reply to War God's queries. Tang Hao opened his mouth, but the words just reached the tip of his tongue and were left unsaid.

In the end, he just sighed.



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“What happened? Do you guys want to scare me to death? Say Something!”

War God was really agitated by the trio.

“Fine, don't tell me. I'll go to Jiangdong myself to see him! I'll ask him personally!”

Being the impatient guy he was, even before he had finished speaking, he was already turning around to leave for Jiangdong.

Finally, Sword Saint stopped him.

“Fine, we have to tell you anyway. We might as well tell you now. Chu Tianfan took his own life.”

Sword Saint's words fell on Ye Qingtian's ears like a lightning bolt.

The shock almost broke the latter's heart.

In an instant, the eyes of that tough man who had guarded China for decades turned red with tears.

He stared incredulously, his fierce and majestic face full of disbelief. “W-What did you say? H-H-He killed himself? How can it be? This is impossible! I know him. I understand Ye Fan. He'll never take his own life. He is such a proud person, and there are no hurdles he can't

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“Instead of fulfilling the wish for him, all of you just watched at the side. You watched as your fellow compatriot died in front of your own eyes. You watched as China's Supreme collapsed right in front of the nation's borders. A proud man like him eventually committed suicide. How much hopelessness must he have felt when he picked up the sword and stabbed himself? How much despair was engulfing him? All he wanted was to go home...”

Ye Qingtian spoke slowly. His voice was filled with sorrow.

For a moment, tears glistened in his eyes.

“Ye...” When Tang Hao looked at him, his heart ached too.

Even Sword Saint and the King of Fighters lowered their heads and sighed continuously.

Sword Saint and the other two were already mentally prepared to face the War God's fury.

After all, they had been involved in multiple conflicts and arguments because of Ye Fan.

Although the previous conflicts were not major or life-threatening, War God still got angry with them because of these incidents involving Ye Fan.

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This time, they failed to protect Ye Fan—in fact, they watched as Ye Fan collapsed just a distance away from China without doing anything.

Sword Saint and King of Fighters were certain that War God would definitely blame them for it.

He would blame them for letting Ye Fan die, for not doing anything as the genius of China met his downfall, and for failing to protect Ye Fan.

Tang Hao and the rest thought that Ye Qingtian would feel furious about Ye Fan's death.

However, to their surprise, Ye Qingtian seemed uncharacteristically quiet.

He was not overwhelmed with fury, nor did he bellow in rage.

He was just laughing there alone.

His laughter was mirthless, filled with boundless sorrow and disappointment.

War God's abnormal reaction caused Sword Saint and the rest to panic.

“Are you okay, Ye? I know that the martial arts world of China did not deal with this perfectly, but you should understand our grievances too.

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Even if we had intervened, we couldn't have protected him. Ye Fan made everyone furious. He killed too many people. He was surrounded by the martial artists of dozens of nations, with Chu Yuan, a fighter who had surpassed Supreme, leading them. It's impossible for him to survive. That's just how life is. My condolences to you," coaxed Mo Gucheng, King of Fighters.

A worried look appeared in Sword Saint's eyes as Tang Hao expressed his condolences to War God as well.

However, Ye Qingtian continued chuckling in anguish as if he could not hear their consolations.

"Forget it. This is the end of the decades we've spent together. There's no point in staying in War God Castle if it's in this state now. This is the end."

Ye Qingtian stared at the sky and chuckled. His deep voice overflowed with disappointment and despair.

He shot one last glance at War God Castle, then at the mountainous terrains underneath him.

Suddenly, Ye Qingtian felt like he was witnessing the scene of these young, ambitious warriors hitting it off immediately. At the peak

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of Mount Yan, they founded War God Castle, which represented the most powerful force in China's martial arts world.

Back then, they were the pillars of China. They had a lofty ambition—to protect the citizens of China and spread the fame of China's martial arts world far and wide.

However, as time progressed, they lost sight of their initial goal.

“Ye, what do you mean? What's the end? What are you planning to do?” demanded Tang Hao anxiously with widened eyes, having picked up something wrong.

Ye Qingtian shook his head, his tone filled with disappointment. “This is no longer War God Castle that I wish to protect. From now on, you're by yourselves. I'm leaving War God Castle and will never set foot on Mount Yan ever again!”

Instantly, War God's words hit Sword Saint and the rest like a thunder strike.

Everyone in the castle was stunned.

“Ye, you... What are you saying? Are you quitting War God Castle?”

Sword Saint widened his eyes as his body

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trembled.

Tang Hao and King of Fighters were similarly shocked—waves of emotions crashed over them.

Even Mo Wuya was astonished.

Evidently, they did not expect War God to quit War God Castle.

After all, Ye Qingtian was the guardian angel of China's martial arts world—he was the pillar of faith for the martial artists in the country.

No one could surpass War God's authority and impact on the whole of China.

If he left like that, War God Castle's status as the most powerful force in China's martial arts world would disintegrate.

Hence, the expressions of Sword Saint and the rest changed drastically when they heard that.

“Ye, you cannot quit! War God Castle needs you!”

“Indeed, War God. Don't act rashly out of fury. Let's sit down and discuss. We're all buddies. There's nothing that we can't reach an agreement about,” persuaded Tang Hao and the rest hurriedly.

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However, War God ignored them.

Since he was already determined, he spun around and left after saying those words.

“Ye, you cannot leave! We won't let you leave! We founded War God Castle together. Are you really going to leave everything behind and stop caring about it?”

Tang Hao and the rest could no longer stand idly by after seeing that War God was actually going to leave.

They rushed forward and blocked Ye Qingtian's way.

Even Sword Saint and King of Fighters rushed forward and stood in front of him.

“Ye, you cannot leave! Anyone in War God Castle can leave but you!” stated Sword Saint solemnly, refusing to let Ye Qingtian quit.

However, the latter remained unaffected by their efforts to make him stay.

His scarred face was filled with a frosty and menacing look.

“Move!” instructed Ye Qingtian.

However, King of Fighters and the rest did not



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budge.

This time, Ye Qingtian lost all patience.

The fury that he had been suppressing exploded at that moment.

“You bunch of f\*cking incompetent cowards, get lost!” bellowed Ye Qingtian furiously.

A stupendous force gathered in front of him before erupting with a blast.

Instantly, the ground shattered, and the rocks came tumbling down the cliffs.

Sword Saint and the other two were sent staggering backward by Ye Qingtian's force.

However, War God did not stop there.

After unleashing his energy, he aimed a punch at the three people in front of them.

*Bam! Bam! Bam!*

With three thunderous booms, Sword Saint and the others were sent flying backward. Blood sputtered out from their mouths as they crumpled on the floor pathetically.

“What are you doing, Ye? Are you crazy?” demanded Tang Hao, his eyes turning

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bloodshot.

Lying on the ground, he suppressed the agonizing pain in his body.

“Hahaha! I'm crazy! But no matter how crazy I might be, I will never watch my compatriot die! I will never watch as a prodigy from China is forced to his death right in front of my country's borders! You all claim to be so patriotic. However, when the time comes to truly be righteous, you reveal yourselves to be nothing but cowards! You can't even protect your compatriot right in front of your country's borders! How can cowards like you still remain in Mount Yan so shamelessly and lead China's martial arts world? I've already told you that Ye Fan is the future of the martial arts world. If Ye Fan lives, China's future lives! Now, because of your cowardice and incompetency, China has lost its pride! You've destroyed China's future with your own hands! In the future, if China's martial arts world is destroyed by Chu Sect, it'll be thanks to the few of you!”

Ye Qingtian's face was twisted with anger as he clenched his fists.

Fury kept raging within him.

Furious, Ye Qingtian wished for nothing more than to kill those b\*stards instantly.

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War God's voice thundered across the place, causing the surroundings to tremble.

Eventually, he spat, "You all deserve to f\*cking die!"

Those words were brief but hurt like a knife to the heart.

Sword Saint, King of Fighters, and the rest stood there paralyzed.

Their eyes were filled with disbelief.

They could barely believe that it was Ye Qingtian saying those words.

They used to be comrades in arms, yet he was saying such vicious words now.

Those words were simply too much for Sword Saint and the others to hear, leaving them utterly dumbstruck.

"You... You... War God, how can you say that to us? We weren't responsible for Chu Tianfan's death. One should hold the actual perpetrator responsible instead. No matter how furious you are, why are you venting it out on us? Furthermore, Chu Tianfan is so arrogant and bloodthirsty. He has committed multiple murders within China. Despite that, War God Castle still turned a blind eye to him, barely

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tolerating his antics. However, he killed so many people outside the rainforest back then. How can the martial arts world everywhere else spare him? Do you want China's martial arts world to put its nation in danger just for the sake of a devil? Ye Qingtian, don't forget that we're the pillar of support for China. We are responsible for the survival of our nation's martial arts world. In such a position, how can we act so recklessly? We have to prioritize the bigger picture!"

Unable to bear the humiliation, Mo Gucheng spat the blood in his mouth away and poured out the grievances within him.

However, Ye Qingtian slapped him as soon as the latter's words fell.

With a shriek of agony, King of Fighters was sent flying away with a mouthful of blood.

"King of Fighters!"

"Father!"

Mo Wuya and the others were shocked.

Even Sword Saint and Tang Hao glared at the God with a look of defiance.

"War God, are you really crazy?"

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They were on the brink of fury.

For so many years, they had never been humiliated so badly by external enemies.

Yet, they were suffering from such embarrassment right in front of their comrade and compatriot.

Ye Qingtian could never be bothered by what they said. With a frosty expression, he stated coldly, "Mo Gucheng, I slapped you because of how ignorant you are. You're just lying to yourself. If Ye Fan was really a devil who only thirsts for blood, do you think the few of you could've left alive? Others might not know the reason for that catastrophe at Jiangbei, but how can you be oblivious to it too? If those martial artists at Jiangbei hadn't taken advantage of their seniority and wanted to kill Ye Fan, would he have retaliated? As for the massacre outside the rainforest, you have no right to blame Ye Fan! War God Castle was the one who invited Ye Fan into the rainforest. When surrounded by people attacking him, was Ye Fan supposed to sit there and wait for his death instead of retaliating? Outsiders accuse Ye Fan of being a devil because they just wanted to occupy the moral high ground! Yet, you fools just listen to what everyone says blindly. You conspired with those outsiders to sabotage the strongest fighter of China! If you're claiming to act in the interest of the

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biggest picture, you're just spouting nonsense!"

After a slight pause, he continued, "Do you think that if Ye Fan is no longer around, China will be free from all worries in the future? Now that Chu Yuan has left his seclusion, it's a certainty that Chu Sect will wage war again. If China still had Ye Fan with us, Chu Sect would still be slightly wary. Once Ye Fan entered the god realm, he'd be able to protect China for the next century! Yet, you've destroyed all hopes for the future just for the sake of these trivial interests dangling in front of you. Just you wait! When Chu Sect invades China, it'll be the moment when you fools regret it!"

Ye Qingtian was overwhelmed with fury.

His furious words reverberated across the place, crashing into everyone's ears like a tsunami.

With that, Ye Qingtian left furiously without staying a second longer.

The vast sky extended outside Mount Yan.

That white figure, who had been protecting China for decades, had disappeared from the peak of Mount Yan on this fateful day.

"Ye, you can't leave... War God! Ye Qingtian, come back!"

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His eyes turning bloodshot from anxiety, Tang Hao jumped to his feet and was about to chase after him.

However, it was impossible for him to catch up to Ye Qingtian, who had already disappeared from the horizon.

“Sword Saint, we cannot lose War God... We must find him back! Sword Saint, say something! What should we do in the future?”

Tang Hao was so anxious that he almost cried.

Meanwhile, Sword Saint had collapsed on the ground. He leaned against a huge boulder and sat there silently for a long time.

His eyes were filled with sorrow and helplessness.

War God's words were still echoing in his mind.

For some reason, when Sword Saint heard Ye Qingtian accusing him of destroying the future of China's martial arts world and the nation, he felt like daggers were stabbing into his heart.

It was as if all the strength had been sapped from his body.

All of his efforts and accomplishments in his lifetime had suddenly lost all meaning.

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For so many years, Sword Saint had been leading War God Castle, pouring his heart and soul into it.

From the first day he entered Mount Yan, his hope was that one day, China's martial arts world would return to its former glory.

Just like how things were a century ago, they would dominate the globe's martial arts world and be glorious again!

That was his hope.

However, after he worked so hard for it for his entire life, War God said that he had destroyed China.

Naturally, the impact to Sword Saint was unimaginable.

"Tang... Tang Hao... Have I... destroyed the future of China's martial arts world?"

Sword Saint suddenly raised his eyes and stared at Tang Hao intently.

At that moment, he seemed like a child yearning for someone's affirmation.

His eyes were filled with anticipation.

Tang Hao fell silent and eventually heaved a



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long sigh.

“Sword Saint, War God was right about something. Chu Sect would make a move one day. Even if we managed to survive today, we wouldn't be able to hide from them in the future. Perhaps, when that day comes, we should give it our all.”

It had been many days since Ye Fan's death, but the scene from that day had not faded from his memory with time.

Instead, it became even more impactful.

When Tang Hao closed his eyes every night, he would see the exact scene of Ye Fan collapsing.

It kept replaying in his mind like a broken record player.

Actually, even if War God did not say it, Tang Hao already regretted it.

They should not have stayed still—instead, they should have fought it out with those people!

They should have protected Ye Fan.

If they had given it their all, there might still be a chance.

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However, there were no more chances left now.

It was only a matter of time before Chu Yuan recovered and Chu Sect regrouped themselves. When that happened, Chu Yuan would lead the fighters to invade China.

Now that War God was gone, and with Ye Fan dead, there was no one who could fend off the onslaught in China.

Just like what War God had said, China's martial arts world no longer had a future when faced with the powerful Chu Sect.

Tang Hao's sigh was undeniably the last straw.

The last glimmer of hope in Sword Saint's eyes was extinguished.

Then, his body trembled as a mouthful of blood splattered onto the ground.

All of a sudden, he collapsed on the ground.

"Sword Saint!"

"Mr. Xiao!"

"Quick, carry him in!"

"Save him!"

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News of War God leaving War God Castle spread like wildfire. Soon, everyone in the martial arts world heard about it, which created a massive commotion.

China's martial arts world was wallowing in sorrow.

It was a series of unfortunate events and miseries coming one after the other.

Under all these impacts, China's martial arts world reached an all-time low.

The martial arts world in Jiangbei, Xijiang, and Adonia were all drowning in despair.

It felt like the end of the world had arrived.

Just when the entire world was grieving over the impending demise of China's martial arts world, it was a different scene in Great North.

It was covered in snowy mountains and ice—only a white expanse could be seen on the far horizon.

Not a single bird could be seen flying overhead, nor could a trace of human life be detected.

However, in a place devoid of any people, there was a glow burning in a wooden hut at the foot of the snow mountain.

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The snowy lands seemed endless.

Yet, it was precisely in such a lifeless place, where no traces of life could be detected, that a wooden hut was hidden amidst the snowy plains.

The flame swayed in the wind, chasing the coldness away slowly.

A middle-aged man was sighing sadly beside the flame.

In front of him lay a skinny figure whose face was ghastly pale.

His breathing was so shallow that it was as if he was barely living.

“This b\*stard is so embarrassing! Damn it! No matter what, I have to cure you. I must regain my pride. Otherwise, the ancestors' name will be tarnished.”

Shaking his head, the man sighed. He was determined that he would save this rascal no matter what.

It was all for his ego!

“But his injuries are quite severe, huh? It looks like I have to put in a lot of effort.”

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When the man thought about how much time would need to be wasted on that rascal, he felt a headache coming.

Initially, he thought that since the rascal was so powerful and was even protected by Dragon God, no injuries would be able to threaten his life.

However, the severity of his injuries far exceeded the man's expectations.

When he had rescued the rascal, the blood vessels to his heart had already been severed. There was not a hint of life to be detected.

By then, the man had almost given up!

"Luckily, this rascal has the Blue Spirit Jade. Otherwise, not even a god can save him. You stupid rascal! Be glad that you're so fortunate. I just wonder who gave this jade to him..."

The man fell into deep thought as he stared at the glowing jade.

He remembered that it was the heirloom of the Tang family, one of the Three Families of the Chu Sect.

In fact, the Blue Spirit Jade had a deep connection with Chu Yunyang, the ancestor of the Chu family.

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There were two jades in total.

One of them was with Chu Yunyang, while the other was given to a woman from the Tang Family as a token.

“Could it be that the girl from the Tang family had given this jade to him? That doesn't sound right... This rascal barely has any interactions with the Tang Family. Why would they give him this heirloom for no reason? Could it be that... No way...”

Upon that thought, a grim look appeared in his face.

“This is horrible. Everything's messed up now. The seniority is all messed up!” scolded the man, feeling so furious that he wanted to beat that rascal up.

*This rascal! No one can beat him in catching the fancy of women! It doesn't matter if he was involved with other women. However, he didn't even spare that girl from the Tang family! The seniority has all been messed up!*

“I'm going to die from fury, you rascal!”

The man's neck turned red from anger.

However, regardless of how angry he was, he could not possibly ignore the injured man.

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“Fine, let's do it. After all, it's my fault for getting myself involved in this. He's such a worrisome person!”

The man sighed, his voice filled with exasperation.

After resting for a while, he started to muster his energy and treat the brat's injuries.

For a moment, golden light filled the wooden hut, and shadows of dragons were reflected on the walls.

Even though the man tried his best to treat the patient's injuries, they were too severe.

After a day, the patient's breathing did not have any improvements.

“D\*mn it! It looks like I cannot do anything for the next two years.”

Outside the wooden hut, the snow continued falling, piling up on the ground.

The snow at that place knew no ends, as if it would never stop drifting from the sky.

In these lands, where only snowy plains could be seen, it felt like time had stopped.

Days and months passed, yet the passage of

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time could not leave a mark on this place at all.

However, despite the tranquility in those snowy terrains, China, which was far away, was embroiled in chaos.

News of War God leaving War God Castle had stunned the martial arts world in China.

Many people, including those living in War God's residence, knelt and begged him to return.

However, Ye Qingtian had already made up his mind.

Now that he had lost all hopes for War God Castle, he would naturally never return.

After leaving Mount Yan, War God headed to Jiangdong to pay his respects to Ye Fan.

When people say how highly War God thought of Ye Fan, another wave of discussions about Ye Fan emerged in China's martial arts world.

Some people felt that War God Castle had made a mistake and that China's martial arts world had let Ye Fan down.

It was a wise choice for War God to leave War God Castle, so Sword Saint and the rest could be taught a lesson.



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Otherwise, none of the fighters in China would dare to kill any enemies or make any forays outside.

“We should not leave anyone acting for the good of the rest to die. Mr. Chu attacked Chu Sect for himself, his family, and the nation! He was the one who raised China's martial arts world to glory. For the past century, the outsiders have been dominating the top ten ranks of the Sky Ranking, but he broke that record in one fell swoop! When we attend martial arts conferences overseas, the first thing that the foreigners would ask after seeing us is whether a dragon had appeared in China. The top rank of the Sky Ranking almost defeated Chu Sect with his own powers! In the whole of history, Mr. Chu was the only one who could do that. Anyone from China should feel proud whenever they are overseas!”

There were similar opinions shared in the martial artists' discussion forum.

Yet, every single word was packed with impact.

Naturally, most of those defending Ye Fan indignantly were martial artists from Jiangdong.

Apart from that, there were more criticisms thrown toward Ye Fan.

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“War God is going overboard. How can he ignore the welfare of the entire nation just for the sake of one person? Chu Tianfan isn't worthy of that! Although he was from China, he never saw himself as part of the nation. He massacred his compatriots on West Lake. When he was at Jiangdong, he viewed War God Castle with disdain. He ignored all laws, all bottom lines, and did not care for his nation... If someone like him exists, it'll be a catastrophe for the entire world!”

“What nonsense! What bulls\*t!”

These arguments were plastered all over the discussion forum until a thread suddenly appeared one day.

Its title was, “Chu Tianfan Is Still Alive!”

The moment that thread appeared, all the criticisms online disappeared.

It was obvious that they were afraid.

If Ye Fan were still alive and saw people criticizing him, he would track them down and kill them.

However, they found out that the user was just posting nonsense and riding on the controversy.

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“What the f\*ck?”

“Can you stop making such jokes in the future? You'd actually kill someone. Chu Tianfan is already dead! How can he still be alive?”

“Yes, is it fun to crack such jokes? Do you wish so badly for him to survive and cause another tragedy at Westlake?”

The quarrels on Martial Artist Forum never ceased.

Time passed slowly amidst such chaos.

Soon, a year passed.

A white figure silently appeared under Mount Yunding.

It was an old hangout, but old acquaintances had already passed away.

Ye Qingtian was filled with nostalgia and sorrow.

Holding two bottles of alcohol, he trekked to the top of Mount Yunding.

Compared to his previous time there, Mount Yunding was much quieter and emptier than before.



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The doors and windows were locked shut while weeds grew all over the courtyard.

It was a pathetic sight—the glory days had disappeared, leaving only ruins behind.

The only tidy place on the initially prosperous Mount Yunding was that short tombstone.

“It's been a year, so I've come to visit you. Why are you so foolish? Why must you commit suicide?”

He added, “You rascal. You left without even waiting for me to come out of seclusion. I wanted to exchange a few blows with you. Even now, I still remember the moment when you first revealed your powers. You were simply too dazzling! It's a huge pity that all those glorious days ended up for nothing. It looks like the heavens are envious of prodigies...”

Ye Qingtian's eyes were bloodshot. Leaning against the tombstone, he sat down and drowned his sorrows in alcohol.



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"Oh? Sir, may I know who you are? Are you Ye Fan's dad?"

Ye Qingtian felt nostalgic when he saw the scenery on Mount Yunding.

Meanwhile, Shen Fei and Han Shaojie walked up to Mount Yunding with some flowers and bottles of wine. Once they reached the peak, they saw Ye Qingtian drinking alone, and his eyes were bloodshot.

Evidently, they did not know who Ye Qingtian was.

Since the man before them seemed to be advanced in age and dejected, Shen Fei and Han Shaojie assumed that he was Ye Fan's father.

As soon as they said it, Ye Qingtian's expression turned grim. "I'm not his father. Don't spout nonsense."

In the beginning, Ye Qingtian only treated Ye Fan as a youngling.

As Ye Fan became increasingly well-known in the martial arts world and demonstrated incredible power, Ye Qingtian regarded Ye Fan as his equal.

To be exact, they had even become good

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friends.

Hence, Ye Qingtian was rendered speechless when the two young men thought he was Ye Fan's father.

"Oh, is that so? In that case, we're sorry for our mistake."

At that moment, Shen Fei and Han Shaojie were overwhelmed with awkwardness.

Although Shen Fei and Han Shaojie had known Ye Fan for a long time, they had never met his father.

All they knew was that Ye Fan's mother lived in Jingzhou.

When they saw him sitting dejectedly in front of Ye Fan's tomb, the first thing that flashed across their minds was that he was Ye Fan's father.

After a short conversation, they finally realized that Ye Qingtian was Ye Fan's friend.

"Ye Fan, it has been a year. We're here to visit you."

With that, Shen Fei and Han Shaojie sat down.

After putting the flowers at Ye Fan's tomb, they

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opened a bottle of wine and poured four glasses.

They handed a glass to Ye Qingtian and left the last one at Ye Fan's tomb.

"Huh... Ye Fan, many of us took it for granted when you were still here. We only realized how important you were to Jiangdong after you left us." Shen Fei heaved a sigh and spoke while tears uncontrollably fell down his face.

At that time, Shen Fei's eyes had turned red. He lifted his glass of wine and gulped it down.

"Ye Fan, you might not know that although it has only been a year, Jiangdong has changed a lot. Everything is different now. Mufan Group that you founded is on the brink of shutting down. Only a few people of yours are trying hard to sustain it. Also, Ms. Qiu and your mom have left Jiangdong and might not visit you on your death anniversary. You did not fail your friends, subordinates, and the world. However, the only regret you had was with your family."

Shen Fei added, "You brought it upon yourself by making Ms. Qiu and your mom mad at you. Why did you decide to go up against such a powerful force? Because of that, your family, career, and Jiangdong were destroyed. After returning to Jiangdong, Mr. Lei always stays in his room to drink his sorrow away. Li Er only

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comes back to Jiangdong once in a few months. Chen Ao has retired, whereas Wang Jiexi is bedridden due to severe illness. The famous elders, who used to work with you, have turned a blind eye to Jiangdong. Now, different people are at the helm of Jiangdong.”

Feeling dejected, Shen Fei continued, “Despite the pressure from the new king, the Shen family could initially sustain itself with the protection given by Shaojie's father. However, a few months ago, Shaojie's father and He Lanshan were transferred to different places. Alas, I'm afraid most of the influential families in Jiangdong don't remember Mr. Chu anymore.”

A new leader would always start with a new team.

Ye Fan's demise had brought about a dramatic transformation to the power structure of Jiangdong.

Back then, when something happened to Ye Fan several times, the power structure of Jiangdong remained steady because Qiu Mucheng, Ye Ximei, and Ye Fan's close relatives were there.

Moreover, Li Er, Lei San, and the elders who worked with Ye Fan could serve him anytime.

While the presence of Ye Fan's family could



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boost the people's morale, the elders could crush troublemakers to maintain peace in Jiangdong.

After Ye Fan passed away, his wife and mother eventually left Jiangdong.

After all, since Ye Fan didn't have children, he couldn't pass his throne in Jiangdong to his descendants.

If Li Er and the elders were still dedicated, they had the means to stabilize the situation in Jiangdong even though Ye Fan's wife wasn't there to calm everyone down.

Nonetheless, Li Er, Chen Ao, and the others were crestfallen when Ye Fan committed suicide to protect everyone, including his subordinates.

The tragedy was over, yet those who stayed alive were tortured deep down.

After the funeral was completed a year ago, Li Er, Lei San, and others could hardly sleep for many nights.

Once they closed their eyes, the images of Ye Fan's body being pierced and the pool of blood on the ground would flash through their minds.

Tears streamed down their faces when they

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opened their eyes.

Under such a bad psychological state, they could hardly be in charge of the affairs in Jiangdong.

While Lei San numbed himself with alcohol, Li Er held on to his last hope to go around the world to find Ye Fan.

Li Er wished to find Ye Fan's body, which was taken away by the mysterious man after he died.

However, because Li Er and other elders chose not to be involved in the affairs of Jiangdong, someone else grabbed the chance to take charge.

Besides, those who Ye Fan trusted were all gotten rid of with no exception.

For instance, Shen Group, which was owned by the family of Shen Fei's father, had fallen, just like Mufan Group.

Furthermore, Shen Fei's father was sidelined by the businessmen in Jiangdong.

In the early days, Shen Fei could live a comfortable life with the help of Ye Fan, Han Dongmin, and He Lanshan.

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Currently, all Ye Fan's comrades were transferred to different places.

For instance, He Lanshan, Han Dongmin, and Lu Tianhe rose through the ranks because Ye Fan supported them. With Ye Fan gone, they were transferred from Jiangdong to some second-rate departments to work until retirement.

As such, Jiangdong, which Ye Fan built, had collapsed within a year.

Nevertheless, many had predicted it before it happened.

Given that Ye Fan was overly influential in Jiangdong, the higher-ups in Yanjing saw him as a threat.

After Ye Fan passed away, they would resort to different means to reduce his influence as much as possible, hoping to restore Jiangdong to how it used to be.

Shen Fei and the rest had anticipated it long before the higher-ups in Yanjing took action.

However, they still couldn't help but sigh at how unfeeling the higher-ups were.

Shen Fei gulped down several glasses of wine when he brought up some of the sorrowful

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memories.

Meanwhile, Han Shaojie also kept Shen Fei company to drown their sorrows.

As Ye Qingtian looked at them silently, his emotions were all over the place.

“Ah... Ye Fan, I can't stay in Jiangdong any longer. Shaojie and I have decided to carve out a new path for ourselves in Jiangnan after today. Even Chu Wenfei, who used to be a nobody, can achieve something. I'm sure both of us can be successful if we try. However, we're only worried that no one will take the time to sweep your tomb.”

After wiping his tears away, Shen Fei grabbed the bottle of wine and gulped it down.

“Sir, we have to go. Since we're leaving Jiangdong tomorrow, we still have to visit some old friends. Please come more often to keep Ye Fan company when you're free.”

Shen Fei waved Ye Qingtian goodbye and asked him to visit Ye Fan's tomb more often.

“God d\*mn the martial arts world of China! Ye Fan wouldn't have committed suicide if those from War God Castle didn't retreat. Also, we wouldn't have to leave our hometown!”



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Shen Fei let out a string of curses as they walked down Mount Yunding.

After that, they hopped into a black car and left.



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A myriad of emotions stirred within Ye Qingtian as he watched Shen Fei and Han Shaojie leave.

Ye Qingtian was particularly upset after listening to what Shen Fei said.

“Alas, everything falls apart now that the patron has fallen. Jiangdong, the vast region, has finally collapsed.” Ye Qingtian shook his head and let out a sigh.

After listening to Shen Fei just now, Ye Qingtian thought if he ought to help them.

Ye Qingtian thought he could somehow compensate Ye Fan on behalf of China's martial arts world by helping his friends and family.

However, Ye Qingtian eventually dismissed the idea after giving it some thought.

Since Ye Fan had numerous comrades and friends over the years, Ye Qingtian could help them temporarily but not forever.

The only way to do so was that Ye Qingtian was at the helm of Jiangdong. Otherwise, Shen Fei and the others couldn't stay for much longer once he moved to another place.

In the end, Ye Qingtian decided to ditch the plan, which was unfeasible in the long term.

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"I didn't expect that even Ye Fan's wife and mother left Jiangdong. Perhaps they wished to escape from the place filled with sorrows," Ye Qingtian murmured and heaved a sigh.

Suddenly, Ye Qingtian realized that almost none of Ye Fan's family remained in Jiangdong.

"Rest in peace, my friend. I'll avenge you one day! Sword Saint might be afraid of seeking justice for you from the Chu Sect, but I want the Chu Sect to repay us for whatever they owe you and China!"

Ye Qingtian stayed in front of Ye Fan's tomb for the whole day and night.

At dawn, he bowed several times before Ye Fan's tomb.

After that, Ye Qingtian took out a dragon mask and put it on his face.

From that day onward, there was one less War God in China. Instead, a man with a dragon mask emerged in the martial arts world.

Time slipped away in the twinkling of an eye.

Incidents that used to send shockwaves throughout the world were slowly forgotten as time passed.

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Xue Renyang was in the Xue family manor in Yanjing. He said to himself, "It has been two years since Dragon Master fell, long enough to make the whole world forget him. I wonder how many people in China still remember Dragon Master's face. Even my memory of his petite figure is becoming more blurred."

Night had fallen, and the city lights were starting to light up one by one.

Xue Renyang stood in front of the floor-to-ceiling window overlooking the city.

That day was the last day of December, and the new year would arrive soon.

People all around the world were ecstatic to welcome the new year.

Looking out the window, Xue Renyang could see that the city was lively, and the roads were full of different vehicles.

Besides, many couples, relatives, and friends gathered to celebrate the new year.

The world seemed peaceful and serene, for everyone looked forward smilingly to the celebration.

However, Xue Renyang couldn't help but feel dejected after gazing at the scene.



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“Everyone enjoys their peaceful lives without a care in the world. However, how many of them will miss those who have sacrificed to bring about peace?” Xue Renyang sighed emotionally.

During festivals, Xue Renyang couldn't help but reminisce about Ye Fan and feel down.

After all, those who went through the tragedy could never forget it.

As Xue Renyang was deep in thought, a young man reported, “Grandpa, I got some news. A few hours ago, when some members of the Chu Sect gathered to celebrate the new year in a hotel in Norwal City, the man in the dragon mask entered with a sword and killed thirty-eight fighters! One of them was an elder of the Chu Sect, while another three elders were severely injured.”

The young man added, “As of today, the man in the dragon mask has carried out ninety-six attacks against the Chu Sect and killed four hundred and thirty-two people. Now, the Chu Sect has issued an order to kill him. Also, the bounty has increased from one hundred billion to three hundred billion!”

Upon listening to it, Xue Renyang couldn't help but frown and asked in a deep voice, “Who on earth is the man in the dragon mask?”

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“Could he be Mr. Chu? Mr. Chu is the Hall Master of Dragon God Hall, and that man happens to wear a dragon mask. Doesn't it signify the head of Dragon Gods? Besides that, the man in the dragon mask is as strong as Mr. Chu. Therefore, people in the martial arts world are saying that the Hall Master of Dragon God Hall has returned. In other words, the man in the dragon mask who murdered the Chu Sect's fighters is Chu Tianfan, who had allegedly committed suicide in the past!” The young man's eyes lit up as he spoke, as though he was excited and looking forward to it.

However, Xue Renyang shook his head and replied, “The man in the dragon mask can't be Dragon Master. Judging from Dragon Master's personality, he will not wear a mask to hide his face when taking revenge against the Chu Sect. Besides, if Dragon Master wants to hide his identity, he doesn't have to wear that mask that raises suspicion. Hence, there is only one reason the man kills the Chu Sect's members while wearing a dragon mask—he wants to avenge Dragon Master!”

With teary eyes, he added in a deep voice, “Of course, there can be another motive...”

“What motive can it be?” the young man asked bewilderedly.

“To disrupt the Chu Sect and foil Chu Yuan's

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ambitious plans!" Xue Renyang looked in the direction of the Chu Sect through the window.

After pausing for a while, Xue Renyang explained, "Didn't you realize the Chu Sect had spent most of their efforts to deal with the man in the dragon mask within the past year? In other words, the Chu Sect barely did anything for such a long time when in fact, among all martial arts organizations globally, the Chu Sect is the most capable of being the leader."

"In that case, should the people of China thank the man in the dragon mask?" The young man fell into a daze.

Previously, the young man only thought the man in the dragon mask went up against the Chu Sect to avenge Ye Fan.

Hence, he was surprised to know that the presence of the man in the dragon mask meant a lot to the martial arts world.

As the young man was deep in thought, Xue Renyang heaved a long sigh and responded, "We should thank the man in the dragon mask. However, he has only delayed the inevitable. As long as he doesn't enter the god realm, the Chu Sect will conquer the world of martial arts sooner or later. Back then, Dragon Master failed to destroy the Chu Sect and even sacrificed himself in the end. Therefore, how can the man

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in the dragon mask accomplish it alone?”

Toward the end, nostalgia and sorrow had filled Xue Renyang's eyes as if he had lost hope.

To Xue Renyang, the future of the martial arts world was buried after Ye Fan passed away.

After a brief silence, Xue Renyang asked the young man about Xu Lei. “How about Ms. Xu? Do you have any news about her?”

Xue Renyang opined that Xu Lei was perhaps the most heartbroken person after Ye Fan's death.

Xue Renyang still remembered that Xu Lei was desolate and shed many tears back then. She even sought death from all her grief.

In the end, Xue Renyang had to tell Xu Lei that Ye Fan didn't die because someone had rescued him.

It reignited Xu Lei's hope, for she felt that Ye Fan would return one day.

After that, Xu Lei, like Li Er, visited various places over the past two years, hoping to look for any news about Ye Fan.

Because of that, Xue Renyang hadn't seen Xu Lei for a long time.



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“I was only informed that she returned to Yunzhou a few months ago. She probably came back to sweep the late Mr. Chu's tomb.”

Xue Renyang felt troubled upon hearing him. “Alas... She's miserable. Let's not dwell on it today. It's the new year tomorrow. Let's go home to have a meal with our family together.”

With that, Xue Renyang left.

While everyone ushered in the new year, a petite figure walked in the snow in the northmost part of the world.

“I can finally see green.”



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In Jiangbei, Livingsfill, the classes in school had just ended, so the street was packed with people.

Parents gathered near the entrance of a kindergarten, and they were all there to pick their kids up.

It was noisy all around. People and cars filled the place, making it impossible for anyone to move freely.

The people around, however, seemed to be used to the chaos surrounding them.

That was understandable since the same thing happened every day when school was off.

It was especially bad when it snowed or rained. The traffic jam would worsen, and the place would be packed.

“Mommy, I’m here.”

“Daddy? Why are you the one to pick me up today?”

There, at the entrance of the school, kids chirped as they searched for their parents. Every single one of them ran into their parents’ arms.

As time passed, the entire street slowly

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became less congested because most kids had already been taken home.

In the end, a single, lonely boy stood at the side of the school entrance. He stared numbly at the road and waited patiently.

“Fan Junior, why is your mommy always so late? I can't reach her via her phone, either. My gosh, we've been waiting for an hour, and the sun is setting. I still have to rush home today to cook.”

A teacher stood beside the boy and seemed impatient.

As she complained, she dialed the same number repeatedly.

“I'm sorry. My mommy might be busy at work,” replied the obedient boy as he bowed to apologize to the teacher.

“What about your dad? If your mom is busy, then maybe your father is free? Give me your father's phone number. I'll call him,” said the teacher as she turned her attention to the boy.

The boy had been with the kindergarten for quite some time, but the teacher had only just realized that his mother was always the one who picked him up. *I don't think I've ever met his dad before.*



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## Chapter 1834

Those words upset the boy. Suddenly, he was depressed, and those bright eyes glowed with less enthusiasm.

“My mom said that I don't have a dad...”

No one noticed it, but when the boy gave his answer, a thin figure hiding behind a tree suddenly trembled.

“Fan Junior!”

Just then, a lady suddenly called out from the other side. She sounded worried.

It didn't take long before a beautiful lady showed up in an aging vehicle.

“I'm so sorry for making you wait for such a long time. I promise I won't be late again,” said the woman as she looked apologetically at the teacher.

“Don't bother. I've heard that promise a dozen times by now. Seriously, if you want what's best for the kid, then you should get him a father. It's tough to take care of the kid by yourself, after all,” replied the teacher, who sighed before heading to her car and leaving.

The mother and the son became the only ones left there.





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“Mommy, did you have a hard time at work today?”

“Not at all. I received a bonus today. Let's go, Fan Junior. I'll treat you to something nice today.”

“No, I don't want that. Everything is expensive nowadays. Let's hurry home. You've worked hard all day, so I'm sure you want to rest now.”

As the two of them spoke, they moved forward and eventually disappeared into the crowd.

The figure hiding some distance away only stepped out after they were gone.

He stood at the spot where the mother and the son stood earlier. As he stared into the distance, his gaze turned gloomy.

“It's been over two weeks. Are you going to keep stalking them? Do you have no intention of reuniting with them?”

While the guy was lost in his thoughts, a woman with a stunning figure appeared.

If Han and the others were around, they would immediately recognize the woman as Junie, the medical expert that used to serve the Dragon God Hall.

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The thin man standing before her was none other than Ye Fan, who had already left the north for over a month.

Ye Fan secretly went to Jiangdong after he returned to the country.

He hadn't fully recovered yet, so he couldn't publicize the news of how he had survived.

That was also why he didn't visit anyone after returning to Jiangdong.

All he did was drop by the Ye residence in Mount Yunding.

After Ye Fan returned to the country, the first thing he did was to go to the one person he wanted to see the most.

Unfortunately, the place in Jiangdong was already abandoned by the time he reached his destination.

Ye Fan had no choice but to contact Han and ask the latter to help locate his wife.

That was how Ye Fan found out that the woman he missed dearly was in the city of Jiangbei.

As for Junie, she came because Han told her about Ye Fan's request.

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Naturally, she was there to tend to Ye Fan's injuries.

Her earlier question prompted Ye Fan to shake his head, though.

"There's no need for a reunion. She's well, isn't she? And her life seems good. What's the point of showing up? A dead man like me would just mess her life up. Besides, I'm guessing she doesn't want to see me again, and I'm content with just seeing them from afar."

Ye Fan shook his head while grinning bitterly. His tone and his words echoed with guilt and self-mockery.

Qiu Mucheng gave up the comfortable life in Jiangdong and left Ye Fan's assets and wealth untouched. She chose to move to Jiangbei and turn to her distant family in Livingfill to start over.

Qiu Mucheng didn't even ask for a penny from Mufan Group when she left Jiangdong.

She simply left.

Others might not understand why she did all that, but Ye Fan did.

Her actions proved she was leaving her past in Jiangdong behind and had chosen to start over.

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It was her way of fleeing, abandoning, and severing all ties from her past, and it was a clean break.

Some might find Qiu Mucheng to be extremely heartless.

Her husband passed away, and she left Jiangdong without looking back. It was as though she didn't care.

Ye Fan, however, understood that Qiu Mucheng wasn't being cruel. She was simply heartbroken.

Ye Fan's life had been filled with hardship, and he had too many near misses in the past few years.

To Qiu Mucheng and Ye Ximei, hearing about Ye Fan being in grave danger was torture.

The worry, the pain, and the intense sorrow the news brought were not something words could describe.

That was why, after the incident in the rainforest, both Qiu Mucheng and Ye Ximei asked Ye Fan to settle down. They wanted him to lead a safe, stable life.

They simply couldn't go through that pain and torture again.

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Unfortunately, Ye Fan didn't listen to them.

He ignored his family's advice and ignored the pain his partner endured. Armed with nothing, he dove into danger once more and fell into death's embrace.

That day, Li Er and the others didn't just take Ye Fan home in a coffin. They also killed Qiu Mucheng's heart because it died of pain and torture.

She was sad, disappointed, and angry.

*Why? Why won't that ass\*le treasure his own life? Why must he be so freaking selfish and repeatedly hurt the people close to him?*

Disheartened, Qiu Mucheng decided to leave Jiangdong, a place filled with memories and heartbreak.

Ye Fan knew what Qiu Mucheng felt, and that was why he was too ashamed to go back to them.

"So... Your plan is to be a living dead? You're going to ignore your wife, your son, your mother, and everyone else you've ever known?" asked Junie in a confused tone.

*He's alive, so why won't he share that news with the people he loves the most?*

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"I don't know. All I know is that even if I decide to go back, that reunion will still have to wait. I have to make sure that I finish everything I set out to do, and I will only return after I have survived everything. The pain of losing someone you love... that is something they need only experience once. I won't make them go through it again."

Ye Fan's heart overflowed with guilt. He knew just how much he hurt everyone.

It had been two years, and there was a possibility that the pain within their hearts had eased.

Hence, why would he risk disrupting that peace?

If he died in the future, they would have to go through the same pain again.

Ye Fan had already died once, so he no longer dared to hope for certain things.

At the very least, he wouldn't dream of being happy until he had accomplished his mission.

Love and family... those were things he no longer deserved.