

Chapter 1721

It was obvious that the five of them did not quite expect the guardian beast to be so ferocious, so much so that it was able to injure all of them in a matter of seconds. Judging from the intensity of its fighting spirit, it was questionable as to whether they were even going to be able to escape, what more to mention whether or not they could even get the Frozen Snow Flower.

"Should I ask the guy at the back to lend me a hand?" Baylor was hesitating as he thought about this.

However, just as he was thinking, there came a loud scream. A disciple's left arm was bitten by the guardian beast. Mustering all its energy, it tore off his arm before swallowing it..

The injured disciple fell to the ground in pain. His face was pale and he had lost the ability to fight.

Baylor was left utterly flabbergasted. At the same time, anxiety took over him.

He had no time to care about anything else. Turning his head to look at Fade, he yelled, "Come on buddy, you just broke into our spell formation and snuck in silently. It should be quite effortless for you judging from your strength."

"Lend us a hand. Let's kill this guardian beast together. Ice Lake Clan will surely reward you handsomely in return."

Upon hearing this, Fade shook his head and replied nonchalantly, "I don't fancy any of your rewards."

"We'll be able to reward you with an Earth Level Pill," said Baylor as he clenched his jaws and gritted his teeth. His expression was one of excruciating pain.

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Fade smirked and replied, "The Frozen Snow Flower is a herb of Heaven Level grade. You are asking for my help to get the Frozen Snow Flower, but you are only rewarding me with a mere Earth Level pill. What an incommensurate reward!"

"You..." Sensing that Fade wanted to take advantage of the situation, Baylor could not help but grit his teeth in animosity. Alas, he had no choice but to raise the stakes. "Two Earth Level pills, one each for the both of you. As rogue cultivators yourselves, this should be quite a good deal."

Notwithstanding the follow-up offer, Fade continued shaking his head. He asserted, "Didn't I just say it? I don't fancy any of your rewards."

The moment Baylor heard this, he replied disgruntledly, "You want to wait until we are defeated before taking advantage of us. Let me tell you, it's not as simple as you think. If we are defeated, the both of you will not be able to battle the guardian beast. However, we might possibly triumph over it if we work together. That's a win-win for everyone."

"What makes you think the guardian beast is out of my league?" Fade retorted sneeringly. He went on and proclaimed, "Give up your pursuit of the Frozen Snow Flower and I shall come to your rescue. Otherwise, you won't be able to last more than thirty minutes."

"You..." Baylor scowled at him. Despite his anger, he did not lift his hands to fight.

Wielding a longsword, Ezra glowered at Fade and said, "I get that. Once we get rid of the guardian beast, you are going to have a good time."

Ignoring the threat, Fade replied nonchalantly, "Hurry up then. You guys can't beat this guardian beast."

The remaining disciples clearly showed no signs of giving up. Giving Fade the go-by, they clenched their teeth as they prepared

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to kill the guardian beast.

Be that as it may, having lost a combat partner, the enraged guardian beast was now out of their league. In just a few minutes, two other disciples had been severely wounded. They were bleeding profusely and their faces had turned pale. It seemed that they were about to succumb to the injuries.

At this moment, Baylor knew that he and his team would definitely be unable to defeat the guardian beast. He could not help but grind his teeth and declare, "We give up. Over to you!"

Nodding his head, Fade took a few steps forwards and sneered, "That should be the way. Why the delay though? Now, everybody has been injured."

Baylor glared at him. Not saying anything, he retreated with his comrades so that Fade could come forward to battle against the guardian beast.

Baylor could not help but remark angrily, "So arrogant of this guy. I'd like to see how he comes to blows with the guardian beast by himself!"

It could be seen that the three injured disciples did not want to concede defeat.

As the guardian beast dashed towards Fade, he shot out a stream of positive energy at the guardian beast gently, causing it to somersault and smash into the walls of the cave. It roared angrily.

As he witnessed what had just occurred, Baylor could not help but be blown away. "This guy is much stronger than I thought."

The three disciples were taken aback too.

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As for Ezra, she seemed to be cooking up a plan as she could be seen moving her eyes. She came close to Baylor and whispered, "As the guy delivers the death blow, shall we then make our move and..."

As she was talking, she gestured a throat-slash sign. Naturally, Baylor understood what she meant. He pulled a long face and replied, "That's not proper, is it?"

She asserted, "What's improper about it? We're talking about the Frozen Snow Flower, a Heavenly-grade herb! Baylor, Ice Lake Clan is nothing but a Black Level sect. Our resources are naturally not comparable to those of the bigger sects. It'll thus be challenging for us to grow influential. If we miss this opportunity, I don't know when it will ever come knocking again!"

"This..." He was still a little hesitant.

"Baylor, we're running out of time. If that fellow succeeds, it'll be difficult for us to snatch it from him. We have to strike him from his back now that he has let his guard down, so that..."

As she was convincing Baylor anxiously, the sound of a sword slash could be heard all of a sudden.

The five of them turned over and looked as Fade used his fingers to create a sword formation of the Heaven Level. The sword whizzed in the air and slashed the guarding beast in half at lightning speed.

Baylor and the team had been struggling to bring the guardian beast down. However, all it took was one fatal blow from Fade to kill it. Everyone was left in great astonishment.

Just as they were still in awe, he unearthed the Frozen Snow Flower. He carried it by his side as he walked back.

Seeing this, Ezra could not help but squint, and her expression was a little unnatural.

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Fade walked towards Quin and said faintly, "Done. let's leave!"

Immediately, the two of them turned around and were about to leave.

Ezra refused to resign to the fact that the Frozen Snow Flower had been taken. Finally, she could not help but utter, "Wait a minute!"

"What's the matter?" Fade stopped walking and turned around.

Ezra looked at him and blurted, "Hand over the Frozen Snow Flower."

"What do you mean?" Upon hearing her words, he gave her a cold stare.

Looking self-righteous, she asserted sanctimoniously, "We were the first to locate the Frozen Snow Flower. We've been preparing for more than half a month, not to mention fighting arduously against the guardian beast for two days. Now that we're about to get our hands on it, you take it away from us. Such shameless riding on our coattails."

"Calling me shameless, huh?" Fade mocked. "Let's get this clear. You were unable to fight against the guardian beast. If it wasn't because of me, you would have been killed by it. "

"What's more, Baylor himself too mentioned about giving up on Frozen Snow Flower," he said as he directed his gaze at Baylor.

Suddenly, Baylor was miffed and he could be seen pulling a long face. He stammered, "Granted, I did say so, but in hindsight, we wouldn't have necessarily been defeated. As a matter of fact, we should be credited for the guardian beast's eventual death."

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Fade squinted and he replied coldly, "And by that do you mean that I should hand over the Frozen Snow Flower to you?"

"Of course," Ezra said matter-of-factly as she wielded her sword.

Baylor felt bad but assured, "Be that as it may, we do acknowledge your effort in bringing down the guardian beast. Therefore, we won't shortchange you."

"Haha!" Fade sneered and said, "What if I refuse to hand over the Frozen Snow Flower?"

"Then don't blame us if we get nasty," Ezra retorted as she thrust her long sword, signalling an imminent fight.

The remaining four people got into a fighting stance too. They ran their positive energy and were ready to fight against Fade.

Shaking his head, Fade grinned and said, "Such an ungrateful lot. Since you want to die, don't blame me for being merciless."

As he spoke, his energy surged as he got ready to attack.

The moment Ezra noticed this, she yelled quickly, "Let's attack together and kill them all. The Frozen Snow Flower will then be ours."

All of a sudden, the five of them came forward to attack at the same time.

"You're courting death!" Fade snorted coldly. Besieged by five people, he threw out a stream of positive energy which tossed all

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of them, eventually causing them to fall to the ground. They all spat out blood.

Never had they thought that he would be so powerful. Despite joining forces, they could not even withstand a blow from him.

In an instant, everyone was confused. As Fade strode towards them with a sombre expression, one of them was so utterly scared that his face turned pale.

"No, don't kill me. I know I'm wrong."

"I didn't want to fight. It was Ezra who gave us the order. Boohoo!"

"If you kill us, Ice Lake Clan will go after you," Ezra remained headstrong even though she was on the brink of death.

Fade was not bothered by her words. The Qi sword in his hand whistled out and he was about to cut down.

However, at this moment, Quin shouted, "Fade, stop!"

As he looked back and gazed at her, he asked, "Yes Quin?"

Looking at him, she muttered, "Granted, they were in the wrong. However, it's not to the point where they should be killed. Just let them go!"

Fade knew that his wife had always been kind-hearted. She had just been exposed to the world of martial arts. Naturally, she was not aware of the cruelty and danger which were part of the modus operandi of this world. Hence, she was unable to tolerate it when he wanted to commit the killing.

Setting them free could potentially spell trouble. However, after all, his wife had spoken. Hence, he withdrew the virtual sword and shouted coldly to the five people, "Lucky you for cheating death. I'll spare your lives. Now get out of here!"

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At this point in time, all five of them were too afraid to say anything. They got up from the ground and ran out of the cave.

However, at this time, Fade suddenly thought of something and shouted, "Wait a minute!"

Instantaneously, all five of them stood stock-still. They looked back at him with a long face and said, "What else do you want?"

Quin too was looking quizzically at him.

Fade asked, "Did some villagers pass by here this afternoon? Did you assault them?"

Upon hearing this, all five of them were stunned. Then, four of them directed their gazes at Ezra.

Knowing that she could not keep mum about the incident, she confessed, "It was me. Those foolish villagers should have been punished for breaking into our formation. I had to teach them a lesson."

Fade's face turned cold, and he said in a deep voice, "Teach them a lesson? Why on earth did you have to teach them a lesson by shooting freezing cold energy into their bodies to kill them?"

She retorted indifferently, "I did not. I was merely striking lightly. Those villagers were just too weak to withstand my inner force. They deserved to die anyway."

His face darkened at this moment. He stared at her and continued, "What about the crippled old man and the ten-year-old kid in the past two weeks or so? Were you the one who killed them?"

She replied nonchalantly, "It was the same situation. They broke into our formation by accident. They were so feeble that they couldn't even withstand a single blow from me. It serves them right to die anyway!"

Upon hearing this, Fade did not utter a single word. He raised his hand and shot out a stream of positive energy towards her.

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She was taken aback at the sight of Fade attacking her despite promising to spare her life. She wanted to say something. However, the stream of positive energy pierced through her heart before she managed to utter a single word. She collapsed to the ground and succumbed to her injuries.

The remaining four people were utterly horrified and terror-stricken.

Fade shook his hand and said coldly, "Take her body and buzz off!"

Baylor and the other three comrades were too stunned to say anything. As they collected Ezra's body, they ran out of the cave quickly.

It was not until they were out of sight that Fade's stony gaze started to dissipate. He looked back at Quin and explained, "My dear wife, I resorted to killing Ezra as she had gone overboard. Not only was she ruthless, but she was also highly conceited and did not treasure human lives. The lives of ordinary folks are nothing but a speck of dust to her."

"Sparing her life would only lead to more innocent people getting harmed. For this reason, she can't be forgiven."

Quin nodded in agreement. She looked at him and said, "Fade, you don't have to explain yourself. I understand. I was too naive. Not realizing the cruelty in the world of martial arts, I..."

He squeezed her hand and said, "Alright then, let's not talk about this. The Frozen Snow Flower that I've just got is of good quality. It suits you perfectly as you are practicing the Nine Froze Skill. Let's descend the mountain and find a place. I'll help to refine the Frozen Snow Flower which can improve your strength."

"Okay," she nodded.

Then, the both of them left the cave and descended the mountain.

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Before descending the mountain, Fade destroyed the formation set up by Baylor so that innocent villagers would not be harmed unnecessarily.

At the base of the mountain, Jamar and the others were fixated from afar as Fade and Quin made their way down the mountain. When they finally reached the foot of the mountain, the villagers scurried towards them to express their concerns.

"Doctor Chen, you descended safely. Great."

"Doctor Chen and Miss Lin, you aren't hurt, are you?"

"Doctor Chen, what is up there at the summit? Is it something spooky?"

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Hearing the words of concern from the villagers, Fade felt a tinge of warmth. He explained that the dangerous formation at the summit had been removed and that it would no longer pose any hazards.

As for the three people that had perished, Fade did not elaborate. Instead, he used poisonous miasma as a smokescreen to cover up the truth..

At noon, he and Quin bid farewell and left after taking a respite at Spirit Bird Village.

Not too far from Spirit Bird Village, the two of them arrived at the centre of East Stream City. They managed to locate a five-star hotel and checked in.

They took a shower and rested. The following day, Fade started to help Quin refine the Frozen Snow Flower.

After refining, her cultivation improved. She managed to break through the Yellow Level and reached the early stage of Black

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Level.

"Honey, let's go out for a walk. It's too boring to confine ourselves to the room for the entire day!" He grabbed hold of her arm to make their way to the door.

She nodded in agreement. Just as they were about to leave, the phone beeped. There was a message.

Chapter 1723

When Fade saw Quin standing stock-still, he could not help but ask, "Are you alright? What's the matter?"

She shook her head and chuckled, "No big deal, it's just an invitation."

"Invitation?" He was burning with curiosity.

She clarified, "It's from a friend of my father. He'll be celebrating his 70th birthday. He invited me to attend the party."

"That old man is Taegan Zhou, who used to be my father's partner in the Lin family business in Capital City. When my parents got together, the Lin family did not give their blessings. They were eventually expelled from the Lin family's home and had to flee elsewhere."

"At that time, many friends cut ties with my parents. Old Master Zhou was the only one who wasn't intimidated by the threats made by the Lin family. He took my parents under his wing for a period of time. My dad is forever indebted to him."

"After my parents settled down in Bay City, my father continued to visit him on several occasions. We rarely stayed in touch ever since my father passed away though. However, we continued to extend greetings and exchange gifts with one another during every festive season."

"A few years ago, I delivered some gifts. This year is his 70th birthday. The Zhou family wants to make some proper arrangements, hence they sent out invitations."

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"Where is the Zhou family's home? Would you like to head over there?" Fade asked.

Quin smiled and replied, "It's such a coincidence that the Zhou family's home is in East Stream City. Now that I'm here and it's his 70th birthday, I should head over to send him my well wishes."

"Alright then. Let's get him a gift!" As the both of them were in a leisurely mode and time was not so much of a constraint, he did not mind staying in East Stream City for a few extra days.

She nodded and replied, "By chance I am here, I want to get Old Master Zhou a well-thought-out gift. After all, it was he who lent a helping hand kindly to my parents at a time when they hit rock bottom."

"Absolutely," concurred Fade.

Then, they left the hotel. After having a meal, they went to a few places in East Stream City in search of a suitable gift.

However, they did not manage to find a suitable one after going around a few shops.

Although the Zhou family was not incredibly wealthy, the scale of their business was not small. The market capitalization of the various companies they owned was in the region of two to three billion dollars. This had already surpassed the market capitalization of Fei Enterprises Holdings Inc owned by the Lin family in Bay City. Besides that, the Zhou family was also one of the most powerful families in East Stream City.

The Zhou family was not in shortage of all kinds of luxury goods, luxury cars or watches. Even then, these were not the things which Taegan would find useful. As for jade wares, Buddhist statues and calligraphic artworks, Quin resisted the temptation to purchase them since she did not know much about his interests.

Just as they were perturbed and could not make up their mind, an idea suddenly popped up in Fade's mind. He looked at Quin

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and said, "I got it. I got it!"

"What do you mean?" She looked at him.

He beamed as he replied, "The gift, I know what kind of gift will be suitable!"

"What idea have you got?" She gazed at him.

He nodded and grinned as he replied, "As you said just now, it's Old Master Zhou's 70th birthday this year. The Zhou family is well-off and money has never been in shortage. I'd like to think that good health and longevity are what he will be after. So, let's get him a health supplement."

"That sounds pretty good. However, when it comes to health supplements, there are way too many scams out there. I'm afraid it'll be a little difficult to find one that's truly effective!" She said worriedly.

Fade smiled and patted Quin's head gently before saying reassuringly, "Honey, it might be difficult for others, but that's not quite the case for us. You must have forgotten what your husband does for a living!"

"I..." She was confused momentarily before getting it. Rolling her eyes at him, she pouted as she said, "Well if you can do it, just go ahead and prepare."

"Alright, sure thing. As per your command, I'll have it prepared right away," he beamed as he headed to purchase a variety of medicinal herbs to prepare some longevity pills for Taegan.

By afternoon, he had already prepared the pills.

The next day, the couple made their way to the Zhou family's home. Although there were two more days before the actual

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birthday party, they decided to pay Taegan a visit in advance.

They called for a cab to drive them over to the Zhou family's home.

The Zhou family truly lived up to its reputation as one of the biggest clans in East Stream City as they had constructed a mansion sprawling over a thousand square meters in the city centre. Exquisite and expensive, it exuded an affluent vibe, befitting the abode of a tycoon.

By the time Fade and Quin arrived at the gate of the mansion, many luxury cars were parked by the entrance. Well-dressed guests carrying gifts could be seen coming in and out from the mansion, most likely invitees of the birthday party sending their well-wishes to Taegan.

As the both of them were about to make their way through the gate, a security guard stopped them. "Hey stop. Where do you think you're going?"

Upon hearing what the guard said, Fade could not help but subtly furrow his brows..

Immediately, Quin went forward and clarified smilingly, "Hi, we're invited guests for Old Master Zhou's birthday party."

"Guests?" The security guard gave them a suspicious look, as if he was doubting what they had said.

She took out her phone and showed him the electronic invitation card sent by the Zhou family. After scrutinizing and confirming its authenticity, the security guard let them in.

As they walked into the mansion, Fade could not help but purse his lips and grumble disapprovingly, "So high-handed of the Zhou family!"

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She gently pulled his sleeve and comforted him in a soft voice, "Don't be angry. After all, this is the first time we're here. It's not unusual that they don't recognize us."

Taegan was a friend of his father-in-law. Therefore, Fade refrained from complaining too much. Instead, he headed straight to the living hall with Quin.

There were many guests in the living hall. Some members of the Zhou clan could be seen welcoming guests. They shook hands with them and greeted them with great enthusiasm.

Not all guests received the same level of warmth and enthusiasm. After some observation, Fade found that some guests were treated to an affectionate reception, while some merely received a lackluster welcome. In all likelihood, the guests that received a warm reception had a high social position.

After greeting a slew of guests, it was Fade and Quin's turn.

As the Zhou family members greeted them with a smile, they shook hands with them and said, "Hello there, welcome."

It was evidently clear that the Zhou family members had no intention of going beyond basic greetings to exchange pleasantries with them.

Judging from the situation, Quin took the initiative to introduce herself. "I'm Quin Lin from Bay City. My father Daniel Lin was one of Mr. Zhou's friends."

"Oh right, President Lin from Bay City. I know him," After coming to the sudden realization about Quin's identity, the Zhou family members said, "Please take a seat. There are many guests today. Old Master Zhou is under the weather. You may need to wait a little longer to see him."

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"It's alright. Go ahead and welcome other guests!" Quin said politely before searching for a place to sit.

In the living hall, guests and hosts alike continued to exchange greetings and make small talks. Even though the official day of the birthday party had yet to come, some guests could be seen bringing along their lavish gifts. Those with presumably higher status were invited into the family room while the rest were merely sipping tea at the living hall.

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Although they had been sitting for over thirty minutes, none of the Zhou family members came to greet Quin and Fade.

Both of them were able to come to grips with the situation. After all, they were not locals to begin with, nor did they have a close relationship with any of the Zhou family members. Not only that, they were not as socially prominent. Hence, it was a given that the Zhou family members did not give them any attention.

Fortunately, that did not bother Quin and Fade. Their main objective had been to express their gratitude to Taegan. After sitting for another ten minutes or so, they bid farewell to the Zhou family members.

Although the Zhou family members smilingly coaxed them into staying a little longer, Fade and Quin knew that they were merely being polite. Therefore, they did not stay but instead left for the hotel.

By the time they were in their hotel room, the whirlwind of visitations at the mansion had subsided.

In the backyard, Taegan could be seen sitting on a mahogany chair and holding a dragon-headed walking stick. Younger members of the Zhou clan were sitting in the lower deck, each taking turns to report the details of the reception.

"Dad, we had guests from a total of 135 families today. Most of the movers and shakers in East Stream City turned up too. These included members of the Xu family, members of the Chu family and some business associates. Representatives from the municipal government were here too."

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"Some major suppliers from neighbouring provinces sent representatives over too. We have duly welcomed them as they are waiting for the actual birthday party which will be held in two days' time. After that, they'll leave."

"Invitations have been sent out to your friends and relatives. Half of them turned up. As for those that did not, some of them had already lost touch with us over the years while the rest of the invitees are out of the country. Be that as it may, they have called up to clarify and sent over the gifts."

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As the younger members reported the details of the reception, Taegan listened and nodded nonchalantly, as if he was not taking the details to heart. Instead, he asked, "What about the Tao family?"

A middle-aged man, in his forties or fifties, stood up. He was Holden Zhou, Taegan's only son in the family. He was also the present head of the Zhou household.

Holden beamed as he clarified, "Dad, no worries. We've contacted the Tao family. Soren and Eudora's engagement has been set. Both families agree to announce the engagement officially at your birthday party. This will surely be a joy to behold."

Taegan nodded and said, "Good arrangement. With everyone present, it'll be more convenient."

As he said this, he directed his gaze at a young man who looked like he was twenty-five or twenty-six years old and said, "Soren, you're not young anymore. Once you're engaged, be sure to get along well with Eudora. Carry yourself well and don't mess around any longer. You should start developing yourself and make plans for the future of the Zhou Family."

That young man was Soren Zhou, Holden's son and Taegan's grandson. Hearing this, he stood up and nodded, "Grandpa, don't worry. I'll work hard to expand the family's business empire."

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Taegan nodded and said, "Okay, it's good that you have such determination. Remember not to repeat your past mistakes."

Samantha Xu, who was Holden's wife, beamed and said, "Rest assured, Dad. Soren is now a mature adult and won't be up to any mischief anymore."

On the other side of the backyard, a young girl aged eighteen or nineteen came forward and reassured smilingly, "Grandpa, no worries. Once my brother is engaged to Eudora, he'll stop fooling around."

"From what I have heard, Eudora is a martial artist who has been accepted into Ice Lake Clan. If my brother has the audacity to mess around with other girls, Eudora will beat him to death."

"Shut up, Annie. Why do you speak ill of your brother?" Samantha glowered at her daughter before looking at Taegan and said, "Dad, what Annie said about the Tao family learning martial arts is true. I've arranged someone to probe into it. Eudora has been learning martial arts for three years in Ice Lake Clan. She has befriended many people there. Many teachers like her too."

"The Tao family has been informed that Ice Lake Clan will send representatives over to the engagement party too. This'll bring great honor to the Zhou family."

Upon hearing this, the members of the Zhou family burst with excitement and started to talk about it.

"The Ice Lake Clan is a true-blue martial art sect. Having them coming over to the engagement party will elevate the status of the Zhou family in East Stream City and even in East Lake District itself."

"That's right. A powerful martial artist commands high status. Our connection to the Tao family via Soren's marriage is therefore a powerful alliance. Surely, the Zhou family will continue to flourish in the future."

"Not only that, I've got wind of the many panaceas and elixirs kept by the sect. Once Soren is engaged to Eudora, let's get him to

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ask her if she can solicit some elixirs that can help in boosting Old Master's health and longevity."

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Still in euphoria, the members of the Zhou family continued talking endlessly.

At this moment, Taegan skimmed through the guest list. As he chanced upon a guest name, he stopped browsing. "Quin Lin, Bay City!"

"Dad, are you alright?" Holden asked as he noticed his father's unusual expression.

Taegan asked, "Were Quin Lin and Fade Chen from Bay City here today?"

After asking one of the servants, the butler replied, "Master, two guests by the name of Quin Lin and Fade Chen were here. President Lin claimed her father was a friend of yours and that she was here on behalf of him."

"On behalf of her father. Bay City. She must be the daughter of Daniel Lin. Where is she? Is she still around?" Taegan asked agitatedly.

The butler paused for a moment and said, "Erm... President Lin left shortly after sending over the gift."

"Why didn't you give her a hospitable reception? She's the daughter of Daniel Lin, I..." Taegan seemed to be a little ruffled.

The moment Holden and Samantha heard about a certain Daniel Lin, their expressions changed instantaneously.

"Dad, you're still in contact with the Lins. Haven't they brought enough harm to our family?"

"That's right. If it wasn't for him, the Zhou family wouldn't have been ground down by the Lin family in Capital City, causing our business empire to reduce in net worth to the tune of an amount that took us ten years to accumulate. It wasn't until recently

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that we were able to bounce back."

Upon hearing this, Taegan stabbed the floor with his walking stick and hollered, "Nonsense. Keep your mouth shut."

"All you can remember is Daniel bringing trouble to our family, but you forgot that it was me who befriended him in the first place. It was with the help of the Lin family that we were able to prosper."

"Come to think of it, our family's current social status should be credited to Daniel's support. Even if we are impoverished, you have no right to hate him."

Hearing this, Holden and Samantha did not rebut. Instead, they pursed their lips disapprovingly.

Although Soren and Annie were quite young, they understood that Taegan had had a close friendship with Daniel. They knew about this, but not quite the details of their friendship. 

Chapter 1725

Someone found that there was something wrong with the atmosphere and changed the topic. "If I'm not mistaken, Daniel has been gone for over ten years. Now that she is paying us a visit, I'm wondering what she's up to."

"What else but to send her well-wishes to the Old Master?" Someone said.

"I don't think so. Ever since Daniel passed away, our family has been sending invitations to the Lin family whenever we host parties. However, the Lins haven't attended any of our parties over the years. Instead, they have sent well-wishes through a phone call or delivered gifts over to us."

"For over ten years, we haven't been particularly close. Aside from the occasional exchange of greetings over the phone, Daniel's daughter has not paid us a visit at all. Why the sudden visit now though?"

"Erm..." For a moment, everyone was at a loss and a little befuddled.

At this moment, Holden suddenly exclaimed, as if he had thought of something, "Could this be the reason?"

"What's the reason?" Everyone's attention was fixated on him.

Holden looked at Taegan and said, "Dad, do you remember the last time Daniel came over to our home before he passed away? That night, the both of you drank a lot. Soren had just returned from school."

"At that time, you talked about Soren. Daniel said he had a daughter whose age was about the same as Soren. He suggested

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matchmaking the both of them if compatibility wasn't an issue."

"Dad, you were all tipsy and mellow after some drinks. Hence, you agreed to his suggestion immediately. You said the Zhous and the Lins would be closer through this marriage."

All members of the Zhou family were astounded. Taegan was deep in thought too.

A straight shooter herself, Annie remarked, "Dad, I think you're trying to say that Quin is aware of Soren's marriage and that her intention of coming over now is to mess things up so that the wedding will be called off and she can marry Soren thereafter."

Just as she uttered these words, many members of the Zhou family were taken aback.

Samantha protested, "I'll be the first to oppose it if she has the guts to do so. Eudora is good enough for Soren."

"That Lin family from Bay City only owns a small-time cosmetics company. Though they can be considered a business owner, the level of their wealth and social status is a far cry from that of the Tao family's!"

"It goes beyond a simple mismatch. Truth be told, the Lin family is not worthy enough to be placed alongside the Tao family to begin with!"

"The way I see it, Quin Lin is after our family's social influence."

"We don't condone this kind of behaviour. I think we need to ask her to make a move. As for the invitation to the birthday party, we'd like her to pass on it too."

The members of the Zhou family got into a frenzy of heated discussion. At this moment, Taegan snorted and exclaimed,

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"Silence."

Everybody quietened down and looked at him.

He said, "Those are merely suppositions. How can you claim it with such assurance? I know Daniel well enough. His daughter shouldn't be that bad of a girl."

"What's more, we aren't sure that she's here because of the prearranged marriage. We can't just turf her out of the house as we please."

"But Dad, that's clearly the reason she's here," Samantha objected. "Daniel's dead. Surely his company isn't doing well. The girl got wind of Soren's marriage, hence she came all the way here."

Taegan snorted and said, "What do you mean? Those are merely your assumptions."

After a pause, he said, "If that's indeed her motive, I'll have a talk with her. Don't make a fuss over it."

After that, he got up and went back to his bedroom.

The other members of the Zhou family looked at each other in dismay before leaving.

Just as Soren was about to leave, Samantha pulled him over and said, "Pay attention to Quin's matter. You must handle it well. Don't ruin your wedding with Eudora."

"But Mom, Grandpa said..."

Samantha murmured, "Your grandfather is old. He has forged a close friendship with Daniel over the years. For this reason, he is scrupulous and tends to act reservedly. Thus, make sure you handle this matter well by yourself so that it is in your best

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interest."

At this moment, Holden came over. He looked at Soren and said, "Your marriage is a big deal for the Zhou family. You mustn't mess it up. Do you understand?"

He nodded and said, "Dad, Mom. I get that. I'll resolve this issue as soon as possible."

Annie also came over and said, "Soren, I have your back. Eudora and I have bonded over the years. I want her to be my sister-in-law. No one else but her."

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After visiting the Zhou family, Fade and Quin had a greater understanding of their character and disposition. Not wanting to be bothered by them, they shifted their focus elsewhere by travelling around the city. They strolled around downtown East Stream City, did some sightseeing and ate some local cuisine.

Both of them changed their attitude towards the birthday party. On the day of the party itself, they would head over to the Zhou family home and have a simple lunch. Soon after that, they would bid farewell to the host and leave. By doing so, they would have behaved with the utmost propriety, not that they would ever have the chance to rub shoulders with each other again in the future.

It was lunchtime when they made their way out of the temple. They strolled around the area before settling on a food stall in the street to have lunch.

Although the street was located in the shabby part of the town, the food nonetheless packed a unique flavor. They enjoyed their meal.

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As they were eating and chatting, the place was buzzing with excitement.

Suddenly, a cold voice came from the side, "Are you Quin Lin?"

Quin turned her head and looked in the direction of the voice. An 18-year-old girl stood before her. Decker out in designer labels and flanked by two strong men who looked like bodyguards, she was unquestionably a rich man's daughter.

"You are..." Quin looked at the woman and asked.

The girl replied, "My name is Annie. Soren is my brother."

"Annie and Soren?" Quin could not recall. She furrowed her brows and thought about it for a while before she managed to jog her memory. "You're Taegan Zhou's granddaughter, aren't you?"

"Yes, that's right." Annie's face was aglow with pride.

Then, she glanced sideways at the food that Quin and Fade were eating. She sneered and said, "No doubt about it, your company is in such bad shape that you can't even afford a proper meal. It's not surprising then that you came all the way to East Stream City to meet my brother. Haha!"

"Miss Zhou, I don't get what you're trying to say," Quin frowned as she asked.

"Feigning innocence, huh?" Annie snorted coldly and slammed the table. With a face aglow with haughtiness, she scowled at Quin and said, "I'll stop beating around the bush then and get straight to the point. I'm here for the simple reason of asking you to give up and stop scheming to pursue my brother. He's about to get engaged. You don't stand a chance. Get out of East Stream City as soon as possible."

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"Miss Zhou, I don't get you," Quin explained. "I'm here in East Stream City to send my well wishes to Old Master Zhou. I have no other intentions."

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As she patted her head, Annie looked at Quin with a smirk and said, "Are you that shameless? I've made myself clear, yet you're still feigning innocence. You're such a shameless b*tch."

"Miss Zhou, you..." Quin's face darkened as she did not expect Annie to curse her so viciously.

Fade did not maintain his composure. He stood up and slapped Annie across her face. In an instant, her cheek turned red and swollen.

"How dare you slap me? You..." Annie glowered at him furiously.

He said coldly, "One more cuss and I'll kill you instead of just slapping you."

"How dare you? Get rid of him!" Infuriated, she commanded the bodyguards to beat him up.

Before the bodyguards could make their move, Fade took a step forward swiftly and punched out twice, causing them to fall to the ground. Groaning with pain, they were not able to stand up.

Annie did not quite expect that her bodyguards, who had cost her a fortune to hire, would be brought down so easily. Visibly taken aback, she retreated two steps backwards and her face darkened.

Fade gave her a cold stare and warned, "Heed the warning. Otherwise, the next one to fall will be you, not your bodyguards."

Annie was too terrified to utter a single word.

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At this moment, Quin took a step forward and looked at her, "Miss Zhou, I don't know what led to this misunderstanding. However, I can assure you that I'm here to send my well wishes to Old Master Zhou."

"Haha!" Annie snorted in disbelief. "Hiding under a pretense, huh? Let me make it clear. It's impossible for my brother to enter into a marriage alliance with you. If you intend to cause a mess to the marriage between the Zhou family and the Tao family, you're asking for trouble."

She sounded threatening, and her index finger was close to Quin's face as she gave her the warning.

Fade walked a step forward and gripped Annie's index finger. He cautioned, "Come any closer and your hand will be broken."

His bloodthirsty demeanor sent chills down Annie's spine, causing her to shiver. As much as she was reluctant, she retreated resentfully.

"Never forget what you've just said." As she uttered these words, Annie got into her car and left, leaving her bodyguards there.

No longer in the mood to eat, and having lost their appetite, Fade and Quin returned to the hotel.

"Honey, what's with the marriage alliance that Annie mentioned? What happened?" As he thought about it, he revealed the question in his heart.

After jogging her memory, she replied, "If she did not bring that up, I would've forgotten about it. I was twelve then. My dad had just returned from the Zhou family's home and told my mom about that."

"He told us that he had just gone for a drink at their home in East Stream City. He stumbled upon Old Master Zhou's grandson and had proposed a prearranged marriage between me and him. "

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"As they were tipsy then, they were merely joking around and did not discuss the pre-arranged marriage in earnest. In the years that followed, there was no mention of it. After my father's death, I haven't even paid them a visit, much less taken this matter to heart."

Fade nodded after understanding what happened. He postulated, "Judging from what Annie said, Soren is going to be engaged soon. Now that he's going to tie the knot, the Zhou family assumes that you're here because they did not honor the prearranged marriage that has been proposed. Annie is worried that you'll ruin the engagement, hence coming over to warn you."

Quin nodded in agreement, "I thought so too. This is a misunderstanding. It shouldn't be so much of an issue as long as we make our intention clear."

Still feeling disgruntled, Fade snorted and said, "It's a misunderstanding, but only because the Zhou family thinks too highly of themselves. We're here to send our well wishes to Old Master Zhou. Never have we brought up any issues related to the prearranged marriage. It's supercilious of them to see us as social climbers. That's ridiculous."

He proclaimed, "Other than me, no other man in the world is deemed fit to be your husband. Not even Soren Chou."

She rolled her eyes and bopped him. She said, "Stop teasing me. Anyway, it's no big deal. Once the birthday party is over, we'll leave. They'll realize it's just a misunderstanding after all."

They did not take this matter to heart. However, at this point in time, Soren was talking about it with his friends.

Clad in only his undergarments, Soren could be seen leaning against a chair in a well-known luxury spa in East Stream City. Squatting down before him, a young woman was giving him a massage attentively.

There were several young men by his side. Clad in a similar fashion like Soren, they were scions from East Stream City.

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"Buddy, you're a lucky man," said Daxton Xu, a chubby young man sitting beside him. "Though you aren't exactly a go-getter, Lady Luck seems to always be on your side! Not only did you manage to court Eudora, but now, another girl from some faraway land is pursuing you."

Soren rolled his eyes at him and said, "Daxton, stop adding insult to my injury."

"Oh well, you know, that Eudora is tall and mighty. She's more masculine than me. I feel no romantic passion towards her. If it wasn't for my family who insisted on me marrying her, I wouldn't have agreed to tie the knot with such an unattractive girl."

"That girl from Bay City, let's not talk about her. Coming all the way from Bay City to send her well wishes? Well, how wretched can she get? I bet that status seeker is here because of Zhou's family background. Haha!"

Next to him, a bespectacled guy named Ford Han, concurred, "Buddy, you're right. The Taos are an illustrious family, but honestly, Eudora is such a plain-looking girl. I think you'd better turn off the lights when you sleep."

"Soren won't be able to be as carefree as he used to be. That b*tch is like a tigress and a martial artist from a true-blue sect. If Soren dares to mess around with other girls, I'm afraid he'll be castrated by her."

"Haha, indeed."

"Soren, you sure have a lot of hurdles to deal with."

"Buddy, you've got two more days to enjoy. Treasure every bit of it. How about ordering a few extra bottles? Let's have a good time. "

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As his friends were gloating and reveling in his misery, Soren felt even more depressed.

At this moment, his phone beeped. It was a message from his sister, Annie. She said she had met Quin but unfortunately she was slapped.

The moment he read the message, he got angrier.

As he looked at a photo sent by Annie, his anger dissipated in a split second. His eyes lit up and were glued to the screen as he stared at the photo.

"Hey buddy, what are you looking at?" Daxton could not help but ask.

Ford and the rest came over and said, "We're brothers. Share with us if you come across something good!"

Soren showed his cell phone to everyone. On the screen, a zoomed-in photo could be seen.

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Everyone cried in astonishment immediately.

"What the f*ck, such a beauty!"

"That's right. A bombshell. She's so pretty."

"What a nice figure. And that face. Perfect!"

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"Soren, tell us. How did you get to know her?"

"Yeah, buddy. Don't keep it to yourself. Hook us up."

Several other friends were urging him too.

Soren said, "She's the one that I mentioned earlier. That girl from Bay City who came looking for me."

"What? So she's the one!"

"D*mn it, Soren. Lucky you. A beauty who takes the initiative to come into your arms. What are you waiting for?"

"She's a lot more pretty than the tigress. I'm sure you prefer to have her by your side!"

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All the perverts were buzzing in exhilaration.

Soren forced a smile and said, "The engagement has been set. If I was to opt out, my dad would break my legs."

Daxton rolled his eyes and said, "Since you don't get to enjoy, hook us up then."

Full of excitement, the bespectacled Ford interjected, "That's right. Well, you're going to get married, but I'm not, so hook me up!"

Soren rolled his eyes at them and said, "It's just an engagement, not marriage. What's more, there are two more days before the engagement. Two days is enough for me to have some fun."

"Buddy, what you're trying to say is..."

"Soren, so you're ready to get laid?"

All eyes were on him.

He rubbed his chin and said gleefully, "She came all the way from Bay City for me. It'll be improper of me if I don't see her. I wonder what's going to happen after our meeting. Hehe..."

"Soren, you can't keep her for yourself. We want to have a taste of this beauty as well."

"That's right. We are brothers. Soren, don't be ungrateful!"

"No, I'm not being ungrateful," Soren looked at his friends and remarked smilingly, "I'll ask her out tomorrow. You guys will be coming along too. I'll have a ride first. Then, all of you join in and have some fun."

"Hehe. Good idea."

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"I can't wait."

"I have to nourish my kidneys tonight."

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The next day, Quin received an invitation card from the Zhou family in the hotel. It was not an invitation to attend Taegan's birthday party, but a personal invitation from Soren.

Although she was upset over what had happened a day earlier, she accepted the invitation. After all, she would be attending the birthday party at the Zhou family home. Besides that, she wanted to clarify her stance on the engagement.

In the afternoon, Quin and Fade arrived at Eastern Club, a private club set by Soren to be the venue of the meeting. They flashed the invitation card before entering the club.

The design in the private club was exquisite, elegant and quaint. It was a lovely place to wind down.

Certainly, it was also a place where only the rich could afford to come over and unwind.

When they arrived at a wooden structure which mimicked a period property, Soren could be seen welcoming them at the entrance.

As Quin walked towards him, he directed his gaze to her face. Even though he had calmed himself ahead of meeting her, he could not help but be enthralled by her beauty. Flashes of excitement and lust could be seen in his eyes.

"Mr Zhou!" Quin greeted him with a smile.

Soren smiled in return and said. "President Lin, you're too polite. Just call me Brother Soren."

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"That's too unseemly. I'd prefer to address you by the name Soren," she turned down his suggestion as it was too affectionate to address him as such.

"I'll address you as Quin then. This way, please," he welcomed her with a smile while giving Fade the go-by, as if he was invisible. She did not walk alongside Soren. Instead, she stopped and waited for Fade to catch up before walking by his side to the lounge.

"Quin, who is he?" Soren glanced at Fade as he asked her.

She introduced, "Meet my husband, Fade Chen."

"My husband!" Upon hearing these two words, Soren could not help but squint and frown a little.

"Isn't Quin here for the pre-arranged marriage? Why does she have a husband? Could it be that she is married?" He thought.

"No, this can't be true. She must be playing a trick on me."

"A day earlier, Annie met her and told her that it was no mean feat being a member of the Zhou clan, so she deliberately got herself a guy to claim that he was her husband. She must be trying to set her cap on me."

"This must be the reason!" Soren concluded in his mind.

As he was hypothesizing about the situation, Fade gave a nod. Soren said, "Mr. Chen, this way please."

As Fade glanced sideways at Soren, he frowned a little. There was a tinge of displeasure in his eyes. Even though Soren had been respectful and polite, Fade's first impression of him was not a good one.

As they made their way to the room, Fade and Quin could hear that the room was in an uproar.

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"Soren, has your guest of honour arrived?"

"They're here. Come over and welcome them!"

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Amidst the uproar, a group of young men stood up and looked over. Much like Soren, they, too, were captivated by her beauty. They were stunned momentarily and were bowled over.

After being in a daze for a short while, their eyes lit up. They were all full of smiles and they looked expectant. There was an overwhelming sense of desire and lust about the way they looked at her.

Even though Quin did not notice this, she could not help but feel something uncanny about the way they gazed at her. As she thought about this, she frowned a little.

At the sight of this, Soren winked at his friends and then invited Quin and Fade to take a seat. "Quin, Mr. Chen, please take a seat."

It was at this moment that everybody noticed there was a young man sitting next to her. Judging from their body language, they seemed rather intimate.

For a while, everyone looked at him quizzically.

Soren immediately made the introduction, "Everybody, meet Miss Quin Lin, a close friend of the Zhou family from Bay City."

"This gentleman is Fade Chen. President Lin said he is her husband," Soren sounded a little odd when introducing him.

The moment Daxton, Ford and the others heard what Soren said, they were all stunned. However, judging from Soren's bizarre

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expression, they realized that Quin was likely making up stories when she claimed that Fade was her husband.

Then, everybody greeted her enthusiastically and ignored Fade.

"Nice to meet you, Miss Lin. I've heard a lot about you."

"I've heard that you're a lady of superior and exotic beauty. Now that I see you in person, I can attest that you truly live up to that reputation!"

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In the greeting, Soren introduced his friends to Quin.

"Quin, meet Daxton Xu. He's the eldest son of the Xu family in East Stream City. The Xu family runs their own business. Their business empire is huge. The family fortune runs to the tune of four to five billion dollars and is listed as one of the richest families in East Lake District."

"This is Ford Han, a well known son of a government official in East Stream City. Ford's father is the deputy director of the Municipal Public Security Bureau. His mother is the director of the Education Bureau. His uncle works in the Public Security Bureau. Most of his family members are in the civil service."

"And this is Mr. Huang. He too comes from a respectable family. This is Mr. Hu, my good friend..."

Chapter 1728

As Soren introduced each of his friends to Quin, she nodded as a sign of courtesy.

After the introduction, Soren lifted a glass of wine and said, "Quin, I'm aware that my sister, Annie, met you yesterday. It was so hot-headed of her to offend you."

"Today, on behalf of my sister and the Zhou family, I apologize."

Then, he raised his head and downed the glass of wine in one gulp.

"It's just a misunderstanding," Quin said. "It can be resolved if we talk it out." Then, she raised her glass and took a sip.

Hearing this, Soren said, "Good to know that she's pardoned. The main reason that I organised this luncheon is to offer my apology to you. At the same time, it's also for you to get acquainted with the young and successful men from East Stream City."

As soon as Soren finished talking, these "young and successful men" raised their glasses in tandem.

"Hi President Lin, I'm Daxton, a good friend of Soren. Pleased to meet you. I feel like I'm meeting an old friend. Cheers," Daxton filled the glass with wine and drank it off.

Quin raised her glass and took a sip. "It's great connecting with you."

At the sight of that, Daxton pulled a long face. He reprimanded, "Miss Lin, that's not the way to down a glass of wine. Am I not deserving of your friendship?"

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Upon hearing this, Fade's face darkened. Just when he wanted to get up from his seat, she held him back while shaking her head. She then lifted her glass and finished her drink in a single gulp. "I'm sorry Daxton. I'm not aware of the etiquette in East Stream City."

"Oh, it's no big deal. It's just a misunderstanding," Daxton brightened up immediately. Then, he turned his head and exchanged looks with Soren and others.

This was the strategy they had cooked up a day earlier. They would each take turns to pour some wine into Quin's glass in an attempt to get her drunk. As soon as she was drunk, they would be able to do anything they wanted.

Daxton was the first to execute this strategy.

Then, Ford and the others followed suit, each taking their turn to make a toast to Quin.

She had no choice but to drink. After all, she had just had a drink with Daxton. It would be unfitting if she refused to drink with the others.

After drinking a toast from everyone, she had had about five to six glasses of wine. Her cheeks had turned red.

Most ladies would have been intoxicated by now, but not quite for Quin. She was, after all, a businesswoman running her own company, and she was used to entertaining and drinking. Her alcohol tolerance would thus be higher in comparison to most ladies.

Fade could not bear it any longer. He stopped the next person who wanted to make a toast to Quin and said coldly, "That's enough. Quin can't drink anymore. I'll drink on her behalf."

"I'm here to drink a toast to Miss Lin. Why would you want to drink on her behalf?" The other party was upset. There was a tinge

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of displeasure in his eyes.

Fade directed his gaze at the table and put down the glass. He was about to fly into a rage.

At this moment, Soren stopped this friend of his from making a toast to Quin. She also managed to calm Fade down and eased the tension in the room. Soren stopped all subsequent attempts of making a toast to her.

Instead of drinking, everyone was chatting. Not only did she not turn tipsy, but she was now as sober as a judge.

Looking at the situation, Daxton and his friends were flustered. They were exchanging looks with each other anxiously.

With someone as stunningly beautiful as Quin sitting right in front of them, they could not help but tingle with concupiscence. All they wanted to do was to pounce on her immediately. Time was ticking away, yet they did not manage to intoxicate her. Naturally they were a little agitated at this moment.

Soren was able to identify with his friends. He pointed at Fade stealthily, motioning that he had been the snag to the success of their plan.

It was clear that with him around, they would be unable to intoxicate Quin.

As everyone was exchanging looks with each other, a sturdy bald man walked towards Fade and said, "I get to know that you're a martial artist. I have learned martial arts for several years. Let's learn from each other through a friendly battle."

At a glance, he could tell the level of his skill. He was merely at the intermediate stage of the Yellow Level. Hence, he shook his head and said, "You're out of my league!"

Taken aback by Fade's remarks, the man pulled a long face and said, "So confident, huh? We can't tell who is stronger until we

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fight."

Soren and the rest also echoed the same sentiment.

"Mr. Chen, Ainsley is the real deal. He used to learn from a Black-Level master. I guess you're a tad overconfident."

"You're a martial artist after all. It's just a friendly fight. Why are you professing to be a martial artist when you don't have the guts to concede to an invitation for a friendly fight?"

"Ainsley, I see somebody's being a chicken. Let's not put him in an awkward position."

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As Fade was bombarded with sarcasm, the bald-head Ainsley picked up an apple and tossed it over to Fade. It knocked over the glass, causing wine to be splashed in his direction.

"I'm sorry, it slipped through my hand," Ainsley said apologetically, but he did not seem to feel sorry at all.

Fade snorted. He grabbed the table cloth and blocked the wine that was splashed in his direction with a gentle wave.

Then, he stood up. As he looked at Ainsley, he sneered, "You want to have a friendly fight, huh? Be my guest."

Ainsley pointed outside and said, "It's too cramped here. We can't have a good fight here. Let's go out there."

Fade instantly leapt out of the room, not uttering a single word.

Ainsley turned around and looked at his friends before making his way out of the room.

Everyone made a beeline outdoors to watch the fight. Soren, Daxton and Ford did not follow suit.

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Ainsley looked at Fade and sneered, "Young man, so pompous of you, huh? Now, let me show you how strong I am."

Fade gave him a nonchalant look and said, "Stop bullsh*tting. Let's fight."

"You..." Ainsley was provoked. He let out a piercing scream and immediately swung his fist at Fade.

Those scions were buzzing with joy and couldn't stop cheering.

"Ainsley, go for it!"

"Let's kill him and let him know how powerful we East River Warriors are."

"Teach him a lesson. Such a stuck-up snob."

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Amid the uproar, Fade stood still with a calm face. He looked as Ainsley came closer with his fist. The moment Ainsley's fist came close to his shirt, Fade struck back by smacking his fist.

There and then, Ainsley felt a huge force coming his way and there was an excruciating pain in his arm. He was flung into the air before falling to the ground, spurting out a mouthful of blood.

The scions were stunned as they did not expect the fight to end up as such. In an instant, there was complete silence.

"I've told you, you're no match for me," said Fade, his head down looking at Ainsley who was lying on the ground. Then, he walked into the building with his hands clasped behind his back.

At this moment, Ainsley gave a cold-eyed stare. He yelled, "Stop him."

Chapter 1729

In a matter of seconds, there was a rustle. More than a dozen men sprang out from the immediate vicinity. Fade was besieged.

He was taken aback, but felt anxious as he looked at the house. "Are they trying to harass Quin?"

"Ah..." At this moment, Quin could be heard screaming in the house, causing Fade to lose his concentration.

Just as he was distracted, all the men came closer in encirclement. They were surging with positive energy. It was clear that they were all professional martial artists.

Be that as it may, they could still be easily defeated by Fade.

Crackling sound could be heard as he knocked them down one by one. Then, he leaped up and rushed straight into the house.

At this moment, Daxton, Ford, and the rest of the scions were at Quin's side in the hall. All of them were looking lecherous. One could be seen wanting to molest her.

"Miss Lin, I really like you. Shall we go for dinner tonight?"

"Miss Lin, Soren is getting engaged soon. There's no hope of getting him by your side. Why don't you come along with me? The Xu family is as wealthy as the Zhou family."

"Miss Lin, our Han family is powerful. My parents are both government officials. Be by my side and you'll be assured of a life of prosperity and need not worry about mundane matters in life."


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Those hideous faces sent chills down Quin's spine. She could not help but look at Soren.

He had no intention of coming to her help. Instead, he beamed, "Quin, I know you're up to something here in East Stream City. It's about the pre-arranged marriage set by my grandfather and your dad. You want to increase your social status through the Zhou family."

"However, the engagement ceremony between Eudora and I will be held soon. I'm afraid it's impossible for me to marry you at this juncture. Though marriage is a no, I'm up for another experience. That occasional fling, if you know what I'm talking about..."

Having explained herself by introducing Fade as her husband, Quin thought she had resolved the misunderstanding that she was coming for the pre-arranged marriage. However, quite the contrary, Soren still superciliously maintained that she was here for it. 

He was not just being supercilious. Despite knowing that he would be engaged soon, he still wanted to have a fling with her. Not only that, he even hinted to her that he could keep her as a mistress.

Immediately, Quin's face darkened. She stood up and said coldly, "I'm sorry. I have some matters to attend to. I have to go now." 

It had not been easy to ask her out in the first place. Hence, these playboys refused to let her go. They blocked her from leaving.

"Miss Lin, why are you in such a hurry to leave?"

"Stay on and let's have fun a little longer?"


"That's right. We have barely had any fun. I haven't enjoyed myself to my heart's content!"

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Soren's face darkened. He looked at her and said, "Quin, we're all esteemed scions of East Stream City's high society. It would be a slap in our faces if you were to leave now!"

Ignoring him, she snorted and continued to make her way out of the room.

Sensing that they could not keep her any longer, the scions resorted to forceful moves to keep her staying. One took the opportunity to touch her inappropriately.

She was no longer the weak girl she used to be. She was now a preliminary Black-Level martial artist. As a result, she did not hold back at all when she struck the molester with her palm. He howled in pain. 

Everyone was befuddled momentarily as they did not expect her to strike. They asked for help, "People, over here please..."

Nevertheless, no one came to their assistance as those goons had been knocked down by Fade.

After dashing into the living hall and witnessing what happened, he was infuriated. He leapt to his feet and rushed towards the scions. In a matter of seconds, he flung them out of the hall.

He held Quin's arm and asked worriedly, "Honey, you alright?"

Shen shook her head and replied, "I'm fine."

Then, Fade looked at those scions whose faces were black and blue. He walked a few steps forward and glared at them.

A few scions looked outside and saw those goons looking disheveled. It was at this moment that they realized that Fade was a highly skilled martial artist. Feeling intimidated, they retreated and stood behind Soren.

As Soren saw Fade coming closer, he frowned and said coldly, "Mr. Chen, hold your horses. Don't go overboard."

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"Go overboard, huh?" Fade gave him a cold look and said, "Don't you know what you have done?"

Soren said disapprovingly, "What have I done? We're all grown-ups. It's normal to have some fun. Besides, my brothers are scions of East Stream City. It's a blessing that they have a crush on her."

Daxton and the rest of the scions, who had been standing behind him, echoed his sentiment.

"That's right. It's just for fun. What's with all the fuss?"

"Let me get straight to the point. Quin, how much do you want to spend a night with me? Let me know the figure. I can afford to pay."

She was so furious that her face turned red. Fade could not hold it any longer. He darted and grabbed Daxton and Ford by their arms before beating them ferociously.

The two were so badly beaten that they howled in pain.

"You want to beat me up, huh? You dare to do so. Do you know who I am?"

"My father is the deputy director of the Public Security Bureau of the city. Hurt me and you'll be dead meat."

.....

To Fade, those threats were inconsequential.

His eyes were full of anger. As Daxton was lying on the floor, Fade trampled on him, breaking his legs.

Daxton screamed at the top of his lungs and howled in pain. Like a meatball, he rolled on the floor.

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Seeing this, Soren and Ford couldn't help but squint. There was a tinge of fear in their eyes.

"You..."

It seemed that Ford wanted to say something. As Fade walked towards him, he was utterly frightened. While he was retreating, he pleaded, "No, don't hit me. I was wrong. I know I was wrong. I won't do that again. I'll apologize."

However, Fade shrugged off his apology. A clicking sound could be heard as he broke Ford's left arm with his palm. Ford was in so much pain that he bellowed non-stop.

"Ah, the Han family will come after you. My dad..." He yelled.

Fade did not blink. He went on to kick Ford's groin. Another clicking sound could be heard as the man's pubic bone was broken. In a split second, his face turned red and he fell to the ground. The pain was so searing that his voice turned hoarse, so much so that his scream could barely be heard.

Looking at it, he was in a way more pathetic state than Daxton.

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Soren pulled a face as he saw this. He gave Fade an angry look and said, "You..."

Fade's eyes swept over him. Without saying a word, he walked towards him.

Soren's face turned pale as panic surged through him. He retreated a few steps, worrying that Fade would beat him.

It was at this crucial moment that Quin reached out and grabbed Fade by the arm. She shook her head gently and said, "Fade, forget it."

He knew that she took Soren's identity as the eldest grandson of the Zhou family into consideration. Since Taegan's birthday was coming soon, she did not want to put him in an awkward position.

Fade snorted as he glared at him. Then, he made his way out of the living hall alongside Quin.

Color drained from Soren's face as he watched the two of them leave. Once they were out of sight, his legs turned weak. He had to hang on to the wall as he walked out of the living hall.

He looked at the direction they went before directing his gaze at Daxton and Ford who had passed out. He took his cell phone and dialed the emergency number. After that, he contacted the Xu and the Han families.

"Mr. Xu, this is Soren. Daxton has got into some problems. He has been injured and is now on his way to First Hospital. This is how it happened..."

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"Director Han, I'm Soren. Ford is suffering from an injury. Someone injured him. Not long ago, we were..."

After the call ended, Soren gnashed his teeth and murmured to himself, "Quin and Fade, let's see how snotty you can get."

"Daxton and Ford are the only sons in their families for the current generation. You have immobilized them. What's more, you've rendered Ford childless through that groin attack. The Han family will never let this pass. You'll get a taste of your own medicine."

Upon their return to the hotel, Quin was feeling dejected. Fade comforted her.

The birthday party would take place in a day's time. After going through a whirlwind of unpleasant events, they were not in the mood to hang around East Stream City. Instead, they decided to take a rest in the hotel.

All they wanted to do was to attend the birthday party and send their well wishes to Taegan before leaving the city immediately. They did not wish to stay here anymore, not even for a short while.

At this moment, members of the Zhou family congregated in the family room by the courtyard.

Sitting at the head of the table, Taegan could be seen knocking his walking stick and asked, "How's it going?"

Everyone knew that he was referring to the pre-arranged marriage between Quin and Soren. Hence, they directed their gaze at Soren and Annie.

The two siblings had volunteered to address this issue. Taegan agreed as he felt it would be aptly appropriate to let the young resolve the issue among themselves.

The birthday-cum-engagement party would be held the following day. Naturally, Taegan wanted to know if this issue had been

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sorted out.

Soren exchanged looks with Annie. They looked rather dismal.

She stood up with her red and swollen cheeks, looking very angry. "Grandpa, look at my cheeks. It was Quin who asked somebody to beat me up. All I wanted to do was to kindly offer an explanation to the situation, but..."

Following that, she twisted the story while exaggerating certain details.

Clearly, she did not mention anything about her rude attitude and insulting words. Instead, she highlighted how Quin refused to let go and how Fade had beaten her.

Shortly after she finished talking, an uproar ensued among the members of the Zhou family.

"He's gone overboard. He even dared to hit Annie. So gutsy of him."

"It seems that the woman is going to point her finger at the Zhou family. We're in trouble."

"There'll be many distinguished guests tomorrow. Many big shots will be present. It'll be terrible if she were to create a scene."

.....

Taegan couldn't help frowning. His expression was one of disbelief as he heard what had just been said. He said, "Annie, could it be that this is just a misunderstanding after all? I used to visit Bay City once and saw Quin. She was such a polite girl then. I don't think she would ever do this."

"Dad, you are referring to something that took place many years ago," Holden said. "It's been so long. Time passes and people change."

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Samantha chipped in hurriedly, "That's right, Dad! In this day and age, people are willing to do anything for money. Even a fool knows he could reap many benefits by staying in close contact with the Zhou family. It's unsurprising then that Quin is willing to be so shameless in order to meet this objective."

"Be that as it may, I'm not convinced that Quin would ever do this," Taegan said in disbelief.

At this moment, Soren stood up and said, "Grandpa, maybe Quin won't, but that man by the name of Fade Chen alongside her is surely a scourge."

"What happened?" Taegan asked.

Soren replied, "As a gesture of goodwill, I invited Quin over for a meeting yesterday. At the same time, I extended my invitation to Daxton, Ford, and a few others too. I wanted to give them an opportunity to befriend her."

"Fade got in a fight with Daxton and Ford. I didn't expect that he would break Daxton's legs and destroy Ford's reproductive system by kicking him in the groin. Both of them are still in the hospital."

"What?"

Upon hearing this, all members of the Zhou family were flabbergasted.

"That guy must have got balls of steel to incapacitate Daxton and Ford!"

"The Xu and Han families will never let this pass. They're doomed."

"He has gone overboard."

.....

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Holden said to Taegan, "Dad, as you can see, it's a lot more serious than you would expect. Quin and Fade aren't good people!"

"Dad, we need to keep them at bay as soon as possible," Samantha advised. "Otherwise, we could be seen as being connected to them."

As much as Taegan refused to believe it, he could not help but pull a face at this moment. He sighed and stopped talking.

Just as the Zhou family was having a meeting, Fade and Quin were making their way back to the hotel room after having their dinner on the first floor of the hotel.

As they reached their room, they noticed that the door was open.

They quickened their pace as they walked into their room. It was at this moment that they saw a group of people smashing their personal belongings while cursing.

"Isn't the whore here? Where is she?"

"Smash it. Keep smashing. Smash all their belongings."

.....

There was a rumble of smashing in the room. Fade and Quin's suitcases were thrown out of the room.

He instantly pulled a face. As he stepped into the room, he exclaimed, "Stop it!"

As the people in the room heard the yell, they turned around and saw Fade, who was in fury and Quin, who was standing at his back.

Then, an unattractive and sturdy young woman could be seen walking towards them.

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The woman looked at Quin while pointing her index finger and asked, "Are you Quin?"

"Yes I am," Quin nodded as she frowned. "Who are you? Why did you barge into my room and smash my personal belongings?" 