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Volume 12: Chapter 10 – Family and Friends

The courtyard door wasn't locked, so Dong Ri and I pushed it to enter. The courtyard was extremely large; it looked like a practice area for martial arts, sparse without any adornment. The surroundings were peaceful and there was a faint medicinal scent. *'Hmm? Why was there a medicine scent? Even if everyone was injured, wouldn't treatment with magic be better? The fort shouldn't lack healing mages!'*

Seeing my heart's doubts, Dong Ri explained. "It was medicine from the elders. They said that even though treatment with magic is faster, magic has side effects, so medicine is better. Big Brother Zhan Hi and the rest of the brothers are staying in the eastern side of the courtyard, while Mu Zi and Hai Shui are living at the western side. Which place shall we head to first?"

I looked at him and said, "We'll head to see Big Brother Zhan Hu and the rest of the brothers first." Even though I was eager to see Mu Zi and Hai Shui, in the current situation, I should head to see the few severely injured brothers. Under Dong Ri's lead, we arrived at the eastern side of the courtyard.

Dong Ri pushed open the door and entered before saying happily, "I'm back!"

Xiu Si's feeble voice was heard. "Seeing your happy expression, could it be that the Monster race retreated? Have the Dragon race come? Without them, it would be hard for us humans to win!"

Dong Ri laughed. "No, it isn't the Dragon race. It's a help greater than the Dragon race. *Haha!*"

There was silence in the room. Zhan Hu said in a slightly shaky voice, "Can it be....can it be....."

Like a flash, I dashed into the room and said with excitement. "Big brother! It's me! I'm back!" The room was chaotic, with little furniture, mostly beds that were randomly placed. Zhan Hu, Xiu Si, Gao De, Xin Ao and the three remaining elders were lying on their beds. With pale complexions, all seven sets of eyes had a peculiar expression the second I appeared. They looked at me, all stunned, not saying a single word.

After a while, Zhan Hu muttered, "Zhang Gong, it's really you. Zhang Gong, you brat, you've finally returned."

Choked with my emotions, I replied, "Big brother, it's my fault for returning late. Elders, I've let you down." Upon saying that, I fell to my knees before the elders.

The three elder's injuries seemed minor. The First Elder stood and came before me. He pulled me up with tears in his eyes. "It's enough that you've returned. That's enough."

"But First Elder, the Third and Fourth Elders, they....."

The First Elder sighed. "So you know. Even though Old Three and Four have died, they died with honor. Our task is to defend the continent, they died in the line of duty. Zhang Gong, you don't need to get upset for us. At our age, death means nothing. The most fortunate way is for us to die in battle."

First Elder was much more calm and collected than I thought. I was a little shocked and said, "Elder, but I....."

The First Elder had forbidden me in continuing what I wanted to say. "Stop, enough of this. Since you're back, the heavy task of eliminating the Monster race is now passed on to you. Telling by the divine aura coming from your body, we can tell that you've already accepted the God's inheritance. Zhang Gong, you haven't let us down. That's worth everything we've done."

I replied choked with sobs, "First Elder, thank you for holding out for so long, gaining so much time for the world. Don't worry, as long as I have a single breath remaining, I definitely won't let the Monster race win."

The First Elder laughed. "Hearing those words, I can truly relax. Even if the final outcome is failure, we will have done all we could do and we won't have any regrets."

Zhan Hu asked, "Zhang Gong, were you the one that made the Monster race retreat?"

Before I could reply, Dong Ru intercepted, "That was that case! Big Brother Zhan Hu, you don't understand how great Big Brother Zhang Gong is. He single handedly forced the retreat of the Three Great Monsters and even cast a Holy Light Slash into the gulf, killing or weakening innumerable monsters. Our brothers then lead the armed forces of the Three Kingdoms to take that opportunity and massacre the monsters, killing every last one."

I glared at Dong Ri. “How could it be as easy as you made it sound? Brothers, you should recuperate as quickly as possible. The invasion of the Monster race has reached its final phase. I believe that not long from now, the Monster King will appear. We must be able to use our combined powers to defeat him when the time comes.”

Xiu Si replied, “I get what you mean. The only way is to use the ultimate forbidden spell. Don’t worry. Our injuries are almost completely healed. In a few days, we’ll be fully recovered. Ah, Zhang Gong, since you returned, have you gone to see Mu Zi and that Hai Shui from the Kingdom of Aixia? Their feelings for you are much stronger than ours. Quickly go and meet up with them.” Seeing that everyone accepted Mu Zi, she must have taken over many of my responsibilities during the period that I was gone.

My face reddened. Embarrassed, I said, “Big Brother Xiu Si, I.....”

Xin Ao laughed. “What about you? Why aren’t you going? The girls have given up a lot for you.”

Under everyone’s instigation, my desire to meet with Mu Zi and Hai Shui grew. The intense emotions made my heart beat rapidly. After leaving the eastern room, Dong Ri didn’t follow me out. I took in a deep breath to calm my heart before turning around to walk to the western room.

I lightly knocked on the door of the western room. My heart raced, I didn’t know how they would react after seeing me. Would they forgive me for leaving without a word?

“Who is it? Come in, the door is unlocked.”

When I pushed open the door and walked in, the western room was much smaller than the eastern room. There were only two beds in the empty room. Mu Zi’s familiar figure was in front of me. She was tidying her bed sheets with her back facing me. On the other hand, Hai Shui, who hadn’t seen me for a few years, stared blankly at me. Even though I was wearing a mask, from the look in her eyes, I knew that she recognised me.

While Mu Zi tidied her bed sheets she said, “It’s probably Dong Ri. The Monster race must have gotten counterattacked and forced to retreat.”

I was stunned. “How did you know?”

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