

## glory is fleeting

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# **glory is fleeting**

by [coming\\_up\\_roses](#)

Summary

but obscurity is forever.

Icarus may have fallen from his melting wax wings, but Jia Shiming was nineteen and relentless. There was no future in chasing after Desert Storm — even if Han Wenqing *did* retire in the next few seasons, Desert Storm would never be known as his character, just like how Tian Sen had never been truly acknowledged as the man behind Peaceful Hermit.

"You're leaving?" his old captain asked, as Jia Shiming stood in front of his office. He furrowed his brows.

"Yeah," Jia Shiming said. He slouched, digging his hands into his pockets. "I guess Tyranny wasn't for me after all."

His tone was mocking, but there was a faint glimmer of understanding behind Han Wenqing's eyes.

*What did he understand?* Jia Shiming thought to himself bitterly. Han Wenqing had been one of the three great gods since the beginning; he'd never had the struggle of fighting his way to the top.

"Take care, then," Han Wenqing said. He paused, and then looked Jia Shiming in the eye. "The next time we meet, we'll be on opposite sides of the arena."

"Yeah," Jia Shiming shrugged. He thought about the offer Royal Style had given him, almost twice as much as the contract Tyranny had given him initially. He thought about Glory, and the Gods, and names forever immortalized in newspapers and chatrooms. "I'll look forward to that, I guess."

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They don't have a chance to meet again.

The next season, Royal Style was knocked out of the semi-finals in a crushing defeat against Blue Rain. Yu Feng, the young genius behind Brilliant Edge, was two years younger than him and two inches taller. Jia Shiming held out his palm after the game was over, a feeling of weightlessness washing over him.

"Good game," Yu Feng said, smiling. He had the kind of handsome face that was good for CFs, and Jia Shiming had already seen one of his commercials playing at KFC. "That Emperor's Fist was well-timed. I can see why you were God Han's successor."

"Mmm," Jia Shiming nodded. He tried to think of something to say. "Thanks."

"I'll see you around, then," Yu Feng said. He released Jia Shiming's hand with a friendly pat on the shoulder. "I'm always down for a round or two."

Yu Wenzhou was already making his victory speech to the press by the time Jia Shiming skulked back to his teammates. Tian Sen stood quietly at the edge of the stairs, his head bowed down.

"We were unlucky to go against Blue Rain," Shen Wanhe said. He flexed his fingers. "We could have at least qualified for finals if it were Seaside or Bright Green."

Ren Junchi shook his head. "Forget it," he said, shooting a nervous glance at the silent Tian Sen. "What's done is done. Let's go back and practice for next season."

Jia Shiming looked away. Standing here, surrounded by defeat, was almost worse than hiding in Han Wenqing's shadow; at least there were people who knew who he was. Time was never kind to losers.

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He transferred to Void after two seasons. Tian Sen didn't look surprised when Jia Shiming asked for the contract transferment notice, just how he hadn't looked surprised when Royal Style lost their chance to advance in the semi-finals again, this time against Samsara.

"I always knew you weren't the type to confine yourself to a declining team like this," Tian Sen said bluntly. "You always had a certain look on your face when you watched the final playoffs."

Jia Shiming swallowed. "Oh," he said, and couldn't bring himself to say anything more.

"I wish I was still young and ambitious," Tian Sen said. "But it's already too late for me."

Jia Shiming pitied him, in the detached way that people looked at hospitalized kids or the homeless elderly. It really was too late for Tian Sen now. He'd set his heart on a low-tiered team, and the payoff was people mocking his name on Weibo.

"Thank you for everything," Jia Shiming finally said, clutching his fingers. He didn't know if he meant it or not, but it felt like something that needed to be said.

Tian Sen exhaled slowly. "You're welcome."

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"We don't have space for you on the main roster," Li Xuan had said, but Jia Shiming understood. It didn't matter; Void consistently ranked in the top 5th or 6th in playoffs. He'd get his chance to play eventually.

They placed 6th and then 7th in the next two regular seasons, with Jia Shiming playing in three team rounds against Thunderclap, Seaside and 301 Degrees the second year after his transferral. They lost against 301 Degrees, but came back with a vengeance with a surprising win against Misty Rain.

"Good game," Jia Shiming said, shaking hands with Li Hua. The boy in front of him was almost half a decade younger than him, but it was with a tired futility that Jia Shiming realized that he would soon be surpassed either way.

"Thank you, senior," Li Hua bowed politely. "I look forward to playing with you again."

Jia Shiming thought back to Yu Feng, who was the captain of Hundred Blossoms now. He thought about Tian Sen, who'd slowly but steadily brought Royal Style up the rankings but



still to no avail. And then he thought about himself, who had left a comfortable spot in Tyranny in search of forging his own glory.

"Yes," Jia Shiming replied. He was twenty-two and hardly past his prime — there would be plenty of opportunities in the future. "Me too."

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