

Divine 2331

Chapter 2331: Mission 11

“If I were to entrust it to you, your desire for cultivation would only persist.

Presently, this low-level cultivation bead rests in the hands of your Elder Brother, a steadfast and honest individual. As he ascends in his cultivation, he will inherently shield and safeguard your siblings, whether within the household or married elsewhere, ensuring they are shielded from any mistreatment.”

“Xunnan, your mother departed early, yet the Xu family has always treated you with fairness throughout these years. If you’re still grappling with this, allow the governess to continue guiding you.” Xu Yuanlong expressed a touch of irritation but maintained a measured tone, hoping for Xu Xunnan to comprehend the situation.

This further riled up Gu Chaoyan.

“I don’t care. Whether I cultivate or not isn’t your family’s concern. Return the low-level cultivation beads to me. If you refuse, I’ll obtain them from Elder Brother.” Gu Chaoyan uttered resentfully before hastily departing.

Xu Yuanlong had never anticipated this turn of events.

Not only did his daughter fail to grasp these principles, but she had also become increasingly unreasonable and haughty. Xu Yuanlong felt a mixture of anger and concern.

If she persisted on this path...

While the Xu family might tolerate her, Jinwei Land would not.

With more occurrences unfolding in Jinwei Land and an increasing number of women demonstrating cultivation potential, the tolerance for such women was rapidly waning.

Contemplating this, Xu Yuanlong was consumed by worry.

Seeing Xu Xunnan's abrupt departure...

He rushed to follow her and signaled for the Xu family's servants to give chase.

She appeared to be on the lookout for Yongnian, who had been causing trouble while working in the imperial court.

Xu Yuanlong hesitated to delve too deeply into the matter. He urgently dispatched someone to fetch her back, but she had already disappeared without a trace.

Chasing after Gu Chaoyan proved futile; they were no match for her speed and determination.

In the end, Gu Chaoyan decided to seek out Xu Yongnian herself.

Based on her recollection, Xu Yongnian worked at Jinwei Land's Ministry of Revenue. When unoccupied, he often frequented the Cang Kong Pavilion, mingling with Jinwei Land's officials and their children.

The Cangkong Pavilion, primarily a relaxation spot, doubled as a place for tea and conversation. It was popular among Jinwei Land's officials.

Gu Chaoyan's intention was to head directly to this location, which had become infamous due to her recent disruptive activities, causing discord between her and the Xu family. It suited her purpose perfectly.

With her memory as a guide, Gu Chaoyan eventually reached her destination.

True to her recollection, the Cangkong Pavilion was bustling with dignitaries, predominantly men in opulent attire, with a few women serving or entertaining. These women occupied lower social strata, often responsible for serving in this establishment.

Notably absent were ladies from the aristocratic families, who seldom ventured outside their homes, let alone attended such venues.

From a distance, Xu Yongnian spotted Xu Xunnan and was taken aback. What was she doing here? It was a breach of protocol for a woman to be in this place.

A few days earlier, her latent cultivation talent had been uncovered, and she had chanced upon a cultivation bead. This discovery had fueled her determination to pursue cultivation.

Her arrival in this place posed a risk, not only subjecting her to criticism but also potentially tarnishing her reputation.

Xu Yongnian was anxious to intervene, but he was too late.

Xu Xunnan had already entered the Cangkong Pavilion, and she was immediately recognized by several dignitaries.

These dignitaries were far from pleased with her presence.

She turned towards Xu Yongnian and demanded, “Yongnian, what’s wrong with your sister? This is a breach of etiquette..”

Chapter 2332: Mission 12

“I’m afraid this will incite everyone’s displeasure. In such a case, even your Xu family might not be able to shield you,” someone cautioned with a stern countenance.

Jinwei Land adhered to its own strict regulations. Unless under exceptional circumstances, women were not permitted in this place, making her presence a blemish upon the Cangkong Pavilion. It was no wonder that these individuals were aggrieved.

“I’ll promptly escort her out,” Xu Yongnian declared, hastening to act.

Yet, Gu Chaoyan, far from modest in her retort, challenged him, “Xu Yongnian, did you pilfer my low-level cultivation bead? Return it to its rightful owner.”

“A cultivation bead? ‘Steal’ it?”

“Women have no claim to possess such an item; it rightfully belongs to Yongnian. You’re a woman. Depart from this place promptly, or we won’t hesitate to take more severe measures.” The Cangkong Pavilion’s dignitaries wore expressions of disdain, treating her as if she were an inconsequential insect, easily swatted away.

In Jinwei Land, a woman’s life held little value, and whether she remained within the realm of the living was of minimal consequence.

“It is mine, and I possess every qualification to retain it. What makes you presume that all valuable possessions must fall into the hands of men like you?” Gu Chaoyan exhibited no restraint.

“Your intention is merely to assert that women lack the potential for cultivation, correct? However, it appears that women don’t lack that potential. I possess both the talent and the opportunity to acquire a low-level cultivation bead. Can the same be said for you men?” Gu Chaoyan’s words dripped with sarcasm, as though she viewed them as inept individuals striving to subdue more talented individuals, stifling them from showcasing their true potential.

Well...

It was evident that her defiance had incensed these men, who held the utmost respect for the established regulations.

“Xu Yongnian, today, for your own good, you cannot save your sister from her actions. She is defying the principles, veering off the path of virtue and Dao!” Someone shouted vociferously, their anger apparent.

Xu Yongnian sensed that something was amiss.

Ever since the incident, their family had entrusted her upbringing to the governess, successfully steering her away from these ideas.

But now, she was spiraling into recklessness.

At home, the Xu family could protect her, even if she created a scene. However, in this place, she was beyond protection.

“Xu Xunnan, cease this foolishness! Persist, and you’ll endanger your life,” Xu Yongnian pleaded.

“Return the low-level cultivation bead to me. Your Xu family has relentlessly stifled me, even endangering my life. If I don’t make a commotion, will I be allowed to exist? If I insist on making a scene, I won’t return to your Xu family. Today, I’m here to reclaim what’s rightfully mine!” Xu Xunnan disregarded the onlookers, lunging at Xu Yongnian and wresting the low-level cultivation bead from his grasp.

Not content with just taking the bead, Gu Chaoyan resorted to delivering a few punches and slaps to vent her pent-up fury upon Xu Yongnian.

The nobles in the Cangkong Pavilion moved in to restrain her, their intentions clearly directed toward subduing this unruly woman.

However, they were unable to apprehend her; not only did she evade capture, but she also left some of them injured in the process.

“She has indeed cultivated! Not only that, she harmed her own brother. A woman like her cannot be allowed to live. We must report this to the Imperial Court and have her apprehended! What purpose do women serve in cultivating? After achieving cultivation, even her own brother is her victim. They are utterly unworthy of pursuing cultivation,” another individual shouted vehemently, expressing their dissatisfaction.

Meanwhile, Gu Chaoyan, before departing, delivered a resounding slap to another individual who had been attempting to argue. The impact sent the individual tumbling, face-first..

Chapter 2333: Mission 13

Gu Chaoyan erupted in laughter, gazing at him with a derisive mirth, as if she had found something profoundly amusing. Her laughter brimmed with contempt.

“Treachery!” someone bellowed, and a group gave chase to Gu Chaoyan, while a few individuals remained to tend to Xu Yongnian.

Xu Yongnian’s visage bore the marks of his injuries, and he was incapacitated, unable to rise.

“Yongnian, it’s not easy to have such a headstrong sister. I fear she may not have much time left. Wouldn’t it be better to marry obediently?” someone remarked, with a touch of sympathy.

Over the past few years...

There had been a plethora of women like her.

Their own family included one as well.

Initially, they were all resistant, but eventually, they were coached into peaceful marriages and child-rearing, with any mention of cultivation set aside. Living a secure and content life seemed appealing.

Xu Yongnian shook his head.

He had contemplated doing the same.

However, he hadn’t anticipated his sister’s audacity.

The Xu family likely couldn’t shield her any longer.

As Gu Chaoyan continued to flee, she held no remorse for her actions against Xu Yongnian.

Her objective was to prevent these individuals from implicating the Xu family in the future. By making it apparent that the Xu family did not wish to retain Xu Xunnan, they hoped to bring some solace to the Xu family.

Gu Chaoyan dashed towards the location of the intermediate pagoda.

In a bold move, she hurled the pagoda into the air.

As it ascended, the pagoda emitted a radiant, golden light, expanding exponentially until it transformed into a colossal structure. Those who witnessed this spectacle stood in stunned disbelief.

Without hesitation, Gu Chaoyan entered the pagoda.

The pursuers made attempts to follow her inside, yet they soon realized they were barred from entry; the pagoda remained impervious to their efforts.

Gu Chaoyan stood at the pinnacle of the pagoda, gazing at those outside with a triumphant smile. “Weren’t you the ones who accused me of deviating from the sutra and defying the Dao? You believed a woman like me deserved to die. But behold, even the heavens prevent you from attacking me!”

“It is the divine will that numerous women possess the potential for cultivation!” Gu Chaoyan proclaimed.

Amongst the onlookers were several men who endeavored to gain entry, but not only did they fail to penetrate the pagoda, they were also repelled by its golden radiance.

“Is this truly fate?” Miss Lin called out from beyond.

Gu Chaoyan nodded in affirmation.

Miss Lin ventured into the pagoda and realized she could access it without hindrance.

“It is indeed the will of the heavens!”

The individuals Miss Lin and the governess had arranged also made their way inside. All of them were women.

The pagoda was sizeable, capable of accommodating hundreds of women comfortably.

Gradually, an increasing number of women sought to enter.

This place evolved into a sanctuary for the women of Jinwei Land, drawing them in like a magnet. They rushed to the scene.

Miss Lin and the governess wore expressions of delight.

Previously, they had contemplated constructing a refuge in the outskirts should Lady Xu Xunnan fail to find a solution. They had never anticipated that Lady Xu Xunnan would unveil such a remarkable pagoda.

Its enchantment was beyond imagination.

Upon witnessing this scenario, the men who had pursued Gu Chaoyan from the Cangkong Pavilion grasped that a momentous event was unfolding.

None had foreseen this turn of events.

Initially, they had merely desired to apprehend the Xu family's woman who had allegedly defied the sutra.

No one could comprehend why such a pagoda had materialized seemingly out of thin air.

Could it be that certain occurrences were fated?

For instance, the low-level cultivation bead acquired by the Xu family's Lady and the pagoda that now safeguarded her.

Together with the developments in recent years...

An ever-increasing number of women were being discovered with the potential for cultivation..

Chapter 2334: Mission 14

However it was dissected..

This had escalated into a significant crisis.

No longer could it be remedied by these self-proclaimed nobles.

Indeed, it seemed plausible that the repercussions would extend across the entirety of Jinwei Land.

These dignitaries appeared disconcerted and apprehensive as they hurriedly entered the palace. Their typically composed countenances were now streaked with perspiration.

For the first time, Emperor Jinwei Land witnessed these individuals in such a disheveled and alarmed state. “What transpired?”

“Your Majesty, a grave situation has arisen!”

“The Lady of the Xu family defied the teachings of her upbringing and insisted on cultivating. She even harmed Brother Xu and seized the cultivation beads from him. We aimed to apprehend this woman who had strayed from the sutra and defied the Dao. To our astonishment, after chasing her from the Cangkong Pavilion all the way to the capital, just as we were about to apprehend her, a

pagoda materialized suddenly in the sky. The pagoda descended into the capital, and the Xu family’s Lady led a group of women inside. Shielded by the pagoda, we were powerless to act against her. Men cannot enter that pagoda!”

“Throughout history, women in Jinwei Land have never practiced cultivation. Now, with the sanctuary provided by this pagoda, I fear numerous individuals who have deviated from the sutra and the Dao will embark on the path of cultivation. In such an event, Jinwei Land is bound to descend into chaos.”

“They claim it to be the will of the heavens, but...

As they discussed the will of the heavens, they had witnessed it firsthand and tacitly acknowledged it. Yet, this predicament concerned Jinwei Land, and while they acknowledged it privately, they dared not make any rash decisions. Only the emperor had the authority to address this matter.

Emperor Jinwei Land found himself taken aback by the unexpected turn of events.

His countenance reflected the gravity of the situation.

Jinwei Land had adhered to its established traditions for countless centuries. These were the regulations governing the land.

During his reign, Emperor Jinwei Land had not harbored any intentions of altering these deep-rooted customs.

Yet now...

Chaos loomed on the horizon.

“Summon Xu Yuanlong immediately. I wish to conduct a thorough inquiry,” Emperor Jinwei Land instructed with evident displeasure.

“Yes, Your Majesty,” an attendant promptly conveyed the message to Xu

Yuanlong.

The others present dared not make a sound.

Meanwhile, at the Xu family’s residence, a state of turmoil had erupted.

Xu Yuanlong had initially intended to dispatch someone to retrieve Xu Xunnan, but she had eluded them, instead venturing to the Cangkong Pavilion to create a spectacle.

The situation had spiraled out of control.

Xu Yongnian had since returned, exacerbating the turmoil following the incidents at the Cangkong Pavilion.

Xu Yuanlong felt an overwhelming sense of despair.

“Come with me,” he said to Xu Yongnian, leading her in search of Xu Xunnan.

Meanwhile, the capital teemed with an unending flow of people, both men and women.

Ordinarily, women were a rare sight on the streets. Today, however, their presence couldn’t be contained. They had all poured out, converging on the pagoda.

Xu Yuanlong heaved a deep sigh. “A major incident has occurred.”

Indeed, a significant event had unfolded.

Under the pagoda, Xu Xunnan had sought refuge.

He called out to her, “Xu Xunnan, descend and accompany me to the palace for an apology.”

“I’m still your father, and you must heed me!” Xu Yuanlong implored.

Xu Xunnan peered down at Xu Yuanlong.

She understood.

Her father meant well, just like everyone else. He only wished for her safety and well-being, not her demise. This very understanding compelled her not to reveal her comprehension of his intentions.

“Impossible! Xu Yuanlong, you seized my cultivation bead. I have yet to settle that score with your Xu family. Your family even attempted to harm my life. This alone renders a return to the Xu family inconceivable..”

Chapter 2335: Mission 15

“Depart from this place before I become entangled with the Xu Family, for their sake as well! If that were to happen, the Xu Family would face grave consequences!” Gu Chaoyan exhibited a visible aversion to any association with the Xu Family.

Evidently, the actions of the Xu family had deeply angered her.

The Xu family’s methods aligned with the customs of all families in Jinwei Land.

In this moment, many individuals found themselves feeling sympathetic toward the Xu family.

After all, it was the Xu family’s eccentric sutra that had instigated this tumultuous chain of events.

Xu Yuanlong let out a heavy sigh. He knew that Xunnan’s future appeared grim. Her fate held little promise of a peaceful death after committing such a grave offense. Jinwei Land was likely to condemn her to a gruesome end.

She was still his daughter. The thought of her suffering in such a manner pained him deeply.

Yet, regardless of what he said, she remained unyielding, even placing blame on the Xu family.

It seemed futile.

Just as Xu Yuanlong grappled with his inner turmoil, a servant from the Xu family approached him, whispering softly, “Master, the emperor has summoned you to the palace.”

Xu Yuanlong’s countenance shifted subtly.

He gazed at the familiar face atop the pagoda, his daughter, his own flesh and blood.

However...

It appeared that he could no longer shield her.

He offered a slight nod, then shifted his gaze away, turning to depart completely.

Observing Xu Yuanlong's departure, Gu Chaoyan felt a sense of relief.

She looked at the governess beside her and proceeded to give her instructions on how to manage the situation with those present.

Xu Yuanlong hastened to enter the palace.

The Emperor had evidently summoned him at this critical juncture to address the matter concerning Xu Xunnan.

Xu Yuanlong was acutely aware of his responsibilities.

While Xu Xunnan was indeed his daughter, the Xu family constituted a large and extensive clan. His own children numbered several, and that was just one branch of the family. When one considered the entire Xu family clan, including the numerous household servants, the population swelled to hundreds.

He could not allow these individuals to perish on account of Xu Xunnan's actions.

From the beginning to the present, he had done his utmost to guide and discipline Xu Xunnan. However, she displayed no remorse for her deeds, harboring resentment toward the Xu family.

Now, in the Imperial Palace, he had no choice but to relinquish Xu Xunnan before the Emperor.

By forfeiting Xu Xunnan, he could safeguard the lives of the entire Xu family.

Xu Yuanlong had resolved his course of action, and his gaze radiated determination.

“Your Majesty, I pay my respects to you. Long live Your Majesty,” Xu Yuanlong prostrated and bowed, his trepidation evident.

The Emperor of Jinwei Land refrained from instructing him to rise. Instead, she preferred to keep him kneeling.

As she regarded Xu Yuanlong, who remained in a prostrate position, the Emperor of Jinwei Land couldn’t help but feel an overwhelming anger. Many of the issues that had arisen in Jinwei Land could be traced back to his daughter.

Irrespective of any other factors, he had failed in his duty.

“Numerous significant events have transpired today, all of which seem to be connected to your daughter. Xu Yuanlong, do you comprehend why I have summoned you to the palace?” The Emperor of Jinwei Land seethed with anger.

Xu Yuanlong prostrated even more fervently, to the point where the sound of his repeated kowtows resonated far and wide.

Xu Yuanlong shouted with fervor, “Your Majesty! It is my daughter who is responsible for this situation. I failed in disciplining my daughter effectively. In the past, I should have taken immediate action and had this disobedient daughter eliminated. She even attempted to learn from the governess!”

“By the time I recognized the gravity of the situation, it was already too late. No one within the Xu family possessed the capability to apprehend her.”

“The entire fault lies with me..

“Please, Your Majesty, hold me accountable for this. Whether it entails punishment or retribution, I am prepared to bear the consequences alone. I implore you to spare everyone else within the Xu family,” Xu Yuanlong entreated.

The Emperor of Jinwei Land regarded Xu Yuanlong thoughtfully.

Undoubtedly, Xu Yuanlong bore a share of responsibility.

He had failed in his duty, a fact he readily admitted.

How could he have neglected to discipline his own daughter adequately, permitting her to precipitate such a significant calamity?

Yet, it was imperative to distinguish between intent and negligence. The Emperor of Jinwei Land remained cognizant of this fact.

Even though the Xu family had not intentionally orchestrated this debacle, they were nonetheless accountable for allowing it to happen.

Nevertheless...

The Emperor of Jinwei Land harbored no intention to directly punish the Xu family at this juncture.

With an air of composure, he stated, “Given the magnitude of this calamity, it is indeed the Xu family’s failure to maintain proper discipline. You may now begin your redemption. Since your daughter leads the pagoda, I shall charge your Xu family with the task of personally capturing Xu Xunnan. If you successfully apprehend her and bring her before me, I shall consider granting leniency.”

Having articulated his decree...

He signaled for the eunuch by his side to summon those waiting outside.

These individuals comprised officials and nobles of Jinwei Land who had entered the palace, aware of the unfolding crisis.

The Emperor of Jinwei Land addressed them sternly, saying, “Jinwei Land has been struck by a momentous event, and each of you shares a measure of responsibility.”

“I am certain that within your families, there are women who are implicated in this matter.”

“If you wish to rectify their behavior and ensure they do not stray from our customs even in their dreams, the onus is upon you.”

“Everyone, disperse and summon all the women within your households to return to the Intermediate. As for women from ordinary households, they fall under the jurisdiction of local authorities. Dispatch messengers to notify these families to retrieve their female members and return them to their respective Intermediate residences.”

“Once assembled, these women shall be subject to registration and, if deemed necessary, face appropriate penalties.”

“Women lack the innate ability to cultivate and, consequently, the qualifications to engage in cultivation. This age-old rule, upheld for millennia, is unbreakable. The audacity of these women is perplexing. Could they aspire to assume a prominent role within Jinwei Land?”

“Men devote themselves to cultivation and serve as leaders outside the home, while women preside over domestic affairs. If everyone partakes in cultivation, Jinwei Land will plunge into disarray. In that case, will there be room for me to govern? Will I allow women to overstep their bounds and dictate all decisions?”

“Such talk is absurd!”

The Emperor of Jinwei Land delivered his statement with unwavering gravity, emphasizing the larger stakes at hand. This matter pertained not only to his interests as the ruler but also to the well-being of all men.

The men present wore ashen expressions, their countenances grim and disheartened.

How could they fail to grasp the underlying rationale? No one favored a rule that had endured for thousands of years, especially when it concerned women of lower status.

What privileges did they possess?

Their sole purpose was to bear offspring.

How audacious these women were to entertain the notion of being on equal footing with men like them!

Jinwei Land currently faced upheaval. Many women within their families had displayed blatant defiance and flocked to the pagoda, to their intense exasperation.

What lay ahead?

Now that the Emperor had personally issued a mandate, upon departing from the palace, they would be heading to the pagoda to retrieve the women from their households, utilizing whatever means necessary—be it reprimanding, chastising, or employing any other methods.

“We acknowledge the decree!” The assembled group of aggrieved individuals responded in unison.

At this, the Emperor of Jinwei Land’s countenance lightened somewhat.

He motioned for them to depart, saying, “Go and execute the directive. I expect to witness results within three days..”

Chapter 2337: Mission 17

In the ensuing period, whether within aristocratic households or ordinary families, there was an increasing emphasis on strict supervision and education for the women in their midst. Nannies were not only hired in greater numbers but were also tasked with instilling discipline and teachings.

Within ordinary households, some individuals, anxious to ensure compliance, resorted to direct reprimand and corporal punishment for the women in their families, fearing they would prove hard to persuade.

Jinwei Land grew even more tumultuous as a result. The heightened scrutiny and harsh criticism only deepened the yearning among these women for the pagoda. If they could cultivate and possess power, they wouldn't have to endure the casual maltreatment inflicted by others, leading to such miserable lives.

The entire Jinwei Land was in disarray.

Conversely, inside the pagoda, an aura of tranquility reigned.

The pagoda featured nine levels in total: the first floor for cultivation, the second for storage of elixirs and weaponry, the third for living quarters, while the fourth and above remained unutilized, deemed redundant at present.

The spiritual energy inside the pagoda was notably more abundant compared to the exterior world. Consequently, those women who embarked on their cultivation journey within these walls experienced notably accelerated progress compared to the men of Jinwei Land. Additionally, the pagoda routinely provided them with a steady supply of medicinal pills, further smoothing their path to cultivation.

Some among them possessed innate talent for cultivation but had been restrained from doing so. Others endured harsh lives and sought refuge within the pagoda. Gu Chaoyan embraced them all.

Those with prior experience instructed newcomers in the ways of cultivation, while the others taught them martial arts. For those without the aptitude for cultivation, this served as their sole recourse.

The presence of the pagoda held immense significance.

For a time, the pagoda had become a sanctuary for these women.

Yet, such an existence couldn't persist indefinitely.

It was as though they had fled from one place only to find themselves running towards another, one where they didn't truly hold any rights.

Xu Xunnan hadn't delineated their next steps, leaving the nanny to inquire of

Gu Chaoyan, "What should we do next?"

In response, Gu Chaoyan smiled at those engrossed in their cultivation, projecting an air of total assurance. She replied, "Our next course of action isn't solely our responsibility, but rather something that falls within the purview of the court."

"I believe it won't be long before they come searching for us. When that moment arrives, we can voice our terms."

The nanny, upon hearing her response, found it quite reasonable.

Their current situation was unchangeable. They couldn't persist in this manner. What came next appeared to be a matter for Jinwei Land's imperial court to deliberate, and an urgent matter at that.

Over these past days, numerous individuals had congregated outside the pagoda, attempting to cajole or deceive these women into returning home. However, they had all remained steadfast in their refusal, indicating that they held no alternative.

Continuing in this vein wouldn't merely be a concern for these women; it would require careful consideration by the Imperial Court.

Consequently, the atmosphere within the pagoda took on a renewed sense of harmony.

As for those officials and aristocratic families, there was much to trouble them within their homes.

Initially, when the Emperor had issued the three-day ultimatum, they hadn't deemed it to be a particularly arduous task. They believed it was merely a matter of offering sufficient incentives to entice the women to return. After all, they knew full well the potential consequences they would face if they chose to remain in exile.

However, at present..

No matter what was said or done, the women refused to return.

What on earth were they going to convey to the Emperor?

Chapter 2338: Mission 18

They were all high-ranking officials and influential figures. Their positions insulated them from most consequences. Whether or not women in the clan could engage in cultivation, they still relied on these officials. With the exception of the emperor, these individuals, be they men or women, held a superior status.

As the emperor's unfulfilled mandate circulated among these officials, they began to discuss the matter among themselves. Their deliberation was unhurried, as no one had managed to accomplish the task. As the saying goes, the law cannot penalize the masses. Even if the emperor felt anger or frustration, there was little he could do to them. The number of officials and nobles was substantial, and it was impractical to punish them all. Such an action might even complicate matters further for the emperor.

Upon careful examination, the situation involving Xu Xunnan from the Xu family significantly impacted the common people's interests. This was the source of the emperor's concern, a matter largely unappreciated by the general populace.

For countless years, Jinwei Land had remained peaceful and uneventful. The emperor's worry primarily revolved around the potential consequences during his reign. He let out a sigh.

"Summon me to the palace."

Certain decisions needed to be made promptly.

Inside the court, the Emperor of Jinwei Land's countenance was exceedingly grim. While it was the eunuchs' responsibility to handle the task, the emperor had heard of their less than satisfactory progress.

It was really unsatisfactory!

"How insolent!" The Emperor of Jinwei Land furiously swept aside the stack of memorials before him. "How insolent!"

The Emperor's ire boiled within him, but words eluded him. This situation had unfolded with such swiftness and abruptness that it defied containment. The appearance of the pagoda seemed like a heavenly shield, a protection beyond his imperial authority.

As the ruler, he found himself utterly powerless.

"Your Majesty, it is time for court," the attending eunuch reminded, casting a glance at the sky outside.

The Emperor of Jinwei Land pounded the table with great force, then rose with an exceedingly grim countenance. He made his way to the court.

Inside the court, the ministers had assembled, their expressions riddled with apprehension. The gravity of the situation weighed heavily on them all, causing anxiety to gnaw at their hearts.

When the Emperor of Jinwei Land arrived in court, he immediately knelt, a chorus of repentance in unison. "We have failed in our duties. Please punish us, Emperor!"

"We have failed in our duties. Please punish us, Your Majesty."

The hall reverberated with these fervent pleas, as everyone prostrated themselves. It was as though they were compelling the Emperor of Jinwei Land to humiliate himself.

His anger, already raging, flared further upon seeing that none had fulfilled their duties, and he was left spluttering with frustration before he could utter a word.

“Your Majesty!” The ministers cried out in worry.

The Emperor of Jinwei Land rolled his eyes at them.

“If their concern for him was genuine, they should have followed his instructions. Instead, they’re deeply worried now, despite not acting upon his prior guidance.

“Your Majesty, this situation is exceptionally challenging to resolve. The Lady of the Xu family has managed to sway their loyalties, and I’m unsure of what incentives she’s provided, but they remain reluctant to return. In my humble opinion, we may need to entrust Lord Xu with the task. It appears to be the most viable option given the circumstances.” Recognizing the Emperor of Jinwei Land’s discontent, an individual promptly stepped forward, deferring the matter to Xu Yuanlong.

Xu Yuanlong was abruptly singled out for the responsibility..

Chapter 2339: Mission 19

He shot an angry glance at the individual.

As he prepared to address the matter, the Emperor of Jinwei Land’s patience wore thin. He swiftly waved his hand, unwilling to witness further evasion of responsibility. Pushing blame onto one another was a futile exercise.

“Leave the court. Ministers Xu, Zhang, and Wang, remain behind and accompany me to the imperial study, ” the Emperor of Jinwei Land declared. With that, he promptly rose and exited.

The individual who had earlier shifted blame onto Xu Yuanlong wore a visibly awkward expression. Initially, he had hoped to gain the emperor’s approval regarding this issue, but instead, the emperor had dismissed him without a hearing. In an instant, it felt as if they had lost significant ground.

After the court session concluded, the ministers’ countenances bore a touch of gloom. The atmosphere was decidedly somber.

He felt deeply disheartened.

The emperor, for his part, seemed enigmatic in his response. Not only did he not reprimand Xu Yuanlong for his daughter's transgressions, but he had also summoned him and the others to the imperial study for discussions. This left many perplexed.

In ordinary circumstances, Xu Yuanlong's family should have faced severe consequences for his daughter's actions. It wouldn't have been an exaggeration to employ intimidation by means of executing the entire family.

"Lord Lin, are you still troubled by what occurred earlier?" someone approached Dao Seeking with a smile and inquired.

"I'm just finding it hard to comprehend."

"This Xu Yuanlong is now untouchable. Do you honestly think the emperor would have allowed him into the court today if he were otherwise?"

"Consider this: With Jinwei Land in turmoil, it's true that his daughter bears responsibility. If we attempt to lay the blame solely on Xu Yuanlong, we face several issues. Firstly, we risk alienating these loyal supporters. Secondly, we'll incur the Xu family's enmity. Thirdly, it will only deepen the matter's freeze.

We're trapped.'

"That's why we cannot touch Xu Yuanlong."

"These days, the cunning figures in the imperial court comprehend the intricacies. They won't speak rashly and are simply awaiting others to make the first move.

"Let's bide our time quietly for the next few days."

As their conversation unfolded, they gradually grasped the dynamics in Jinwei

Land.

His voice receded in the distance.

Inside the imperial study, Xu Yuanlong, Zhang Cailiang, the prince, the king, and the monarch, Yuan Kui, stood in readiness before the Emperor of Jinwei

Land.

With the court adjourned and them left alone, the emperor clearly had matters of importance to discuss with them.

Zhang Cailiang served as the Left Prime Minister. The prince, the king, and the monarch, Yuan Kui, held the title of general in Jinwei Land.

As for Xu Yuanlong, he had been a relatively inconspicuous figure in the royal court and had not consistently held a prominent position. The reason for his summons was undeniably connected to his daughter's actions.

The three of them exchanged glances, and silence enveloped them. Given the tense state of affairs in Jinwei Land, apprehension weighed heavily upon everyone.

“Please, take your seats.”

“These individuals have performed poorly in handling the tasks I assigned them earlier. None have executed them effectively.”

“Minister Zhang, Minister Wang are my closest advisors, and Minister Xu is directly implicated in the events of today. The three of you must contemplate our next course of action.”

“Currently, there's growing discontent among the people of Jinwei Land.”

“Unfortunately, my hands are tied.”

“If this situation persists, Jinwei Land may descend into chaos. Such uncertainty is detrimental, no matter who the player.”

“What are your thoughts on this?”

Xu Yuanlong let out a weary sigh. Zhang Cailiang and Wang Yuankui, being his trusted advisors, had likely conceived a plan.

The two of them nodded in unison..

Chapter 2340: Mission 20

Subsequently, Zhang Cailiang rose from his seat and addressed the Emperor,

“Your Majesty, I have an idea, although I’m uncertain of its feasibility.”

The Emperor of Jinwei Land, growing somewhat impatient, replied, “Regardless of feasibility, please, proceed. In our current predicament, having any potential solution is already a welcome development.”

Zhang Cailiang, sensing the urgency, wasted no time and explained, “Your Majesty, it seems clear that neither officials’ families nor common households can retrieve the women from the pagoda. This suggests that Xu Xunnan and the pagoda possess a protective influence.”

“For centuries, the women of Jinwei Land have been unable to cultivate, resulting in their marginalized status.”

“Ordinary women are treated as subordinates, even lower than servants, creating a discontent that unites them.”

“Our approach may not be to target the people directly, but rather to focus on their leader, Xu Xunnan.”

“She’s currently in the spotlight, leading a significant number of women.”

“Nonetheless, the future may not be as accommodating. Once we’ve managed to pacify these individuals, they cannot remain within the pagoda indefinitely.”

“In that case, we can negotiate with Xu Xunnan. If she is willing to cooperate with you, dealing with those women should become considerably more manageable.”

“At that point, you needn’t fret about Jinwei Land reverting to its former state.

Do the people hold you in high regard?”

After Zhang Cailiang concluded his analysis, a faint smile touched his lips.

The Emperor of Jinwei Land, upon hearing this, recognized the practicality of the proposal in the current circumstances.

“But Xu Xunnan is quite obstinate. Even Minister Xu finds it challenging to sway her. What conditions could entice her to agree?” inquired the Emperor of Jinwei Land.

Zhang Cailiang grinned. Evidently, he had anticipated this query. “When I devised this plan, I naturally considered the conditions.”

“Simple.”

“After all, she is just a woman.”

“Women’s desires are quite straightforward.”

“We offer her supreme status, the prestige of a Paragon, as well as vast riches, gold, silver, jewelry, and wealth. She may select any outstanding man within Jinwei Land.”

“These incentives should prove enticing to a woman, don’t you think?”

“Moreover, all of these are easily within the Emperor’s means.”

“As the situation gradually stabilizes, we can more easily manage her over time, ” Zhang Cailiang suggested.

As the Emperor of Jinwei Land attentively absorbed Zhang Cailiang’s proposal, a smile gradually graced his countenance, reflecting his satisfaction.

However...

Despite his contentment, Zhang Cailiang remained mindful of his relatively lower status as a thousandth of a tael (use it judiciously) official.

Upon concluding his statement, he shifted his gaze towards Xu Yuanlong. It was apparent that he was considering whether Xu Yuanlong might take offense, given that she was his daughter.

Recognizing this, Xu Yuanlong swiftly reassured, “It’s my duty, it’s my duty. Xu Xunnan has committed such a disgraceful act. It’s my responsibility to address it. If there’s any way I can be of assistance, I will not hesitate!”

Regardless of Xu Xunnan being his daughter, Xu Yuanlong comprehended the hierarchy of importance in this matter..