

Es. Benefits 271

Chapter 271: I'm Happy to Help You_2

Qin Yushan replied, "Prince, this is a kind of drug that can seal all the meridians in the body. As long as you take this drug, a martial artist's skill will be sealed, and they will be unable to use their inner strength, much like an ordinary person."

Hearing this, Lu Chen thought to himself, if someone had given him this drug that day, would his skill also be sealed?

With this thought, Lu Chen asked, "Does this pill have any other side effects?"

Qin Yushan was startled. He had not expected Lu Chen to ask this question, as they themselves did not consume the pill—it was meant for their enemies. As to whether it had any specific side effects, they really did not know.

Qin Yushan then said, "This subordinate is not sure about that, but usually, we just need to give them the antidote, and they can quickly recover their skill."

Lu Chen then said, "Give a pill to this prince to try."

Qin Yushan hastily said, "Prince, you absolutely must not!"

Qin Yushan had not expected Lu Chen to actually be interested in this pill. After all, Lu Chen was a prince; how could he just casually consume something?

Lu Chen said, "It's fine, you also have the antidote on hand. Just give one to this prince to try."

Seeing that Lu Chen insisted on trying the pill, Qin Yushan said no more; he immediately took out a pill and handed it to Lu Chen.

Lu Chen swallowed it in one gulp, and as soon as he did, he felt as though the pill dissolved within his body, and Qin Yushan watched nervously, afraid that something might happen to Lu Chen.

Realizing that the pill had no effect inside his body, Lu Chen reacted instantly. Oh, it seems he has a Poison Immunity Body; all the poisons in the world have no effect on him, and this pill is considered a poison.

His Poison immunity Body had not been utilized for such a long time that he had almost forgotten he possessed this ability.

Seeing that Lu Chen seemed to be fine, Qin Yushan was stunned.

No effect?

This pill could seal the skill of even an Extreme Realm Master upon consumption, yet there was no effect at all when the North Prince took it.

Carefully, Qin Yushan asked, “Prince, do you need the antidote?”

Lu Chen said indifferently, “This pill is of no use to this prince. When you are guarding those assassins, don’t always think that a single pill will make them obedient.”

Qin Yushan felt a bit awkward. He had not anticipated that there would be someone in the world completely immune to the poison of such a pill.

Qin Yushan then said, “The Prince is right; this subordinate will ensure that the Brocade Guard soldiers keep a strict watch and will not let them have a chance to escape.”

Lu Chen glanced over the crowd and then said, “Now that everything has been resolved, this prince should return. The rest is up to you.

“The houses of the common people that were damaged have to be compensated with silver. I believe these assassins should have quite a bit of silver on them—they were even throwing silver to use grenades, clearly, they are wealthy.” As Lu Chen’s words fell, he turned around and departed, and Qin Yushan and the others immediately said, “We see the Prince off!”

Lu Chen had just walked a few steps when he heard Qin Yushan's voice from behind, "Hand over all the silver you have on you."

Hearing this, Lu Chen smiled faintly. He believed that Qin Yushan and the others would handle the compensation issue for the common people's houses well.

Inside the North Prince Mansion, the main hall.

Lu Chen's wives and concubines were sitting in the main hall at this moment, waiting for Lu Chen to return.

Unlike the last time, when the North Prince Mansion was attacked by an assassin and they all hid in the underground passage, this time, with Bai Qingqing and Chen Wanrong, two Grandmasters protecting them, they did not have to hide underground.

Although they knew Lu Chen had changed and possessed great strength now, Mu Zixuan, along with Xiaozhou and Dazhou, still showed worried expressions.

Seeing their worried expressions, Chu Yuqin comforted them, "Zixuan, you don't need to worry, Chen'er will be fine."

Hearing this, Mu Zixuan smiled slightly and then said, "Madam Chu, I believe the Prince will definitely be alright."

At that moment, Chen Wanrong swept an indifferent glance over the women in the great hall, and on seeing these women, she couldn't help but think to herself that it was no wonder Lu Chen had not sought her out. With so many beautiful wives and concubines, reveling night after night, and changing partners daily, even the most lascivious of men would not be able to withstand it. Lu Chen would have no inclination to come find her.

It seemed she would have to be more proactive. Her Love Worm had been ready for some time, yet there had been no opportunity. If this continued, her worm might well starve to death.

Just as Chen Wanrong was thinking about having Lin Wanyun create an opportunity for her to be alone with Lu Chen, Chu Yuqin said to her, "Miss Chen, we're troubled by this matter."

Chen Wanrong responded indifferently, "It's only right."

Lin Wanyun added, "Yuqin, since we reside in North Prince Mansion, and Chen'er has treated us so well, it's only natural that we should step forward to help when North Prince Mansion is in need."

Although Lin Wanyun and Chen Wanrong intended to send disciples from Mysterious Moon Palace to aid Lu Chen, he had only asked the two of them to keep watch over North Prince Mansion and did not request that the Mysterious Moon Palace send people to act with him.

Of course, even so, it pleased both women to some extent, because it meant Lu Chen had, to a degree, accepted the Mysterious Moon Palace and accepted them. All they needed to do was take one step further, and then they could begin to implement their plan.

No sooner had Lin Wanyun finished speaking than a maid rushed in hurriedly, "Your Highness, the Prince has returned!"

On hearing this, Mu Zixuan immediately stood up and handed over her child to the wet nurse.

After a short while, a tall and burly young man appeared at the doorway. On seeing Lu Chen return, his wives and concubines all surged forward.

Mu Zixuan asked with concern, "Prince, you haven't been injured, have you?"

Lu Chen took Mu Zixuan's jade hand and said with a smile, "I'm fine. The more formidable assassins have mostly been dealt with. There may still be some assassins hiding in the shadows that we haven't discovered, but they don't pose a great threat to North Prince Mansion. It's sufficient to intensify patrols." At this point, Lu Chen turned his head to look at Chen Wanrong, "Miss Chen, I'm very grateful to you for this time."

Chen Wanrong still maintained an expressionless face as she replied, "There's no need to thank me."

Lin Wanyun hurriedly tugged at Chen Wanrong's dress, signaling her to be less curt in her speech. Chen Wanrong caught on to the concern and then, still expressionless, added, "I'm glad to be of help to you."

Lin Wanyun sighed internally. That response would have to do, she supposed. Chen Wanrong rarely conversed with men, so it was quite something for her to say even this much.

Lin Wanyun glanced at Mu Zixuan and the others and then said, “Chen’er, since most of the assassins have been taken care of, if there’s nothing else, the Palace Master and I will head back first.”

Lu Chen replied, “Yes, alright.”

What followed was time for Lu Chen and his wives and concubines. As outsiders from Mysterious Moon Palace, it wasn’t quite appropriate for them to remain there, so Lin Wanyun and Chen Wanrong left the great hall together. After Chen Wanrong and Lin Wanyun left, Lu Chen soothed his wives and concubines and then had them return to their respective rooms.

Once they were all gone, Lu Chen did not spend the night in Mu Zixuan’s room. After absorbing the skill of three Grandmasters, he felt his body was tremendously restless, completely devoid of sleepiness, and his vitality surged exceptionally strong.

Since Mu Zixuan was already pregnant, given his current condition, he definitely could not stay with her. He had to either visit Spring Sound Court or spend the night in Chu Qingli’s room.

Lu Chen decisively chose Chu Qingli’s room. After reaching an agreement with Chu Qingli last time, they had only been intimate once, as he had not found an opportunity since then.

The main reason was that Chu Yuqin and Chu Qingli lived in the same courtyard, with their rooms adjacent to one another. Whenever he wanted to visit Chu Qingli to foster their relationship, he would see Chu Yuqin, making it somewhat difficult for him to make a move.

But this evening, Chu Yuqin was on duty in the inner court, which afforded him an opportunity.

Chu Qingli had been in the main hall at first, but after Lu Chen told them to return, she went back to her own room.

It was her sister’s turn to watch over the inner court that night, so she didn’t need to stay outside.

Back in her room, Chu Qingli slowly removed her outer garment, revealing her smooth skin. She planned to take a bath and then go straight to sleep. However, just then, she suddenly heard the sound of the door being pushed open from outside.. Chu Qingli instantly became alert, “Who’s there!”

Chapter 272: Sister, I’m Fine_I

After sensing the movement at the door, Chu Qingli hurriedly put her clothes back on, but just then, the door opened, and a familiar figure appeared inside her room.

Seeing it was Lu Chen, Chu Qingli was stunned for a moment.

In her mind, the events that had occurred in the study before flashed before her eyes.

Ever since she had struck a deal with Lu Chen, she had been thinking of completing the transaction with him as soon as possible, preferably serving Lu Chen once a day so that, after three months, her sister would be able to regain her freedom.

But Lu Chen had too many wives and concubines, and with her sister frequently patrolling the inner court, it was very difficult for her to find an opportunity to be alone with Lu Chen.

The key issue was that Lu Chen himself didn’t come looking for her. She even began to suspect that after Lu Chen had gotten her body, he was preparing to go back on their deal by reneging on their agreement.

Seeing Lu Chen appear in her room, Chu Qingli thought to herself that it seemed Lu Chen acknowledged their deal, otherwise, he wouldn’t have come to find her.

At that moment, Chu Qingli said coldly, “I pay my respects to the Prince.” Lu Chen closed the door behind him and approached Chu Qingli as he spoke, “Qingli, I wonder if you still remember the transaction we made in my study last time.”

Chu Qingli said with an expressionless face, “I remember.”

Lu Chen said, “Since you remember, then why haven’t you come looking for me during this time? Don’t you want your sister to regain her freedom sooner and leave the North Prince Mansion?”

“It seems you don’t care about your sister as much as I thought.

Hearing this, Chu Qingli was taken aback. She would never allow anyone to say she didn’t care about Chu Yuqin. So she said, “I’m just afraid that my sister will discover it.”

Having said that, Chu Qingli unhesitatingly stripped off her outer garment once again, revealing her smooth and delicate shoulders, and declaring with a righteous demeanor, “Come on then.”

Seeing this scene, Lu Chen chuckled, as if they were indeed on a mission.

Chu Qingli was too direct and it was no fun. Lu Chen then moved to her side, lifted her turquoise outer garment, and covered her shoulders.

Chu Qingli was stunned by this, she had thought that Lu Chen had come to do that sort of thing with her; she had already taken off her clothes, yet now Lu Chen was pulling them back up.

Chu Qingli then coldly asked, “What do you mean by this?”

Seeing Chu Qingli’s icy face, Lu Chen felt even more agitated inside. Perhaps it was because he had absorbed too much skill just before, and his body wasn’t able to convert it instantly, which caused him to feel somewhat out of control.

Without hesitation, Lu Chen hugged Chu Qingli’s delicate body from behind, pressing his own against her backside.

Chu Qingli was somewhat speechless; this man was clearly here to do something bad, yet he was putting on the airs of a gentleman, such a hypocrite.

Who doesn’t know what he wants to do? What’s with the pretense?

Lu Chen rested his head on Chu Qingli’s shoulder and whispered in her ear,

“Qingli, you are truly beautiful.”

Being embraced by Lu Chen like this, Chu Qingli felt her body starting to heat up, and that odd sensation she had experienced last time began to return.

Suddenly, a blush appeared on Chu Qingli's snow-white skin, even tainting her delicate, fair collarbones red.

Chu Qingli felt her body growing hotter and hotter, and her mind kept replaying the events that took place in the study.

Biting her silver teeth, Chu Qingli tried hard to control her body, attempting to stay alert and not be like the last time.

At that moment, Chu Qingli said coldly, "Don't think that by using hypnosis on me, you will win my heart. You can only have my body; beyond that, you'll get nothing from me. I won't be hypnotized by you!"

Chu Qingli's tone was very determined. In her view, all the unusual sensations in her body were caused by Lu Chen's hypnosis; otherwise, she couldn't possibly feel this way.

Hearing Chu Qingli's words, Lu Chen couldn't help but laugh. He liked seeing Chu Qingli being stubborn, though she couldn't keep it up forever.

At that moment, Lu Chen whispered in her ear, "Qing Li, turn your head towards me."

Upon hearing Lu Chen's deep voice, Chu Qingli felt as if her body was being controlled, and she actually turned around as if possessed by a ghost.

At this moment, Chu Qingli's cool and elegant cheeks were already suffused with the blush of spring, and her eyes shimmered like pools of autumn water, but she still tried to control herself and not to let her mind wander.

Seeing the ice-cold beauty's shy demeanor, Lu Chen could no longer restrain himself and directly bent down to capture her red lips with a kiss.

After several rounds of patrolling the inner courtyard, Chu Yuqin patrolled to her own residence. She hadn't planned to enter, but just then, some strange noises caught her attention.

Chu Yuqin immediately entered the courtyard, quickly pinpointing the source of the noises coming from Chu Qingli's room.

Chu Yuqin thought Chu Qingli might be in trouble, so she hurried to Chu Qingli's door and asked, "Qing Li, what's wrong with you?"

Hearing Chu Yuqin's voice, Chu Qingli suddenly snapped back to reality, her body tensing up at once.

Lu Chen inhaled sharply, thinking that Chu Yuqin's timing couldn't be any worse.

Chu Qingli quickly said, "Sister, I'm fine."

Chu Yuqin asked curiously, "I just heard you crying out. Are you experiencing qi deviation due to your martial arts practice? Do you need me to help you adjust?"

When she mentioned "adjusting," Chu Yuqin couldn't help but picture Lu Chen in her mind, the scene of her adjusting him in the study replayed in her mind, and at the thought, she felt her cheeks grow warm.

Hearing her sister offering to come in, Chu Qingli became even more panicked and her muscles tensed up even tighter.

Chu Qingli quickly said, "I've adjusted myself already, sister. You don't need to worry. Um! Go on with your... Ah... own things."

Noticing Chu Qingli speaking intermittently, Chu Yuqin knitted her brows slightly. "Qing Li, are you really all right?"

Chu Qingli wished she could sever her connection with Lu Chen with a single cut. Clenching her teeth, she struggled to keep her breath steady and said, "I... I'm really... okay..."

Hearing Chu Qingli's words, Chu Yuqin continued walking toward the door again.

Something is off...

Very off...

There must be something wrong with Chu Qingli.

Feeling the footsteps at the door getting closer, Chu Qingli's tense nerves were completely taut.

Chu Qingli hurriedly said again, "Sister... although the Prince has dealt with many assassins, this is precisely the time when the Prince's Mansion cannot afford to relax its vigilance. You... should go back to patrolling.

"I... just experienced qi deviation while practicing... Air... it's an old problem, I'll be fine soon."

Chu Yuqin felt there was some truth to Chu Qingli's words, although Lu Chen had indeed dealt with many an assassin in Yan County.

Yet there were still more assassins lurking in Yan County, and who knew if those assassins would take advantage of the North Prince Mansion lowering its guard to assault Lu Chen.

With this in mind, Chu Yuqin said, "Alright then, if you're really feeling unwell, just tell your sister. There's no need to endure silently. If I can't fix it, you can also ask Chen'er for help. Chen'er has medical skills; he can easily cure you."

Chu Qingli said, "Um, I... understand."

Without giving it further thought, Chu Yuqin turned and left directly..

Chapter 273: Becoming a Grandmaster i

Chu Yuqin had just turned to leave when Chu Qingli's tightly wound emotions reached a critical point, suddenly releasing, her mind going blank and her consciousness blurring completely.

If not for a large hand encircling her slim waist, her delicate body might have fallen straight down.

The moon was beautiful tonight, and the night was long. Spring had arrived, melted ice water trickled down from the rooftops, pitter-pattering onto stones.

The night at North Prince Mansion was not so quiet; apart from the pitter-patter of dripping water, there were occasional calls of special animals, sounds that were sometimes cheerful, sometimes shrill, making it impossible to discern what they were.

Lu Chen had noticed that whenever someone was about to discover them, that person's emotions and body would become tense in an instant, and he would fly straight into the sky, no need to describe how.

This gave Lu Chen a little idea, in the future, he must trade with Chu Qingli more often, preferably in places where they could easily be seen by others.

After an unknown amount of time, the moon's light gradually dimmed, and a streak of white appeared in the distant sky, signaling the break of day. By that time, the skill that Lu Chen had absorbed from the three individuals yesterday had basically been completely converted into his own.

Just at that moment, the system notification sound suddenly rang out.

[Ding! Host Lu Chen cultivates a bond with Chu Qingli, Qi Refinement Mantra experience increased by 600, Rejuvenating Skill experience increased by 1000, Dragon-Phoenix Yin-Yang Spell experience increased by 1000, Absorption Technique experience increased by 1000. Host has triggered a super Emotional Crit, all cultivation techniques' experience quadrupled.]

[Congratulations to the host, Qi Refinement Mantra breakthrough to the fourth level, host's realm advanced to Grandmaster, Rejuvenating Skill breakthrough to the third level, Dragon-Phoenix Yin-Yang Spell breakthrough to the second level, Absorption Technique breakthrough to the first level.]

With the system voice sounding, Lu Chen felt a strange power infuse his body, followed by his brain becoming incredibly clear, and his perception greatly enhanced; everything around him seemed to be within his senses.

Lu Chen tried closing his eyes to test his perceptual abilities, and in the instant he closed his eyes, he could notice the drip of water from the eaves outside the door, and everything around him appeared in his mind.

Even without his eyes, just relying on his perception alone, he could see this world clearly.

Is this the strength of a Grandmaster?

Lu Chen was astonished.

At that moment, a bold guess suddenly arose in his heart: could it be that the higher the martial arts realm, the more it evolves toward cultivation? Could the so-called Celestial Realm actually be the Qi Refining stage of cultivators?

In this world, there is an end to martial arts. The strongest known in martial arts is the Celestial Realm, and beyond that, no one knows what realm lies above it.

With Lu Chen's breakthrough to Grandmaster, his body was also reshaped, becoming even more robust.

Chu Qingli also clearly felt the changes in Lu Chen. When she sensed the martial artist's might emanating from him, she was completely stunned.

She had never seen a Grandmaster, nor knew their strength, but she had seen an Extreme Realm Master. Lu Chen had been one, so she knew what an Extreme Realm Master's martial artist might be like.

The martial artist's might that Lu Chen was now releasing was clearly not that of an Extreme Realm Master. In other words, Lu Chen was no longer an Extreme Realm Master; he had likely broken through the Grandmaster rank to become a Grandmaster.

Chu Qingli was somewhat dazed.

Grand... Grandmaster???

Could it be...

When Lu Chen was still a Grandmaster, she was no match for him, and if he had broken through to Grandmaster...

Chu Qingli could hardly believe what she would encounter next.

Grandmaster and Grandmaster are completely different concepts; a Grandmaster relies on Protective Gang Qi to fend off attacks, while a Grandmaster can withstand hits with just the strength of their body, without even using Protective Gang Qi, demonstrating the terrifying resilience of a Grandmaster's body.

Lu Chen became a Grandmaster, which meant that his physical strength had once again greatly increased, his stamina dramatically improved. Before he could keep up with her all night, now he might be able to keep going for days on end without a problem.

Thinking of this, Chu Qingli's drenched and pallid face went white, never having expected this man to break through to Grandmaster so swiftly.

How exactly does this man cultivate?

How could his strength increase so rapidly?

At this time, Lu Chen looked down from his high position at the ice beauty before him.

Seeing Chu Qingli's pale face, Lu Chen said with a smile, "Qing Li, why has your face turned so awful?"

"Are you feeling unwell? Let me treat you."

That said, Lu Chen placed his hand on her and started to heal her with Rejuvenating Skill, and soon Chu Qingli felt a warm current entering her body.

This warm current could not only heal some of her minor injuries but also quickly calm her frantic heart; once Chu Qingli quieted down, her expression turned cold again, and she gazed straight at Lu Chen saying, "This is the third time!"

Hearing this, Lu Chen laughed and then replied, "Aren't you thinking a bit too beautifully? We haven't been apart since last night, so how can it be counted as the third time?"

Chapter 274: Becoming a Grandmaster_2

Just as Chu Qingli was about to speak, she saw Lu Chen bend down once again and then directly kissed her red lips, leaving Chu Qingli only capable of making "mmm ininm mmm" sounds.

At first, Chu Qingli thought to herself that since Lu Chen had already broken through to the Grandmaster Realm, if they continued with their previous method of calculation, wouldn't she be at a great loss?

If Lu Chen took several days at a time, when would she be able to rescue her sister from the North Prince's Mansion? So, she wanted to change the counting rules to count anything beyond one day as one occurrence.

However, it was clear that the decision was not hers to make, and she couldn't change the counting rules just because she wanted to.

At this moment, Lu Chen had broken through to the Grandmaster Realm and was looking to test his physical abilities, leaving Chu Qingli to suffer the consequences.

The light from outside gradually penetrated the room; although the doors and windows were closed, they were pasted with paper in this era, and light easily seeped through.

Seeing that it was already daylight outside, Chu Qingli realized her sister would soon return and quickly lifted her jade hand, pushing against Lu Chen's chest, trying to push him away.

If her sister returned, that would be troublesome. Her sister had already been suspicious of her the previous night, and if she stayed in the room during the day without leaving, it was likely that her sister would come in directly.

If she came in and saw this scene, then everything would be ruined.

Unfortunately, at this time, Chu Qingli was completely drained of strength, her inner skill was also sealed, and she was unable to push Lu Chen away. With no other option, she had to continue developing her relationship with Lu Chen.

Early in the morning.

Chu Yuqin stood on a rooftop of the North Prince's Mansion, her gaze sweeping over the entire estate.

She was thinking that they had dragged on for so long, it couldn't go on any longer. If they continued to delay, Lu Chen might become angry with her.

Thus, she planned to find a suitable hiding place within the North Prince's Mansion and then fulfill her promise.

After scanning the architecture of the North Prince's Mansion, Chu Yuqin realized there was no suitable place to hide; as long as Chu Qingli was patrolling, she would practically visit every place inside the mansion.

Previously, she had thought about serving Lu Chen in the study, but as Lu Chen's state affairs became increasingly burdensome, more and more people frequented the study, making it an inappropriate place.

Currently, Chu Yuqin could feel her face growing hotter and hotter. What was she doing thinking about these things standing on the rooftop so early in the morning?

She really was an indecent woman, thinking in her heart about finding a place where she could secretly be intimate with a man.

After a moment of self-deprecation, Chu Yuqin's gaze landed on the courtyard where she lived, prompting a jolt in her heart.

The most dangerous place could also be the safest. Every time Chu Qingli left the courtyard where she lived, she would hardly return for the whole day, instead wandering around the inner courtyard.

If that was the case, then next time she helped Lu Chen with his physical conditioning, she could perhaps have Lu Chen come to her boudoir, and, while conditioning, casually fulfill her promise.

With this thought, Chu Yuqin firmly decided in her heart.

Spring had arrived, and it was time for her to take that step.

Thinking this, Chu Yuqin came down from the rooftop; night had passed, and another would be patrolling during the day. She intended to go and relieve Chu Qingli from her shift.

Just as she returned to her own courtyard, Chu Yuqin faintly heard from Chu Qingli's room the same kind of sounds as last night, causing her to hesitate.

A whole night had passed, and Chu Qingli still hadn't recovered?

It seemed the situation was quite serious.

Chu Yuqin quickly went to Chu Qingli's room door. "Qingli, are you okay?"

"If you really feel uncomfortable, I will go find Chen'er to help you."

Hearing Chu Yuqin's voice, a groggy Chu Qingli suddenly became alert, a strange emotion flooding her heart, and her body instantly tensed.

Lu Chen thought to himself, sure enough, it was the secrecy that made it thrilling.

Chu Qingli quickly controlled her voice and said to Chu Yuqin at the door, "Sister, I'm fine."

Chu Yuqin's face showed a hint of worry before she said, "How can you be all right? You were bewitched by your cultivation last night and have yet to recover. If this continues, you could not only lose all your skill, but it could even threaten your life."

At this point, Chu Yuqin walked to the door, put her hands on it, and then said, “Qingli, why don’t you let your sister give you a treatment? Sister is coming in.”

Hearing Chu Yuqin’s words, Chu Qingli’s inner panic instantly peaked, and Lu Chen sharply inhaled.

Chu Qingli couldn’t help but wail, “Ah! Sister... go find the Prince quickly! Let... ow... let the Prince come help me...”

At the door, Chu Yuqin hesitated for a moment.

She thought Chu Qingli must be quite severely bewitched, which is why she asked her to find Lu Chen. Chu Yuqin said hurriedly, “Sister, wait, I’ll go find Chen’er right away.”

With that, Chu Yuqin’s hands left the room door, and she turned and headed straight to the main court, still thinking that Lu Chen had spent the night at Mu Zixuan’s place.

After Chu Yuqin had left, Chu Qingli’s entire body slumped, becoming as if a puddle of mud.

Knowing that Chu Yuqin would be back soon, Lu Chen didn’t stay long either. He stood up and straightened his clothes.

Seeing Chu Qingli with eyes brimming like autumn water, Lu Chen said with a smile, “Qingli, if you don’t get up quick, your sister will be back in here.”

Hearing Lu Chen’s words, Chu Qingli snapped awake and quickly got dressed.

Meanwhile.

Chu Yuqin had already reached the main court.

She happened to run into Mu Zixuan coming out of her room, and Chu Yuqin said urgently, “Zixuan, has Chen’er gotten up? I need him for something important.”

Hearing Chu Yuqin's question, Mu Zixuan replied, "Madam Chu, the Prince didn't stay in my room last night."

As soon as Mu Zixuan finished speaking, Chu Yuqin used Qinggong to head towards the northern courtyard, only to find Lu Chen was not there either. She quickly proceeded to Spring Sound Court, but Lu Chen wasn't there as well.

Then Chu Yuqin asked the servants of the Prince's Mansion, and they said Lu Chen hadn't gone to the study either. Chu Yuqin was incredibly anxious and decided to help Chu Qingli recover first.

Becoming bewitched in cultivation was a very serious matter and could not be left to linger.

Soon Chu Yuqin returned to the courtyard where she lived, only to find Lu Chen opening the door to Chu Qingli's room and coming out.

Seeing this, Chu Yuqin was stunned.

She had never expected to see Lu Chen coming out of Chu Qingli's room, but then, seizing the moment, Lu Chen cleverly spoke, "Madam Chu, you never told me Qingli was bewitched by her cultivation last night. If I hadn't heard noises from her room early this morning and rushed in to treat her, she might have been in mortal danger."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Chu Yuqin suddenly came to her senses, chastising herself for her wild imaginations. She had actually thought Lu Chen spent the night in Chu Qingli's room.

It was ridiculous. She knew what kind of person Chu Qingli was. How could she have such thoughts? It was as if she assumed others would behave as she would.

This was clearly Lu Chen hearing Chu Qingli's screams of agony, then entering to use an Immortal Technique to help her recover.

Chu Yuqin then asked, "Chen'er, how is Qingli doing now?"

Lu Chen replied, "She's fine now; she just needs some rest."

Relieved by Lu Chen's words, Chu Yuqin sighed, "Then that's good."

Feeling somewhat guilty, she continued, "Ah, I heard Qingli in pain last night, but I didn't take it seriously. I should have come to find you then."

Lu Chen responded with a smile, "Madam Chu, don't blame yourself. Just be more careful next time. I have other things to attend to, so I must go now."

Chu Yuqin said, "Mm, alright, take care of your tasks."

After that, Lu Chen left the courtyard of the two sisters, feeling quite satisfied.

Chapter 275: The Simple Chu Yuqin_1

After Lu Chen left, Chu Yuqin hurried into Chu Qingli's room and closed the door behind her.

As soon as she entered the room, she smelled a strong, strange scent, one she had encountered many times before, especially in Lu Chen's study, but she still did not understand what it was.

Chu Yuqin did not dwell on it, her gaze instead falling on Chu Qingli, who was lying on the bed under the covers, looking rosy-cheeked and as though nothing was amiss.

Chu Qingli turned her head to look at Chu Yuqin and said, "Sister, I'm all right now."

Chu Yuqin then sat down beside the bed, straightened out Chu Qingli's messy hair on her forehead, and said while doing so, "Qingli, I know you're somewhat dissatisfied with Chen'er and don't want him to treat you, but you're currently the Guard Commander of the inner court in the Prince's Mansion. If you're injured, how will you protect the North Prince Mansion?"

"If you lose all your skill and can't serve as the Guard Commander of the Prince's Mansion, what value would you have if you stayed in the North Prince Mansion? You wouldn't want to be driven out by the Prince, would you?"

Feeling weak, Chu Qingli said, “Sister, I understand. You don’t need to say any more. It’s my mistake this time.”

Chu Qingli rushed to concede, hoping to have Chu Yuqin finish her lecture and leave her room. If Chu Yuqin continued to stay, she might discover something.

Hearing Chu Qingli’s dismissive words, Chu Yuqin sighed and continued, “Qingli, Chen’er probably only healed the injuries on your body. Your meridians may not have been completely cleared. Let sister check for you again.”

Chu Qingli quickly said, “Sister, no need. I’m really fine.”

Chu Yuqin, however, did not heed Chu Qingli’s protests; she lifted the blanket, causing Chu Qingli’s face to turn deathly pale instantly.

Upon lifting the blanket, Chu Yuqin noticed that Chu Qingli’s bedsheets were wet and carried a very strange scent.

Without giving it much thought, Chu Yuqin said, “Qingli, you’ve expelled a lot of impurities from your body. You should change the sheets and take a bath before resting.”

Chu Yuqin thought that everything on Chu Qingli’s bedsheets was the impurities expelled from her body during her training.

Seeing that Chu Yuqin seemed completely clueless, Chu Qingli breathed a sigh of relief.

At the same time, an idea dawned on Chu Qingli.

If sister doesn’t know even this, could it be that she and Lu Chen have not done that deed?

Encouraged by this thought, Chu Qingli was somewhat happy, guessing that at most Lu Chen had only hugged and embraced her sister, and probably they hadn’t gone through with the act between a man and a woman. Otherwise, how could her sister not recognize that smell?

Chu Qingli said, “I understand. I’ll get up and take a bath immediately.”

Just as Chu Qingli was about to get up, Chu Yuqin suddenly said, “Wait.”

Hearing this, Chu Qingli’s heart skipped a beat, and she felt her heart pound uncontrollably.

Was she discovered?

That shouldn’t be possible, right?

Didn’t her sister just believe these were impurities expelled from training?

Chu Qingli cautiously asked, “Sister, what’s wrong?”

Chu Yuqin, eyeing the red scars on Chu Qingli’s pale neck, heaved a sigh and said, “The backlash from your training last night was too severe, leaving scars all over your body.”

Chu Qingli’s pale neck bore many red scars, which led Chu Yuqin to believe that they were the result of the dangerous training practice Chu Qingli underwent the previous night.

Stunned by her words, Chu Qingli paused.

Chu Yuqin then said, “Qingli, take off your clothes so that sister can see how many such scars you have. Later, I’ll speak to Chen’er and see if his medical techniques can remove the scars.”

Chu Qingli quickly replied, “Sister, there’s no need.”

Chu Qingli heaved another sigh of relief internally, thinking Chu Yuqin had found nothing substantial when, in fact, Chu Yuqin had only noticed the red marks on her neck.

Chu Yuqin said, “Qingli, don’t think these scars are nothing. You are not yet married, so having these scars isn’t an issue now, but what will your future darling think when he sees them? These scars must be removed.”

Saying this, Chu Yuqin took matters into her own hands and started to peel off Chu Qingli's outer garments from her shoulders.

After hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Chu Qingli felt a swell of emotions, not towards her sister, but directed at a certain bad man, feeling resentful towards him.

The scars had all been left by him, marking her body with so many, yet he hadn't used his Immortal Technique to heal her. It's incomprehensible what that bad man was thinking.

Lu Chen could heal the wounds on her body, not letting her feel any pain, so it was impossible that he couldn't deal with such small scars. He was clearly doing it on purpose, intentionally leaving the scars.

When Chu Yuqin peeled back some of Chu Qingli's clothes, she saw the multitude of red scars that adorned her pale, delicate body almost entirely.

Frowning, Chu Yuqin remarked, "Qingli, you cannot withstand the backlash of your training like this anymore. Look at all these scars on you."

Chu Qingli responded, "Sister, these scars will fade away on their own. It's fine."

Chu Yuqin sighed again, "I will still tell Chen'er afterward, so that he can help you remove all these scars."

Chapter 276: The Simple Chu Yuqin_2

"Alright, go take a bath. I'll have the maids change your sheets,"

Saying this, Chu Yuqin stood up and walked directly towards the door.

Seeing that Chu Yuqin didn't seem to suspect anything at all, Chu Qingli finally breathed a sigh of relief. It was fortunate that her sister had not discovered anything; otherwise, she had no idea how she would face her in the future.

The thought of that demon made Chu Qingli involuntarily clench her fists.

She was a decent person herself, it was only because of that demon's hypnosis that she had become like she was yesterday, and now just thinking of him made her body react in strange ways.

She might never be able to break free from this man for the rest of her life. Chu Qingli bit down on her lower lip, reassuring herself that as long as her sister could regain her freedom, everything would be worth it, and enduring some hardship was nothing.

It had already been two times, with only ninety-eight left...

At the thought of the ninety-eight times, Chu Qingli's body couldn't help but shudder.

Lu Chen had already broken through to the level of a Grandmaster. With ninety-eight times left, how was she going to manage...

At the same time.

In Chu Xiong's courtyard.

Chu Xiong sat in the courtyard, sighing as he looked at the corpse on the ground.

The body on the ground was that of the assassin sent by the Chu Family to kill Lu Chen. Last night, Xuanyuan Chen had delivered the corpse and told Chu Xiong about the previous night's events. Since then, Chu Xiong sat in the courtyard all night without sleep.

He had never imagined that after he left the Chu Family, they would actually send someone to assassinate his own grandson.

But then again, it made sense. His grandson had crossed the bottom line of the Aristocratic Families, and the Chu Family was also one of the South's Aristocratic Families; they couldn't tolerate Lu Chen, even if he was the grandson of the former Chu Family Master.

Now that he had lost his position as the Family Head, the Chu Family was completely out of his control.

Chu Xiong understood why Lu Chen had sent the body here—it was a reminder to him, the grandfather, that the Chu Family was now in a hostile state with him, and the North Prince Mansion and the Chu Family were bound to be enemies, forcing him, the grandfather, to make a choice.

Either choose the North Prince Mansion or choose the Chu Family.

Of course, there was another option: to take those in the Chu Family who supported him and leave Great Xia to go to the Da Yue Dynasty or the Great Qian Dynasty.

After pondering in the courtyard for the whole night, Chu Xiong finally made a decision.

He had been staying in the North Country for some time now and had come to understand Lu Chen's North Country quite well. Although the North Country was still poor, he had noticed that following Lu Chen's policies, within ten years, the North Country would definitely become the strongest feudal state within the Great Xia Dynasty.

The reason other feudal states couldn't develop much was largely because their lands were under the control of the Aristocratic Families and local power groups, which meant the Seigniors could do nothing without being restrained by these families.

But the North Country was different. Currently, the North Country was dominated solely by the North Prince Mansion. Whatever the North Prince Mansion decided to do, the people below must strictly obey.

This had its disadvantages—if the North Prince's policies were wrong, it could impede the development of the North Country. However, there was also a significant advantage: the commands of the North Prince could go directly to the common people. As long as the North Prince remained wise, the North Country would quickly grow to become a strong feudal state, perhaps even the most prosperous.

If the Chu Family moved to the North Country, they would face a significant issue—they would have no land there. Traditional Aristocratic Families were based on land ownership. Without land, an Aristocratic Family would be like a fish without water.

However, during his time in the North Country, Chu Xiong saw a different model of development.

If the Chu Family were to side with the North Prince to avoid extinction, they could also pursue commerce. Transitioning from a land-based Aristocratic Family to a commercial one was also viable, especially since the North Country had much uncultivated land they could take on lease at this time.

Although they would not own the land, they would have the right to use it. According to the North Prince's regulations, the Aristocratic Families could utilize these lands during the lease period.

Most importantly, with the North Prince Mansion leading the way in commerce, the status of merchants was changing. In the future, in the hierarchy of scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants, merchants would no longer be at the bottom.

The business environment in the North Country is very good now, with caravans from various countries constantly coming in and out of Yan County.

If the Chu Family can seize this opportunity, within less than fifty years, they're bound to become a great family once again.

Of course, Chu Xiong was also aware that an aristocratic family in the North Country would inevitably be suppressed, and his grandson wouldn't possibly allow the Chu Family to become the kind of family that could control the economic lifeline again.

At that moment, Chu Xiong rose from the stone stool and directly said to the servant in the yard, "Prepare the carriage, this old man is going to the North Prince Mansion."

Right now, Lu Chen was enjoying the porridge personally made for him by Mu Zixuan, his face always wore a smile when drinking the porridge.

Seeing how good Lu Chen's mood was, Mu Zixuan smiled and asked, "Prince, which sister served you so happily last night?"

Lu Chen replied with a smile, "My consort, take a guess."

Mu Zixuan said, "Could it be Nanyan?"

Lu Chen took a sip of porridge and said, "It's not."

Mu Zixuan continued, "Isn't it someone from Spring Sound Court?"

Lu Chen replied, "No, keep guessing."

Mu Zixuan thought for a moment; there were only two people in Spring Sound Court, Yelv Nanyan and Xiao Wenyao. Since it wasn't someone from Spring Sound Court, it must be from the northern court, but both Great Jue and Xiaozhou from the north court were already pregnant.

That left only Wang Qingci and Bai Qingqing.

Mu Zixuan said with a smile, "This consort guesses it's either Wang sister or Little Bai."

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen raised his hand and playfully flicked Mu Zixuan's nose, then said, "Who guesses like you do? I don't have that many women." "However, unfortunately, you've still not guessed correctly."

Hearing Lu Chen's answer, Mu Zixuan was momentarily stunned.

If it wasn't one of the women known to Lu Chen, could it be Chu Yuqin?

But Chu Yuqin had only come to the main courtyard to find Lu Chen this morning; surely last night Lu Chen wasn't with Chu Yuqin. That left only Chu Qingli and the two women from Mysterious Moon Palace.

Those two from Mysterious Moon Palace likely hadn't made their moves so quickly, so by process of elimination, the only one left was Chu Qingli.

But wasn't Chu Qingli harboring some resentment towards Lu Chen?

Seeing Mu Zixuan seriously contemplating, Lu Chen chuckled and then said, "All right, my consort, don't fret over it anymore, you'll find out who it was in due time."

Mu Zixuan snapped back to reality, her smile reappearing as she said, "Even if the Prince doesn't say, this consort has already guessed. Congratulations to the Prince for acquiring another beauty."

Just then, a maid entered the hall, “Prince, there is an elder outside looking for you.”

Hearing the maid’s words, Lu Chen instantly guessed who it was; he had anticipated that Chu Xiong would come looking for him last night.

Then Lu Chen put down his bowl and said, “Take him to the study.”

Yes, Prince.”

Chapter 277: the prince, have a very important message to tell you i

When Lu Chen arrived at the study, Chu Xiong was standing at the door of the study. Upon seeing Lu Chen, Chu Xiong immediately said, “This humble one pays respects to the Prince!”

Lu Chen quickly came over to support Chu Xiong by the arms and said, “Grandfather-in-law, what are you doing? There’s no need for formalities like this when we meet in private.”

Chu Xiong was about to say something about the indispensability of courtesy, but Lu Chen interrupted him and continued, “Grandfather-in-law, I presume you have already seen the assassin from last night?”

Hearing this question from Lu Chen, Chu Xiong sighed and then said, “I did see him. I never expected that after I left the Chu Family, they would do such a monstrous and unrighteous thing.”

Lu Chen said with a smile, “What I have been doing in the North Country has touched their bottom line; it’s not surprising that they would do such a thing. After all, the Chu Family is one of the Aristocratic Families, and even the largest one in the South.”

Chu Xiong said, “The Chu Family has already fallen apart and can no longer be considered a top Aristocratic Family of the South.”

Lu Chen asked, “Grandfather-in-law, about the matter I discussed with you before, have you considered it?”

“If the members of the Chu Family who wish to follow you are willing to come to the North Country, I can give them a piece of land for free. Of course, under the laws of the North Country, the Chu Family would only have the right to use it.”

“However, you must understand, Grandfather-in-law, that once the reforms in the North Country are complete, land will no longer hold the same importance as before, and the future development of the Chu Family doesn’t necessarily have to rely on land.”

Chu Xiong said, “I’m planning to return to Sufeng City tomorrow, but if I were to lead the people of the Chu Family to the North Country, there would likely be significant resistance.”

After all, he was the former Chu Family Master. There would definitely be many people following him, and if he were to leave, the Chu Family’s strength would be significantly weakened. First of all, the new Family Head would certainly not agree.

Furthermore, it is a crucial time for the Aristocratic Families of the South to band together against the Emperor. If so many people from the Chu Family were to leave all at once, it would equate to the weakening of the strength of the Southern Aristocratic Families.

If it were in the past, these Southern Aristocratic Families would have been more than happy to see the strength of the Chu Family diminish. But times have changed, and if the power of the Southern Aristocratic Families were to weaken, the Sum Emperor might set his sights on them.

So at the very least, the strength of the Aristocratic Families of the South cannot be weakened for now, and other families would definitely not allow the Chu Family to leave the South, to leave Sufeng City.

If Chu Xiong were to lead his clan out of Sufeng City, there could be another potential resistance, namely the Sum Emperor, who might not be pleased to see the Chu Family running off to the North Country.

Even though part of the Chu Family running off to the North Country means the weakening of the Southern Aristocratic Families, the Sum Emperor is quite suspicious by nature and might wonder if there is some other ulterior motive behind the Chu Family’s move to the North Country.

In short, it’s not an easy task for the Chu Family to leave the South.

Hearing Chu Xiong's words, Lu Chen thought for a moment and then said, "Grandfather-in-law, if you encounter any difficulties, you can seek help from my people. They will assist you throughout the process of moving to the North Country."

Currently, the Brocade Guard is throughout Sufeng City, and the intelligence work in the Southern area is very well done. If there are any movements from other families, the Brocade Guard will soon be aware of it; they would be able to cover and assist the Chu Family in leaving Sufeng City to some extent.

Chu Xiong replied, "Then I will trouble you with this."

"I will head back today. Before we move to the North Country, I will send someone to inform you."

Lu Chen responded, "Fine."

Afterward, Chu Xiong left the North Prince Mansion.

Not long after Chu Xiong had left, a 'bitch' appeared at the yard entrance of the study, leaning against the doorframe with her body showcasing her S-curved waistline to perfection.

"Prince, such a big event happened last night, and you didn't even say a word to me. If I hadn't heard about it from the servants today, I wouldn't have known that such a big incident had happened in Yan County last night."

Seeing that it was Wang Qingci who had come back, Lu Chen said with a smile, "A big event? What big event? It was just dealing with a bunch of petty thieves; nothing to make a fuss about."

As he spoke, Lu Chen glanced at Wang Qingci's graceful figure and continued, "Is there any intelligence you have for me today?"

Wang Qingci replied, "Indeed, there is a piece of very important intelligence, and it is likely to affect Great Sum."

Hearing her words, Lu Chen was momentarily stunned. Affect Great Sum?

Once Lu Chen came to his senses, he immediately made his way to the study. He and Chu Xiong had been talking in the yard, not even entering the study.

“Come in, and let me know in detail what it’s all about,” he said.

Afterwards, Wang Qingci followed Lu Chen into the study. Once inside, she proactively shut the door, then took out an intelligence report from her sleeve and placed it on Lu Chen’s desk.

Lu Chen picked up the report, opened it, and read it carefully. His lips gradually curled into a smile, but soon his expression turned serious again as he finally understood why Wang Qingci had said this intelligence could affect Great Sum.

At that moment, Wang Qingci said, “It’s quite normal for Great Wu to experience rebellion due to their constant waging of wars. If it weren’t for their recent declaration of war against Great Sum, it might not have led to a rebellion so soon. Following this, Great Wu will likely have no capacity to deal with Great Sum anymore.”

The content of the intelligence detailed recent events in the Great Wu empire, where revolts had erupted in two counties of the southwestern part, with the support of the regular Great Wu army. The regular army and the rebel farmers united and marched towards the Martial Emperor’s city under the banner of ‘ching-kun-tsai’, vowing to rid the emperor of “evil” ministers.

Chapter 278: the prince, have a very important message to tell you_2

If it were just two counties, it wouldn’t be too much of a problem, but now many counties in the Great Wu Dynasty are restless, especially those Seigniors.

Before long, civil war in Great Wu would break out. To be precise, it had already erupted the moment the peasant uprising began.

Lu Chen felt some joy upon seeing civil war erupt in Great Wu, but he quickly realized that once Great Wu descended into civil war, Great Xia would lose all external pressure.

Without external pressure, I’m afraid his own father, the Sum Emperor, would prepare to make a move against the Aristocratic Families. With Great Wu in chaos, Great Xia would be next.

“Apart from the Great Wu Dynasty, I have another piece of intelligence here.

However, it’s not as significant as the outbreak of civil war in Great Wu, and it has not been confirmed yet; it’s just some rumors.”

As she finished speaking, Wang Qingci took out another piece of intelligence from her sleeves and placed it on Lu Chen’s desk.

Lu Chen opened the second piece of intelligence Wang Qingci had given him, glanced over it, and his serious expression was swept away, he then said with a smile, “It seems that the window of opportunity for North Country’s development has arrived. Fortune really does favor me!”

The second piece of intelligence from Wang Qingci recorded some rumors heard by the Rain-listening Pavilion’s trade caravan within the borders of the Great Qian Dynasty, that an epidemic had broken out to the south of Great Qian Dynasty, and to prevent the spread of the disease, they had redeployed their armies to the south for quarantine.

However, this matter was still under wraps, and while people have heard whispers, there is no way to confirm if the news is true.

At that moment, Wang Qingci continued, “Although we have not confirmed the veracity of this intelligence, the fact that the Great Qian Dynasty has moved its soldiers away from the Great Xia border suggests that something significant has indeed happened in the south.”

Originally, all the major dynasties had troops stationed on the borders of Great Xia, but after war broke out, the Da Yue Dynasty remained stationary, and the Great Qian Dynasty actually redeployed its soldiers back home, leaving only Great Wu to launch an attack on the Great Xia Dynasty.

And now that Great Wu no longer has the luxury of dealing with Great Xia, only

Da Yue remains, but considering the current situation in Da Yue, they re

unlikely to expand externally anytime soon.

The Empress of Da Yue had only recently ascended to the throne, and like North Country, they also face the threat of the Barbarian Tribe in the north. If Da Yue tries to expand south now, it's uncertain whether they'd be able to hold onto their capital when the Barbarian Tribe descends from the north.

Now that all three major dynasties bordering Great Xia are preoccupied with their own affairs, all of Great Xia's external pressures have vanished.

Once the external pressures are gone, the internal conflicts that were being suppressed are bound to erupt.

For North Country, widespread chaos is a great opportunity. Being on the periphery, the turmoil of other kingdoms won't have much impact, the only likely effect being a possible influx of refugees.

But refugees fleeing to North Country is exactly what Lu Chen wants to see. As

North Country's population is relatively small, the refugees would be a population boost. Of course, managing them might present significant challenges.

So, in the end, the biggest problem North Country currently faces is a shortage of Civil Officials.

Once the Chu Family arrives, Lu Chen plans to employ some of its members as officials. A fragmented Chu Family poses little threat, and he isn't worried about them forming a new significant force in North Country.

After arriving in North Country, the Chu Family will have no support and will have to stand with the North Prince Mansion. Utilizing people from the Chu Family shouldn't pose too much of an issue.

The key point is that North Country's military power and economic lifelines are controlled by the North Prince Mansion, which is why Lu Chen has such confidence.

If he were just a Prince with nothing to his name, employing people from the Chu Family as officials could lead to them overshadowing him, much like the predicament Great Xia is currently facing.

This is what's happening in the current court, where Aristocratic Family officials are employed and the Sum Emperor's orders can't even make it out of the Capital city.

In that moment, Lu Chen, looking at the two pieces of intelligence on the table and pondering for a while, then said to Wang Qingci, "Continue to send people to gather information on Great Qian Dynasty's situation. I want to get accurate news to see if Great Qian really is in trouble."

Wang Qingci replied, "Yes, Prince."

At this point, Wang Qingci gave Lu Chen a serious look. For some reason, she suddenly felt as though Lu Chen had become even more handsome today, and also seemed taller and more robust.

Was it her imagination?

Wang Qingci couldn't help thinking-could it be because she hadn't returned for so long that she felt there had been a change in Lu Chen's physique?

As Wang Qingci was thinking this, Lu Chen looked up at her. He noticed that her eyes were fixated on him. Originally, he had intended to have the maids outside inform the Brocade Guard and call for the officials of Yan County to discuss state affairs in the Hall of Political Affairs.

However, seeing the affection in Wang Qingci's eyes as she looked at him gave Lu Chen some ideas.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "Mr. Wang, why are you staring at me like that? Is there something on my face?"

Caught in her daydream by Lu Chen's words, Wang Qingci snapped back to reality and quickly said, "Not at all, this one was just thinking about something."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "Oh? Thinking about something? What could be so engrossing? Tell me about it."

Wang Qingci spoke softly, "This one was wondering why the Prince seems to have grown taller again."

Lu Chen said lightly, "I am at the age of growing, isn't it quite normal to get taller?"

Wang Qingci said, "The Prince is right. If the Prince has no other matters, then this one will take her leave."

Wang Qingci, afraid that Lu Chen might have other ideas about her, planned to make a quick escape.

Lu Chen said, "Mr. Wang, don't be in such a hurry to leave. I have important news to tell you, and this news is even more important to you personally."

Hearing Lu Chen's words made Wang Qingci pause.

News that was extremely important to her?

What could that be?

The tone of Lu Chen's voice didn't seem to suggest he was discussing serious matters. What could be so important?

When Lu Chen had official business with her, he wouldn't address her as Mr. Wang.

Although she guessed it probably wasn't anything serious, her curiosity got the best of her and Wang Qingci asked, "May I ask what news the Prince has to tell?"

Lu Chen said with a slight smile, "Come closer to me. Not many people know of this matter yet. I'll tell you quietly."

Seeing Lu Chen's harmless smile, Wang Qingci's legs trembled involuntarily.

Did he truly have important news to tell her?

Or could it be he wanted to...

Wang Qingci then sashayed over to Lu Chen and, with a look of aggrievement, said, “Prince, if you want to be naughty, just say so directly. Why make excuses about having important news to tell this one?”

After Wang Qingci arrived by Lu Chen’s side, prepared to be pressed down on a table by him, Lu Chen did not make any moves but instead whispered in her ear, “Not many people know about this yet, Mr. Wang. Do not let the secret slip, or you will receive a very severe punishment from me.”

Seeing that Lu Chen hadn’t made any advances, Wang Qingci’s curiosity grew. Could it be that Lu Chen actually had some news to tell her?

She had thought that Lu Chen would, as before, call her Mr. Wang with his lips and then, the next moment, have her pressed against a table and deal with her.

Wang Qingci promptly said, “Please speak, Prince. This one will keep your secret and not let a third person know.”

Lu Chen then said, “I have already broken through to be a Grandmaster. My body has become even more robust than before. Before it was a big deal to stay up all night, but now it’s not a problem for me to stay awake for several days and nights.”

At this point, Lu Chen paused, then leaned closer to Wang Qingci’s ear and whispered, “Do you consider this news important to you, Mr. Wang?” Upon hearing Lu Chen’s last sentence, Wang Qingci turned pale, and her delicate body began to tremble uncontrollably.

Chapter 279: Heaven Really Helps Me 1

Grandmaster...

When Wang Qingci heard Lu Chen say those words, she was completely dumbfounded.

In the entire Great Sum, there were only a few known Grandmasters, and they were all basically in the Capital city.

Becoming a Grandmaster wasn't an easy feat. Ordinary martial artists spent their whole lives training; becoming a Master was already quite an achievement, and there were even fewer Extreme Realm Masters.

Lu Chen was only seventeen this year. How was it possible for him to become a Grandmaster!!!

Soon, however, Wang Qingci realized something. That's why when she saw Lu Chen today, she always felt that he had become more robust, emanating a more powerful aura than before.

She couldn't believe Lu Chen had already become a Grandmaster!

Wait a second...

What did it mean for Lu Chen to be telling her this news first?

And he even emphasized how his body became stronger and that he could go days and nights without sleep...

Wasn't this indirectly telling her that he could handle her for days and nights without any problem?

Just thinking about it, Wang Qingci couldn't help but break out in a sweat, and she turned her pale face to look at Lu Chen.

At that moment, Lu Chen was smiling at her with a devilish grin, making Wang Qingci feel a chill run down her spine.

Wang Qingci quickly put on a pitiful look, gazing into Lu Chen's eyes and said, "Prince, I'm but a weak woman, please don't be so fierce with me in the future."

Seeing Wang Qingci coquettishly using a whiny voice on him, Lu Chen chuckled, wrapped one arm around her slim waist, placed his other hand on her hip, pressed his body against hers, and said with a smile, "A weak woman? I remember Mr. Wang being quite arrogant in front of me before, always calling me Young Prince and provoking me. How come you're a 'weak woman' today?"

Wang Qingci continued to act coquettishly, "Prince, I've never provoked you, I was just cooperating with your act."

Lu Chen's hand wandered over Wang Qingci's body as he said, "Then how about this, you bear a child for me, and I will forgive your previous disrespect. Otherwise..."

He paused, and with a sudden slap on Wang Qingci's hip, she let out a soft yelp. Then she said, "Prince, I'm only a female slave, I'm not worthy of bearing your offspring."

"Even if I were really to bear your child, the child would later suffer from the scorn of others because of my status. Would you bear to see your own child being humiliated in the future?"

Lu Chen said with a smile, "You need not talk to me about this. I know you just don't want to bear my child. Having stayed in the North Prince Mansion for so long, you can't be unaware of my attitude towards my children."

“I even dote on my daughter, holding her in the palm of my hand. How could I possibly bear to see my children suffer?”

“You little siren, monopolizing my body for the longest time, deceiving my affections, and yet refusing to bear my child. It seems like you’re just trying to rebel against me.”

Hearing Lu Chen’s words, Wang Qingci continued to feign a pitiful appearance, “Prince, how would I dare deceive your feelings? I am a Ninth Grade martial artist after all. Even if I wanted to bear your child, it wouldn’t be that easy to get pregnant.”

Lu Chen said, “That’s simple. From now on, you’ll come back to the Prince’s Mansion every day. I’ll visit your room daily, and I don’t believe I, a Grandmaster, can’t get a Ninth Grade martial artist pregnant.”

Hearing this, Wang Qingci froze.

Visiting her room daily, she would die, right...

Ying ying ying...

Coming back to her senses, Wang Qingci hurriedly said in a coquettish tone, “Prince, I also have to help you oversee the Rain-listening Pavilion, you have yet to achieve your great cause, and I still have to work for you. I wouldn’t want to fall behind on my duties because of pregnancy. Let’s wait until the North Country is stable, and then I can bear children for you.”

Hearing that, Lu Chen lifted her delicate chin with one hand, looked into her eyes, and with a smile said, “Why do I feel like you just don’t want to have my child? Could it be that you despise me for only being a prince, not worthy enough for you to bear my children?”

Wang Qingci immediately said, “How could I possibly think that?”

At this point, Wang Qingci fluttered her peach-blossom eyes and continued to play coy and pitiful.

Seeing Wang Qingci’s seductive appearance, Lu Chen felt like pinning her down on the desk and giving her a good lesson, but having stayed up all night yesterday and already having dealt with Chu Qingli after getting up, he didn’t have such strong urges now.

So he let go of Wang Qingci and then said, “Alright, I was just teasing you. I’m not insistent on you bearing my child right now.”

Hearing that, Wang Qingci breathed a sigh of relief.

It wasn’t that she was unwilling to bear Lu Chen’s child; she was mainly concerned about her low status as only a female slave to Lu Chen. If she bore a child, her child could likely suffer unjust treatment. Even though Lu Chen treated her well and frequently doted on her, she was clear about her own position.

At that moment, Lu Chen said, “For today, you’d better go back. Let the trading caravan of the Rain-listening Pavilion continue to keep an eye on the happenings in the Great Qian Dynasty.”

“Alright, Prince,” said Wang Qingci.

Just then, something crossed Wang Qingci's mind, and she asked with certainty, "Prince, have you really reached the Grandmaster Realm?"

Wang Qingci still found it hard to believe that there could be a seventeen-year-old Grandmaster in this world. Even though Lu Chen's aura was so formidable, she always felt it defied common sense, a bit too exaggerated.

Lu Chen asked with a smile, "What? You don't believe it? Why not test it out yourself?"

Wang Qingci quickly replied, "No, no, this servant shall take her leave."

Having said that, Wang Qingci hurriedly fled.

If Lu Chen had truly broken through to the Grandmaster Realm, his physical prowess must have become incredibly strong. Coupled with his young age, now, when his vigor was at its peak, how could she, a frail woman, withstand it? It was better to quickly leave this dangerous place.

Watching Wang Qingci's panicked retreat, Lu Chen chuckled.

This little enchantress, she has now submitted completely.

She used to provoke him often, but now she'd probably tremble at the sight of him in the future.

After Wang Qingci left, Lu Chen said to the maid at the door of the study,

” Inform the Brocade Guard to summon all officials from Yan County to the Hall of Political Affairs.”

“Yes, Prince.”

Meanwhile.

In the Great Sum Capital City, within the Imperial Palace.

The Sum Emperor, upon hearing the Shadow Guard’s report, could not help but reveal a satisfying smile.

“Excellent, excellent, excellent!!!”

“The Great Wu Dynasty is reaping its own consequences.”

The Rain-listening Pavilion collected only some public information. Whatever intelligence the Rain-listening Pavilion could gather, the Sum Emperor’s Shadow Guard could also obtain. The Sum Emperor was also aware of the peasant uprising that had erupted in the Great Wu Dynasty.

The moment he heard of the peasant uprising in the Great Wu Dynasty, the Sum Emperor’s mouth almost curved into a sideways grin. It was the happiest he had laughed in a long time.

At this moment, Situ Ce asked, “How does Your Majesty plan to deal with Xiwu County?”

Now that Great Wu was embroiled in internal strife, although the terms for peace had already stated that Xiwu County was to be ceded to Great Wu, it was unlikely that Great Wu had the capacity to occupy Xiwu County anymore. Thus, it was entirely possible for Great Sum to go back on its word.

The Sum Emperor then said, “Since a pact has been signed, Xiwu County must naturally be granted to them.”

The Sum Emperor was no fool. Although Great Wu was now in chaos, the internal strife had not shaken the foundation of the Great Wu nation. If he were to go back on his word at this time, the large army that Great Wu had amassed in Xiwu County might very well advance eastward again.

Since signs of internal conflict had already appeared within Great Wu, it was now especially imperative not to give Great Wu an excuse to wage an external war. Internal conflicts can generally be deflected through external wars, and it was vital not to give the Martial Emperor a chance to distract from domestic troubles.

Great Sum could temporarily sacrifice Xiwu County for now. Once Great Wu fell into complete chaos, Great Sum could always retake Xiwu County in the future.

Furthermore, even if Xiwu County was handed over to Great Wu, amidst the internal turmoil, it was uncertain whether Great Wu’s troops could completely occupy it. At most, they would send soldiers to raid Xiwu County before returning to Great Wu.

Xiwu County was but a minor matter. The internal turmoil of Great Wu presented the Sum Emperor with an opportunity.

With the external threat gone, it was time for him to take action.

Having tolerated humiliation for so many years, he finally saw an opportunity.

Just then, another Shadow Guard appeared in the Royal Garden, kneeling before the Sum Emperor and raising the intelligence in his hands, “Your Majesty, there is news from Great Qian!”

Upon hearing this, the Sum Emperor grabbed the intelligence from the Shadow Guard’s hand, glanced over it, and then burst into laughter, “Hahahaha, truly, heaven helps me!”

“Who could have expected this!”

Seeing the Sum Emperor so excited, Situ Ce knew that there must also be trouble within Great Qian.

It seemed that the civil war within Great Sum was about to start.

With this thought, Situ Ce envisioned Lu Chen in his mind.

Once the civil war erupted in Great Sum, it would inevitably create many refugees, and most likely, these refugees would pour into the North Country, signaling the start of a window of opportunity for development.

If the Sum Emperor emerged victorious from the civil war, successfully purging the Aristocratic Families, then the Great Sum that the North Prince would inherit would inevitably become even stronger.

Situ Ce's expectations began to rise. At first, he had not been too supportive of the Sum Emperor's purge of the Aristocratic Families, as Great Sum faced external pressures. Now that there was no external threat, he naturally supported the Sum Emperor.

Chapter 280: Even if given another hundred years, North Country wouldn't be able to develop_1

The news of internal strife in Great Wu rapidly spread throughout Great Sum, causing immediate panic among the aristocratic families within its borders.

If the external pressure on Great Sum vanished, it's very likely that the Sum Emperor would turn his blade on the aristocratic families next.

Suddenly, every major aristocratic family within Great Sum began to prepare. Some colluded with seigniors, while others chose to ally with princes, ready to overthrow the Sum Emperor and install a new one should he dare to move against them.

However, the following period saw an unexpected calm in Great Sum; the Sum Emperor showed no signs whatsoever of acting against the aristocratic families.

Not only was there no large-scale mobilization of troops, but he also established Prince Lu Shuyun as the Crown Prince, bringing immense joy to the aristocratic families in the South, who began to believe that the Sum Emperor was truly willing to make a full compromise.

One month later.

North Prince Mansion.

Lu Chen, in his study, looked over the messages from the Capital city, feeling a tinge of confusion; his Imperial father must be aware of the problems within Great Wu and Great Qian, so why wasn't he taking action now?

Not only had he avoided a confrontation with the nobility, but he also named Prince Lu Shuyun as Crown Prince, a move that seemed to be a concession to the Southern aristocratic families.

Could it be that his Imperial father was playing a long game and the establishment of a Crown Prince was merely a smokescreen?

While now was the best opportunity to strike at the aristocratic families, their influence was deeply intertwined with that of Great Sum—rooting out an Ancient Family was akin to scraping the bone to cure the poison.

Despite it being an opportune time to eradicate the Ancient Families, dealing with the nobility was a matter that required a slow and steady approach.

Lu Chen certainly didn't believe that his Imperial father had completely abandoned the idea of taking action against the aristocratic families.

As Lu Chen pondered over the intelligence reports from the Capital city, Wu Yuan arrived at the entrance of the study and said, "Prince, an envoy from Qi Prince has come to Yan County."

Hearing this, Lu Chen paused for a moment and, setting aside the reports in his hand, he then said, “Qi Prince? Which Qi Prince?”

Wu Yuan quickly understood and immediately replied, “Your Imperial Uncle.”

The names of Qi Prince and Qii Prince sound alike; Lu Shuyun was the Qii Prince, while the other Qi Prince was Lu Chen’s Imperial Uncle, a seignior with his own feudal lands. Lu Chen had initially thought the envoy was from Lu Shuyun again.

After hearing Wu Yuan’s response, Lu Chen, out of curiosity, said, “What does he need an envoy for?”

The lands under Qi Prince bordered directly with North Country, lying just to its south.

Wu Yuan answered, “It’s most likely about the refugees.”

With that explanation from Wu Yuan, Lu Chen seemed to understand, a slight smile appearing on his face before he said, “Bring that envoy to my study to see me.”

“Yes, Prince.”

Soon enough, Wu Yuan brought a middle-aged man wearing a gray robe into the study.

Upon seeing Lu Chen, the man immediately performed a courteous salutation and said, “This humble official, Liu Zhong, greets the North Prince!”

Hearing this, Lu Chen smiled and said, “A humble official? We are all subjects of Great Sum, how could you call yourself such?”

“Could it be that my Imperial Uncle has other intentions?”

Though they all resided in one empire, it was customary for ministers from different feudal states to refer to themselves as “humble officials” to those from another. Lu Chen, well aware of this fact, was merely jesting to see how Liu Zhong would react, a subtle form of a test.

Liu Zhong showed no signs of panic on his face and spoke with a respectful yet firm tone, “The Prince is correct; it was my mistake. Upon my return, I shall admit my wrongdoing to my King and request his punishment.”

Lu Chen decided not to pursue this topic further and cut to the chase, “Tell me, what is my Imperial Uncle’s business in sending you?”

Liu Zhong replied, “Prince, my King heard that there are vast uncultivated lands in the North Country but a lack of manpower for development. Recently, as you’ve been troubled by the issue of population, and coincidentally, Qi Country has received quite a number of refugees from Xiwu County, my King intends to send these refugees to the North Country to assist you, Prince, in reclaiming the land.”

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen let out a laugh before saying, “My Imperial Uncle indeed plays a clever game. What do you mean by ‘assisting me in reclaiming the land’? It seems to me that Qi Country simply doesn’t want to take in those refugees, viewing them as a burden, and thus wishes to send them to the North Country instead.”

Liu Zhong, still composed, replied, “Your words are mistaken, Prince. Nowadays, Qi Country is abundant in food, and the nation is wealthy and the people strong; we could still accommodate those refugees from Xiwu County.”

“Sending them to North Country is simply an effort to foster good relations. It is out of goodwill that my King takes the initiative to aid you, Prince.”

Lu Chen said, “Your kind intentions from Qi Country are well received. Since Qi Country is capable of accommodating those refugees, let them stay with you.”

“North Country is impoverished, and we can’t even provide for our own people, let alone spare any food for those refugees.”

Yet Liu Zhong remained unflustered, calmly stating, “Please rest assured, Prince. My King said that if you agree to accept the refugees, their food for the entire year will be provided by Qi Country.”

Hearing Liu Zhong’s words, Lu Chen replied, “Oh? My Imperial Uncle is that generous? He’s even prepared food for the refugees? Qi Country wouldn’t just send the people over and then disregard them afterward, would it?”

Liu Zhong replied, “The refugees’ food rations, along with the refugees themselves, will be simultaneously delivered to North Country. Upon receipt, North Country can verify and count the provisions first.”

Lu Chen could tell that the situation with the refugees from those three counties had become a thorn in Qi Country’s side, and they wouldn’t be acting so humbly otherwise.

Deciding not to haggle any further, Lu Chen planned to take the offer; a year's supply of food for the refugees would help them settle through the year comfortably. Once corn, potatoes, and sweet potatoes were harvested, sustaining the refugees in the coming year would not be a great challenge.