

## Es. Benefits 621

### Chapter 621: Eternally Mysterious Taoist Self-Destructs\_1

Eternally Mysterious Taoist's figure continuously darted through the forest, cursing the Sum Emperor in his heart as he fled. If it weren't for the Sum Emperor, he wouldn't have ended up in this predicament.

Fortunately, he still had an Exploding Spirit Pill on him. The blast it caused was so powerful that even if it hadn't injured the Celestial, it would at least hold him off for a moment.

Eternally Mysterious Taoist believed in his heart that he could successfully escape. He had lived over a hundred years and faced many dangers, always turning them into blessings. He was certain this time would be no different.

Just as Eternally Mysterious Taoist was comforting himself, suddenly a terrifying pressure descended from the sky, rendering his body immobile in an instant.

Eternally Mysterious Taoist's face changed drastically; he had not expected the other party to catch up so quickly.

Luckily, the state of immobility was lifted in just a moment. As soon as Eternally Mysterious Taoist could move, he immediately counterattacked. More than a dozen tornadoes burst forth from either side of his body and continued to grow larger.

Using Whirlwind again, the spiritual power inside Eternally Mysterious Taoist was nearly depleted. He knew that if he continued like this, he would certainly die here, so he immediately consumed a pill.

The next moment, Eternally Mysterious Taoist's skin turned bright red, and his eyes became blood-red.

Seeing this scene, Xuanyuan Chaoge simply smiled faintly, "So you're prepared to fight to the death?"

Although Xuanyuan Chaoge did not know what potion Eternally Mysterious Taoist had taken, he could tell from his body that it must be a pill that temporarily increased his skill.

Such pills, which boost skill in a short time, were usually forbidden. Consuming these could cause tremendous damage to one's body, some of which was irreversible.

These kinds of drugs were generally used in desperate situations.

At that moment, Eternally Mysterious Taoist shouted, "So what if you're a Celestial! Today, I shall slay a Celestial beyond my own Realm!"

As he spoke, all the leaves in the vicinity started to converge towards Eternally Mysterious Taoist. Soon, he was surrounded by those leaves.

The next moment, a giant dragon made up of leaves charged straight at Xuanyuan Chaoge.

Watching the incoming tornadoes and the giant leaf dragon, Xuanyuan Chaoge didn't show a trace of panic. He slowly raised his right hand.

In an instant, the world seemed to freeze. Streaks of cold light flew out from Xuanyuan Chaoge's body. In just a brief moment, the tornadoes and the giant dragon were shattered by the cold light.

Seeing this, Eternally Mysterious Taoist fell to pieces.

"How... how is this possible..."

Eternally Mysterious Taoist collapsed to the ground, unable to move. This was his last desperate strike, but it had been neutralized in an instant by the opponent.

Is this what a Celestial is?

Is a Celestial's power truly so vast?

He was after all a Pseudo Celestial!

Just one word difference, yet why is the gap so immense!

He couldn't accept this!

With great difficulty, he had become a Pseudo Celestial and was just one step away from becoming a true Celestial, and yet, he was about to die here!

Just then, Eternally Mysterious Taoist's blood-red eyes suddenly stared fixedly at Xuanyuan Chaoge. His body violently rose from the ground, then with a push of his legs, he rapidly charged at Xuanyuan Chaoge.

Xuanyuan Chaoge was startled for a moment, but then quickly understood. He saw through Eternally Mysterious Taoist's intent; Eternally Mysterious Taoist was planning to self-destruct his Dantian and perish together with him.

Xuanyuan Chaoge immediately struck with his palm, sending out a massive palm print directly towards Eternally Mysterious Taoist.

As soon as the palm print touched Eternally Mysterious Taoist, his body exploded instantly.

The self-destruction of a Pseudo Celestial was mightier than the cannons of the North Country. In just an instant, the trees in the center of the forest were destroyed. The earth shook and the aftershocks flew, carrying away the soldiers around Lu Chen.

Feeling the disturbance from the heart of the forest, Lu Chen frowned.

He had basically guessed what was happening; the power of the explosion suggested that the Eternally Mysterious Taoist had likely self-destructed his Dantian.

Originally, he had been using the Absorption Technique to take the Eternally Mysterious Taoist's skill, but it seemed his plan had gone awry.

However, it didn't matter. Although the Eternally Mysterious Taoist was dead, as long as he hurried to the old city, he would still be able to absorb the Sect Hierarchy's skill.

Now, although absorbing other's skill no longer increased his Realm, the skills he absorbed could make him stronger, and any excess skill could be transformed and transferred to others.

Mu Zixuan, Dazhou, and Xiaozhou had all become first-grade Martial Artists. They could now receive more of his skill, and by infusing them with more skill, their speed of Realm advancement would greatly accelerate.

Hence, regardless of whether others' skills could enhance his own Realm, Lu Chen did not intend to waste them.

Some time later, Xuanyuan Chaoge returned to Lu Chen. Despite the considerable power of a Pseudo Celestial's self-destruction, it was utterly impossible to kill a Celestial through such an act.

However, when Xuanyuan Chaoge returned to Lu Chen, his clothes were somewhat tattered. His body could withstand the explosion, but his clothes could not.

Seeing Xuanyuan Chaoge's disheveled state, Lu Chen immediately asked, "Are you alright?"

Xuanyuan Chaoge promptly responded, "Your servant is incompetent and could not bring that person back alive."

Lu Chen said, "It doesn't matter, as long as he is dead."

"How about you?"

Xuanyuan Chaoge replied, "Your servant is unharmed; although the blast from his Dantian self-detonation was powerful, it didn't penetrate through your servant's Protective Gang Qi."

Hearing this, Lu Chen was somewhat surprised; such a large explosion still hadn't breached a Celestial's Protective Gang Qi.

Had the strength of Celestials already reached such a level?

That being the case, would firearms be completely ineffective against a Celestial?

And he wondered if nuclear weapons would work...

As Lu Chen was lost in thought, Xuanyuan Chaoge reminded him, "My King, we should hurry to the old city. The noise just now was too loud, and I fear they're already alerted over there. If we're too late, those assassins might escape."

Coming back to his senses, Lu Chen immediately said, "Let's go! To the old city at once!"

Following that, Lu Chen led his soldiers towards the old city.

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In the old city of Yan County.

Zhuge Zhongguang and the Master of Divine Communication still hadn't taken action; both were still verbally confronting each other.

At that moment, Zhuge Zhongguang tried to persuade, "As the Son of Destiny, the North Prince will inevitably unite the world under one king. In the future, no matter the power, all will submit to the North Prince. Why don't you pledge allegiance now, make your mark and accomplish great deeds?

Do you really have to wait until the North Country's cavalry flattens your strongholds before you bow your heads?"

Hearing Zhuge Zhongguang's words, the Master of Divine Communication let out a laugh, then retorted, "Ridiculous, Zhuge the old traitor, you being a dog is your own business, and yet you have the shamelessness to want us to be dogs with you."

Just then, a giant mushroom cloud appeared in the distance, followed by the earth shaking and mountains swaying.

Approaching closer, a faint wave of Spiritual Power swept over everyone's body. Despite its severely weakened force, it almost knocked those ordinary people to the ground.

Sensing the magnitude of this wave of Spiritual Power, the Master of Divine Communication's expression drastically changed. His eyes, fixed through the window on the mushroom cloud emanating red light in the direction of the new city, were filled with alarm.

The Master of Divine Communication muttered, "Such a massive blast... could it be that a Pseudo Celestial has self-destructed?"

"Could that old thing Heng Yu have run into trouble?"

Chapter 622 - That is a Celestial!!!\_1

Seeing the blood-red mushroom cloud from the explosion in the distance, Zhuge Zhongguang realized the affair at New City had ended. With Xuanyuan Chaoge's speed, he feared Chaoge would soon arrive at the old city. At this point, there was no need to continue wasting time with the pseudo-celestial inside.

Thinking this, Zhuge Zhongguang said, "It looks like the ones you sent to assassinate the Prince at New City have been executed. Next, it's your turn. I'll give you one last chance. If you refuse to surrender, then death is the only path left for you."

Upon hearing these words, the Master of Divine Communication's face turned ashen. How did Zhuge Zhongguang know they had sent people to New City?

Could it be...

Had Zhuge Zhongguang and his team known about his and Eternally Mysterious Taoist's plan from the very beginning, so they simply played along to bait the Eternally Mysterious Taoist into their trap?

Even if that were the case, there was only one pseudo-celestial, Zhuge Zhongguang, in Yan County, and with him standing right here, shouldn't the Eternally Mysterious Taoist have been able to break into New City no matter what?



They had considered the possibility that their plan could be discovered from the start. But considering they had two pseudo-celestials on their side against the single one in Yan County, with the most crucial point being that Zhuge Zhongguang was a scholar, at best he should have been able to only restrain one of them.

So even if their scheming was discovered, it should have been no significant setback.

How was the Eternally Mysterious Taoist driven to self-destruct?

Was that blood-red cloud truly formed by the Eternally Mysterious Taoist's self-destruction?

Or was it the result of a mysterious weapon from North Country?

North Country's weaponry was immensely powerful, creating scenes reminiscent of martial artists self-destructing their dantians. They had already known this. At this moment, the Master of Divine Communication could not be certain if it was the Eternally Mysterious Taoist who had self-destructed his dantian or if North Country had deployed a more potent weapon.

Seeing no movement from within the tavern, Zhuge Zhongguang spoke indifferently, "Gentlemen, I have given you a chance. Since you refuse to surrender, don't blame me."

Then Zhuge Zhongguang commanded, "Attack!"

The next moment, over a dozen cannonballs flew toward the tavern where the Master of Divine Communication was. Hearing the roar outside, he immediately snapped back to reality.

He quickly said to the tavern's disciples, "Watch out for those iron balls!"

As soon as the Master of Divine Communication finished speaking, one of the iron balls exploded on the tavern's roof, blowing a huge hole in it instantly.

One after another, countless cannonballs poured through the gaping hole in the roof. In an instant, the tavern was filled with continuous explosions, pained screams, and frantic cries.

Witnessing this scene, the Master of Divine Communication could no longer hold back and charged at Zhuge Zhongguang with a great knife.

Seeing a figure swiftly approach Zhuge Zhongguang, Liang Zong promptly warned, "Great Scholar, be careful!"

Liang Zong had hardly finished speaking when Zhuge Zhongguang suddenly raised his hand. Immediately, golden protective Gang Qi surrounded his body, with countless verses of poetry flowing within the golden Qi.

The Master of Divine Communication's knife struck Zhuge Zhongguang's protective Gang Qi.

The Master of Divine Communication viciously said, "I want to see just how formidable you, the Literature Saint, truly are!"

As he spoke, the Master of Divine Communication concentrated his full skill and unleashed his ultimate technique.

"Heavenly Destruction Eighteen Slash!!!"

Following that, a purple light directly struck Zhuge Zhongguang's protective Gang Qi. When the purple blade Qi touched Zhuge Zhongguang's protective Gang Qi, a crack immediately appeared.

Seeing this, Liang Zong's complexion drastically changed.

He thought to himself, Zhuge Zhongguang was only a scholar, and even though he was now a pseudo-celestial, when compared to martial artists, his strength would still be lacking. It was possible that Zhuge wasn't a match for this man in front of him.

Liang Zong immediately made a move against the Master of Divine Communication. Zhuge Zhongguang was a Great Scholar of North Country, handling many of its government affairs. He couldn't afford an accident; if something happened to him, wouldn't the North Prince hold him, the Commander of the Brocade Guard, responsible?

Just as Liang Zong was about to reach the Master of Divine Communication, a purple blade Qi swung out towards Liang Zong, approaching him at incredible speed. Liang Zong hadn't even reacted before the blade Qi closed in.

Liang Zong hastily raised his knife to block, but the moment the purple blade energy touched him, both he and his knife were sent flying, and Liang Zong's body instantly crashed through over a dozen houses.

Liang Zong immediately felt intense pain in his body as if all his bones had shattered. He couldn't help feeling utterly shocked inside. Was this the strength of a Pseudo Celestial?

He had already exerted all his strength to block that strike, yet it had still not been enough to withstand it.

At the same time, the Sect Hierarchy of Divine Communication continued to furiously hack at Zhuge Zhongguang's Protective Gang Qi. With each slash, the power increased tenfold, and as the cracks in his Protective Gang Qi grew larger, Zhuge Zhongguang's face remained unpanicked.

At that moment, he raised his hand, swung it, and then shouted loudly, "Suppress!"

A surge of Spiritual Energy burst forth from his body, and when that golden Spiritual Energy made contact with the body of the Sect Hierarchy, the Hierarchy suddenly felt completely paralyzed, as if something had bound him.

Zhuge Zhongguang, who had taken the Literary path to the Dao, was indeed not as adept at killing as Martial Artists, which didn't mean he lacked power.

The Sect Hierarchy was momentarily dumbfounded. He hadn't expected Zhuge Zhongguang's move to be so powerful as to instantly seal off all his skill.

The Sect Hierarchy quickly tried to break free from the restraint, at which point Zhuge Zhongguang made a flicking gesture with his hand and commanded, "Attack!"

The next moment, a beam of golden light shot out from Zhuge Zhongguang's fingertip, instantly hitting the body of the Sect Hierarch, who was blasted away just like Liang Zong before him, crashing through over a dozen houses.

However, this also allowed the Sect Hierarch to recover. Feeling the Spiritual Energy within his body again, he leapt to his feet. Although he had been wounded by Zhuge Zhongguang's previous attack, his life was not in danger.

The Sect Hierarch spat out a mouthful of blood, then, gripping the knife in his hand, he said, "I truly did not expect, a weak scholar such as yourself, to possess such strength. I underestimated you!"

"I wonder if you can catch this next move!"

As he spoke, the body of the Sect Hierarch disappeared on the spot, transforming into a lingering shadow, charging straight for Zhuge Zhongguang.

Just as he was about to reach Zhuge Zhongguang, he suddenly felt an overwhelming pressure, and his body was immediately immobilized by this force.

The Sect Hierarch was instantly stunned.

Who had unleashed this pressure? How could there be such a terrifying presence?

The next moment, Xuanyuan Chaoge and Lu Chen appeared in front of Zhuge Zhongguang.

Seeing that the newcomers were a young man and an elder, both emitting a presence not inferior to that of a Pseudo Celestial, the Sect Hierarchy was dumbfounded again.

Two more Pseudo Celestials?

How could North Country have so many who have reached the Unity Realm, when there had been only one anomaly in North Country?

What was going on?

Where had these Pseudo Celestials come from?

No, that was wrong...

Just as the Sect Hierarchy thought both the arrivals were Pseudo Celestials, he suddenly realized that the presence exuding from the elder was even more terrifying; it simply couldn't be the aura of a Pseudo Celestial.

He himself was a Pseudo Celestial and was very clear about the kind of might a Pseudo Celestial could unleash. If the elder's presence could press down on him so heavily that he was left breathless, it meant the elder's strength far surpassed his own.

A Celestial... A Celestial!!!

That was a Celestial!!!

The face of the Sect Hierarchy instantly turned pale!

Chapter 623 - Impossible, How Could You Possibly Be the North Prince!!!\_1

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North Country actually has a Celestial!!!

How is this possible?

The Master of Divine Communication's entire mind went blank; he had never considered the possibility of a Celestial appearing in the North Country.

When he snapped back to reality, the Master of Divine Communication suddenly thought of something.

Mysterious Moon Palace...

It must be Mysterious Moon Palace!

The Palace Master of Mysterious Moon Palace stayed at North Prince Mansion for quite a long time, didn't she? This proves that the North Prince has a very good relationship with Mysterious Moon Palace, so this Celestial must have been sent by them!

An idea to escape flashed through the Master of Divine Communication's mind instantaneously.

He was already struggling to deal with Zhuge Zhongguang, and now, not only was there a Pseudo Celestial, but also a genuine Celestial. There was no way he could be their match.

At this moment, the Master of Divine Communication gripped the knife in his hand and swung it fiercely.

Heavenly Destruction Eighteen Slash!!!

In the next instant, eighteen purple streaks of blade energy flew towards Lu Chen and the others. Xuanyuan Chaoge immediately raised his hand and struck out with his palm, dispersing the eighteen blade energies instantaneously.

But when the dust settled, the Master of Divine Communication had vanished without a trace.

Seeing that the Master of Divine Communication was fleeing, Xuanyuan Chaoge was about to take action when Lu Chen said at his side, "Don't rush, let's wait until he leaves the city."

The self-destruction of Eternally Mysterious Taoist just now was enough to destroy a city. If it weren't for its distance from New City, the New City would surely have been affected.

If they were to attack the Master of Divine Communication now and push him into a corner, he might just detonate his Dantian just like Eternally Mysterious Taoist did. If it happened within the city, the common people would certainly not survive, so it would be best to take action outside the city.



Hearing Lu Chen's reminder, Xuanyuan Chaoge instantly understood and promptly said, "This old servant understands."

Xuanyuan Chaoge then released his spiritual power, sensing the exact location of the Master of Divine Communication, but he did not pursue him immediately.

After a short while, the Master of Divine Communication left the old city. With the speed of a Pseudo Celestial, it would take only the blink of an eye for him to cover several thousand meters.

Feeling that the Master of Divine Communication was sufficiently far from the old city, Xuanyuan Chaoge spoke to Lu Chen, "Great King, the Master of Divine Communication has left the old city. Even if he detonates his Dantian now, it will no longer affect the old city."

Lu Chen immediately said, "Good, let's set off then, and take me with you."

"Yes, Great King."

As soon as Lu Chen finished speaking, Xuanyuan Chaoge placed his hand on Lu Chen's shoulder.

In the blink of an eye, Xuanyuan Chaoge had brought Lu Chen to the Master of Divine Communication's front.

At this moment, the Master of Divine Communication, thinking that no one was pursuing him, felt extremely exhilarated, believing he had escaped. Little did he know that Xuanyuan Chaoge and Lu Chen were already waiting for him ahead.

The Master of Divine Communication then cursed, "What a damn Celestial! Still couldn't catch up with me!"

"Lucky I ran fast enough, otherwise I would have ended up like Eternally Mysterious, that fellow!"

"It's all Sum Emperor's fault. This is surely all a trap set by Sum Emperor. He wants to use the North Country Celestial to get rid of us. Once I make it back alive, I will definitely lead Four Directions Mountain to attack Great Sum!"

As the Master of Divine Communication was muttering to himself, a voice came from afar, "To lead Four Directions Mountain to attack Great Sum, I'm afraid you no longer have that chance."

Hearing this voice, the Master of Divine Communication froze, halting in his tracks instantly. And that's when he violently realized that the young Pseudo Celestial and the Celestial were waiting for him up ahead.

How could this be...

He had fled at full speed, using all his power, and he had not sensed anyone catching up to him just before. How could these two appear in front of him!

The Master of Divine Communication immediately tightened his grip on the large knife, "Who exactly are you?"

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Hearing this question, Lu Chen chuckled, it seemed The Master of Divine Communication was just as clueless as Eternally Mysterious Taoist about his own appearance.

But that wasn't surprising, after all, he had always stayed in the North Prince Mansion and seldom came out.

Then Lu Chen said, "Isn't The Master of Divine Communication here to kill me? How come you don't even know who I am? You're not very competent as an assassin."

Upon hearing this, the same expression that had previously been on Eternally Mysterious Taoist's face now appeared on The Master of Divine Communication's.

He widened his eyes, looking at Lu Chen in disbelief.

"North... North Prince..."

"Impossible, how can you be the North Prince? How old is the North Prince this year? How can he possibly become a Pseudo Celestial!!!"

Lu Chen indifferently said, "Whether you believe it or not is unimportant, what matters is whether you want to live or die."

The Master of Divine Communication quickly came to his senses. He knew that escape was hopeless—if he could have fled from a Celestial, then Eternally Mysterious Taoist should have been able to escape too, and he wouldn't have needed to self-detonate his Dantian.

The fact that even after Eternally Mysterious Taoist's self-detonation of his Dantian, neither Lu Chen nor the old man were significantly harmed proved that a Celestial's strength far surpassed that of a Pseudo Celestial.

One character difference, but a world of difference in reality.

Immediately, The Master of Divine Communication said, "I want to live! This old man wants to live!!!"

"Whatever you want to know, my Prince, I will tell you, as long as you are willing to let this old man go!"

Hearing this, Lu Chen gave a slight smile, then spoke, "It must have been my Imperial Father who sent you to assassinate me, am I right?"

The Master of Divine Communication immediately said, "Yes, he said that becoming a Celestial required the death of all the Seigniors. We took it as the truth, so this old man and Eternally Mysterious Taoist joined hands in preparation to assassinate you."

"Little did I know, all this is a plot by the Sum Emperor; he simply wanted to use the North Country's hand to eliminate this old man and Eternally Mysterious Taoist!"

At this point, The Master of Divine Communication clenched his teeth in rage, wishing he could rush back to the Capital city right now to settle the score with the Sum Emperor. If it wasn't for the Sum Emperor, how could they have ended up in the situation they faced today?

They had already become Pseudo Celestials, just one step away from becoming true Celestials, and yet at this very moment, they faced a life and death crisis.

Seeing the twisted expression of unwillingness on The Master of Divine Communication's face, Lu Chen said with a laugh, "You've lived for over a hundred years and yet you're still so naive. How could you be so sure that what he said about becoming a Celestial was true?"

"The conditions for becoming a Celestial are vitally important for a Pseudo Celestial who is entering the Unity Realm. If these conditions were known, they could very well be obstructed by others with ulterior motives."

Generally speaking, to become a Celestial surely involves some difficulty. Zhuge Zhongguang initially speculated that the Sum Emperor's condition for becoming a Celestial was the unification of the entire Great Xia Dynasty. If that were the condition, it would definitely be a challenging task for the Sum Emperor.

But if the Sum Emperor's condition to become a Celestial was merely the killing of all the Seigniors, such a condition would be far too easy in comparison, and obviously, couldn't be true—the Sum Emperor clearly wasn't telling the truth.

Hearing Lu Chen's words, The Master of Divine Communication paused for a moment, realizing they had been tricked. But by this point, such thoughts were futile; when it came down to it, surviving was what mattered most. If only he could survive, once he broke through to the Heavenly Human Realm, he would seek revenge against the Sum Emperor.

The Master of Divine Communication then said, "My Prince, this old man knows he was wrong. As long as you spare this old man, upon returning, I will lead the entire Four Directions Mountain to serve you!"

Hearing The Master of Divine Communication's words, Lu Chen glanced at the personal information of The Master of Divine Communication.

[Name: The Master of Divine Communication]

[Identity: Ancestor of Four Directions Mountain]

[Strength: Pseudo Celestial]

[Loyalty: -50]

Lu Chen chuckled. Originally, he had considered whether he could subdue The Master of Divine Communication and then bring the entire Four Directions Mountain over to his side, but upon seeing a negative loyalty, he dismissed the idea.

If it had been zero, he might have accepted it, but negative meant no chance. Negative loyalty proved he had no intention of pledging allegiance to the North Country.

Lu Chen then said, "Very well, but you will need to sign a Blood Covenant with me."

Chapter 624: Sum Emperor: How Could It Possibly Fail?\_1

After hearing Lu Chen's words, The Master of Divine Communication was momentarily stunned.

A Blood Covenant? What Blood Covenant?

Following that, The Master of Divine Communication asked, "What is this Blood Covenant that the Prince speaks of?"

Lu Chen indifferently replied, "It's something that prevents you from betraying me. Once the Blood Covenant is established, as long as your strength is weaker than mine, you will never be able to betray me."

Upon hearing this, The Master of Divine Communication's heart skipped a beat.

Seeing The Master of Divine Communication hesitating, Xuanyuan Chaoge immediately unleashed the Celestial pressure. In an instant, The Master of Divine Communication felt so crushed by this pressure that he could barely breathe, hastily saying, "This old man agrees."

Although he did not want to be controlled by others, in such a situation, if he did not agree to the North Prince's terms, he might very well lose his life. He had no desire to self-destruct and die like the Eternally Mysterious Taoist had just moments before.

It was just a Blood Covenant, after all. Just agree to it, he thought; based on the North Prince's description, this Blood Covenant didn't seem all that frightening.

As long as one day he could break through to the Heavenly Human Realm, the Blood Covenant would become invalid, and he would be free from the North Prince's control.

He believed that day would not be far off.

As he thought this, Lu Chen's voice came through, "Well then, since you've agreed, shall we proceed with forming the Blood Covenant?"

With that, Lu Chen walked straight toward The Master of Divine Communication.

As Lu Chen approached him, The Master of Divine Communication instantly became alert, but he took no aggressive action. With another Celestial by his side, he had entirely lost any desire to resist at this point.

Moreover, as a Pseudo Celestial himself, he was in no position to take Lu Chen hostage. With the both of them being in the same realm, he probably wouldn't be able to take Lu Chen hostage before the Celestial opposite him eliminated him.

If Lu Chen weren't a Pseudo Celestial, if he were a martial artist below Master Level, then perhaps he might attempt to take Lu Chen as a hostage and use him to escape this place.

The Master of Divine Communication felt a pang of unwillingness. Why should someone like Lu Chen, not yet thirty years old, be able to become a Pseudo Celestial? They had lived for over a hundred years before entering the Unity Realm. The heavens were unfair!

At this moment, Lu Chen had already arrived in front of The Master of Divine Communication, who immediately asked, "May I ask the Prince, how is the Blood Covenant formed?"

Lu Chen calmly said, "All you need to do is extend your hand."



Without further thought, The Master of Divine Communication immediately extended his right hand. The next moment, Lu Chen seized The Master of Divine Communication's right hand.

Immediately after, The Master of Divine Communication felt the skill within his body rapidly draining. His face turned ashen.

This was not a Blood Covenant at all; it was an absorption of his power. How could there be such an evil cultivation technique in this world!

No wonder the North Prince was so young and had already reached the Unity Realm; he had been advancing his realm by absorbing the skill of others. The Master of Divine Communication bellowed, "You're deceiving this old man!"

Lu Chen chuckled but said nothing, continuing to use the Absorption Technique to frantically drain The Master of Divine Communication's inner skill. However, as a Pseudo Celestial, he still had some capability to resist.

At that moment, The Master of Divine Communication raised his left hand, attempting to free himself from Lu Chen's grasp with a palm strike. But in the very next second, Xuanyuan Chaoge appeared in front of The Master of Divine Communication and seized his left hand, preventing him from moving.

As the skill within him continued to be drained relentlessly, The Master of Divine Communication grew more and more panicked, urgently saying, "What does the Prince mean by this? I have already agreed to serve the Prince, why must the Prince treat this old man so!"

Lu Chen replied indifferently, "Someone uncontrollable, no matter how powerful, is a threat to me. Do you think I don't know what's in your heart?"

The Master of Divine Communication hurriedly pleaded for mercy, "Prince, spare my life!!!  
Whatever you ask of me, I will do from now on!!!"

The Master of Divine Communication realized that the loss of his skill was accelerating. Soon his strength had fallen to the Grandmaster Realm. At this rate, it wouldn't be long before he became completely incapacitated.

The fate of an incapacitated person goes without saying.

Lu Chen said indifferently, "For me, your biggest use is the skill within your body. Since you wish to serve me, then offer up all your skill to me!"

Hearing Lu Chen's words, The Master of Divine Communication's eyes immediately filled with countless bloodshot lines, and his entire eyes turned blood-red, as if they were about to explode.

The Master of Divine Communication said viciously, "Since you refuse to release me, let's die together!!!"

As he said this, The Master of Divine Communication immediately tried to gather the skill in his body into his Dantian and then detonate it.

However, the next moment he found that he couldn't gather the skill in his body to his Dantian at all. Although he could still manipulate the skill within his body, it was quickly absorbed by Lu Chen, making his attempt to detonate his Dantian utterly delusional.

The Master of Divine Communication roared, "Damn it! I won't accept this!"

While he spoke, his body trembled, as if electrified, and soon, his appearance became increasingly aged.

At his age, one's life is maintained by skill. Without it, one would quickly grow old, and that's what happened to The Master of Divine Communication.

Seeing the life force in his body rapidly draining away, The Master of Divine Communication cursed, "Even if I turn into a ghost, I will not let you go!!!"

Amidst his roar, The Master of Divine Communication continued to try to mobilize all the skill in his body. Just then, his body suddenly began to swell.

Lu Chen was stunned for a moment. Xuanyuan Chaoge also noticed something was wrong and quickly warned, "Your Majesty, quickly get away!"

Lu Chen, realizing the situation was awry, immediately used Shadow Shifting and left his original position.

The next moment, The Master of Divine Communication's body exploded violently. Although the explosion was much less powerful than Eternally Mysterious Taoist's detonation of his Dantian, it still destroyed everything nearby, and the old city could feel the aftermath of the blast.

Lu Chen, standing at a distance, was somewhat puzzled. Clearly, he had drained the skill within the man's body, preventing him from gathering all of his skill at his Dantian, so how could The Master of Divine Communication still detonate himself?

Could it be because he was absorbing the skill too slowly, allowing him to gather it together?

It seemed that absorbing the skill of a Pseudo Celestial was not an easy task. It would be best when they were beaten half to death, but by then, they might just detonate their Dantian, like the previously encountered Eternally Mysterious Taoist, and wouldn't give him the chance to absorb their skill.

Looking at the huge crater created by The Master of Divine Communication's self-detonation, Lu Chen sighed. Well, although it was only a bit of skill, this skill was enough to help his wives advance several realms.

At that moment, Xuanyuan Chaoge approached Lu Chen and asked, "Your Majesty, are you alright?"

Lu Chen replied, "I'm fine. I leave the rest to you. I'm going back first."

Xuanyuan Chaoge said, "Yes, Your Majesty."

...

Several days later.

Great Xia Dynasty.

Inside the Imperial Palace, the Sum Emperor was cultivating when a shadow suddenly appeared in the room.

"Your Majesty, The Master of Divine Communication and Eternally Mysterious Taoist have failed," it said.

Hearing this, the Sum Emperor's mind went blank.

Failed?

How could they possibly fail?

Two Pseudo Celestials couldn't defeat Zhuge Zhongguang, a mere scholar?

Chapter 625: The Palace Has Arrived\_1

After regaining his composure, the Sum Emperor immediately cursed, "Waste, all a bunch of waste!!!"

"Two Pseudo Celestial martial artists, and they can't even deal with a literati! What use are they!"

Having vented his anger, the Sum Emperor quickly calmed down, and then he asked, "How did they fail?"

The shadow replied, "According to the spies' letters, Eternally Mysterious Taoist and The Master of Divine Communication had planned to use a stratagem to lure Zhuge Zhongguang away, but somehow, Eternally Mysterious Taoist ended up self-detonating his dantian."

Hearing the shadow's answer, the Sum Emperor's face darkened. How could he have self-exploded his dantian without reason?

What kind of joke is this?

If Eternally Mysterious Taoist had not encountered a formidable enemy, how could he possibly self-destruct his dantian?

What exactly happened?

The Sum Emperor then asked, "What about The Master of Divine Communication, how is he?"

The shadow answered, "Your Majesty, after The Master of Divine Communication escaped from the old city of Yan County, he too self-detonated his dantian and died. However, our spies only observed the blood clouds formed by their self-destruction, without knowing what they encountered."

Although the Shadow Guard had been monitoring Eternally Mysterious Taoist and The Master of Divine Communication, they maintained a certain distance to avoid detection.

The Yan County Shadow Guard only observed Zhuge Zhongguang going to the old city and ultimately the escape of The Master of Divine Communication. As for what happened outside the city, they had no knowledge whatsoever.

Even the deaths of The Master of Divine Communication and Eternally Mysterious Taoist were mere conjectures by the Shadow Guard since, after the event, they didn't see either of them, and nearly all disciples dispatched from Four Directions Mountain and Fixed Wind Mountain to the North Country had perished, leading the Shadow Guard to guess that the two blood clouds were formed when Eternally Mysterious Taoist and The Master of Divine Communication self-detonated.

After hearing the shadow's response, the Sum Emperor again cursed, "They're all a bunch of good-for-nothings!"

At that moment, the shadow suddenly remembered something and continued, "The letter from the spy mentioned that when the soldiers of Yan County surrounded the tavern where The Master of Divine Communication and Eternally Mysterious Taoist were, the North Prince also appeared in the old city, and upon seeing the North Prince, The Master of Divine Communication immediately fled the old city."

Hearing this, the Sum Emperor frowned.

He had sent them both to kill Lu Chen. Why, upon seeing Lu Chen, did The Master of Divine Communication think not of how to kill him, but chose to flee instead?

He must have seen something.

Being a Pseudo Celestial, only another Pseudo Celestial or beings Above Celestials could have threatened The Master of Divine Communication!

Could it be...

A chill ran through the Sum Emperor's heart as he considered a possibility he least wanted to see.

Could it be that the North Country had a Celestial?

If the North Country had no Celestial, with the strength of The Master of Divine Communication and Eternally Mysterious Taoist, they should have been able to escape the North Country at all costs, not opt to self-detonate their dantian.

The Sum Emperor's mind instantly flashed back to the recent messages from the North Country, and he immediately pieced those messages together into a coherent thread.

The rebellious son used the false news of Zhuge being a Celestial to intimidate the Great Xia Dynasty, deterring it from launching any military actions against the North Country, and also instilling fear of the North Country in other dynasties.

Although this false news was soon to be debunked, there was no need for the North Country to proactively clarify that the news about Zhuge being a Celestial was false.

The North Country could have maintained a sense of mystery, letting the outside world speculate whether Zhuge had truly become a Celestial or not, but they did not do so.

The North Prince could not be unaware of the trouble that would ensue from openly revealing that the North Country had no Celestial. Even if he was unaware, Zhuge Zhongguang, being the Literature Saint, would surely have known the consequences and would have advised the North Prince not to clarify this matter. Yet, the North Country chose to proactively clarify that Zhuge was not a Celestial.



What does this indicate...

It indicates that the North Country is already prepared to deal with anything, including the acts of assassination against Lu Chen...

Therefore, they are not afraid of the news that the North Country has no Celestial being spread.

Or perhaps, this is all a trap, the North Country wants those dynasties to attack them, wants the world's martial artists to try assassinating the North Prince. Indeed, the Great Wu Dynasty and Eternally Mysterious Taoist fell right into the trap in the North Country.

Thinking this through, it is very likely that the North Country already has a Celestial, otherwise the North Prince would not have the confidence to publicly disclose the message that Zhuge is not a Celestial.

Having realized all this, the Sum Emperor's face became extraordinarily grim.

He suddenly recalled that Mysterious Moon Palace had long been in contact with North Country, and even Chen Wanrong, the Palace Master of Mysterious Moon Palace, had stayed in North Prince Mansion for a long period.

Could it be that the Celestial from Mysterious Moon Palace had gone to North Country, which is why that unfilial son now had so much confidence!

Yes, it must be that the Celestial from Mysterious Moon Palace had struck some deal with that unfilial son!

Thinking of this, Sum Emperor clenched his fists, and his hatred for Mysterious Moon Palace surged once again.

Sum Emperor forced himself to calm down. Then he said to the shadow in the room, "Find a way to ascertain if The Master of Divine Communication and Eternally Mysterious Taoist really died by detonating their dantians!"

"Also, check if the Celestial from Mysterious Moon Palace has left the palace."

The shadow was about to say something when Sum Emperor said in a roaring voice, "Even if you find nothing, keep looking!"

To find out whether the Celestial from Mysterious Moon Palace had ended the seclusion was extremely difficult for the Shadow Guards at the moment. Not to mention whether they could infiltrate Mysterious Moon Palace, even if they managed to establish connections within the palace, the disciples inside might not even know whether the Celestial had come out of seclusion or not.

Unless they could win over the top echelons of Mysterious Moon Palace, such as those core Elders, only then might they be able to learn whether the Celestial had ended seclusion.

At that moment, the shadow said, "Yes, Your Majesty, I will investigate right away."

"I take my leave!"

As his voice faded, the shadow merged into the shadows of the furniture in the room and disappeared.

Sum Emperor murmured to himself, "No one can block my path! I will certainly become a Celestial!"

"You died but left an offspring to oppose me! If I had known this day would come, I should have smashed him to death the moment he was born!"

...

Half a month later.

A massive caravan was majestically heading towards Yan County, stretching endlessly, so long that one could not see its end from the front to the back.

In the middle of the caravan was a luxurious carriage drawn by eight horses, all adorned with gold and jewels.

At that moment, the caravan suddenly stopped.

As soon as the caravan halted, a cool voice came from inside the carriage, "What's the matter?"

The guard immediately replied, "Princess Junwan, an old woman has blocked the way ahead."

Hearing this, Wu Junwan was slightly startled.

An old woman?

Who would be stopping Great Wu's caravan at this time?

Just then, the voice of the old woman could be heard in the distance.

"Princess Junwan, Empress has sent this old servant to protect your way."

Upon hearing that voice, Wu Junwan instantly knew who it was.

She immediately said, "So it's Elder Hu, then I'll have to trouble Elder Hu!"

Although that fellow Pei Hong betrayed her, Yue Emperor would not betray her. The fact that Yue Emperor sent Grandmaster Hu Shu to protect her was the best proof.

At that moment, Wu Junwan's lips curved into a slight smile.

Little man, I've arrived, and you will eventually pay a heavy price for your decisions!

Chapter 626: Idea To meet with Her Majesty the Empress\_1

Wu Junwan had not yet fully realized what would happen to her after she arrived in Yan County.

In her heart, she believed that being a hostage for the North Prince was just that, and even if the North Prince really coveted her body, he wouldn't act inappropriately.

After all, she was still the Princess Junwan of the Great Wu Dynasty, and no matter what, the North Prince wouldn't dare to do something that crossed the line. At most, he would only use his words to insult her.

On the contrary, she was even more eager to get close to the North Prince because only by gaining his trust could she possibly obtain the secrets of the North Country from him.

As long as she stole the secrets of the North Country, she would definitely have a chance to turn the tables. One day, she would wear a Phoenix Robe just like the Yue Emperor!

Although Wu Junwan appeared cold at the moment, a fierce flame had already ignited in her heart. She hadn't felt as happy as she did today since the day she lost her power.

The caravan soon entered Yan County, and after it did, the Prefecture Governor of Yan County and the accompanying personnel from Great Wu completed their handover, taking them to a large compound arranged by the North Country.

However, just as Wu Junwan was getting off the carriage and preparing to enter the dwelling arranged by the North Country, the Prefecture Governor of Yan County spoke to her, "Princess Junwan, your residence is not here. Please follow me."

Hearing this, Wu Junwan was momentarily taken aback, and then she asked, "All my attendants are staying here. Why am I not staying here?"

Although Wu Junwan was a hostage, she still possessed the temperament of a noble; she would not lower her voice and succumb just because she had become a hostage.

The Prefecture Governor of Yan County smiled and said, "According to the Prince's request, your residence, Princess Junwan, is in the North Prince Mansion. Although this courtyard is also yours, you must stay in the North Prince Mansion."

Hearing these words, Wu Junwan's eyebrows knitted slightly.

Stay in the North Prince Mansion?

What kind of joke was this? She was not a wife or concubine of the North Prince Mansion. How could she possibly stay there?

What was the North Prince trying to do?

Wu Junwan glanced at her attendants and seemed to understand something.

Could it be that the North Prince was afraid she would cause trouble in the North Country, so he wanted to separate her from the attendants she had brought with her?

If she stayed in the North Prince Mansion, then the North Prince would be able to monitor her constantly, and her movements would be restricted. Add to that the separation from her attendants, and it would be even more difficult for her to give them orders.

With this in mind, Wu Junwan chuckled softly to herself. She didn't expect the North Prince to be so afraid of her.

Just as Wu Junwan was about to say something, Hu Shu, standing beside her, spoke up, "Princess Junwan, you mustn't. If you stay in the North Prince Mansion, and anything happens, we would not be able to come to your side immediately."

The North Prince Mansion was the North Prince's residence, and the wives and daughters of the North Prince all lived there. Therefore, the North Prince Mansion would definitely not allow Hu Shu, the Protector, to enter, which would mean Hu Shu couldn't protect Wu Junwan's safety all the time.

If something happened to Wu Junwan, she wouldn't be able to report back to the Yue Emperor as well.

After hearing Hu Shu's words, the Prefecture Governor of Yan County said, "Princess Junwan, the alliance signed between Great Wu and the North Country clearly states that after the hostages from Great Wu arrive in the North Country, they must comply with the arrangements of the North Country. Do you intend to break this treaty?"

Wu Junwan's expression turned extremely cold. She indeed remembered this treaty, and when she saw it, she felt something was amiss.

Then, Wu Junwan said, "Fine, I will go to the North Prince Mansion as you wish."

Saying this, Wu Junwan turned to Hu Shu and added, "Senior Hu, please stay here for the time being. If anything happens, I will send someone to inform you."

Beneath someone's roof, one has no choice but to bow their head; Wu Junwan had no options, especially since there were stipulations like that in the treaty. If she violated the treaty at will, the North Country's army might just have a reason to continue moving south.

Forget it, it was just being constantly monitored by the North Prince.

After all, she was also intending to get close to the North Prince. If she could stay in the North Prince Mansion, this would give her an opportunity instead.

Although living in the North Prince Mansion would make it difficult to engage in any secretive actions, she didn't need to send out any information either. She could simply store the intelligence she gathered in her mind, and then, when she had a chance to leave the North Country later, she could bring those secrets out.

Seeing that Wu Junwan had spoken as such, Hu Shu did not feel it was her place to say more. She was the Protector assigned to Wu Junwan by the Yue Emperor, and when she left Great Yue, the Yue Emperor had told her to obey Wu Junwan's commands once in the North Country.

Since Wu Junwan had made up her mind to do so, they could only listen to her.

Hu Shu then said, "This old servant understands."



Thereupon, Wu Junwan boarded the carriage and followed the Prefecture Governor to North Prince Mansion.

When Wu Junwan arrived at North Prince Mansion, she looked at the plaque above the gate and was overwhelmed with emotion. She had originally thought that she would never have the chance to return here in her lifetime, yet, to her surprise, not much time had passed before she found herself back at this place again.

At that moment, a group of maids approached Wu Junwan and, curtsying, they said, "We greet the Empress!"

Huh???

Hearing this, Wu Junwan, who had been lost in thought, was suddenly startled.

The Empress?

What did that mean?

Was she experiencing auditory hallucinations?

Why was she hearing these maids addressing her as the Empress?

Wu Junwan could hardly believe her own ears and then said to the head maid in front of her, "What did you just refer to me as?"

The head maid immediately replied, "Your Majesty, this servant addressed you as the Empress."

Wu Junwan knitted her brows and said in confusion, "I am merely a princess, so how have I become the Empress in your mouths?"

Although she did indeed aspire to be the Empress of Great Wu, she wasn't there yet; that goal was still far off. Who would address her as the Empress at this time? What were the maids of the Prince's Mansion up to?

The head maid quickly said, "Your Majesty, it was the Prince who instructed us to address you in this manner."

This...

Wu Junwan's gaze showed confusion. What was North Prince up to?

Wu Junwan then asked, "Why would North Prince have you address me in this manner?"

The head maid answered, "Your Majesty, this servant does not know."

Wu Junwan then said, "You should continue to call me Princess Junwan or Your Highness."

The head maid hastily said, "Your Majesty, please forgive us, but it was the Prince's order, and without his command, we dare not change the way we address you."

Hearing this, Wu Junwan said resignedly, "Fine, do as you please."

At that moment, the head maid said, "Empress, please follow us. We will take you to the courtyard where you will be staying."

With the maids leading the way, Wu Junwan arrived at a spacious courtyard. The arrangement seemed somehow familiar, but she could not remember where she had seen such a courtyard before.

Then, the maids continued to guide Wu Junwan toward the room inside.

Upon entering the room, a strong sense of déjà vu came over her again. There were some red curtains inside the room separating the inner chamber from the outer chamber, and a special fragrance wafted through the air.

At that moment, Wu Junwan realized where she had seen this scene before.

Wasn't this the sleeping quarters of the Yue Emperor?

The layout inside the room was almost identical to that of the Yue Emperor's sleeping quarters.

Chapter 627: What Does the Prince Mean?\_1

...

Seeing the layout of the room in front of her, Wu Junwan was somewhat baffled, not knowing what North Prince was up to.

Wu Junwan then lifted the red curtain and stepped into the inner room, only to find, just as she had thought, that the decor within was almost identical to that of the Yue Emperor's Palace, down to the last detail.

Even the patterns on the cotton quilts and bed sheets were the same.

Wu Junwan had a look of confusion on her face.

Just then, a maid spoke up, "Your Majesty, the hot water is ready. After your long journey, you must be exhausted. Why not take a hot bath to ease your fatigue?"

Wu Junwan snapped back to reality, and without much thought, replied, "Alright."

Subsequently, Wu Junwan made her way to the bathhouse, and as she entered, she was startled to discover that the layout of the bathing pool was strikingly similar to that of the Yue Emperor, with the only difference being that this bathhouse was much smaller compared to the Yue Emperor's, though the layout was almost identical.

With the attendants' help, Wu Junwan shed her clothes and slowly stepped into the pool.

Inside the bathing pool, the steam was rising, creating an utterly dreamlike atmosphere. After entering the pool, Wu Junwan felt the fatigue of many days dissolve in an instant, and in her hazy state, she thought she saw the moonlight.

She did not know how much time had passed before she finally regained full consciousness. Only then did she realize she was alone in the bathing pool, without the Yue Emperor. It had all been an illusion.

Mainly because the scene was all too familiar, combined with the soporific effect of the hot water, she had experienced an illusion.

After coming to her senses, Wu Junwan promptly rose from the pool, and the maids hastened to bring towels to attend to her, some drying her body while others brought clothes for her to dress.

When Wu Junwan saw the clothes the maids were holding, she was stunned all over again. The clothes in their hands were identical to the Empress's Phoenix Robe, worn by the Yue Emperor.

Although she did indeed wish to wear the Empress's Phoenix Robe, she had never imagined herself wearing it under such circumstances.

Just as a maid was about to dress her in the Phoenix Robe, Wu Junwan immediately stopped them and asked, "A Phoenix Robe? Where did this come from?"

The maid serving her replied, "Your Majesty, it was specially made by orders of the Prince."

Wu Junwan was even more perplexed internally, wondering what the North Prince meant by this, having maids address her as the Empress and dressing her in a Phoenix Robe.

Despite her confusion, Wu Junwan ultimately lifted her arms, allowing the maids to drape the Phoenix Robe over her.

Somehow, the robe seemed to possess a bewitching quality that made it impossible for her to refuse.

Once robed in the Phoenix Robe, Wu Junwan returned to her bedroom, where she approached the dressing table.

In front of the dressing table was a massive full-length mirror, which was quite different from the Empress's chambers in the Yue Imperial Palace.

The mirrors in the North Country were glass mercury mirrors, hence very clear. Wu Junwan had long been familiar with mirrors from North Country as they were very popular and favored by noble young ladies across various kingdoms.

However, Wu Junwan had only ever encountered handheld mirrors; this was her first experience with a mirror of this kind.

After admiring her reflection in the Phoenix Robe for a while in the mirror, Wu Junwan sat down at the dressing table, and the maids began to tend to her hair.

After a short while, a maid suddenly brought over a Phoenix Crown for Wu Junwan to wear, at which Wu Junwan's eyebrows slightly raised, but this time she said nothing.

Since she was already dressed in the Phoenix Robe, wearing a Phoenix Crown made no difference. Although she did not understand why the North Prince would do this, she quite liked the attire.

She had long wanted to try on this ensemble but never had the opportunity. During her time in Great Yue, the Yue Emperor was the Empress, so she could not wear such attire. After returning to Great Wu, her father the Emperor was still alive, so it was even more inappropriate for her to wear it.

She had thought she would only get to wear the Phoenix Robe upon her own ascension to the throne—if ever she had not expected to don these garments so soon.

In the time that followed, Wu Junwan spent the entire evening in front of the mirror, admiring the outfit she was dressed in.

As dusk fell, the maids prepared a table full of delicacies for Wu Junwan, but she didn't eat much. She looked at the food on the table and then asked the maid beside her, "Is your Prince not in the Prince's Mansion?"

Wu Junwan felt a bit puzzled. Since she had entered Yan County, she hadn't caught a glimpse of Lu Chen.

Though she was a hostage, by all rights the North Prince should meet with her. Hadn't Lu Chen declared in her presence that Great Wu would send her to the North Country?

Now that those from the Great Wu dynasty had indeed sent her to the North Country, wasn't it time for him to come and humiliate her?

Upon hearing Wu Junwan's question, the maid answered, "Your Highness, the Prince is in the Prince's Mansion, but he has been busy with state affairs recently, dealing with them in his study room."

Wu Junwan didn't ask any further. She ate a little and then had the maids clear all the food from the table.

She then returned to the full-length mirror and fell into contemplation at her own reflection.

Once she calmed down, she began to speculate about Lu Chen's intentions, convinced that he didn't have her don the Phoenix Robe for a mere whim.

That young man must have an ulterior motive.

Could it be...

Just as Wu Junwan suddenly thought of something, a maid's voice suddenly came from the door, "Greeting the Prince!"

Then, a familiar voice reached Wu Junwan's ears, "You all may leave."

"Yes, Prince."

Immediately after, Lu Chen entered Wu Junwan's bedroom. He lifted the red curtain and stepped into the inner chamber.



The moment Lu Chen saw Wu Junwan, he was stunned.

The Phoenix Robe clung to Wu Junwan's body, accentuating every curve, from her slender waist to her ample hips, with flesh where it should be and slender where it should be slim, combined with Wu Junwan's dignified and beautiful aura, Lu Chen was utterly spellbound.

Seeing that Lu Chen had brazenly barged in, Wu Junwan was also taken aback. Although she had been staying in the North Prince Mansion, she was, after all, sent to the North Country as a hostage by Great Wu.

As the North Prince, how could Lu Chen simply enter her bedroom?

However, Wu Junwan didn't scold Lu Chen; instead, she directly asked, "What is the meaning of this, Prince?"

Coming back to his senses, Lu Chen smiled and counterquestioned, "How does Your Highness, the Empress, like the attire I have prepared for you? Do you enjoy it?"

Seeing Lu Chen address her as Empress, Wu Junwan was taken aback for a moment, but quickly recovered and then said, "Are you perhaps planning to make me the Emperor of Great Wu, using this as a pretext to interfere in the succession of Great Wu, and then take the opportunity to split Great Wu?"

"If that is the Prince's plan, then I must tell you that your scheme is likely to fail," Wu Junwan stated.

Wu Junwan had been pondering why Lu Chen would have her wear the Phoenix Robe, until just now when she suddenly understood.

History was not without instances where defeated nations sent hostages to their enemy states, who were then made emperors by the adversaries, often using it as a pretext to divide the nation and overtly interfere in their internal affairs, sometimes even proclaiming the hostage to be the legitimate ruler.

Although those hostages were mostly princes, Wu Junwan held a high position in Great Wu, so she could also be considered an heir, serving anyway as a pretext for the North Country to meddle in Great Wu's internal affairs.

Of course, these were all Wu Junwan's thoughts.

Chapter 628: Is the Prince planning to ruin my innocence today?\_1

Hearing Wu Junwan's speculation, Lu Chen laughed, "Empress, you worry too much. To me, the Empress has no political use whatsoever."

Wu Junwan frowned.

No political use?

This young man really knows how to lie without blushing.

If she were of no political use to North Country, then why would the North Prince have specifically ordered her to come to North Country as a hostage?

With that thought, Wu Junwan chuckled lightly, then said, "Prince, you really have a sense of humor. If you thought I was of no use, then why would you have me come to North Country as a hostage, and even have people make a phoenix robe for me?"

"Would North Prince really think I am a fool?"

Lu Chen smiled and then walked towards Wu Junwan. As he drew closer, Wu Junwan suddenly felt nervous, her heart thumping wildly.

Wu Junwan quickly took a deep breath, trying to ease her tension.

As a princess of Great Wu and already in her thirties, she had no reason to fear this young man who was more than a decade her junior.

Although that's what she thought, her heart still raced as Lu Chen continued to approach.

When Lu Chen was less than two steps away, he finally stopped, and Wu Junwan let out a sigh of relief.

At this moment, Lu Chen used the system to check Wu Junwan's personal profile.

[Name: Wu Junwan]

[Identity: Princess Wu of Great Wu, daughter of the Martial Emperor, friend of the Yue Emperor, 31 years old, possesses extremely high martial arts talent, her realm has reached the Master Realm, and she has developed feelings for the North Prince deep inside her heart. She often dreams of the North Prince at night. This time, as a hostage to North Country, she wants to do two things the most.

The first is to probe the secrets of North Country, preparing for her own ascension to the throne in the future, and the second is to see what is special about this young North Prince.]

[Score: 98]

[Favorability: 99]

Seeing Wu Junwan's favorability, Lu Chen's lips slightly curled up, not expecting Wu Junwan's favorability towards him to have reached ninety-nine, just a little short of the full mark.

It seemed that just one final step was needed, and Wu Junwan's favorability towards him would be complete.

At this time, Lu Chen said, "I merely stated that your majesty has no political use to me, not that you have no use to me at all?"

This...

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Wu Junwan was slightly startled. She had always believed that everything Lu Chen did was for political considerations, which is why her first thought about her value to the North Prince was in terms of political utility.

What did Lu Chen mean by his words?

No political use, but some other use?

What other use?

Just then, Lu Chen spoke, "To me, your greatest use, your majesty, is to bear my children."

With those words, Wu Junwan was completely stunned. "You!"

Wu Junwan was at a loss for words.

Lu Chen asked with a smile, "What did you want to say, your majesty?"

Wu Junwan snorted coldly, "Ridiculous, do you think I would believe your lies?"

As soon as Wu Junwan finished speaking, Lu Chen suddenly took a step forward, startling her, prompting her to hastily take a step back.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "Does Your Majesty really not see whether I am lying or not?"

A trace of barely noticeable panic appeared on Wu Junwan's face. During her last mission to North Country, Lu Chen boldly expressed his love for her, but at that time, she thought it was very likely that he was just teasing her.

Firstly, Lu Chen is a man with great ambitions, and his mind couldn't possibly be focused entirely on women. Despite appearing to be frivolous on the surface, in reality, he might be a very profound person, at least that was Wu Junwan's opinion of Lu Chen.

Wu Junwan hadn't expected Lu Chen to say such things to her again, and his gaze was burning with intensity, giving the impression that he wasn't lying.

Lu Chen's gaze was too impassioned, filled with desire for possession.

Having ascended to a high position, Wu Junwan had long since learned to read people, and she immediately perceived the intent in Lu Chen's gaze.

Wu Junwan then said, "Prince is quite the jester. If the Prince truly wishes for me to bear you children, why not directly propose a marriage alliance to the Great Martial Royal Family?"

Instead of answering Wu Junwan's question, Lu Chen said, "As intelligent as Your Majesty is, I believe you can certainly deduce why I didn't propose a marriage alliance, but instead, Your Majesty came to North Country as a hostage."

Wu Junwan immediately realized, if they were united through marriage, North Country and the Great Martial Royal Family would become relatives, and thereafter, the Martial Emperor would

become North Prince's father-in-law. Should North Prince ever decide to lead troops against Great Wu, that would be an attack on his own father-in-law, and North Prince would lose moral standing.

Thus, it turns out North Prince indeed harbors the ambition to unify the realm!

Wu Junwan then said, "Since North Prince didn't propose a marriage alliance, then I am a hostage here. Could it be that North Prince intends to extend his devilish claws towards me, a hostage? If word of this were to spread, I fear North Prince's reputation..."

Wu Junwan hadn't finished her sentence when she was interrupted by Lu Chen, "Your Majesty, you should be well aware that my reputation has never been good to begin with."

Wu Junwan's gaze faltered; indeed, North Prince's reputation had never been good.

Quickly changing the subject, Wu Junwan said, "I am somewhat puzzled. Why does the Prince insist on having me wear the Phoenix Robe and have people address me as 'Empress'? You even refer to me in the same manner."

Lu Chen replied, "The reason is quite simple. Because it's your wish, isn't it? You wished to be the Empress, so I am fulfilling it for you."

"Of course, there is another reason."

Wu Junwan pressed, "What reason?"

Lu Chen, eyes fixed on Wu Junwan's mature and mesmerizing face, corners of his mouth slightly lifted, said, "I have a particular interest in the status of 'Empress', so I wanted you to play the part."

Wu Junwan did not grasp the meaning behind Lu Chen's words, but seeing his smile, she knew that whatever he meant was certainly not good.

At this moment, Lu Chen took another step forward, and Wu Junwan, out of instinct, retreated again.

Wu Junwan still couldn't believe that Lu Chen was truly planning to do something to her.

"Is the Prince planning to ruin my purity today?"

Lu Chen said, "Your Majesty has guessed correctly."

No sooner had he spoken than Lu Chen took another step forward, and Wu Junwan, frightened, stepped back again.

Although she had initially thought about approaching Lu Chen to extract secrets from Great Wu, she hadn't expected that on her very first day in North Prince Mansion, North Prince would intend to have relations with her, caught completely unprepared.

As Lu Chen moved forward step by step, Wu Junwan retreated in kind until she reached the edge of the bed, with nowhere else to go.



Lu Chen was now staring intently into Wu Junwan's eyes, her face showing a faint blush and a touch of panic.

Usually poised and aloof in her lofty position, Wu Junwan suddenly seemed like a little girl before Lu Chen.

Chapter 629: Is the Prince Mocking Me?\_1

Seeing Lu Chen continue to approach and having nowhere else to retreat, Wu Junwan grew even more panicked, as her heart raced crazily and her cheeks became abnormally burning hot.

For some reason, looking at the young man before her, Wu Junwan felt completely unable to harbor any thoughts of resistance in her heart.

As Lu Chen was about to reach her, Wu Junwan immediately threatened, "If Your Highness really makes a move on me, I guarantee that you will regret it!"

Lu Chen said with an unconcerned expression, "Regret? Then, Your Majesty, why don't you tell me where I'll be regretting?"

At this, Lu Chen took another step forward, his leg almost touching Wu Junwan's Phoenix Robe. Wu Junwan's body instinctively leaned back slightly, trying to maintain some distance from Lu Chen.

She then said, "I am the Hostage of Great Wu; if Your Highness lays a hand on me, it will surely incur my imperial father's wrath. It will also reveal Your Highness's true nature to all the great dynasties, and from then on, no defeated kingdom will send hostages to the North Country, and they may even join forces against the North Country."

Lu Chen laughed and said, "What if I don't care about any of that?"

Wu Junwan was momentarily stunned.

This young man must be blinded by lust!

How dare he lay hands on a hostage; that would be breaking the treaty. If the other kingdoms learn of the North Prince's actions, they will definitely no longer trust the North Country's promises.

Just then, Lu Chen lifted his hand and directly grasped Wu Junwan's delicate chin. Wu Junwan's heart skipped a beat. She wished to step back, but she had already reached the edge of the bed, with no way to retreat further; to move back any more would be to fall onto the bed.

At that moment, Wu Junwan suddenly thought of something and, instead of continuing to show a panicked demeanor, she let out a cold laugh.

"Is Your Highness mocking me? I don't believe that Your Highness dares to do that sort of thing to me."

In her heart, Wu Junwan still couldn't believe that Lu Chen would dare to sleep with her. After all, she had once been the Princess Junwan of Great Wu, and although her title had been revoked, the common people of Great Wu still recognized her as their Princess.

If the North Prince dares to defile her, and should the common people of Great Wu come to know of it, they would surely be outraged. Even if the current Great Wu is helpless against the North Country, if the North should occupy Great Wu's lands in the future and seek to rule over it, they will certainly encounter fierce resistance from the common people of Great Wu.

This would be detrimental to the North Prince's plans for unifying the continent.

For the North Country, the greatest challenge isn't in vanquishing a nation, but in how to govern it afterward.

Moreover, there is another danger in what Lu Chen is doing; if he forcibly takes a woman from Great Wu, wouldn't it imply that the soldiers of the North Country are just as ruthless?

As goes the leader, so follow the soldiers.

This would make the common people of the other kingdoms even more fearful of the soldiers of the North Country, and the North's future attempts at unification would surely meet with even more intense resistance.

When passing through Youping County, Wu Junwan had heard that to rule the region, the soldiers from the North Country had treated the locals especially well and refrained from looting or slaughtering. Clearly, Lu Chen was trying to establish a positive image to lessen the hostility of the commoners towards the North Country.

Lu Chen was able to train an army that was strictly disciplined and did not harm the common folk, which proved that he himself was a man of extreme self-control. Therefore, Wu Junwan believed that Lu Chen would surely not do that sort of thing to her.

As for why Lu Chen was putting on a lecherous act in front of her, it was most likely to mock her, to humiliate her.

When Wu Junwan spoke, Lu Chen was taken aback for a moment.

Mocking?

Even now, Wu Junwan thought he was mocking her?

Lu Chen then said, "Whether it's mockery or not, Your Majesty will find out soon enough."

"It's already so late into the night, so let this prince attend to Your Majesty's bedtime."

As he finished speaking, Lu Chen suddenly reached out and encircled Wu Junwan's slender waist, his large hand resting on her hips.

Seeing that Lu Chen was truly making a move on her, Wu Junwan became incredibly panicked in that moment. Was this young man serious?

As Wu Junwan raised her hand to push against Lu Chen's chest, attempting to struggle, Lu Chen's other hand seized Wu Junwan's jade arm.

Wu Junwan twisted her body for a while, but finding herself unable to break free, she stopped struggling.

At this point, Lu Chen's large hand at Wu Junwan's waist was gently stroking her back. Wu Junwan was dressed in a silk Phoenix Robe, which was extremely soft and smooth to the touch, making it very comfortable.

Touched so softly by Lu Chen, Wu Junwan felt a strange sensation within her heart. Seeing that Wu Junwan was not continuing to struggle, Lu Chen smiled and asked, "Your Majesty, why don't you continue to resist?"

With her face flushed, Wu Junwan stared hard at Lu Chen and said, "You are a Grandmaster, and I am but a Grandmaster. If you are determined to do that sort of thing to me, I am no match for you."

Lu Chen smiled and asked, "So, Your Majesty has accepted her fate?"

At this moment, Wu Junwan felt as if her heart was about to leap out of her chest; her body had completely begun to stir. She didn't know what was going on; why did she feel so strange when she was near this man?

She had never been so close to a man before, so this was the first time she felt this unusual sensation.

This feeling did not make her uncomfortable.

Seeing Lu Chen from such a close distance, Wu Junwan noticed that he seemed even more handsome and extraordinary. A nameless impulse in her heart made her want to lean closer to him.

At this moment, holding the soft and delicate body of Wu Junwan and smelling the mature and beautiful scent emanating from her, Lu Chen's body also became restless.

He was unable to tolerate it any longer and desperately wanted to possess her right then and there, yet he still forcefully restrained himself and did not start by tearing off her clothes.

Suddenly, the room became quiet, with Lu Chen gazing into Wu Junwan's eyes. Both fell into silence, with a glimmer of desire appearing in their eyes.

After an indeterminate amount of time, Lu Chen finally said, "I've heard that when you visited Great Jue, you often cuddled in bed with the Yue Emperor?"

Upon hearing this sudden statement, Wu Junwan was slightly stunned. Indeed, every time she went to Great Jue, she had to share a bed with the Yue Emperor. However, she did not know how Lu Chen came to know this.

Wu Junwan coldly replied, "What does that have to do with you?"

With a slight smile, Lu Chen responded, "I wonder how it feels when Your Majesty and the Yue Emperor cuddle together?"

Hearing this, Wu Junwan's brows furrowed slightly, but she said nothing.

Seeing the beautiful woman frowning, with an air of cold elegance, Lu Chen could no longer hold back. He leaned down and sealed Wu Junwan's lips with a kiss.

"Mmm mmm mmm..."

Wu Junwan's mind went blank. She had not expected Lu Chen to suddenly launch a surprise attack. Instinctively wanting to struggle, she suddenly found that the skill in her body seemed to be restrained.

After kissing Wu Junwan's lips, Lu Chen slowly wrapped his arms around her waist and laid her on the bedstead. While his mouth kissed her, his hands roamed over Wu Junwan's body.

Once Wu Junwan came back to her senses, she cursed Lu Chen in her heart.

This detestable young man, he truly intended to sleep with her!

Despite their age difference, he actually found interest in her body!

Although she cursed Lu Chen in her mind, Wu Junwan's body couldn't help but cooperate with Lu Chen.

The feeling of kissing Lu Chen made Wu Junwan unable to stop; she felt her entire body come alive, extremely excited; she had never felt this way before.

Chapter 630: Princess Junwan Says She's in a Bad Mood\_1

Wind Cloud Court.

Mu Zixuan was looking at the account books, and the other wives and concubines of Lu Chen were still in the Wind Cloud Hall and hadn't left.

They had already eaten dinner, but tonight's dinner was early, and it wasn't completely dark yet, so they didn't immediately return to their own courtyards.

At this moment, Xiao Wenyao asked, "I heard that the Princess of Great Wu has arrived?"

Wang Qingci was holding a child, comforting the child while saying, "She has indeed moved into the Prince's Mansion. Why, is Yaoyao interested in her?"

Xiao Wenyao said, "Then the Prince must have gone to her room, right?"

Zhou Youyou said, "The Prince left in such a hurry just now; he definitely went to her place."

Chu Qingli then said, "What are you discussing this for? If he went, he went. That's just the kind of person he is, and it's not like you haven't known him for just one day."

At this time, Lin Wanyun said, "That Princess has only been in the North Country for one day, and besides, she's here as a Hostage. If the Prince gets involved with her tonight, and word gets out, I'm afraid it could tarnish the Prince's reputation."

Chu Qingli indifferently said, "His lechery is already well-known, he already doesn't have a good reputation to begin with, so there's nothing to fear from others speaking about it."

Hearing Chu Qingli say this, Lin Wanyun thought to herself, that's also true; it seems another woman is about to be conquered by that little rascal.



...

Princess Junwan was kissing a man for the first time. Under Lu Chen's kiss, Princess Junwan's mind quickly became foggy. She had lived for over thirty years and had never felt this strange sensation before, which instantly made her sink into it.

After who knows how long, Princess Junwan, still hazy in consciousness, sensed her shoes being removed from her feet, and the next moment, she was moved onto the bed.

Princess Junwan opened her misty eyes, wanting to see what was happening, but the next moment, she heard a ripping sound – her Phoenix Robe seemed to have been torn apart.

Princess Junwan's heart jolted. She suddenly widened her eyes, and just as she was about to say something, Lu Chen pressed down on her again, once more sealing her enticing red lips.

"Mmph!"

"Mmmmm..."

Princess Junwan struggled weakly for a while, realizing it was futile; she was already powerless, and struggling now was utterly useless.

In order to fully conquer her, Lu Chen subsequently used the Rejuvenating Skill, channeling Spiritual Power to heal the pain in Princess Junwan's body, making her feel no discomfort at all.

Princess Junwan was incredibly shocked inside. It was her first time hearing that Lu Chen possessed such a method. Without the pain, her mind quickly became dazed.

Princess Junwan couldn't accept being thoroughly devoured by this young man; although her skill had been sealed, she still had a trick up her sleeve. She could actively manipulate her meridians, causing all her muscles to tense through her meridians, which might allow her to break free from Lu Chen.

After a little while, Lu Chen felt something different in Princess Junwan's body. He slowly lifted his chest and looked at her, puzzled.

The dignified and elegant Princess Junwan had a seductive look on her face, but her two eyes were fixed sternly on Lu Chen.

Lu Chen chuckled lightly, then said, "I didn't expect Your Majesty to have such tricks up her sleeve, impressive indeed!"

Seeing that Lu Chen had really gotten up, Princess Junwan thought her plan had worked. She sneered and said, "Prince, is that all you've got?"

"Trying to conquer me, what a joke!"

Hearing Princess Junwan's provocative words, Lu Chen didn't say anything. His lips curled slightly; truly the Princess of Great Wu, to still be so proud even after losing her purity.

But maybe Princess Junwan was underestimating him a bit too much. Although he indeed hadn't withstood her tactics, things were far from over.

Just as Princess Junwan was feeling smug in her belief that the North Prince was nothing special, Lu Chen bent down once more, sealing Princess Junwan's red lips again.

"Mmmmm..."

Princess Junwan's eyes widened, almost in disbelief.

Princess Junwan soon realized she was wrong, horribly wrong. Her little trick was utterly ineffective against Lu Chen; on the contrary, it made him very pleased.

...

Early morning.

A ray of sunshine entered the inner courtyard of the North Prince Mansion, and the wives and concubines of Lu Chen were already up. After having breakfast, those with work busied themselves with it, and those without work headed to the Wind Cloud Court.

At this time, Chu Yuqin also arrived at the Wind Cloud Court. Just as she entered, a maid hurried into the courtyard.

"Greetings to the Princess Consort, and to Madam Chu."

Mu Zixuan, who was in the pavilion, glanced at the maid and asked, "What's the matter?"

The maid replied, "My lady, the entourage of Princess Junwan of Great Wu would like an audience with their princess."

Hearing this, Chu Yuqin said, "You can just go and inform the Prince directly."

The maid's cheeks flushed as she said, "The Prince is still in Princess Junwan's room. I'm afraid of disturbing them."

Mu Zixuan and Chu Yuqin were both momentarily stunned, then Mu Zixuan suggested, "How about you just tell the attendants to go back for now?"

Chu Yuqin remarked from the side, "Zixuan, if we send them away directly, they might suspect that the North Prince Mansion has placed Wu Junwan under house arrest."

Although Wu Junwan had come to the North Country in the capacity of a hostage and couldn't roam freely, she still had a certain degree of liberty. If the North Country didn't even allow Wu Junwan to meet with her retainers, it would be no different from house arrest, and Great Wu would certainly be suspicious.

Once Chu Yuqin explained this, Mu Zixuan also realized the issue. Wu Junwan had just arrived at the North Prince Mansion the day before, and now denying her any visitors seemed rather indefensible.

But at this time, Lu Chen was probably in the midst of a tussle with Wu Junwan. Knowing Lu Chen as they did, they knew he likely wouldn't let her go until tonight at the earliest.

To someone like Wu Junwan, with her dignified elegance and cold stunning beauty, Lu Chen was sure to be utterly enamored.

Chu Yuqin then said, "I'll go ask Chen'er and see how he intends to deal with this."

Mu Zixuan replied, "Thank you for the trouble, Sister Chu."

Mu Zixuan didn't want to disturb Lu Chen while he was likely having a good time. Of all the people in the North Prince Mansion, only Chu Yuqin had some sway over Lu Chen, so it was best for Chu Yuqin to approach him.

Chu Yuqin then turned and followed the maid who had come to report, heading towards the courtyard where Wu Junwan was staying. Upon reaching the outside of Wu Junwan's room, Chu Yuqin heard some strange noises.

"Your Majesty, how is my strength?"

"Spare... me..."

"Weren't you very arrogant yesterday?"

"I was wrong..."

"Still addressing yourself as 'this palace'? Didn't I tell you that you're now the Empress?"

"I admit my mistake..."

...

Upon hearing these words, Chu Yuqin curled her lips, seemingly confirming what that bitch Wang Qingci had said—Lu Chen really did enjoy playing such games.

At that moment, Chu Yuqin coughed and then spoke, "Chen'er, the attendants of the princess would like to see her. What do you think should be done?"

Soon, Lu Chen's voice came from the room, "Huh... Madam Chu, just tell those people that their princess is in a bad mood right now and doesn't want to see them. Ask them to come back tomorrow."

This...

Chu Yuqin thought to herself, would this work?

"Alright, I understand," she responded.

Afterwards, Chu Yuqin turned and headed towards the entrance of the Prince's Mansion, not sure if she could fool those people, but still intending to try.

Before long, Chu Yuqin reached the entrance and saw the people from Great Wu, including Hu Shu.

Chu Yuqin directly told them, "Your princess said she's in no mood to see anyone right now and asked you to come find her tomorrow."

Upon hearing Chu Yuqin's words, everyone at the door was taken aback.

In a bad mood?

Could it really be that she wouldn't see them just because she was in a bad mood? Or could it be that their princess had been placed under house arrest by the North Prince Mansion?

Hu Shu frowned and then asked, "Did the princess really say that?"

Chu Yuqin answered, "You'll know when you see her tomorrow. She is indeed in a bad mood."

Hu Shu then refrained from asking further, "This old one understands. Please convey our message that I will visit her tomorrow."

"Alright," said Chu Yuqin.

With that, Hu Shu led the people from the Princess Mansion away.

As those people left, Chu Yuqin breathed a sigh of relief, her heart filled with worry, uncertain if she had managed to deceive them.

But then again, even if they met Wu Junwan tomorrow, Wu Junwan certainly wouldn't dare tell them about having her virginity taken, would she?