

Es. Benefits 631

Chapter 631: How Does the Prince Plan to Deal with Me?_1

At dusk, a strand of crimson twilight crept through the window, casting its glow on people's backs.

Lu Chen leaned against Wu Junwan's jade-like back, their fingers interlocked, with Wu Junwan's hands placed on either side of her head.

After a long silence between them, Wu Junwan finally broke the quiet, "This palace is quite curious, Prince, what kind of Cultivation Technique do you practice?"

After being tossed around for so long, Wu Junwan had finally come to her senses, and she had realized the terror of Lu Chen.

Not only did Lu Chen possess the means to heal people's wounds, he could even help someone enhance their skill. He had infused her with a considerable amount of skill, enabling her to break through and become a Grandmaster.

Such methods, she had never heard of before.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "I've already told you, you must think of yourself as the Empress."

Hearing this, Wu Junwan thought of the events that had transpired from last night until just now, and she snorted coldly, "The Prince really has a particularly nasty taste!"

She had finally understood why Lu Chen had prepared the Phoenix Robe for her and treated her like the Empress. This young man simply had a peculiar fetish for the identity of the Empress. It was no wonder that last night Lu Chen had told her of his interest in the Empress.

"Prince, are you really not afraid such actions will ruin your reputation?"

Lu Chen buried his face in the disheveled hair of Wu Junwan and took a deep breath before saying, "Haven't I already said that my reputation can't get any worse? There is no room for it to decrease any further."

"If you go to the main streets of Yan County now and ask anyone about my lechery, they will all surely say I am fond of beautiful women."

"For someone as dignified, elegant, and mature in beauty like Your Majesty, it's quite normal to be taken by me."

Hearing this, Wu Junwan had nothing left to say. Lu Chen's attitude was now that of a dead pig not fearing scalding water, completely indifferent.

Wu Junwan said coldly, "To fancy even me, a woman over a decade your senior, your tastes are indeed unique, Prince."

Lu Chen whispered in her ear, "So what if you are over a decade older? I like a mature woman like you."

Wu Junwan fell silent.

What had happened, had happened; whatever she said or did was of no use now.

And she hadn't really suffered a loss; at most, she had compromised morally since she had not yet married and her purity had been destroyed.

But for someone like her who valued power, the purity of the body wasn't really worth anything. In the royal family, some princesses played around much more than she did, not knowing how many male consorts they had nurtured; even those married princesses who wouldn't let their princess's husbands share the bed would have other men serve them.

She'd just consider it being served by a male consort for a day and a night.

The older one gets, the lower the sense of morality becomes, and Wu Junwan was not greatly constrained in her heart.

Key to her was that, for the first time, she had experienced those special sensations, and her Realm had even been lifted to the Grandmaster Realm because of it—something she had never anticipated at the beginning.

For someone in her high position who favored the tally of gains and losses, if the benefits were considered, sleeping with the North Prince was a sure gain without loss.

Seeing that Wu Junwan had fallen silent, Lu Chen blew a breath into her ear and then asked, "What's the matter, why have you suddenly gone quiet?"

Wu Junwan said, "What does the Prince plan to do with me now?"

Lu Chen asked in puzzlement, "Deal with you? Why should there be any need to deal with you?"

Wu Junwan said, "Prince, daring to do such things to me, a hostage, proves that the Prince has completely disregarded Great Wu. It also indicates that the Prince is ready to annex Great Wu."

"If the Prince doesn't want this incident leaked, there are only two options: place me under house arrest to prevent me from meeting with Great Wu's people, or kill me in secret."

Lu Chen snorted with laughter, then responded, "You have quite the imagination. How could I possibly do such a thing to my own woman?"

"No matter what happens in the future, and regardless of whether North Country and Great Wu will go to war again, your destiny is to bear my children here in the North Country."

At this point, Lu Chen gently bit Wu Junwan's ear, then continued, "I am very fond of your body; how could I possibly bear to kill you?"

Upon hearing the words of this young man, Wu Junwan felt a strange sensation within her. She didn't know what it was, but it made her feel complicated; she was sad, yet there was a tinge of joy.

Wu Junwan chuckled and said, "So the rumors about you have always been true. You really are a lecher. It's laughable that I once thought your lechery was just a front for the bigger picture."

"Has the Prince never considered that throughout the history of great dynasties, lecherous emperors almost always come to a bad end?"

People usually associate lechery with "incompetence," so in their minds, lecherous emperors often lead to the downfall of their nations, or they lose their grip on power and the country ends up in chaos.

At least in the eyes of the current emperors, none seem to be lecherous. Of course, that was just Wu Junwan's opinion.

At this moment, Lu Chen said with a smile, "There is no emperor in this world who isn't lecherous. To be precise, there are no men who aren't. Look at the emperors of the great dynasties now; which one doesn't have dozens, if not hundreds, of women in his harem?"

"Take your Emperor father, for example. Would you dare say he's not lecherous? If he weren't, could he have fathered so many children?"

Wu Junwan wanted to refute Lu Chen's words, but found herself speechless as the words reached her lips.

Lu Chen continued, "You want to be Empress so badly only for the power that title holds. Haven't you thought about what you would do once you had that power?"

"Once you become a ruler, do you intend to spend your life dealing with state affairs in the study and never indulge in anything else, pouring all your energy into governance?"

"I'm not such a selfless person. I desire power for my own personal wants. Now that North Country has defeated Great Wu under my leadership, and brought you, a beautiful woman, back to North Country, how could I play the gentleman and not enjoy the fruits of victory? Junwan, you must not take me for a saint."

"If your father, the Emperor, had defeated a country and brought back their princess or empress, can you honestly claim he wouldn't lay a finger on them?"

Wu Junwan had no response.

Because Lu Chen was right; her father, the Emperor, might seem to have dedicated his life to war and expanding his territory, but he too frequently added the vanquished nations' beautiful women to his harem.

Though he appeared diligent in governance, it was not possible that his sole focus was for the benefit of the Great Wu Dynasty.

Seeing that Wu Junwan had fallen silent, Lu Chen gave a faint smile, then said, "I won't stop the people of Great Wu from seeing you, but I hope you understand that someday the great dynasties will unify, and only in the North Prince Mansion can your dream of empresshood continue."

"Did you not experience the joy of being an empress last night? There are not many women in this world who can be personally attended to by me."

On hearing Lu Chen's words, Wu Junwan, who had been silent, scoffed coldly, "The Prince has quite a sense of humor. Claiming possession over my body as though you have drawn the short straw."

Seeing that Wu Junwan had spoken again, Lu Chen said with a smile, "I never said I'm at a loss. After all, it's the first time I've met a woman whose cultivation skill is sealed yet can still actively control her meridians and tense up her body."

With that remark, Wu Junwan, who had just calmed down, suddenly felt an overwhelming sense of shame. She originally thought that she could stop Lu Chen with this tactic, but ironically, she ended up accommodating the man.

This "dog" isn't meant as an insult—it truly made no difference between him and an animal. She had lived for over thirty years, and although she knew something about the affairs of men and women, she had never heard of a man like Lu Chen.

Chapter 632: This guy actually wants me to have his baby!_1

After hearing what Lu Chen had said, Wu Junwan realized she had no place to call Lu Chen lecherous.

Because she was fundamentally the same kind of person as Lu Chen.

They were both people who wanted to grasp power.

The biggest difference between her and Lu Chen was that he had much more power than she did at the start, and Lu Chen enjoyed the company of beauties simply because he was using the power he had to do what he wanted.

If she had the same power as Lu Chen, even if she didn't seek male consorts, she would inevitably use that power to do some things for herself.

Wasn't one of the reasons her title of Princess Junwan was revoked precisely because she was accused of using her power for personal gain?

She had indeed done so; the treasures collected through the intelligence agency all ended up in Green Cloud Palace for her own use, and she had also amassed a great wealth through Qianhai Commercial Association. All of these were her ways of using power for personal gain.

At this moment, Wu Junwan didn't know how she should interact with Lu Chen, although her body had already been claimed by this young man, she didn't harbor any hatred towards him.

On the contrary, she found herself with the desire to keep this man by her side forever.

In fact, this wasn't a new thought. Long before, she had contemplated that after the Great Wu defeated North Country, she would capture Lu Chen and make him her male consort.

Unfortunately, the plan failed, and in the end, she became a sacrifice and was sent to North Country.

Although the process didn't go smoothly, the outcome was more or less the same; in the end, they became one.

And she was very satisfied with Lu Chen, it was just that she was no match for him and could only be overwhelmed by him.

Wu Junwan sighed internally, feeling a bit lost. Initially, she had planned to get close to Lu Chen, then extract North Country's secrets, and ultimately rise up to become the Empress of Great Wu.

But in just a day and a night, her lofty ambitions had vanished without a trace.

She wanted to be Empress for the power, but after her intimate encounters with Lu Chen, she realized that the best thing she could attain using power was doing that sort of thing with this young man.

This was not because she had fallen in love; she had held great power before, and had enjoyed all the benefits that came with it, except for that one experience. Lu Chen had made her experience an unprecedented happiness, instantly causing her to sink into it.

Now, the position of Empress didn't seem so important anymore.

As Wu Junwan pondered this, she quickly stopped herself from continuing down that path.

No, how could she have such a degenerate thought!

Although the current outcome was similar to what she had previously imagined, after all, she came to North Country as a hostage. To put it bluntly, she was just a spoil of war for this young man.

In the future, this young man could get tired of her and abandon her at any time. She had no status at all in front of this young man.

If she could not have the same power and status as the North Prince, then she would always be subdued by the North Prince.

She couldn't fall just for this young man's looks; she had to become someone with great power in her hands.

While Wu Junwan was having these thoughts, Lu Chen's large hand caressed her jade back and said, "Wanyan, a supreme beauty like you is truly irresistible."

Upon hearing these words, Wu Junwan immediately felt an immense sense of humiliation; she felt like an object, and Lu Chen's words felt like an insult to her.

At this moment, Wu Junwan suddenly thought of something and then asked, "You managed to make the room look like the Yue Emperor's quarters because North Country's spies have infiltrated the Yue Emperor's side, right?"

The Yue Emperor was, after all, Wu Junwan's good friend, so she was very worried about the Yue Emperor's situation. This young man had not only made a Phoenix Robe just like the Yue Emperor's, but even the layout of the bedroom resembled the Yue Emperor's chambers, which was quite horrifying.

Wu Junwan felt she needed to warn her good sister to be wary of the people around her. This young man was not to be trusted.

Moreover, Lu Chen had her wear the Empress's clothes for their intimate relations, and Wu Junwan vaguely felt that Lu Chen might see her as his own dear sister. This fellow might not only be coveting her body but also lusting after the Yue Emperor's.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "It's not easy to send someone to infiltrate the Great Jue Imperial Palace. My people have yet to enter it. The reason I know how the Yue Emperor's bedroom is laid out is that she personally sent someone to the North Country, and this person has always taken care of her daily life."

Hearing Lu Chen's answer, Wu Junwan paused for a moment, then said, "Impossible!"

Wu Junwan thought to herself, how could the person her dear sister sent to the North Country cooperate with the North Prince to do such things? Those from Great Jue must be aware of the relationship between her and their Emperor.

Lu Chen continued, "Your dear sister does not have good intentions. She sent a beauty to the North Country, trying to seduce me with her charms. The making of the Phoenix Robe and the arrangement of the bedroom were all done with the help of that beauty."

Upon hearing Lu Chen mention this, Wu Junwan suddenly thought of something.

She seemed to recall the Yue Emperor mentioning that once she had sent an exceptionally beautiful woman to the North Country to gather intelligence.

Could it be that woman?

If it was her, then it might make sense.

However...

Such a lecherous young man, that woman must have also fallen prey to the North Prince's hands. She wondered if her dear sister's plan to use beauty as a tactic could be considered successful?

This amorous young man, although fond of beautiful women, was unlikely to focus all his attention on one woman. Without his favor, it would probably not be easy to extract any confidential information about the North Country from him.

At that moment, Lu Chen let go of Wu Junwan's other hand, then wrapped both arms around her soft and delicate body, still lying on her back, "Wanyan, I helped you breakthrough to the Grandmaster Realm. Don't you think about how to repay me?"

Hearing this, Wu Junwan fell silent.

Repay him?

This young man really had thick skin.

Not only did he take her virginity, but now he actually expected repayment.

It wasn't like she asked him to elevate her Realm.

Seeing Wu Junwan didn't speak, Lu Chen said with a smile, "You don't know how to repay me, do you? In that case, how about this, you bear me a few hundred children, and we'll call it even."

At that, Wu Junwan couldn't help but speak up, "Prince, you really have a way with jokes. Setting aside whether I can become pregnant, I am the Princess Junwan of Great Wu. Even if I did carry your child, would you dare to let me give birth to it?"

If one day Lu Chen truly annihilated Great Wu, then she would become a remnant of the defeated kingdom. If she had a child, her child would carry the blood of the Great Martial Royal Family. Coupled with her own indomitable nature, Lu Chen might not dare to let her give birth to the child.

Lu Chen said with a smirk, "Whether you can become pregnant is my concern. Among my wives and concubines, there are female Masters who have borne me children and not just one."

"As for whether I'd dare to let you have the child, you needn't worry about that. As long as you can get pregnant, I dare to let you give birth," he said.

Wu Junwan was startled in her heart.

This young man couldn't be serious, could he?

No wonder he relentlessly pursued her day and night. Could it be that his whole purpose was to get her pregnant?

The bastard!

Wu Junwan suddenly felt a surge of anger. Currently, she herself was very confused, unsure how to establish herself in the North Country, let alone think about raising a child.

And this fellow actually wanted her to bear his children!

Chapter 633: Wu Junwan: Aren't You Afraid I Will Betray You?_1

"Does the Prince really think he has me at his mercy? Just because you want me to bear your child, am I obliged to do so?"

Wu Junwan certainly did not want to actually carry this young man's seed. If it were just a matter of sex, she could imagine Lu Chen as her male concubine in her heart.

If she truly ruined Lu Chen's child, and even bore him a child, wouldn't she become nothing more than a personal breeding tool for Lu Chen?

Her thoughts were simple—she could share a bed, but having a child was absolutely out of the question.

Upon hearing Wu Junwan's icy tone, Lu Chen smiled faintly, then whispered in her ear, "If I wanted to impregnate you, could you stop me?"

Just as Wu Junwan was about to say something, Lu Chen suddenly moved his body, leaving Wu Junwan utterly humiliated, "You!"

What Lu Chen said was indeed true; if he wished to impregnate her, it would be very difficult for her to stop him.

However...

Wu Junwan said coldly, "For a Grandmaster, disposing of a child doesn't seem to be a difficult task."

Lu Chen still did not take her words to heart, and he responded indifferently, "That is also simple. If you dare to do that, I'll just make you conceive again. For me, getting you pregnant is equally not a difficult task."

Upon hearing this, Wu Junwan said coldly, "Is the Prince not afraid that when the time comes, I will let my own child join the struggle for inheritance?"

Lu Chen replied with a smile, "Struggle for inheritance? With my strength, living for a thousand years is no problem. I don't believe I can't find a way to prevent such things from happening in these thousand years."

"To put it bluntly, you may not live as long as I do. As long as I am alive, you will never have the chance to cause trouble in the North Country."

"As for whether the grandchildren's generation will engage in struggles for inheritance, that has nothing to do with me anymore. I can only manage the affairs of my lifetime. If you outlive me, let alone having your child join the struggle for inheritance—I wouldn't be able to interfere even if you became Empress."

This...

After Lu Chen said this, Wu Junwan thought it over and felt there was some sense to his words. With Lu Chen's talent, breaking through the Heavenly Human Realm should pose no great challenge, and once he did, it was indeed possible for him to live for over a thousand years.

With this man around, her chances of getting away with any mischief were indeed very slim.

Wu Junwan asked, "Do you intend to keep me confined in your harem for a lifetime, like a caged canary?"

Lu Chen replied nonchalantly, "As I said, I won't stop you from interacting with anyone. You have a certain degree of freedom. If you truly desire power, I can also share some of it with you."

Wu Junwan found it hard to believe this young man's words. Was this young man really so generous?

After all, she was the Princess of Great Wu, and not long ago they were enemies. Even though she was now a hostage, she was still, nominally, the Princess of Great Wu. Why should Lu Chen trust her?

Was this young man so conceited?

Wasn't he afraid she might betray him one day?

Wu Junwan asked, "Aren't you afraid that one day I will betray you?"

No sooner had Wu Junwan finished speaking when Lu Chen, holding her waist, flipped her around to face him directly, and then he pressed down on her again, arching his chest, and looking down at her with a lofty demeanor, gazing into her mature and alluring face of peerless beauty.

"Why do you think I'm not afraid of your betrayal?"

Gazing into Lu Chen's eyes, Wu Junwan fell silent; how could she know where Lu Chen's confidence came from that she would not betray him.

Wu Junwan didn't consider herself a woman content with her lot. Although she might not look for another man behind Lu Chen's back, her yearning for power was insatiable. To gain power, she would surely commit acts detrimental to the North Country.

Seeing Wu Junwan fall silent without responding.

Lu Chen lifted his hand and caressed Wu Junwan's blushing cheeks while gently brushing aside her disheveled hair, tucking the stray locks behind her ears.

"The answer to this question, you will know in no more than a month. There's no need for me to say more now."

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"Why don't we make a bet? I'll bet that within one month you will fall deeply in love with me and won't be able to live without me."

As soon as these words came out, Lu Junwan chuckled lightly once again and then said, "So that is what Prince is thinking. Is Prince really under the impression that after sharing a bed with His Highness just once, I would be utterly submissive to you?"

"For me, the matter of men and women, though novel, does not dictate my actions."

Lu Chen said, "Oh? You're that confident? Then tell me, are you willing to bet or not?"

Junwan didn't immediately answer. She felt that something was amiss—was this young man truly so certain she would fall for him?

While she was indeed interested in him, it was absolutely impossible for it to escalate to love—after all, in the royal family, there are no feelings involved, only interests.

Lu Chen himself was from the Great Sum royal family; he was already of age and couldn't possibly be this naïve, not even understanding such basic truth.

Junwan always felt there might be some kind of plot hidden within.

After much thought, Junwan finally decided to take Lu Chen's bet. She wanted to see what Lu Chen was up to.

"I accept your challenge. How shall we bet?"

Lu Chen said with a smile, "If within a month, you don't call me darling, or tell me you love me, or say you like me or anything of that sort, I will give you the blueprints for the cannon."

"You've probably heard about the cannon before, right? It's the kind of weapon that defeated your Great Wu army."

Junwan's heart skipped a beat.

Cannon!!!

Her main goal in coming to North Country as a hostage was to obtain the blueprints for North Country's mysterious weapons, and she never imagined she would have the chance to get her hands on them so soon. She simply couldn't believe it was true.

Junwan said, "How do I know you won't go back on your word?"

Lu Chen said with a smile, "You don't have a choice now, do you? Besides, although I am libidinous, I am still a Prince, the ruler of a feudal state; it would be beneath me to renege on a promise."

Junwan said, "Fine, I accept your terms."

Lu Chen continued, "You agree so readily—don't you want to know what you'll have to pay if you lose?"

Junwan said with an icy expression, "I cannot lose!"

Junwan's tone was resolute. She had great confidence in herself. Though she fancied the man's body, she wasn't about to muddle the difference between right and wrong. Winning the bet would mean completing the mission her Sum Emperor father had entrusted to her; she was determined to take the gamble.

Lu Chen said, "If you lose, you will have to stay in my harem for life, bearing me sons and daughters, always making me your priority."

Junwan frowned slightly but ultimately said, "I agree, just hoping that Prince won't back out in the end."

The corners of Lu Chen's lips curved up slightly—an innocent beauty, indeed.

Let alone a month—in less than seven days, Junwan would lose.

At that moment, Junwan gazed into Lu Chen's eyes and asked, "Your Highness has been in my chambers for a day and a night. Isn't it time to leave?"

Feeling Junwan's burning yet velvety soft body, Lu Chen didn't want to let go at all.

Lu Chen responded indifferently, "Anyway, it's already dark, so let's just continue sleeping."

Junwan's mind went blank, "You..."

"Mmm..."

Before Junwan could finish speaking, Lu Chen leaned down once more and captured the beautiful woman's lips with a kiss.

Chapter 634: It's the subordinate's impatience, forgetting the master's plan_1

Princess Junwan and Lu Chen had not bet for even two hours when she regretted agreeing to the wager with Lu Chen; she soon realized why Lu Chen dared to stake the schematics of the cannons.

Lu Chen was too powerful; she simply could not fend him off. On several occasions, she almost called him darling; once she did, it would mean she had lost.

Princess Junwan couldn't understand how there could be such a terrifying man in this world.

In a mix of anxiety and exhilaration, Princess Junwan gradually lost herself.

Fortunately, in the end, she managed to hold onto her bottom line. She did not call Lu Chen darling, nor did she say words like 'I love you.'

Another morning dawned.

Princess Junwan looked at the light outside the bedroom, her whole being lost in thought. Even as a Grandmaster, she was no match for Lu Chen without her skill.

At that moment, the brute was still holding her in his embrace, but by now Princess Junwan couldn't even muster anger. She just lay on her side, looking at the red curtains outside.

After what felt like ages, Princess Junwan noticed Lu Chen awaken before speaking, "Yesterday, you said that my attendants would come to see me today. If you do not let me go, they might suspect you're holding me captive."

Princess Junwan was utterly at a loss with the man behind her and could only speak to him softly and gently, hoping he would spare her for the moment and allow her to meet with her attendants.

Upon hearing Princess Junwan's words, Lu Chen didn't hesitate to release her and then got up from the bed.

Seeing this, Princess Junwan was momentarily stunned. She had thought the man might cling to her for a while before letting go, but she hadn't expected him to release her so quickly today.

Had he reached his limit?

While Princess Junwan was thinking this, Lu Chen said, "We've sweated a lot these past few days, let's take a good bath."

Just as Princess Junwan was about to say something, Lu Chen spoke to the maids outside the red curtain, "Is the hot water ready?"

The maid waiting outside hurriedly replied, "Prince, the hot water in the bath is ready."

Upon hearing the maid's answer, Lu Chen immediately stretched out his arms and scooped Princess Junwan up in a princess carry before heading straight to the bathtub.

Princess Junwan initially wanted to struggle a bit but ultimately chose to give up. She was utterly powerless at the moment and struggling in front of this man was futile. She was more concerned about provoking his wild side later on.

It was better to stay docile in his arms. To avoid falling, Princess Junwan couldn't help but raise her jade arms and wrap them around Lu Chen's neck.

Soon the two entered the bathtub in the inner room. Maids carrying baskets of flowers kept throwing petals into the steaming hot water, filling the bathtub with the fresh scent of flowers.

At this moment, Lu Chen smiled at Princess Junwan and said, "Your Majesty, allow me to serve you well in your bath!"

Hearing this, Princess Junwan's delicate body couldn't help but tremble slightly as she quickly said, "No need."

Lu Chen laughed, "That won't do. As the Empress, how could you bathe alone? You must be served."

Before Princess Junwan could say anything, Lu Chen had already set her down beside the bathtub.

Then, water splashed in the bathtub, and they both thoroughly bathed.

By the time the two emerged dressed, it was already almost noon.

Even as a Grandmaster, Princess Junwan could not endure any longer. She did not feel any pain, just a sense of tiredness, not of the body, but of the heart.

Meanwhile, in a pavilion over a pond in the outer courtyard, Hu Shu and some of Princess Junwan's attendants were anxiously waiting. The people from the North Prince Mansion had said they would see Princess Junwan today, but it was almost noon, and she had yet to appear.

The North Prince Mansion had allowed them to enter, but only as far as the mansion itself. After they had entered, they had been confined to the pavilion in the middle of the pond, not allowed to go anywhere else.

The guards of the North Prince Mansion were also constantly watching them in the courtyard. Hu Shu sensed that the Realm of the guards at the entrance was all above Ninth Grade, and several among them were Grandmasters.

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Even though she, a Grandmaster, was not afraid of these Masters, the average skill of these guards proved that North Country had a multitude of high-level martial artists.

Not to mention the mysterious weapons of North Country, just looking at the skill level of their martial artists, it was evident that North Country already possessed the strength to establish its own dynasty.

At this moment, a worried voice from one of Princess Junwan's entourage whispered, "The Princess hasn't really been put under house arrest, has she?"

Another member of the entourage said, "After all, Princess Junwan is the Hostage of Great Wu, and the alliance with North Country has just been signed; North Prince wouldn't dare to do such a thing."

"Then why hasn't the Princess come to see us?"

"Perhaps the Princess..."

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While Princess Junwan's entourage was lost in discussion, a dignified and graceful beautiful woman entered the courtyard.

Seeing Princess Junwan appear, everyone instantly fell silent, and they spontaneously walked up to greet her.

"We pay our respects to Princess Junwan!"

Hu Shu asked, "Princess, are you alright?"

The moment Hu Shu finished speaking, he immediately noticed that something was off about Princess Junwan's aura, and soon her entourage did as well; after all, they were martial artists, and they were quite sensitive to changes in Junwan's aura.

The crowd looked at Princess Junwan in amazement, their faces filled with disbelief.

Princess Junwan said, "I apologize, Elder Hu, for making you wait."

Hu Shu, now somewhat incredulous, asked, "Princess, have you... have you broken through to the Grandmaster Realm?"

As these words were spoken, Princess Junwan's entourage also turned their gazes toward her. They had their suspicions, as the martial prowess emanating from Junwan was too overwhelming, but they were not certain that Junwan had indeed broken through to the Grandmaster Realm.

As everyone watched Princess Junwan with anticipation, she answered, "Yes, this humble one has indeed broken through to the Grandmaster Realm."

Upon hearing this, Princess Junwan's entourage became incredibly excited.

These individuals were all followers of Princess Junwan, believers in her potential to make a comeback. Their families, or the forces behind them, also supported Junwan's faction.

Ever since Princess Junwan's title had been revoked, they had been subjected to oppression from other factions. Their visit to North Country was a quest for an opportunity to rise again with Princess Junwan.

Unexpectedly, Princess Junwan had broken through to the Grandmaster Realm shortly after arriving in North Country.

At that moment, an excited retainer said, "Princess, now that you have broken through to the Grandmaster Realm, can we request the court to replace the Hostage?"

Although Great Wu had recently lost two Grandmasters, Grandmasters were still powerful forces in all the dynasties, and particularly because the Martial Emperor's court had lost two Grandmasters, they were all the more precious.

In the eyes of Princess Junwan's entourage, if the news of Princess Junwan becoming a Grandmaster were to reach Great Wu, the Martial Emperor would definitely negotiate with North Country to replace the Hostage and bring back Princess Junwan, now a Grandmaster.

However, at that moment, Princess Junwan said, "I was designated by North Prince himself to come to North Country as the Hostage; he won't let me leave North Country that easily. Besides, we have our own tasks to fulfill here in North Country, so let's discuss this matter after a year."

Upon hearing Princess Junwan's response, everyone immediately understood her intentions; they knew what she coveted most was North Country's secrets. Now that she had finally infiltrated North Prince Mansion, it was only natural that she didn't want to leave so soon.

The retainer who had just suggested replacing the Hostage said, "I recognize my error; I was too hasty and almost forgot Your Highness's plans."

Princess Junwan replied calmly, "It doesn't matter."

Hu Shu asked, "Princess, surely North Prince hasn't placed you under house arrest, has he?"

Princess Junwan answered, "No, I didn't meet you yesterday as I was on the verge of breaking through."

Chapter 635: Thank You Prince for Bestowing the Pill!_1

Hearing Princess Junwan's reply, everyone breathed a sigh of relief. Just yesterday, they had thought that Princess Junwan had been imprisoned and that it would be very difficult to see her again.

If it was going to be difficult to see Princess Junwan in the future, and they could not interact with her for intelligence sharing, they wouldn't know how to act or coordinate with Princess Junwan's plans.

At this time, an attendant asked, "Your Highness, besides allowing you to see us, has the North Prince also permitted you to leave the North Prince Mansion?"

After the attendant finished speaking, everyone's gaze fell once again on Princess Junwan.

Although they could now see Princess Junwan, they were, after all, in the North Prince Mansion, a place where they couldn't discuss more about their plans with her.

Only if Princess Junwan left the North Prince Mansion would they dare to discuss certain matters confidently.

Princess Junwan said, "The North Prince has not forbidden me from leaving the North Prince Mansion, it's just that my range of activities is limited within Yan County, and I cannot leave Yan County."

Hearing Princess Junwan's answer, everyone breathed a sigh of relief again. As long as she could leave the North Prince Mansion, they could simply find a room to converse in, which was preferable to being in the North Prince Mansion.

At that moment, Hu Shu's gaze lingered on Princess Junwan's stunningly beautiful face.

For some reason, Hu Shu always felt that Princess Junwan had undergone significant changes.

Princess Junwan's skin seemed to have become glossier, even more beautiful and enchanting, filled with the charm of a mature woman.

Hu Shu didn't think much of it, speculating that this must be due to Princess Junwan's breakthrough to the Grandmaster Realm.

After breaking through to the Grandmaster Realm, Princess Junwan surely expelled some impurities from her body, which is why her skin looked fairer.

It was then that Hu Shu suddenly remembered the task given to her by the Yue Emperor and directly addressed Princess Junwan, "Your Highness, before I came to the North Country, His Majesty asked me to investigate a matter. I wish to trouble Your Highness for assistance, if that may be possible?"

Hearing Hu Shu's words, Princess Junwan asked with curiosity, "What matter?"

As soon as she finished speaking, Princess Junwan immediately thought of the matter related to the phoenix robe and the bedchamber, and she immediately guessed that Hu Shu's concern was related to that woman.

Hu Shu then leaned close to Princess Junwan's ear and whispered, "His Majesty had sent a woman named Murong Xue'er to get close to the North Prince, and I would like to ask Your Highness's help to find out if this woman has ever shared a bed with the North Prince."

The Yue Emperor was eager to know if Murong Xue'er had managed to control Lu Chen, so she sent Hu Shu to Princess Junwan's side, not only for her protection but also to gather further intelligence about the North Country.

Hearing Hu Shu's request, Princess Junwan thought to herself that it indeed related to that woman.

Princess Junwan then said, "I can do that, I will find an opportunity to inquire."

Hu Shu promptly expressed her gratitude, "Then I will trouble Your Highness."

Princess Junwan replied, "Senior Hu, there's no need for formality."

At that moment, a female guard said, "Your Highness, now that you are alone in the North Prince Mansion without anyone to take care of you, why not speak to the North Prince and ask him to leave a few female guards to attend to you?"

After all, Princess Junwan was the esteemed Princess of Great Wu, sent to the North Country as a hostage. How could she have no one of her own by her side? Without her people around her, even passing messages would be extremely difficult.

Princess Junwan replied, "There's no need. The North Prince will not allow my people to stay in the North Prince Mansion."

If it was just monitoring her alone that would be fine, but if Princess Junwan's side had other people from Great Wu, the security work at the North Prince Mansion would significantly increase. Princess Junwan didn't believe the North Prince would allow her people to stay.

Princess Junwan continued, "You should all go back today. If there's anything in the future, I will have the maids of the North Prince Mansion notify you in advance."

"Next time, you don't need to come to the North Prince Mansion. If there's something to discuss, I will directly go to the Princess Mansion arranged for me by the North Prince."

This place was, after all, the North Prince Mansion, and they couldn't hold discussions here, so Princess Junwan did not intend to have her attendants come looking for her in the North Prince Mansion again.

Hu Shu and the others immediately understood Princess Junwan's intent, and they chorused, "Yes, Your Highness!"

Hu Shu spoke, "Then take care, Princess Junwan. Shall I lead them back to the Princess Mansion now?"

Princess Junwan nodded slightly and said, "Yes, go ahead."

Subsequently, Hu Shu led Princess Junwan's attendants away from the North Prince Mansion.

Watching their departing figures, Princess Junwan sighed softly, wondering if she could withstand the pressure and hold out for a month to obtain the cannon blueprints from Lu Chen's hands.

If she managed to get her hands on the blueprints of that mysterious weapon, then it would be worth it even if she had to share a bed with Lu Chen for the next half year.

Meanwhile.

In the North Prince Mansion, the study.

Lu Chen sat in the chair, browsing through the system prompts.

"Congratulations, host, for gaining another woman, reward obtained: Gatling blueprint."

"Host builds rapport with his consorts once, Qi Refinement Mantra experience points increase..."

"Host and consorts achieve telepathy ×20, reward: two Realm Breaking Pills."

...

"Host builds rapport with his consorts once, Qi Refinement Mantra experience points increase..."

"Host and consorts achieve telepathy ×10, reward: twenty Beauty Enhancement Pills (Preserving Beauty Pills)."

Looking at the system interface before him, Lu Chen fell into deep thought.

Who should receive the two Realm Breaking Pills?

To give them to his own women, or to his military generals?

Better to give them to the military generals. There are already two grandmasters in the inner court of the Prince's Mansion, there's no need to increase their number any further. In a year, he'd be heading south, and would need quite a few grandmaster military generals by then.

Wenren Lie has already broken through to the Grandmaster Realm, so he doesn't need the Realm Breaking Pill.

How about giving one to Xuanyuan Chen, and the other to Wei Siyuan.

Both were summoned by the system and were absolutely loyal to him, so there was no problem giving them the pills.

Furthermore, Wei Siyuan's navy had already been essentially established. Although it was made up of wooden steam warships, they could be used at a push. When heading south to assist the king in the future, the navy might play an important role.

With this thought, Lu Chen immediately spoke to the maid at the door, "Summon General Xuanyuan to the Prince's Mansion, and have the Brocade Guard notify Wei Siyuan to return to Yan County once."

"Yes, Prince!"

It wasn't long before Xuanyuan Chen arrived at the Prince's Mansion. At that moment, Wu Junwan was still in the outer court. When she saw a master clad in armor heading towards Lu Chen's study, her curiosity was piqued. She wanted to know what that military general was doing at the North Prince Mansion.

However, considering the sensitivity of her own status, Wu Junwan didn't follow directly. She stayed in a pavilion in the outer courtyard, pretending to sip tea while observing the situation in the North Prince Mansion's outer court.

At this very moment.

In the study.

After arriving at Lu Chen's study, Xuanyuan Chen saluted and said, "Your Highness!"

Lu Chen nodded slightly, "At ease."

Xuanyuan Chen asked, "May I know why Your Highness has summoned this subject?"

Lu Chen took out a Realm Breaking Pill and said directly, "This is a Realm Breaking Pill. After taking it, your strength will rise to the Grandmaster Realm."

Upon hearing this, Xuanyuan Chen was stunned.

The next moment, his eyes blazed with an eager light; he had been stuck at the Master Realm for quite some time.

Xuanyuan Chen was well aware that if he wanted to further attract the attention of the North Prince, he must prove his worth when the North Prince heads south to support the king. They would face the grandmasters of Great Sum, and even with powerful firearms at their disposal, using firearms alone wouldn't be enough to kill a grandmaster.

Therefore, if he wished to be of significant use, he must break through to the Grandmaster Realm.

He had been anxious about his inability to break through to the Grandmaster Realm, especially after learning that Wenren Lie had already done so. Wenren Lie and he were both from Great Yu City, but now Wenren Lie had broken through, and he had not.

Xuanyuan Chen, somewhat incredulous, asked, "Your Highness, is this Realm Breaking Pill for me?"

Lu Chen, with a smile, did not answer but directly tossed the Realm Breaking Pill to Xuanyuan Chen, who hastily caught it.

"Thank you for bestowing the pill, Prince!"

Lu Chen said, "I plan to establish another Synthetic Camp, which should include not only infantry and cavalry but also artillery. From now on, this unit will be under your command."

"As for the defense of Yan County, I intend to temporarily entrust it to your sister."

"What are your thoughts, General Xuanyuan?"

Chapter 636: How Many Secrets Does This Little Man Have?_1

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Xuanyuan Chen was stunned for a moment.

Lu Chen was willing to let him command a Synthetic Camp alone, and of course, he was overjoyed. The Synthetic Camp was the main force of the North Country, and in the event of war, it would immediately rush to the frontlines.

The Synthetic Camp of the North Country wasn't a camp in the modern sense but a term used for an army at that time.

A Synthetic Camp in the North Country had at least several hundred thousand soldiers. Leading a Synthetic Camp meant that Xuanyuan Chen would become the Main Commander of a main force from now on.

Although he had previously led the Black Cavalry, the Black Cavalry was only a part that coordinated with the main force in combat; he didn't have command authority.

Now in the North Country, aside from the North Prince, only those two Grandmasters from the polar regions and Mu Changtian held command authority.

Despite feeling pleased, Xuanyuan Chen still expressed his concern, "Seignior, Yunqi is just a Master, she may not be competent enough to defend the Capital city."

Even though Xuanyuan Yunqi was his sister, as a subordinate of the North Prince, he naturally had to consider matters from the North Prince's perspective. Xuanyuan Chen didn't believe his sister was capable of protecting Yan County properly.

Hearing Xuanyuan Chen's words, Lu Chen said with a light smile, "General Xuanyuan seems to underestimate his own sister too much."

"I have heard that she is valiant and skilled on the battlefield, possessing outstanding ability."

Mu Changtian would write to Lu Chen from time to time, not only to report on military affairs but also to update him on Xuanyuan Yunqi's performance.

Mu Changtian was a clever man; he naturally knew the relationship between Xuanyuan Yunqi and Lu Chen, so he described her performance in detail in his letters.

The reason why Lu Chen had Xuanyuan Yunqi come back to take on the responsibility of defending Yan County was mainly to train her ability to lead troops.

Compared to the Synthetic Camp, which had to engage in warfare abroad, the city defense troops of Yan County were much safer, and the number of soldiers was also significant, an ideal environment to train Xuanyuan Yunqi's leadership abilities.

As for whether he would let Xuanyuan Yunqi go onto the battlefield in the future, that would have to wait until she had broken through to the Grandmaster level.

At this moment, Xuanyuan Chen thought it over. With his father stationed in Yan County, his sister would be relatively safe there. It would also be good for her to come back.

Immediately afterwards, Xuanyuan Chen said, "I will follow the Seignior's arrangements!"

Lu Chen said, "Very well, then it's settled. General Xuanyuan, quickly take the Realm Breaking Pill."

"Yes, Seignior!" As soon as he finished speaking, Xuanyuan Chen placed the Realm Breaking Pill into his mouth and swallowed it.

Moments later, Xuanyuan Chen felt a surge in his skill; then a wave of Spiritual Energy erupted from his body, sweeping through the entire study.

Feeling that he had indeed made a breakthrough, Xuanyuan Chen became even more excited, but he also realized his current predicament. Having broken through to the Grandmaster Realm, his body had expelled a lot of impurities, and he was covered in filth.

Just as Xuanyuan Chen was about to speak, Lu Chen said, "General Xuanyuan, go back and clean yourself first. Once the affairs of the Synthetic Camp are settled, I will call for you."

"Yes, Prince!"

"Your servant will take his leave!"

Xuanyuan Chen hurriedly left the study, fearful that his stench might offend Lu Chen.

When Xuanyuan Chen reached the outer courtyard, Wu Junwan, who was in the pavilion outside, saw him again.

Confusion instantly appeared on Junwan's face.

Grandmaster?

What is going on?

Wasn't this person at the Master Realm when he went there a moment ago? How did he become a Grandmaster as soon as he came out?

How did the North Prince accomplish this?

Although Wu Junwan herself had broken through to the Grandmaster Realm overnight, she had completed this process in bed with the North Prince; she didn't believe this Military General had done the same thing with the North Prince.

Wu Junwan's beautiful eyes lifted slightly, her willow brows creased as she thought to herself, the North Prince must have other methods of enhancing one's strength.

How many secrets does this young man have!

Not only does he possess such a terrifying weapon, but now he can actually elevate a Master directly to the Grandmaster Realm!

If the North Country has enough Masters, then it could have more Grandmasters. In that case, even without that mysterious weapon, other dynasties wouldn't be able to compete with the North Country.

Wu Junwan is becoming more and more pessimistic about the prospects of the Great Wu Dynasty as she suddenly felt that this young man might indeed unify the entire world one day.

If that day really came, what should she do?

Wu Junwan fell into deep thought.

...

The Great Xia Dynasty.

The East Palace.

Prince Lu Yi and a host of court officials were discussing something in the hall.

At that moment, Prince Lu Yi spoke, "Although Father has appointed me as Crown Prince, my influence is confined within the court and fundamentally cannot sway the conduct of the Seigniors in outlying regions."

"Now that Zhao King has annexed the territories of three Seigniors, and apart from North Prince, his strength is the greatest. However, he is closer to King Yun, and if things continue to drag on, my position here may become unstable."

Since being appointed Crown Prince, Lu Yi had been acting as regent, but his edicts rarely left the Capital city; the Seigniors in the outer regions simply didn't listen to him.

Lu Yi had been feeling very anxious during this period. He dreamt of becoming Crown Prince before, but now that he had become one, he realized sitting in this position was like sitting on pins and needles.

The number of people and forces supporting him were not insubstantial; after all, he was Prince Lu Yi, and traditionally the Great Xia Dynasty followed a system of primogeniture, with the conservative faction largely supporting him.

But what use was the support of the conservatives when what he needed most now was military power? The Great Xia was essentially in a state of fragmentation. Although, in theory, he could

mobilize some troops while acting as regent, their leaders simply did not listen to him and did not take him seriously at all.

What irritated Prince Lu Yi the most was that he had no way to punish those commanders. It was a critical time now, and rashly punishing anyone could very likely drive them to revolt. If the armies of the court all defected to the Seigniors, his situation as Crown Prince would become even more difficult.

Thinking of these things, Prince Lu Yi sighed deeply.

Just then, one of the ministers spoke up, "Crown Prince, why not try to win over the North Prince?"

"With the power of the North Country so formidable, even the Great Wu has been defeated by the North Country. If we could secure the support of the North Country, the Seigniors would no longer dare to be as arrogant as they are today."

Hearing this, Lu Yi chuckled, "He probably covets that position himself. Do you think he would truly support me?"

Another minister said, "Crown Prince, why not cede Qi Country and the territories north of it to the North Prince and support his establishment of an independent dynasty? With sufficient benefits, I believe the North Prince would stand with us."

The Qi Prince supported other princes, and so for Lu Yi, Qi Country was expendable. If he could trade some territory for the North Prince's support, it would be a sure-win situation for him personally.

But the crux of the matter was whether the North Prince was interested in the Sum Emperor's position. If the North Prince considered the Northern Land too impoverished and preferred the wealth of Great Xia, he might very well head south to seize the throne.

At this moment, another minister in the hall said, "Your Highness, I agree with Minister Yu. With ample benefits, the North Prince might give up that position. Judging from the policies the North Prince has implemented in the Northern Land, he seems to deeply detest landlords and Aristocratic Families.

Although many Aristocratic Families in Great Xia have been dealt with by the Emperor, there are still numerous ones remaining. It will not be easy for the North Prince to govern all of Great Xia. Should the North Prince ascend to the throne, landlords and Aristocratic Families throughout Great Xia would certainly rebel."

"I believe the North Prince understands this. The policies he has implemented have seriously hurt the interests of all social classes, and the common people of Great Xia would not consent to him becoming Emperor."

"To the North Prince, the current state of Great Xia is a mess. Rather than tackle this mess, he might prefer to establish a new dynasty altogether."

No sooner had this minister finished speaking than another minister continued, "I fear that the ambition of the North Prince is grand, and he likely covets more than just Great Xia, other dynasties included. Merely offering him Qi Country will likely fall short of satisfying the North Prince's appetite."

"In my view, even if we obtain the support of the North Prince now, there will come a day when he will lead his troops south."

Listening to the discussions of the ministers, Prince Lu Yi's brow furrowed, and he was plunged into silence.

Chapter 637: Isn't the Prince afraid that I will do something unfavorable to North Country?_1

Right Minister Zhao Wenhan stood up amidst the heated discussion among the ministers and said, "Your Highness, even if the North Prince truly harbors the ambition to unify the several kingdoms, I believe we can still engage in temporary cooperation with him."

Normally, someone of Zhao Wenhan's stature should not make an appearance in the East Palace, after all, he was the Prime Minister. For a Prime Minister to publicly lean towards the Crown Prince would be tantamount to completely undermining the Sum Emperor.

However, in their eyes, the Sum Emperor was already on his last legs, without any solution even from the old ancestors of Fixed Wind Mountain and Four Directions Mountain. It was only a matter of time before Lu Yi would ascend to the throne, so Zhao Wenhan was not afraid of the Sum Emperor punishing him.

After hearing Zhao Wenhan's words, Lu Yi curiously asked, "What do you mean by that, Zhao?"

Zhao Wenhan replied, "Has Your Highness ever considered why, despite North Country easily defeating Great Wu and possessing the strength to annihilate it, they ended up signing an alliance with Great Wu instead?"

"North Country could have taken advantage of the situation to pursue their victory and completely wipe out the Great Wu dynasty, but they chose not to do so."

Upon hearing Zhao Wenhan's words, the ministers in the hall fell into deep thought, and soon one of them said, "Perhaps it's because North Country is not yet prepared?"

Zhao Wenhan immediately said, "You're right. North Country indeed is not ready."

"Conquering realms might be easy, but sitting on a throne is difficult. With North Country's strength, plus their mysterious weapons, destroying the Great Wu dynasty might not be too difficult."

"But what about after annihilating the Great Wu dynasty? Can the North Prince truly manage the entire Great Wu dynasty effectively? Not necessarily."

"Moreover, considering the current comprehensive power of North Country, it would be very difficult to annihilate all the major kingdoms. The Martial Emperor and the North Prince are very similar, both possessing great ambition."

"Ever since the Martial Emperor came to power, he has led Great Wu in constant warfare, expanding the territory through battles from the south to the north. It may seem that Great Wu's territorial size has increased, but its internal contradictions have also grown, with uprisings in the southeastern regions being the best example."

"If North Country neglects its governance capabilities, even if they were to occupy the entire Great Wu dynasty, the remnants of Great Wu would find ways to create chaos for North Country."

"The most crucial point is if North Country did occupy the Great Wu dynasty, would they need to recruit soldiers from the previously controlled Great Wu territories?"

"If North Country conscripts from the territories once controlled by Great Wu, then there's a high likelihood that their mysterious weapons would fall into the hands of the Great Wu remnants."

"Once North Country's internal governance faces problems, those Great Wu remnants would use North Country's own weapons to strike back at them, leading to North Country's inevitable collapse."

After listening to Zhao Wenhan's analysis, all the ministers in the hall fell silent, and Lu Yi did not speak either, mentally digesting Zhao Wenhan's discourse.

A while later, Lu Yi finally asked, "Then, according to Zhao, what do you think North Country's next move will be?"

Zhao Wenhan said, "What the North Prince needs most to unify the kingdoms is time—not the time to obliterate each dynasty, but the time to transform the populations of the other kingdoms into the citizens of North Country."

"Now that North Country has occupied two counties of Great Wu, the governance of these two counties will take up a considerable amount of time, so I believe North Country will not make any significant moves for the time being."

"We can take this opportunity to send envoys to negotiate with the North Prince. On one hand, we would cede the lands north of Qi Country to North Country, increasing their time spent in governance. On the other hand, we'll tell North Country that Great Sum will fully support them in the future—whatever North Country needs, Great Sum will provide."

This...

Hearing Zhao Wenhan's words, the ministers were somewhat stunned. If Great Sum provided whatever North Country needed, wouldn't Great Sum essentially become a vassal state to North Country? How could this be acceptable?

Just as Lu Yi was about to say something, Zhao Wenhan continued, "My proposal is primarily aimed at stabilizing the North Prince, to deter any thoughts he might have of moving southward."

"Think about it, Your Highness. If the North Prince were to move south, he would inevitably clash with the various Aristocratic Families and landlords, and he would spend a considerable amount of time managing the resulting mess."

"If Your Highness were to pretend to be a puppet for the North Prince, assisting him in managing the entirety of Great Sum, not only providing North Country with what it needs to develop, the North Prince would temporarily avoid direct conflict with the major landlords and Aristocratic Families. It's very likely he would agree to such a proposal."

"If Your Highness continues to show a weak stance towards North Country, then in the eyes of the North Prince, Great Sum won't pose any threat, and he won't need to directly deal with the major landlords and Aristocratic Families for the time being, as Your Highness would be managing things for him."

Upon hearing this, someone realized the loophole in Zhao Wenhan's suggestion, and at that moment, Lu Yi asked, "Zhao, if the North Prince truly has the ambition to conquer the entire world, then from his perspective, Great Sum would also be within his grasp, and he would eventually mobilize troops to move south."

Zhao Wenhan said, "I understand. My intention is to distract the North Prince's targets as much as possible, to make Great Sum seem nonthreatening to North Country, able to continuously provide benefits, and ideally to give the North Prince the illusion that he could claim all of Great Sum without waging war."

"Your Highness, if Great Sum were to be utterly subservient to North Country, wouldn't the North Prince think that as long as Great Sum provided the resources needed for North Country's

development, and given how weak Great Sum is, if North Country were to conquer the other kingdoms, wouldn't Great Sum surrender without a fight?

This way, North Country wouldn't need to deploy troops against Great Sum."

Chapter 638: Isn't the Prince afraid that I will do something unfavorable to North Country?_2

Lu Yi furrowed his brows, contemplating for a moment before they relaxed again, "I have understood Zhao's intention, Zhao wants me to bide my time and then secretly amass strength."

Zhao Wenhan continued, "That is indeed what I meant. If the North Prince agrees to support Your Highness, Great Sum can also exploit the fact that North Country is a feudal state of Great Sum, constantly sending people to infiltrate North Country and locate the blueprints for those mysterious weapons of North Country.

If Great Sum obtained the blueprints for those weapons, Great Sum may not necessarily be weaker than North Country."

Lu Yi immediately felt that Zhao Wenhan made a lot of sense, and said with a smile, "With Zhao by my side, I can settle the whole world!"

Zhao Wenhan promptly bowed and said, "Thank Your Highness for the compliment!"

Lu Yi then said, "Following that, I will send an envoy to North Country, striving to divert the North Prince's attention."

The crowd uniformly exclaimed, "Your Highness is wise!"

Zhao Wenhan's rise to the position of Prime Minister in Great Sum wasn't only due to his minor cleverness and talent for flattery but also some intelligence.

He saw that the North Prince's first move to unify the major dynasties would be to march south to vie for the throne, but his solution was overly simplistic.

His idea was that since the North Prince's purpose in going south was for the resources of Great Sum, why not simply let Great Sum kneel down and proactively offer everything North Country needed? That way, the North Prince temporarily wouldn't need to head south.

A few days later.

North Country.

Inside the courtyard, a little bridge spanned flowing water where carp swam to and fro.

Wu Junwan sat alone in the pavilion, looking somewhat lonely and desolate.

Now, there were no one from her side in the entire North Prince Mansion. Even the maids were from the North Prince Mansion, and she couldn't even find someone to talk to.

Wu Junwan sighed softly.

Ever since Lu Chen spent two nights with her a few days ago, that man hadn't come to see her again, leading Wu Junwan to suspect whether Lu Chen had already forgotten about their bet.

At that moment, a maid approached Wu Junwan and brewed a pot of Dragon and Phoenix Tea for her. Wu Junwan curiously asked, "What has your Prince been doing these past few days?"

Upon hearing Wu Junwan's question, the maid immediately replied, "Reporting to Princess Junwan, the Prince has been dealing with state affairs in his study for the past few days."

This wasn't something that needed to be kept secret, after all, Lu Chen was always in his study and didn't go anywhere special.

If Lu Chen had visited the armory or gone to a distant place, perhaps secrecy would have been necessary.

Hearing the maid's response, Wu Junwan couldn't help but wonder if there had been some major event or operation in North Country recently that had kept Lu Chen especially busy, so much so that he didn't even have time to come to her room?

While Wu Junwan was contemplating this, she suddenly heard the voice of a maid at the courtyard gate, "Greeting the Prince!"

The next moment, a familiar voice reached Wu Junwan's ears, "At ease."

Shortly after, the figure of that petty man appeared at the entrance of the courtyard. Seeing Lu Chen enter, Wu Junwan immediately dismissed her speculations.

With so many women, this man had no need to come to her room every day. His absence was normal, and she was overthinking it.

After entering the courtyard, Lu Chen glanced at Wu Junwan, who was drinking tea in the pavilion, and asked with a smile, "Is Princess Junwan getting accustomed to living here?"

Hearing this, Wu Junwan replied expressionlessly, "Thanks to the Prince, I am quite accustomed to it."

Lu Chen then directly walked into the pavilion, sitting down on the stone bench next to Wu Junwan after arriving at the stone table and pouring a cup of tea for himself.

After taking a sip of tea, Wu Junwan then asked, "Does the Prince have any business with me?"

Lu Chen put down the teacup in his hand, turned his head, and gazed into Wu Junwan's eyes, "Why can't I come to see you if there's nothing important?"

Wu Junwan replied, "The Prince is a very busy man, why would you come to see me if there's nothing?"

At that moment, Lu Chen reached out his hand and wrapped an arm around Wu Junwan's slender waist. Wu Junwan tried to struggle as they were in the courtyard, not in her room, and she didn't want anyone to see her struggling with this petty man, even if only the maids of the North Prince Mansion were present.

However, as soon as Wu Junwan tried to resist, she realized her skill had once again been sealed.

This...

Wu Junwan could hardly believe it.

Last time she had contact with Lu Chen, it was the same, her skill had been sealed in an instant. She had thought it was something in the room that affected her, such as a problem with the scent of the bath she took.

But now she was in the pavilion; surely there was nothing here that could affect her body, right?

Could it be the tea?

At this point, Wu Junwan's eyes involuntarily fell on the teacup on the stone table, and she thought to herself that she had always been drinking this tea, and these past few days were no exception. It hadn't had any bad effects on her body.

Far from having a bad effect, it had actually helped with her training and even had the effect of refreshing her mind and clearing her head; how could there be a problem with it?

Most importantly, this was not the first time she had drunk this tea. She had had this tea during her last mission to North Country, and Lu Chen had even gifted her a lot of it. Upon her return, she often drank this tea, and after drinking it for so long, she had never seen any issues with her body.

So it probably wasn't the tea...

Chapter 639: Isn't the Prince afraid that I will do something unfavorable to North Country?_3

While Wu Junwan was mentally sifting through reasons that could lead to her skill being sealed whenever she came into contact with Lu Chen, Lu Chen spoke teasingly, "Is Her Majesty the Empress angry? Blame me, blame me for being too busy these past few days, not coming to see you every day, making you feel lonely and neglected."

Upon hearing Lu Chen's words, Wu Junwan merely huffed coldly and said nothing more.

These past days in the North Prince Mansion, she indeed felt lonely and isolated. After all, none of the people she knew were around her; the courtyard was filled with unfamiliar maids, and even outside there were some female guards. This made her feel caged and extremely uncomfortable.

Lu Chen continued, "If Your Majesty finds it too dull to stay in the courtyard all the time, you can also go out for a walk."

Hearing that, Wu Junwan said, "Does the Prince not fear that this palace might do something to harm the North Country?"

Lu Chen said with a smile, "If you want to cause trouble, you may as well do so."

Wu Junwan said, "Do you think this palace poses no threat to you, that I cannot stir any waves?"

Lu Chen replied, "You can think of it that way."

Hearing Lu Chen's response, Wu Junwan's eyebrows knitted slightly; this young man really did not take her seriously at all.

"Someday you'll pay for your arrogance."

Wu Junwan did not wish to say more to Lu Chen. Since the young man had said she could take a walk, she would spend her days at the Princess Mansion arranged by Lu Chen, staying with her entourage, and then return in the evening.

He wasn't afraid of her causing chaos in the North Country, was he? He would regret it eventually.

Just as Wu Junwan was contemplating what she would do after leaving the North Prince Mansion, her body was suddenly lifted by Lu Chen. Before she could struggle, she was seated on Lu Chen's lap.

Lu Chen wrapped his arms around her soft waist from behind, his head resting on her fragrant shoulder, inhaling the scent of her hair as if utterly enchanted.

Wu Junwan had intended to struggle, but remembering that her skill was sealed, she simply gave up, allowing this lecher to sniff around her as he pleased.

After a while, Lu Chen said, "If you feel lonely, I'll arrange someone to stay with you in a few days. I believe you two will have much in common."

Wu Junwan asked, "Who is it?"

Lu Chen answered with a smile, "You'll find out in a few days."

Wu Junwan spoke expressionlessly, "It seems the Prince is still worried this palace might do something detrimental to the North Country and plans to have someone monitor me."

Without going into too much detail, Lu Chen simply said, "The person I'm arranging for you is not from the North Country."

Wu Junwan was taken aback.

Not from the North Country?

She fell into thought, wondering what Lu Chen was planning next.

With Wu Junwan's soft body in his arms, Lu Chen, a vigorous young man, momentarily had thoughts, with a beauty in his embrace. How could he lack intentions?

Wu Junwan soon sensed Lu Chen's change, and she began to twist her body, trying to stand up, but Lu Chen's arms held her waist tightly, no matter how she struggled she couldn't rise.

The more Wu Junwan writhed, the more excited Lu Chen became. However, before he could take the next step, a female guard entered the courtyard and said, "Prince, Commander Liang is looking for you."

Lu Chen felt helpless. There were too many things during the day, and he couldn't even take a moment of rest.

"Tell him to wait for me in the study room."

With that, Lu Chen whispered into Wu Junwan's ear, "Your Majesty, wait for me tonight, let me take good care of you."

As his voice trailed off, Lu Chen released Wu Junwan and stood up.

At this moment, a slight blush appeared on Wu Junwan's cheeks. In just those few moments, her heart had been stirred by the young man, even developing feelings for him, making her whole body restless.

Indeed, the charms of a man are like poison!

No wonder their master at the Misty Immortal Sect had warned them not to easily indulge in the company of men, or else they might become helplessly smitten.

Wu Junwan now felt she was beginning to lose control. Just a casual provocation from this young man was enough to make her feel uncomfortable, longing to engage in intimate pleasures with him.

No! She must restrain herself!

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In the study room of the North Prince Mansion.

After Lu Chen arrived at the study, Liang Zong handed over the intelligence report to him.

"Prince, the Crown Prince has secretly sent an envoy to the North Country."

Hearing this, Lu Chen's hand, which was opening an envelope, paused. Looking up at Liang Zong, he asked, "What does he send an envoy to the North Country for?"

Although the North Country was nominally a feudal state of Great Xia, it was only in name. The court of Great Xia no longer had any real control over the North Country.

Speaking of the North Country, the central government couldn't even mobilize its own troops at the moment. Lu Chen didn't understand what Lu Yi could accomplish by sending envoys to the North Country at this time.

Liang Zong replied, "It is said to be an attempt to win you over."

Lu Chen thought for a moment and did not pursue further. He then opened the letter in his hand and began to read it carefully.

After reviewing the Brocade Guard's intelligence, Lu Chen instantly understood the situation.

Currently, in Great Xia, all Princes with the power to contend for the throne had dealings of one kind or another with certain Seigniors. However, the only solid support Lu Yi had was from the Scholar Officials and conservative officials in the court. With his father, the Emperor, obstructing him in the dark, Lu Yi currently couldn't mobilize the court's troops.

Lu Yi felt his position as Crown Prince was unstable and was seeking external support.

After reading the intelligence report, Lu Chen asked, "When can the Crown Prince's envoy arrive in the North Country?"

Liang Zong replied, "They can reach Yan County in three days. Our Brocade Guard spy who delivered the message left the Capital city together with the Crown Prince's envoy. They are not slow in their travel."

Chapter 640: Wu Junwan: A bet? What bet?_1

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Hearing Liang Zong's reply, Lu Chen contemplated for a moment.

Under normal circumstances, once the Brocade Guard obtained intelligence, they would send someone to Yan County right away.

The fact that the Brocade Guard's scout could leave the Capital city at the same time as the envoy group dispatched by Lu Yi meant that as soon as Lu Yi decided to send out the envoy group, he had immediately sent them towards the North Country.

Lu Yi was in a hurry, eager to establish a connection with the North Country.

At this time, Lu Chen said, "I understand, go and report this intelligence to the Great Scholar."

Even though Lu Yi's envoy group hadn't arrived in the North Country yet, Lu Chen didn't know how Lu Yi specifically intended to win him over, although Lu Chen had already planned to head south, there was still about a year's time.

Lu Chen wanted to see if there was a way to use Lu Yi to his advantage.

Taking the letter from Lu Chen's hand, Liang Zong said, "Your subordinate takes his leave!"

Then, Liang Zong turned and left the study to head for the office of political affairs next to the Hall of Political Affairs.

For the time being, Lu Chen didn't dwell on the matter. Until the envoy group arrived in Yan County, he wouldn't know Lu Yi's specific demands or what conditions Lu Yi would offer to win him over. Pondering too much now was useless; everything would wait until the envoy group reached the North Country. You.

As evening approached.

When Lu Chen was having dinner, Mu Zixuan asked from the side, "Prince, Princess Junwan from Great Wu has been at the Prince's Mansion for several days now and has not once come to Wind Cloud Palace for dinner. Why don't you speak to her and invite her to the Wind Cloud Palace for dinner."

Lu Chen said with a smile, "There's no need for now, let her get used to life at the North Prince Mansion first."

Chu Yuqin said, "Chen'er, I saw the Princess yesterday and noticed that her martial artist's aura is not inferior to mine. She seems to have reached the Grandmaster Realm. Continuing to let her stay in the inner courtyard of the Prince's Mansion might be a threat."

After all, Wu Junwan was a princess from a hostile nation, and Chu Yuqin always felt uneasy about Wu Junwan, fearing that she might do something detrimental to the North Prince Mansion.

Since Wu Junwan arrived at the North Prince Mansion, Chu Yuqin had been closely watching the courtyard she stayed in, desperately afraid that Wu Junwan might harm Lu Chen's wives or children.

Lu Chen said with a smile, "Don't worry, she's already my woman now, she won't cause trouble."

Chu Yuqin wasn't aware of the matter with the Dragon and Phoenix Tea, so she was quite worried that Wu Junwan would not be tamed by Lu Chen.

Seeing how confident Lu Chen was, Chu Yuqin just sighed softly in her heart and did not say much.

After dinner, Lu Chen went straight to the courtyard where Wu Junwan was staying.

At that moment, Wu Junwan had already had her dinner and had just emerged from the bath, redressing in a red Phoenix Robe.

Sitting in front of the dressing table, Wu Junwan looked at herself in the mirror, completely calm and quiet, her thoughts unknown.

While she was lost in thought, the voice of a maid came from the doorway.

Wu Junwan snapped back to reality, her heart tightened, and she instantly became extremely nervous.

He was here! Truly here!

This little man, she didn't know how he was going to torment her this time!

Before Wu Junwan could rise from her seat, Lu Chen had already approached from behind. He rested his hands on her fragrant shoulders and looking at her reflection in the mirror, said by her ear, "Your Majesty, you are truly beautiful."

As he spoke, he lifted Wu Junwan's hair to his nose and took a slow sniff, seeming to greatly enjoy the scent.

At that moment, Wu Junwan wanted to say something, but she found herself speechless.

Under someone's roof, what could she say? Surely she couldn't ask Lu Chen to spare her, and this little man certainly wouldn't let her go; besides, to her, matters between a man and a woman were an enjoyment in themselves.

Wu Junwan sat in front of the mirror, still not moving, completely unsure what to do or say next.

Seeing Wu Junwan motionless, Lu Chen asked, "If Your Majesty is willing to answer some questions, I could refrain from staying overnight here."

Hearing these words, Wu Junwan nervously asked, "What do you want to know?"

Lu Chen asked, "I've heard that in the far west of the continent, there is a foggy region, and almost no one who enters it can come out again. Yet, both you and the Yue Emperor not only entered the fog but also came out of it, moreover, with great strength. The Yue Emperor even broke through to the Celestial Realm. Of course, I'm not certain if she is truly a Celestial."

Wu Junwan frowned slightly, not expecting Lu Chen to suddenly take an interest in the foggy region.

She then warned, "The foggy region is very dangerous. You'd best not be curious about that place."

Lu Chen, lifting Wu Junwan's hair, took a deep breath and said, "That's my affair. You just need to tell me what's inside the foggy region, or what lies beyond it."

Wu Junwan replied, "Since you are so interested in the foggy region, I will tell you some things."

"The foggy region is another world. The Yue Emperor and I once shared the same master. After he led us into the foggy region, we lived there for nearly ten years. During those ten years, I desired to return home to visit, but no matter which way I went, I could not find my way out of the fog. Until one day, the ground shook, and the fog suddenly vanished for a short while.

It seemed our master realized something and took the initiative to send both the Yue Emperor and me back."