

## Es. Benefits 781

### Chapter 781 Return to Yan County\_1

Time passed day by day, autumn gave way to winter, and winter to spring, and the preparation work for the capital relocation to Yan County was basically completed. Everything was ready, and it only awaited an auspicious day to proceed.

During this near half-year period, the Sunset Sword Sect had not been able to find the hiding place of the Taiyin Divine Sect, and at most had just eliminated some of the lower-ranked members of the Sect.

Just as Xue Linglong had said, the Leader of the Taiyin Sect was a very cautious person; the core members of the Taiyin Divine Sect had almost never come out to cause havoc, as if they had vanished from the world.

Lu Chen had long been prepared for this, so he did not pay too much attention to it. Right now, he just wanted to unite the world as soon as possible and elevate his Cultivation State to the Celestial Realm.

In the recent half year, Xue Linglong and Bai Qingqing were worn out, as only the two of them stayed by Lu Chen's side. Lu Chen had also followed his ministers' advice and conducted a selection of consorts. However, after choosing for some time, he had not seen a single lady who scored ninety or above.

Lu Chen even suspected there was some issue with the system. With so many beautiful women of noble families in the Capital city, not finding a single one with a score of ninety or above was indeed hard to explain.

Lu Chen even questioned the system whether it was doing this on purpose, but the system replied that this was a normal occurrence.

Later on, Lu Chen gradually discovered what was going on; it turned out that the women who scored higher than ninety all had special attributes to their bodies, not just beautiful appearances.

Having no other choice, Lu Chen focused his attention on Bai Qingqing and Xue Linglong, hoping to have them bear his children.

As a result, both of them had to attend to Lu Chen every day. Especially the Demon Sect Sorceress Xue Linglong, Lu Chen did not hold back with her at all, and yet as of now, she had not become pregnant.

Lu Chen had come to terms with it by now. If she couldn't conceive, then so be it. He did not need to be overly obsessed about it. Thankfully, before he traveled south, he had gotten Qin Yuwei pregnant with his child.

Once Qin Yuwei's child was born, he should be able to gain another power. With that, uniting the world would be even easier for him.

After more than half a year of governance, Great Sum had stabilized, and the transfer of land ownership was essentially complete. Now, all land was nominally owned by Emperor Lu Chen.

Of course, this was just a legal formality regarding land ownership, and the buying and selling of land were not completely forbidden. Moreover, if the state needed to requisition land, they would still offer a certain compensation.

With internal stability achieved, Lu Chen had only two significant matters left: the relocation of the capital and the destruction of the various dynasties.

The date for the capital relocation was soon set.

In the Imperial Palace of Great Sum, Imperial Study Room.

Lu Chen was dealing with memorials when Bai Qingqing's voice reached him, "Your Majesty, Grand Scholar Xuanyuan requests an audience."

Lu Chen said, "Let him in."

Xuanyuan Chaoge then entered the Imperial Study Room, "Greetings to Your Majesty!"

Lu Chen said indifferently, "Dispense with the formalities."

"Grand Scholar Xuanyuan, I plan to leave you in charge of the six ministries of the Capital city in my stead. What do you think of this arrangement?"

Currently, Great Sum had two Grand Scholars, one was Zhuge Zhongguang, the other was Xuanyuan Chaoge.

Although both held the title of Grand Scholar, there was a difference in their statuses. Zhuge Zhongguang was the Grand Scholar of the Wenyuan Pavilion, while Xuanyuan Chaoge was the Grand Scholar of the Military Pavilion.

The two systems they belonged to were different, but Lu Chen needed someone trustworthy to oversee the officials in the Capital city to prevent them from causing trouble; Xuanyuan Chaoge was very suitable for this role.

Moreover, Xuanyuan Chaoge was a Celestial, and with a Celestial present, the officials of the Capital city would not dare to step out of line.

Upon hearing Lu Chen's words, Xuanyuan Chaoge immediately replied, "This subject will not let Your Majesty down."

Xuanyuan Chaoge was also aware of the significance of the six ministries of the Capital city. Although their powers would diminish over time, at this stage with so many officials, if they were not watched over, it was very likely they might collude behind the scenes and commit acts detrimental to Great Sum.

Lu Chen continued, "Then I'll trouble you, Grand Scholar Xuanyuan. The telegraph has been invented, and it will soon be operational. If there are any issues in the Capital city in the future, report it to me through the telegraph."

Xuanyuan Chaoge replied, "As Your Majesty commands."

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After determining the people who would stay behind in the Capital city, the relocation work began early the next morning.

Before the transition, many ministers' families had already moved to Yan County, so the relocation was relatively swift.

Half a month later.

Yan County.

Today Yan County was teeming with people; nearly all the residents had come out to welcome them.

Now that Yan County had become the Capital city, the lives of its residents would get even better. Even if those people did nothing, the price of the houses they had bought before would immediately skyrocket.

Not just the new city, but the Old Yan City too had seen its land prices rising rapidly; the people of Yan County had become wealthy one after another.

All this they owed to Lu Chen, and so the people of Yan County only had gratitude for their new Emperor.

Soon, the sound of the train "woo-ing" could be heard in the distance. The new city was a bit away from the train station, but once they heard the train's sound, everyone realized the Emperor was about to arrive and the city gates quickly became quiet.

Before long, a luxurious carriage arrived from afar, and inside sat Lu Chen.

At this moment, Mu Zixuan, along with a group of concubines, stood quietly at the entrance of the new Imperial Palace, waiting for Lu Chen's return.

Sitting in the carriage, Lu Chen was very eager in his heart; he had not seen his concubines for quite a long time and missed them dearly.

At the same time, Xue Linglong sitting in another carriage used a delicate handkerchief to wipe away nonexistent tears, muttering to herself, "I have finally returned to Yan County..."

During her time in the Capital city, she had to attend to Lu Chen almost daily, and even though she had fallen from grace, she could not endure it any longer.

Lu Chen knew how to heal with Immortal Technique; she rarely felt discomfort, but the constant stimulation had significantly slowed her brain functions.

Moreover, she realized she was increasingly acting like a female slave, involuntarily lifting her hips every time she saw Lu Chen.

Now that she was back, Lu Chen's concubines had been waiting for him in Yan County for nearly a year. They probably couldn't contain themselves any longer, and with them around, Lu Chen definitely wouldn't come to find her for a long time.

Now at least she could finally rest properly for a while.

Thinking of this, Xue Linglong felt exceedingly happy deep down. Back when she was in the Taiyin Divine Sect, she would've never dreamt that she, a Demon Sect Sorceress, would have a day like today.

Other Demon Sect Sorceresses went to drain those men, using the men's Yang energy for cultivation, but she, a Demon Sect Sorceress, ended up under a man's control, repeatedly tormented by Lu Chen, the devil.

At this thought, Xue Linglong couldn't help but sigh inwardly, wondering what kind of Demon Sect Sorceress she really was.

The carriage carrying Lu Chen quickly approached the gates of the Imperial Palace.

The Imperial Palace had been expanded from the original foundations of the North Prince Mansion. When the North Prince Mansion was being built, enough land had been reserved for future expansion, and at that time Lu Chen was already considering the relocation.

Having arrived at the gates of the Imperial Palace, Lu Chen stepped out of the carriage, and Mu Zixuan and the others immediately performed a bow and said, "We pay our respects to Your Majesty."

Lu Chen had become the supreme ruler and was no longer the Seignior of the past. Although deep inside, they missed him dearly and wanted to rush over to embrace him, they still restrained their inner urges.

Seeing that Mu Zixuan and Chu Yuqin didn't come over to embrace him, Lu Chen instantly understood what they were worried about.

Lu Chen then said with a smile, "My ladies, I have returned."

With that, Lu Chen walked straight up to Mu Zixuan, and before she could say anything, he embraced Mu Zixuan and Chu Yuqin who was next to her.

Lu Chen continued, "Although I am now the Emperor, I am still your darling, and I'm very disappointed that you treated me so coldly."

Upon hearing this, everyone immediately crowded around, engulfing him in their midst.

In their hearts, they had also been worried that Lu Chen, becoming the Emperor, would undergo a great change in temperament, but now it seemed that their worries were unfounded.

Chapter 782 Madam Chu, I Have Some Questions for You Tonight\_1

Lu Chen held Mu Zixuan and Chu Yuqin in his arms, greedily inhaling the fragrance of their bodies.

At that moment, Lu Chen said, "Zixuan, Madam Chu, you've worked hard."

Upon hearing this, Mu Zixuan and Chu Yuqin were about to say something when Lu Chen turned his head to look at the other wives and concubines beside him, "You've also worked hard."

Then, Lu Chen's gaze fell on Lin Wanyun. He smiled and said, "Wanyun, the Lin Family has already moved to Yan County. Go and see them in the next couple of days."



Hearing this, Lin Wanyun was slightly taken aback. A blush involuntarily spread across her cheeks. With the Lin Family moving to Yan County, it meant that she was likely to officially marry Lu Chen soon.

Lu Chen then glanced at the others and noticed that Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er were not present.

Although the two of them were already his women, they didn't have a formal status, so they didn't come out to greet Lu Chen to avoid giving people something to talk about.

Lu Chen didn't give it much thought. He caressed Mu Zixuan and Chu Yuqin's slender waists before saying, "All right, go back now. I have to hold a court assembly later. We can talk more during the family banquet tonight."

Upon hearing these words, the women didn't say much to Lu Chen. After all, now that Lu Chen was back, there was plenty of time to slowly talk with him about everything on their minds.

Afterwards, the women returned to the Imperial Palace, and Lu Chen immediately summoned the officials from the North Country.

Many officials from the Capital city had followed Lu Chen to Yan County, which would soon lead to substantial changes in the political landscape.

The court assembly held that day was just to let the ministers from the Capital city get to know the original ministers from the North Country.

Soon, the Great Court Assembly began.

Lu Chen sat on the Dragon Throne, looking over the people in the great hall. The court had clearly divided into two distinct factions: his original supporters and the ministers who had come from the Capital city.

At that time, Lu Chen said, "Starting today, the court assemblies will follow the old rules of the North Country, with a minor one every seven days and a major one monthly."

Hearing this, the ministers from the Capital city were stunned.

A minor court assembly every seven days?

Could that be true?

Don't emperors have to attend court every day?

Only negligent rulers often skipped court; could it be that after becoming an emperor, Lu Chen was planning on indulging in pleasure?

The ministers who had come with Lu Chen from the Capital city were officials with aspirations, ideals, and ambitions. Those without ambitions and wanting to retire stayed in the Capital city and did not come to Yan County.

These ministers did not want to see the new ruler become decadent.

At this point, Lin Gaoyuan stood up and asked, "Your Majesty, won't changing the court assemblies to once every seven days delay the execution of orders?"

Lu Chen said, "You can rest assured about that. The North Country has always operated this way, and it won't delay the execution of any orders. On the contrary, it will actually improve the efficiency of the officials."

"I've long noticed that with daily court assemblies, some ministers come to court without even having woken up properly, dozing off during the session, and having no idea what was discussed after the assembly."

"Moreover, the issues discussed at daily court assemblies are basically trivial matters; it's a pure waste of time."

"Of course, even with a court assembly every seven days, it doesn't mean you can't report urgent matters to me. If you have important issues, you can still submit official documents, which I will deal with daily."

"From now on, the minor court assembly every seven days, as well as the major one monthly, will mainly discuss more significant issues. Don't bring up trivial matters for discussion anymore."

After hearing Lu Chen's response, Lin Gaoyuan said, "Your Majesty is wise."

Then Lin Gaoyuan returned to his place.

Lu Chen scanned the officials and then said, "Additionally, the beloved ministers who accompanied me from the Capital city need not worry. The personnel arrangements will be distributed to you in a few days and will also be published in the Great Sun Times."

Although Lu Chen looked down on some of the officials from the Capital city, among the ones who had come with him to Yan County, there were still those who were insightful and forward-thinking. Lu Chen intended to reshape the court's personnel structure.

Of course, the main focus was still on his own people. For all the important departments, such as those controlling the finances, he would entrust them to the officials summoned by the system, to those coming from the Universal Academy.

Today's court assembly was relatively brief and didn't touch upon any significant matters. It was simply an opportunity for the officials from the Capital City and the North Country to familiarize themselves with each other, in preparation for the assignment of their positions and the commencement of their duties.

After the court assembly concluded, Lu Chen went to the Wind Cloud Palace.

The Wind Cloud Palace had been expanded from the original Wind Cloud Court, and now it was built even more majestic and spectacular.

When Lu Chen arrived at the Wind Cloud Hall, Mu Zixuan and the others were already waiting, and during the dinner, he saw Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er as well.

Just as Lu Chen thought about walking over to them and giving them an embrace, a little boy suddenly burst out from nowhere.

"Daddy, daddy..."

Hearing this, Lu Chen was momentarily taken aback but quickly recovered. He hurriedly squatted down with open arms.

The next moment, the little boy threw himself into Lu Chen's embrace.

Lu Chen lifted Lu Changfeng, laughing as he said, "Feng'er, I never expected you to start talking so soon."

Right then, Lu Huanhuan and Lu Changsheng also came before Lu Chen. Seeing the three of them, Lu Chen's face showed a kindly smile.

He had only been away from Yan County for less than a year, yet he hadn't expected his children to have changed so much in that time. They were indeed his offspring.

After playing with his children for a while, Lu Chen then took his place at the head of the table.

During the family banquet, Mu Zixuan spoke up, "Your Majesty, now that Feng'er has also started to speak, it is time to find him a teacher."

In this era, a teacher for a prince isn't just anybody; it often involves political arrangements.

Lu Chen thought for a moment before saying, "As for the matter of his teacher, I have already made arrangements."

Hearing Lu Chen's response, Mu Zixuan dropped the subject. Since Lu Chen had a plan in mind, there was no need for her to say more.

Lu Chen glanced at Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er, then his gaze returned to Mu Zixuan. "Zixuan, many things must have happened in Yan County during my absence, right? I remember you wrote me a letter saying that someone had intended to harm the North Prince Mansion?"

Mu Zixuan replied, "There was indeed an attempt to harm the North Prince Mansion, but with Sister Wu's help, the matter has already been resolved."

Upon hearing Mu Zixuan's response, Lu Chen looked towards Wu Junwan again, smiling as he said, "Junwan, you must have worked hard."

Wu Junwan responded indifferently, "It was my duty."

Although Wu Junwan appeared aloof, inside she was full of anticipation, having eagerly awaited Lu Chen's return.

Of course, it wasn't just Wu Junwan who felt this way. Every woman in the great hall was looking forward to Lu Chen's return, each longing for him to visit her room tonight.

However, they all knew well that as Lu Chen had just returned, it was impossible for him to visit each woman. Tonight, it was certain that Mu Zixuan would be the one to attend to him.

Unfortunately, the women had clearly guessed wrong about Lu Chen's intentions.

During the dinner, Lu Chen learned in detail about the events that had transpired in Yan County after his departure. They dined until eleven o'clock.

As the dinner came to an end, all the women's gazes fell upon Lu Chen, as if a pack of hungry wolves had fixed their eyes upon a succulent sheep.

Lu Chen smiled faintly and then said to Chu Yuqin, "Madam Chu, I would like to have a word with you tonight about some matters."

Upon hearing this, the women internally sighed, having thought that, on his first night back, Lu Chen would have several of them attend to him simultaneously. They had not anticipated he would choose only one, and not Mu Zixuan at that.

At this moment, Zhou Xiaoxiao and Zhou Youyou anxiously watched Mu Zixuan, who had been a Princess Consort before and was seemingly the most likely candidate to become the next Empress. However, on the first day of Lu Chen's return, he did not summon Mu Zixuan to attend to him but chose Chu Yuqin instead.

This made Zhou Xiaoxiao and Zhou Youyou worry about whether Mu Zixuan might feel unsettled inside.

But at this moment, Mu Zixuan showed no signs of disappointment on her face. She did not care at all whom Lu Chen chose to attend him, nor did she have a strong desire for the position of Empress.

Chapter 783 Lu Chen's Decision\_1

Mu Zixuan didn't care who Lu Chen chose to share his bed with, or who would be the next Empress, not because she didn't love Lu Chen, nor because she was very open-minded, but mainly because she had been through too much, and she didn't want to be entangled in the struggle for royal power as she had been in the past.

If it weren't for Lu Chen that year, the Mu Family might have been destroyed, and she knew what kind of person Lu Chen was. If she got involved in the fight for the position of Empress, a huge rift would inevitably form between her and Lu Chen.

Now, she didn't need to do anything, just quietly wait for Lu Chen to confer who would be the Empress.

Soon, Lu Chen arrived at Chu Yuqin's chamber. Just as Chu Yuqin had entered her chamber, Lu Chen came up from behind and wrapped his arms around her soft, graceful body.

With a slight sigh, Chu Yuqin said, "Your Majesty, you should have let Zixuan serve you tonight."

Although Chu Yuqin knew she held an important place in Lu Chen's heart, she was also a sensible person. Mu Zixuan was Lu Chen's official wife, the rightful future Empress by all accounts.

Lu Chen had just returned from the Capital city; naturally, he should spend the night with his future Empress, not only to reassure Mu Zixuan.

If Lu Chen now ran off to another woman, Mu Zixuan might overthink, feeling that her position as Empress was unstable.



Upon hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Lu Chen, still embracing her waist and pressing against her bottom, began pushing her towards the bed while saying, "Madam Chu, I've noticed you've become much colder towards me. Haven't I always said that when we're alone, you should call me Chen'er?"

Though Lu Chen said this, Chu Yuqin still replied, "Your Majesty, you're now the Emperor, and things can't be the same as before."

Lu Chen blew gently into Chu Yuqin's ear, then whispered beside it, "If you keep calling me 'Your Majesty,' I might just get angry."

Chu Yuqin inwardly sighed; she certainly knew about Lu Chen's preferences, and so she reluctantly said, "Chen'er, you having me serve you as soon as you return must mean there's something on your mind, right?"

Lu Chen smiled and responded, "Can't it be that I simply missed my wife, and that's why I sought you out?"

As Lu Chen's words ended, they had reached the edge of the bed. Lu Chen's hands found their way to Chu Yuqin's waistband, and soon her belt was easily untied, revealing her white undergarments.

Chu Yuqin said, "If you had only missed me, you wouldn't have called only me tonight."

The night before Lu Chen left Yan County, he had Mu Zixuan and her accompany him together; yet upon his return, he had sent for only her.

Being so affectionate, how could Lu Chen possibly think only of one woman? In Chu Yuqin's view, he surely thought of every woman.

So, upon his return, it was only natural for him to spend the night with as many of his wives and concubines as possible.

Hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Lu Chen gave a slight smile, not expecting that Chu Yuqin had indeed sensed his ulterior motives.

At that moment, Lu Chen fell into silence. He gently slid off Chu Yuqin's outer garment, then undid his own belt.

Then, while embracing Chu Yuqin's slender waist, he said, "I do have a question I want to ask Madam Chu."

Chu Yuqin promptly asked, "What is it?"

Lu Chen spoke directly, "Today, after the court session, several officials approached me, saying that now I have returned to Yan County, for the stability of Great Sum, I should confer the Empress and establish the Crown Prince as soon as possible."

Chu Yuqin was taken aback by these words; she hadn't expected Lu Chen wanted to talk about this matter with her.

At this point, Lu Chen continued to ask, "Madam Chu, do you think Zixuan is suitable to be the Empress?"

Faced with this question, Chu Yuqin didn't answer directly. She quickly said, "Your Majesty, I am now your consort, and it's not appropriate for me to touch upon such matters. If I were not your consort, you could ask for my opinion. But by asking me now, if I were to answer, that would be political interference."

On the matter of establishing the Empress, Chu Yuqin dared not speak carelessly.

Moreover, she was now one of Lu Chen's women, and if she spoke out of turn, she very well might get herself entangled as well.

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Although Lu Chen still occasionally calls her Madam Chu, Chu Yuqin is very clear in her heart that it's just to add a bit of pleasure in the boudoir; she can no longer speak without a care as she used to.

Seeing how cautious Chu Yuqin was being, Lu Chen said with a smile, "Madam Chu, since when have you become so careful and cautious?"

Chu Yuqin let out a slight sigh, then replied, "Your Majesty, even though I've watched you grow up since you were little and you trust me very much, after all, I have become your woman now, and I am involved in certain interests. If I speak carelessly, sooner or later I will be impeached by the ministers."

Lu Chen also heard the worry in Chu Yuqin's voice, and felt some emotion in his heart, realizing how the identity of the Emperor indeed often led to a lonely existence.

In Lu Chen's eyes, Chu Yuqin was the person in this world most worthy of his trust; yet now, even she had grown distant because of their statuses.

If distance had arisen, then the best method was to close that distance, and Lu Chen soon found a solution.

Lu Chen's hand began to roam across Chu Yuqin's voluptuous body while he spoke, "My lady, you have changed, now even intentionally keeping your distance from me."

"It seems I must find a way to close the distance between us."

Hearing those words, Chu Yuqin's cheeks flushed crimson, for she clearly understood the implication of Lu Chen's words.

After a moment, Chu Yuqin felt a burning heat all over her body—for she had not seen this little rascal for so long, and nearly a year's worth of longing had accumulated in her heart.

Just being near her, Lu Chen was already stirring her body and soul.

At that moment, Lu Chen whispered in Chu Yuqin's ear, "My lady, you're being naughty."

At the sound of Lu Chen's deep and magnetic voice, Chu Yuqin's face grew even hotter, and just then, a whimper escaped her throat.

After almost a year without doing bad things with this bad guy, he just...

However, at this time, Lu Chen didn't continue further but maintained that state. He then said, "Actually, I don't really want to establish an Empress. After all, you are all my ladies, and you are equally important in my eyes. If an Empress were established, there would be a difference in status."

"And once there is an Empress, it's very likely that harem struggles will ensue, as everyone would want the position of Empress."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Chu Yuqin struggled to stay rational. She took a deep breath and said, "If you do not establish an Empress, there will be even more people coveting the position, and then everyone will feel they have a chance."

"Moreover, without an Empress, how would the position of Crown Prince be determined? Surely you don't plan to select the Crown Prince using the old methods of Great Xia?"

The old method Chu Yuqin referred to was, naturally, the survival of the fittest, the winner becomes the king and the loser the bandit.

Chu Yuqin believed that Lu Chen, as a father, would not want to see his children kill each other.

Upon hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Lu Chen pondered for a moment, then shifted his body slightly, prompting Chu Yuqin to clench her teeth tightly. Lu Chen continued, "In fact, establishing or not establishing a Crown Prince will both lead to struggles for imperial power. Take my father, the Emperor, as an example; he appointed two Crown Princes, but in the end, both Crown Princes met with unfortunate fates, and the one who ended up becoming the Emperor was me, the Prince who was last in line."

"The temptation of power is immense. The solution I can think of is to support one child to become the Emperor while I am still alive, and under my supervision, to let him have absolute control over the court and its officials. In this way, even if other children have ideas, they will have to weigh whether they have the ability to compete for power."

After hearing Lu Chen's words, Chu Yuqin considered them for a moment and found his reasoning not without merit.

However, she found it hard to think rationally right now, only wishing that Lu Chen would hurry up and get on with it.

At this moment, Lu Chen's hand encircled Chu Yuqin's abdomen, and he lowered her body saying, "I've thought it over, and I've decided not to establish an Empress after all. I'll directly appoint Feng'er as Crown Prince, and how about bestowing the title of Noble Concubine on you and Zixuan? What do you think?"

Chu Yuqin was stunned for a moment, when suddenly Lu Chen made a move, causing her to let out another whimper, and she quickly replied, "That's not possible, how can I become a Noble Concubine? That would put me on equal footing with Zixuan. I'm just a servant girl, how would the ministers view you then?"

Lu Chen said with a smile, "I am now the Emperor, and one who has absolute control over the court at that. Do I still need to look at others' faces when appointing a Noble Concubine?"

Chapter 784 Chu Yuqin is Pregnant Again\_1

After Lu Chen finished speaking, he shifted his body slightly before continuing, "Actually, it's not just you, I also plan to appoint Rongrong and Wu Junwan as Imperial Noble Consorts."

Chu Yuqin's mind started to fog upon hearing Lu Chen's words.

"You... appointing so many Imperial Noble Consorts... what for..."

Lu Chen said, "My thinking is that anyone who has been involved in important affairs, like Nanyan, will be appointed as Imperial Noble Consorts, while those who focus on raising children, like Yaoyao, Xiaoxiao, and Youyou, will be made Noble Consorts."

"Then we'll only retain these two ranks, and for those below Noble Consort, no more titles will be granted."

After hearing Lu Chen's thoughts, Chu Yuqin said, "In the future, you'll have even more women, and if all are appointed as Noble Consorts, won't there be too many of them?"

Usually, an Emperor's women all have distinct ranks, not every woman can become a Noble Consort, and not every woman can ascend the Emperor's dragon bed.

Chu Yuqin was worried that if Lu Chen titled all his women as Noble Consorts, then as Lu Chen's women increased in number, so too would the expenses of the Imperial Palace.

Although many Emperors mainly allowed a few women to sleep in their chambers, the Emperor's harem often had a vast number of Consorts. Chu Yuqin feared that if Lu Chen chose hundreds of women for the palace, suddenly adding hundreds of Noble Consorts, and if each woman's living expenses were the same, wouldn't that bankrupt the inner treasury?

When Lu Chen heard Chu Yuqin's concerns, he said with a smile, "I won't want just any woman, I'll only want the women I fancy. Even when choosing more consorts in the future, if I don't fancy them, I'll send them all back."

Hearing this, Chu Yuqin seemed to understand something, and also reacted to it.

Although Lu Chen had a fondness for beauty, he was also a man of principles; when he saw someone he liked, he would find every means to have her.

If the women did not catch Lu Chen's fancy, no matter how beautiful they were, and even if they walked back and forth in front of him each day, he would not be interested in them, nor would he touch them.

The North Prince Mansion had previously kept numerous dancing girls, and all the maids were carefully selected for their beauty, yet Lu Chen had never laid a hand on those dancers or maids.

This indirectly showed that Lu Chen was a man who preferred quality over quantity; he had unique demands for beauty and was resolutely uninterested unless the woman was stunning.

The North Prince Mansion once selected concubines for Lu Chen, but after a rigorous selection process, he did not take any of the presented women, which also showed how stringent Lu Chen's standards were.

If Lu Chen continued to maintain such stringent conditions, even if his harem were to grow, it likely wouldn't increase by much in the future.

Therefore, entitling them all as Noble Consorts wasn't unacceptable.

With this thought in mind, Chu Yuqin lifted her cherry lips slightly and exhaled, "You... just decide on your own."



Chu Yuqin didn't want to say anything more at the moment, she just wanted this little rascal to hurry up and do the naughty things.

At this time, Lu Chen said, "Then it's settled."

When he finished, Lu Chen whispered in Chu Yuqin's ear, "My lady, turn your head back and look into my eyes."

No sooner had Lu Chen's voice fallen than Chu Yuqin followed his words and turned her head slightly.

At this moment, the beautiful woman's cheeks were covered in a rosy flush, her delicate eyelashes fluttering lightly, and her eyes pooled with liquid autumn, making her appear exceptionally alluring.

Feeling the heat from Lu Chen, Chu Yuqin whispered softly, "Darling... let's have another child."

Hearing the beautiful woman's words, Lu Chen's inner wildness was instantly stirred, and he bent down to capture Chu Yuqin's red lips, then began to attend to the matter at hand.

The next morning, as dawn was just breaking, Chu Yuqin and Lu Chen still had not slept. At this time, Chu Yuqin was nestled in Lu Chen's arms, feeling incredibly blissful.

Even though she had been initially tricked by this little rascal, she had no regrets now. Instead, she felt extremely fortunate – without this little rascal, she might have never experienced such happiness.

Suddenly, Chu Yuqin thought of something and quickly asked, "You have court today, don't you?"

Chu Yuqin certainly didn't want to delay Lu Chen's attendance at court because of herself.

Hearing her words, Lu Chen smiled faintly and gently stroked Chu Yuqin's hair, saying, "There's no court today; there will be a minor court session in a few days."

Until the new list of officials is released, the current officials wouldn't know what to do at court, only after the new appointments do they know what tasks they are responsible for.

In the coming days, it was as if they were on holiday; Lu Chen planned to take this time to cultivate affection with his wives and concubines.

Just then, Lu Chen glanced at his system interface subconsciously.

Nowadays, when Lu Chen and his wives consort, he had set the system to silent mode so that it wouldn't disturb him. Thus, every time after he finished his business, he would check to see if he had received any system rewards.

The moment Lu Chen looked, he was stunned.

[Congratulations Host, for impregnating Chu Yuqin. Reward: one Earth Knowledge Library]

[Pregnancy rewards are incentive rewards. Please Host, take good care of your wives and ensure the child is safely born. Upon the successful birth of the child, an even more generous reward will be granted.]

This...

Lu Chen remembered the time in the Capital city when he tried hard every day to get Bai Qingqing and Xue Linglong pregnant. Both of them were nearly at their limits after half a year of effort, but there was no effect. Their bellies showed no reaction at all.

But now, just after he had returned and spent one night with Chu Yuqin, she got pregnant immediately.

How come the difference between people is so great? It comes to think of it, it was the same with Chu Yuqin's first pregnancy; she succeeded on the first try.

Thinking of this, Lu Chen was incredibly excited. Chu Yuqin also sensed Lu Chen's excitement at this moment. Just as she was about to say something, Lu Chen smiled and said, "Darling, shall I tell you some good news?"

Chu Yuqin asked, "What good news?"

Lu Chen lifted his hand and gently stroked Chu Yuqin's soft belly, then said, "Guess what the good news is."

Seeing Lu Chen's hand on her belly, Chu Yuqin immediately realized what he meant. His hint was so obvious, how could she not know what the good news was? But still, she found it somewhat unbelievable.

After all, she was now a Grandmaster, and Lu Chen was a Pseudo Celestial. Although last night she had verbally expressed the wish for Lu Chen to give her another child, she had said those words only to tease Lu Chen into being bad to her. But to actually be pregnant?

Chu Yuqin then said, "Really... Really? I'm already a Grandmaster, and I can still get pregnant?"

Hearing Chu Yuqin's words, Lu Chen proudly said, "Of course! You underestimate who I am. It's not just because you're a Grandmaster, even if you become a Celestial in the future, I can still impregnate you."

Chu Yuqin felt a surge of excitement internally, not expecting to be pregnant with their second child so quickly.

The morning.

When Chu Yuqin appeared before her sisters, including Mu Zixuan, with a radiant smile, it was clear that she had been well-loved the night before.

The other women felt envious and hoped Lu Chen would choose them that night.

At this moment, Lu Chen had already made his way to the newly built Imperial Study Room.

Similar in structure to the book room in the North Prince Mansion, the Imperial Study Room also had a resting area, and it was much larger than the one in the North Prince Mansion. After all, it was the working place of Emperor Lu Chen, and naturally, the standards had to be higher.

After entering the Imperial Study Room, Lu Chen instructed for the doors to be closed, then he opened the system interface.

He was curious about what use the Earth Knowledge Library that the system had just rewarded him with might have.

When Lu Chen clicked into the [Earth Knowledge Library], he found countless books before him. These books ranged from kindergarten to university textbooks, including some professional literature.

Numb with shock, Lu Chen gazed upon the scene.

Is this the Earth Knowledge Library?

With these books, won't it be possible to transform this ancient world into a modern world in just a hundred or two hundred years?

The system had always rewarded things piecemeal, and it was unexpected that this time it had given him all the knowledge of Earth at once.

If he were to disseminate the knowledge in this library, the world was bound to undergo earth-shattering changes in the future.

Suppressing the excitement in his heart, Lu Chen then said to the maid at the door, "Go call Ms. Dongfang."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Lu Chen planned to hand over the library directly to Dongfang Longyue. The library involved many vital matters, so it must be managed by someone he trusted.

Chapter 785 Will Your Majesty Choose the Kingly Way or the Hegemonic Way?\_1

When Dongfang Longyue appeared at the Imperial Study Room, it was already stacked with piles of books bearing exquisite designs, causing her to be slightly stunned.

This was the first time she had seen such perfectly bound books, with their paper exceptionally white and the characters remarkably clear.

Upon seeing Dongfang Longyue enter the Imperial Study Room, Lu Chen finally put down the book he was holding.

Dongfang Longyue snapped back to reality and hastily bowed, saying, "This servant pays respects to Your Majesty. May Your Majesty live forever, forever and ever!"

Lu Chen replied with a faint smile, "Longyue, from today onwards, you need not refer to yourself as 'this servant'. Today, you will resign from your position as the Chief Editor of the Eastern Newspaper Agency."

Dongfang Longyue felt a jolt in her heart, but quickly realized Lu Chen must have another task for her, so she promptly said, "As you command, Your Majesty."

Lu Chen continued, "I know you're not one to sit idle, so I didn't plan on having you stay in the Imperial Palace indefinitely. I have a very important mission for you."

Upon hearing this, Dongfang Longyue thought to herself that indeed, His Majesty had an important task for her.

At this moment, Lu Chen glanced at the books on the desk. "The knowledge contained in these books is bestowed from the heavens. I plan to establish the Great Sum Royal Library, and you will be specifically in charge of supervising the craftsmen to print these books. Each volume should be printed in copies of hundreds of thousands. From now on, you will be the Director of the Great Sum Royal Library."

Hearing this, Dongfang Longyue was puzzled. Knowledge bestowed from the heavens?

Lu Chen said further, "The content within these books is very important, and it must not be leaked out for the time being."

"Your consort understands. I will ensure that no one outside will come to know about any book in the library," she replied.

Lu Chen said, "There's no need to be too strict. The library's books are meant for imparting knowledge. They should be made available to others, of course, but only for our own people to learn and use."

After some thought, Lu Chen said, "I will first have some individuals study the knowledge in these books and train them to become teachers. Then, these teachers will go on to instruct more students."

"In the future, only these students will have the privilege of accessing the books of the Great Sum Royal Library."

Dongfang Longyue instantly understood Lu Chen's intention.

With that, Lu Chen called out to a maid, "Go summon Commander Qin."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Talking to Dongfang Longyue once more, Lu Chen said, "I will have Qin Yushan assign some of the Brocade Guard to assist you."

Dongfang Longyue quickly expressed her gratitude, "Thank you, Your Majesty."

At this point, with a nervous heart, Dongfang Longyue asked, "Your Majesty, may I be permitted to read these books?"

She was very curious about this "knowledge bestowed from the heavens." As a person eager to learn, she also wanted to gain some insight from these books.

Lu Chen answered, "Certainly, the books of the Great Sum Royal Library are fully accessible to my wives and children. You are free to read and learn from them if you wish."



Dongfang Longyue thanked him again, "Thank you, Your Majesty!"

Afterward, Lu Chen discussed matters of the library further with Dongfang Longyue.

Once Qin Yushan arrived, Lu Chen spoke to him about the library as well. It wasn't until midday that Dongfang Longyue and Qin Yushan left the Imperial Study Room.

After lunch and a short rest, Lu Chen met with Zhuge Zhongguang.

Lu Chen wanted to ask Zhuge Zhongguang about their next steps and sought his counsel.

After all, something like unifying the world was unprecedented for Lu Chen and beyond his experience.

When Zhuge Zhongguang arrived at the Imperial Study Room, he bowed to Lu Chen, "Your old subject pays his respects to Your Majesty. May Your Majesty live forever and ever!"

Lu Chen said, "Please rise. Bring a seat."

The maid serving in the Imperial Study Room hurriedly brought a chair, and Zhuge Zhongguang bowed again, "Thank you, Your Majesty."

After Zhuge Zhongguang had taken his seat, Lu Chen spoke directly, "I've summoned the Great Scholar here mainly to seek your counsel on how I should proceed next in a proper manner."

Upon hearing Lu Chen's words, Zhuge Zhongguang instantly understood his meaning.

Zhuge Zhongguang then inquired, "This old servant dares to ask Your Majesty, how many Celestials can Your Majesty mobilize at this moment?"

Although Zhuge Zhongguang had heard that there were four Celestials by Lu Chen's side, he still wasn't clear on the actual amount of strength Lu Chen possessed.

Lu Chen thought for a moment before replying, "As for now, there are two Celestials I can directly call upon."

"However, there are a total of five Celestials who stand by my side, and should the need arise, they can also arrive at a moment's notice."

Zhuge Zhongguang said, "With such power at Your Majesty's disposal, you already possess the strength to unify the world."

"But for Your Majesty, the true difficulty lies not in conquering the world but in governing it. Currently, Great Sum's officials are insufficient to manage the entirety of the world on Your Majesty's behalf. Once Your Majesty has eradicated several great dynasties, you will inevitably have to employ the natives of those dynasties to govern the remote regions."

Lu Chen naturally understood this as well, saying, "I am indeed worried about these issues. Once people from other dynasties enter Great Sum's bureaucratic system, then Great Sum's weapons and

various types of knowledge will also become known to the people from these great dynasties. Among them, there are no lack of those who feign allegiance to Great Sum. In the future, if they take Great Sum's weapons, they could very well bring enormous losses to Great Sum."

Lu Chen, having read history books, was also aware of the covert deeds performed by the remnants of the Six Kingdoms after Qin Shi Huang had unified them.

He strongly suspected that the remnants of the former dynasty might quietly wreak havoc in secret. With access to Great Sum's weapons, their potential for destruction would be even greater.

Thus, governing the world was indeed a great challenge.

At this point, Zhuge Zhongguang spoke up, "This old servant has a question to ask Your Majesty, may I?"

Lu Chen replied, "Great Scholar, whatever question you have, just ask."

Zhuge Zhongguang asked, "May I inquire if Your Majesty intends to choose the Way of the King or the Way of Hegemony next?"

Upon hearing this question, Lu Chen was momentarily taken aback.

After pondering for a while, he then countered, "What is the difference between the two?"

Zhuge Zhongguang explained, "If Your Majesty chooses the Way of Hegemony, then the destruction of other dynasties would be also the end for their imperial families. Once Your Majesty uses the sword against the royal families of those great dynasties, that sword must continue to be wielded. There will certainly be many remnants who, under the guise of resisting a tyrant, will oppose Great Sum. Your Majesty would then have to keep killing until no one dares resist Great Sum any longer."

"If Your Majesty chooses the Way of the King, you can use a method of deterrence, convincing the royal families of the great dynasties to surrender voluntarily. If the royal families of the great dynasties choose to submit, this can, to a certain extent, alleviate the hatred of their people towards Great Sum. But this approach can also sow the seeds of future trouble, where some members of other dynasties' royal families might harbor treacherous ambitions and attempt to restore their former reigns."

Hearing Zhuge Zhongguang's words, Lu Chen reflected a moment. After Qin Shi Huang had extinguished the Six Kingdoms, he did not kill all the nobles. A great number were relocated to Xianyang, or exiled.

In the end, among those who survived, there were many who harbored thoughts of restoration, which indeed created a substantial problem.

Yet if all of them were killed, it could likely leave the image of a tyrant in the minds of the populace of the great dynasties, and sheer violence was not a sustainable way to rule.

After thinking it over, Lu Chen declared, "I have decided to choose the Way of the King."

In his mind, Lu Chen thought that once the nobles of the great dynasties were placed under house arrest, if they complied, they would be granted some benefits. If they thought of rebellion, then they would be made examples of and be exterminated.

By striking a balance between punishment and reward, he could not only maintain his dignity but also reduce fear among the common people.

Moreover, he was different from Qin Shi Huang; he was already a Pseudo Celestial. He could live longer than Qin Shi Huang did, giving him ample time to deal with those royal nobles.

He could tackle them one by one, gradually.

Lu Chen then inquired, "According to the State Preceptor, which dynasty should be eradicated first?"

Zhuge Zhongguang did not directly answer the question but remarked, "This matter should start with the easy before moving to the difficult. Great Qian is rife with epidemics and at its weakest. It would be the easiest to eliminate them now, but precisely because their epidemic is still rampant, if Great Sum's soldiers were to be infected, it would be a catastrophe for Great Sum."

"Great Jue's strength is modest compared to Great Wu, but to the north of Great Jue, the Barbarian Tribe is eyeing us covetously. There was recent news from the Brocade Guard that a so-called Goddess has unified the entire Barbarian Tribe."

"If Great Jue is to be destroyed, then the Barbarian Tribe to the north must be wiped out as well. The lands in the northwest are vast, and the Barbarian Tribe can escape at any time. Exterminating the Barbarian Tribe will not be easy."

Chapter 786 I Decided to Send Troops to Great Wu in Three Months!\_1

Hearing Zhuge Zhongguang's words, Lu Chen fell into thought for a moment.

Indeed, the epidemic in Great Qian was getting more severe, and even many of the Brocade Guards they had sent to Great Qian had died. Now they still had no clarity about the actual situation there.

Therefore, it was not wise to rashly attack Great Qian at this time. If the epidemic spread to Great Xia, who knows how much trouble would ensue.

Now, there was only one target left, and that was the Great Wu dynasty.

At this moment, Zhuge Zhongguang continued, "Great Wu reveres martial power, among the great dynasties, its military strength is the strongest. Although exterminating the entire Great Wu dynasty seems relatively difficult, if we start by annihilating the strongest Great Wu, it will also pose a certain deterrence against the other dynasties."

"Once Great Wu has fallen, when His Majesty later moves to exterminate the other dynasties, they will surely lack the will to fight."

Lu Chen thought about it, and it did make sense. If even the strongest Great Wu were to be destroyed, by then, both Great Jue and Great Qian would definitely weigh their own strength.

Lu Chen said, "If that's the case, then we'll do as the Great Scholar suggests—eliminate Great Wu first, then Great Jue."

"We'll send troops southward after clarifying the epidemic situation in Great Qian."

Just then, a maid's voice came from outside, "Your Majesty, Commander Liang seeks an audience!"

Seeing someone looking for Lu Chen, Zhuge Zhongguang stood up and said, "Your Majesty, if there are no other matters, this old official will take his leave."

Lu Chen replied, "There's no hurry, Great Scholar. Let's hear what it's about together."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Zhuge Zhongguang sat down again, "Yes, Your Majesty."

Soon, Liang Zong entered the Imperial Study Room, "Greetings to Your Majesty, long live, long live, long long live Your Majesty!"

Lu Chen directly asked, "What is it?"

Liang Zong took out a letter and handed it to Lu Chen, "Your Majesty, our men sent to Fengyin Island have returned. This is the investigative report they wrote on Fengyin Island."

Hearing this, Lu Chen immediately took the letter from Liang Zong's hand, then opened the envelope and began to read carefully.

As he scanned the contents of the letter, Lu Chen's expression shifted slightly.

The materials for the Piercing Cloud Bow and Piercing Cloud Arrow made by Prince Lu Shuyun originally came from Fengyin Island, and the Slayer Spear was also from Fengyin Island. Lu Chen had always suspected that there might be some aircraft dropped from a higher-level world on Fengyin Island, so the first thing he did after unifying Great Xia was to send the Jinyiwei to investigate Fengyin Island.

After a long investigation by the Jinyiwei, there was finally news. Lu Chen read the investigative report written by the Jinyiwei.

He thought to himself, it seems that it was just as he suspected, there indeed existed a spacecraft on Fengyin Island that had fallen from a higher civilization's world.

However, the ship was incredibly large, and the materials used to construct it were very sturdy. There was simply no way to transport the ship to Yan County.

If he wanted to see what that spacecraft looked like, he would have to visit Fengyin Island in person.

He also wondered if the functions of that spacecraft were still intact, and whether it could operate.

At this moment, Lu Chen suddenly noticed some content in the Jinyiwei's investigative report: in the report, the Jinyiwei Guard mentioned that the spacecraft had many transparent glass windows through which they could see the inside from the outside.

There were rooms within the spaceship, and the rooms were very clean and tidy, as if someone was living there regularly.

Lu Chen's heart skipped a beat. Could it be that there were still people living inside that spacecraft on Fengyin Island? If so, once the spacecraft started operating, it was possible that it was equipped with extremely terrifying weapons. Maybe one blast could destroy all of Great Xia.



Immediately, Lu Chen instructed Liang Zong, "Have the Jinyiwei Guards keep a close watch on Fengyin Island. If there is any anomaly with that mysterious structure, report to me immediately!"

Liang Zong immediately said, "Yes, Your Majesty!"

Lu Chen then waved his hand, "You go and attend to your tasks first!"

"This subordinate shall take his leave!"

Following that, Liang Zong left the Imperial Study Room; once he was gone, Lu Chen directly tossed the investigation report in his hand to Zhuge Zhongguang.

"Great Scholar, take a look at the content as well."

Zhuge Zhongguang immediately caught the paper flying towards him from Lu Chen and, after seeing the content of the investigation report, he couldn't hide his disbelief, saying, "Your Majesty, could it be that the mysterious structure is an Extraterrestrial Material?"

Lu Chen did not answer immediately; with a casual wave of his hand, the Slayer Spear appeared in his grasp. Seeing the strange weapon in Lu Chen's hand gave Zhuge Zhongguang a shock.

Zhuge Zhongguang felt the immense oppressive force emanating from the Slayer Spear and had a premonition that this odd weapon could take his life in an instant.

Lu Chen said, "This is the Slayer Spear, the previous emperor originally intended to use this weapon to kill my master, but unfortunately, he was ultimately injured by the backlash from the weapon, and this weapon came from that mysterious structure on Fengyin Island."

Zhuge Zhongguang said, "In that case, it is indeed possible that the mysterious structure on Fengyin Island is an Extraterrestrial Material."

At this point, Zhuge Zhongguang's expression turned graver, and he suddenly thought of something, "Your Majesty, this old servant has a speculation, the epidemic that has struck Great Qian might also be related to Extraterrestrial Materials."

In the past, Zhuge Zhongguang had always lived within the Great Qian Dynasty, and he was quite familiar with it; he had never heard of such a severe epidemic in Great Qian before.

The people of this era were not fools, although most of them were unaware of the specifics of the epidemic, they also knew some methods to prevent it, such as isolating those who were ill and cremating those who had died of the disease.

In the past, Great Qian also experienced small-scale epidemics, and not only Great Qian, other kingdoms had experienced epidemics as well, but those epidemics would settle down in no more than half a year.

Whereas the epidemic in Great Qian had been raging for so long now, and was getting worse. According to the intelligence gathered by the Brocade Guard, the courts of Great Qian had tried every method possible; as soon as an area was struck by the epidemic, troops were sent to cordon it off. Yet even so, they were completely unable to stop the spread of the disease.

Zhuge Zhongguang felt that this epidemic was peculiarly strange; despite various countermeasures taken by the Great Qian Dynasty, it could still spread throughout the entire kingdom. Clearly, this epidemic was not like those previously encountered.

Since Extraterrestrial Materials had been found on Fengyin Island, it was not impossible that Extraterrestrial Materials had also appeared in Great Qian - the epidemic in Great Qian might have been brought by such materials.

Hearing Zhuge Zhongguang's speculation, Lu Chen felt a jolt in his heart.

Zhuge Zhongguang's conjecture could very well be true. If it were an ordinary epidemic, the people of this world would also have methods to deal with it, and he had long since passed on some knowledge about epidemics to the Brocade Guard. Liang Zong's Jinyiwei guards sent to investigate Great Qian were aware of what the epidemic was and knew how to prevent it, yet many Jinyiwei guards who went to investigate in Great Qian still died without understanding why.

Either the situation in Great Qian was the work of the Taiyin Divine Sect, or the epidemic in Great Qian had another source; perhaps some Extraterrestrial Material had indeed fallen into Great Qian, bringing about some deadly pathogens that led to such a catastrophic blow to Great Qian.

Regardless of whether there were Extraterrestrial Materials within Great Qian's borders, this gave Lu Chen a sense of urgency, as after all, the world was not as safe as he had previously thought.

Setting aside the possibility that figures like the Leader of the Taiyin Sect, who had apparently come from other worlds, existed, the powerhouses in the western fog zone were also a tremendous threat to this world. It was now almost confirmed that the objects on Fengyin Island were Extraterrestrial Materials, and Great Qian was also suspected to harbor such materials.

Thinking thus, Lu Chen felt the dangers ever more acutely.

He must hurry to unite the world under one rule.

Coming back to his senses, Lu Chen then said to Zhuge Zhongguang, "Great Scholar, I have decided to lead the troops into Great Wu in three months. What do you think?"

Upon hearing Lu Chen's words, Zhuge Zhongguang thought for a moment, "With the forces at Your Majesty's disposal, three months is sufficient preparation time."

Lu Chen said, "Very well, then I will lead the troops into Great Wu after three months!"

Chapter 787 Lu Chen gets angry\_1

After deciding when to dispatch troops to Great Wu, Lu Chen discussed the appointment of officials with Zhuge Zhongguang.

The abilities of most officials in the Capital city were inferior compared to those from the North Country, as Lu Chen had always let officials of the North Country handle various matters independently, and they were constantly monitored by the Brocade Guard.

Lu Chen was reluctant to assign the Capital city's officials to crucial positions, but if he didn't provide them with some suitable roles, those officials might feel discontent.

After all, they had followed him to Yan County, unlike those old foxes in the Capital city who were merely getting by; these officials still had some aspirations.

How to assign them tasks involved many considerations.

After Lu Chen and Zhuge Zhongguang finished discussing the appointments of the officials, the sunset had already fallen, leaving only the twilight hanging in the sky.

Seeing that it was getting late through the window, Lu Chen said, "Great Scholar, you may return for today. We can continue to discuss the appointment of officials tomorrow."

Zhuge Zhongguang then stood up from his seat and, bowing to Lu Chen, said, "This old official shall take his leave!"

Zhuge Zhongguang then turned and left the Imperial Study Room.

After Zhuge Zhongguang departed, Lu Chen went straight to the Wind Cloud Palace.

When Lu Chen entered the Wind Cloud Hall, he saw Zhou Youyou and Zhou Xiaoxiao were also there. Zhou Youyou and Zhou Xiaoxiao were quite worried about Mu Zixuan's condition, especially since on the first night of Lu Chen's return, he had not summoned Mu Zixuan to the bedchamber but Chu Yuqin instead.

This matter was naturally not something they could interfere with, but they could stay by Mu Zixuan's side to console her.

Zhou Xiaoxiao and Zhou Youyou had been in the Wind Cloud Palace all day and just as Mu Zixuan was about to have someone prepare dinner, a maid outside suddenly shouted loudly, "The Emperor has arrived!"

Hearing this, the three ladies were startled and then hurried out to greet him.

Before Mu Zixuan could even perform a courtesy, Lu Chen spoke, "Xiaoxiao and Youyou are here too. That's good. Don't go back tonight. Stay in the Wind Cloud Palace."

Hearing this, the three ladies immediately understood Lu Chen's intention, and Zhou Xiaoxiao and Zhou Youyou couldn't help but blush.

At this moment, Lu Chen looked at Mu Zixuan and said, "Zixuan, it's quite late already. Dinner should be ready, right?"

Mu Zixuan promptly responded, "It is prepared. Your consort will have the servants serve the dishes."

Mu Zixuan then ordered the maids to go and tell the Food House to serve the meal quickly.

Lu Chen meanwhile walked towards the Wind Cloud Hall.

After entering the Wind Cloud Hall, Lu Chen sat at a round dining table, and Mu Zixuan, Zhou Xiaoxiao, and Zhou Youyou quickly joined him, but they did not sit down immediately.

Now that Lu Chen's status had changed, they did not dare to be as informal as before.

Seeing that Mu Zixuan and both Zhou sisters were standing, Lu Chen said with a smile, "Why is it that since I've returned, you all seem so afraid of me, as if I'm a stranger to you?"

"Please sit down."

Hearing Lu Chen's words, Mu Zixuan, Zhou Xiaoxiao, and Zhou Youyou said in unison, "Thank you, Your Majesty!"

Only then did the three ladies take their seats.

Seeing their restraint, Lu Chen continued in a calm tone, "Although I am now the Emperor, this is the inner palace, my home. You are my wives and concubines, my women, the people closest to me. Do you all really want to distance yourselves from me and leave me a lonely man?"

Although Lu Chen's tone was placid, Mu Zixuan and the others instantly picked up on his irritation. He rarely got angry, and this was their first time hearing him speak so sternly.

Simultaneously, the three women hastily stood up from their seats and knelt on the ground.

Mu Zixuan said, "Your Majesty, we do not harbor such thoughts."

Seeing the three trembling on the ground, Lu Chen sighed.

As he had thought, assuming this position ultimately led one to become a lonely ruler.

It's often said that the Emperor has no personal affairs, only state affairs; even in the harem, the Emperor's wives must maintain the dignity of sovereign and subjects in his presence.

Although Lu Chen knew this era was just like that, he felt very uncomfortable.

Lu Chen also understood that, for someone like the Emperor who held the power of life and death, even if he verbally allowed his wives and concubines some freedom, they would not dare to act recklessly. After all, a single word from him could lead to their downfall, as well as the destruction of their families.

Moreover, compared to his father, the Emperor, his own power was even greater. His father had been restricted by the Aristocratic Family, but now he had sole control over state affairs. Whatever he said was law, and no one could limit him.

For an Emperor with such immense power, making his wives and concubines unafraid of him was almost an impossible task.

At this time, Lu Chen said, "Zixuan, you have been married to me for several years now. Don't you know what kind of person I am?"

Hearing this question, Mu Zixuan was slightly stunned, then said, "Your Majesty is benevolent and harmonious, with far-reaching ambition. You are a wise ruler, a rarity seen once in thousands of years."

Lu Chen was very dissatisfied with this answer. Mu Zixuan's words were too polite.

Lu Chen then rose from his seat and walked straight over to Mu Zixuan, then crouched down.



Mu Zixuan was taken aback once again.

Looking into Mu Zixuan's eyes, Lu Chen said, "Zixuan, what do you think about this? I will issue a command to the Inner Court that my wives and concubines are not to kneel before me so readily."

This...

Mu Zixuan immediately understood what Lu Chen meant. He was very dissatisfied with their behavior today.

Mu Zixuan quickly said, "Your Majesty, your concubine knows her mistake."

Lu Chen said, "Knowing your mistake, why not rise quickly?"

"You want to kneel so much? Later when we go to bed, I'll let you kneel all you want."

The meaning behind Lu Chen's words was clear to the three women; their cheeks instantly grew even redder and became incredibly hot.

Then the three women rose from the ground.

At this time, Mu Zixuan said, "Your Majesty, your concubine understands your point, but the Imperial Palace today is not what the North Prince Mansion used to be. With so many eyes watching in the palace, any misconduct by a wife will inevitably lead to impeachment at court."

It is said that the Emperor has no private matters; affairs of the Harem, once known to those ministers, will definitely be brought up in the court sessions and will be used as an opportunity to launch political struggles.

This is common in every dynasty, so even though they knew Lu Chen disliked their overly cautious behavior towards him, which might make him feel isolated, they also had to consider the troubles that might arise from acting disrespectfully.

Hearing Mu Zixuan say this, Lu Chen then said, "In the future, I will issue a command that matters of the Harem are my family affairs, and no minister is allowed to discuss them, unless it is something to do with the businesses you manage outside or some deeds that affect Great Xia."

Just as Mu Zixuan was about to say something, Lu Chen quickly said, "Alright, this matter is settled."

With that, Lu Chen glanced at Mu Zixuan and the two Zhou sisters, then continued, "I will just say this, if you really make me a man without kinship, feeling that I have no family, then from now on, I will truly not act with sentiment."

"I believe you do not wish to see an Emperor like my father, do you?"

Hearing these words, the three women felt a pang in their hearts.

They naturally did not want to see Lu Chen become a cold and heartless Emperor.

As Lu Chen's words fell, he once again sat down at the dining table.

At this time, the servants had already started serving the dishes.

Lu Chen said, "Come and sit down quickly."

After coming to their senses, Mu Zixuan and the two Zhou sisters hurriedly took their seats at the table. With the words Lu Chen had just said, the three women were no longer as cautious as before.

Once the dishes were served, Zhou Xiaoxiao and Zhou Youyou prepared a cup for Lu Chen while the other poured wine for him.

At this time, Lu Chen said to Mu Zixuan, "Zixuan, after yesterday's court session ended, a minister came to me and brought up the matter of appointing the Empress."

Hearing these words, Zhou Xiaoxiao and Zhou Youyou's hearts tightened.

Chapter 788 Li Rui's Troubles\_1

Hearing Lu Chen mention the matter of the Empress, Mu Zixuan instantly understood why Lu Chen had gone to Chu Yuqin the night before without asking her to serve him in bed.

She was well aware of the position Chu Yuqin held in Lu Chen's heart. Lu Chen seeking out Chu Yuqin was surely to discuss matters regarding the Empress.

Whenever the subject of the Empress came up, Mu Zixuan couldn't help but sigh inwardly; she truly didn't want to get involved in such affairs again.

Unfortunately, it wasn't up to her wishes. As Lu Chen's royal consort, she was bound to be involved in these matters.

Lu Chen glanced at Mu Zixuan's reaction and then said directly, "My intention is for Feng'er to become the Crown Prince, but I will not establish an Empress."

Hearing this, Mu Zixuan breathed a sigh of relief. She instantly grasped Lu Chen's intention.

Ever since Lu Chen's harem had grown, he had always emphasized harmony in his harem. He did not wish for any woman to struggle for power and advantage in it.

Lu Chen's choice not to establish an Empress was most likely to prevent the Empress from becoming a target, and on the other hand, it was probably also meant to signal to the women in the harem that he would never appoint an Empress, so they shouldn't aspire to climb any higher.

Lu Chen continued, "Although there will be no Empress, I will establish an Imperial Noble Consort. From now on, in my harem, the only distinction will be between the Imperial Noble Consort and Noble Consorts. Below the rank of Noble Consort, there will be no further rankings."

Hearing this, Mu Zixuan thought to herself that it was exactly as she had anticipated; everything Lu Chen did was for the harmony of the harem.

Mu Zixuan then said, "I will defer to Your Majesty's decision on this matter."

Lu Chen asked, "Zixuan, are you not upset that I haven't made you Empress?"

Hearing Lu Chen's probing words, Mu Zixuan quickly replied, "Your Majesty, in truth, I have no interest in the position of Empress. Not only do I have no interest, but I also don't wish to be involved in the struggle for it."

"Your Majesty is also aware of the incident that occurred with the Mu Family. I have grown weary of those affairs and don't wish for my children to be embroiled in them either. I only want to see my children grow up safely."

Lu Chen sighed and said, "I also do not wish to see my children embroiled in such affairs. After all, I faced life-and-death crises numerous times when I was younger. I no longer wish to witness brother against brother, father against son. Yet, given my current position, my children will inevitably be dragged into some matters in the future. I can only hope that Feng'er grows up quickly under my protection, to stand on his own so that, in time, others will no longer entertain different ideas."

Mu Zixuan instantly understood Lu Chen's thoughts. He wanted to use the time while he was still alive to solidify Lu Changfeng's position as his heir apparent. As long as Lu Changfeng's position was secure enough, it would naturally negate the ambitions of others.

At that moment, Lu Chen said, "All right, let's not discuss this any further. Let's eat, or the food will get cold."

Afterward, the four of them stopped discussing the topic of the Empress and Crown Prince and began talking about their children.

After dinner, all four went to the bathhouse to bathe. Once they finished, they proceeded to the large bed in Wind Cloud Palace.

To punish them for distancing themselves from him, Lu Chen made Mu Zixuan and the other two kneel for almost an entire night, and he also whipped them. Their cries could be heard from outside the Wind Cloud Palace.

Dawn was breaking, and only then did Lu Chen let them go. Following his discipline, Mu Zixuan and the other two assured him they would never dare to distance themselves from him again.

In the morning, Lu Chen had some porridge and went to the Imperial Study Room to deal with state affairs.

The list of ministerial appointments was yet to be drafted, so he would be busy for the entire day.

Not long after Lu Chen had arrived at the Imperial Study Room, Zhuge Zhongguang once again came to continue discussing the court structure and the matter of appointing officials with Lu Chen.

As Lu Chen was busy, the officials who had followed him to Yan County from the Capital city were also trying in every possible way to ingratiate themselves with the original ministers of North Country, especially Li Rui.

As a Great Scholar of the Wenyuan Pavilion, Zhuge Zhongguang was someone Lu Chen could summon at any moment, resulting in him living close to the Imperial Palace. Thus, it was difficult for the ministers to meet him, and they also didn't dare to blatantly curry favor with Zhuge Zhongguang so close to the Imperial Palace.

Most ministers chose to curry favor with Li Rui.

At this very moment.

Within the Li Mansion.

Li Rui sat in the hall, sipping tea and sighing, seemingly troubled by something.

Just then, a servant hurriedly ran in, "Master, another person has arrived, and they say he was an Assistant Minister in the former court."

Li Rui quickly waved his hand, "Do not see me, do not see me, just say I am sick and still lying in bed."

Li Rui was no fool; he was very well aware of the Brocade Guard's capabilities. If he really met those officials from the capital city, he wouldn't even know how he died when the time came.

At this thought, Li Rui couldn't help but feel emotional. Who would have thought that he, Li Rui, would have such a day? When the North Prince came to North City, he was just a simple Prefecture Governor. While he lived a better life than the common people, he was far below those officials in the capital city.

Who would have imagined that in just a few short years, he too had become a person of high rank and great power? Now it was those officials from the capital city who came to ingratiate themselves with him.

Li Rui felt somewhat fortunate in his heart. Fortunately, when the North Prince came to North City, he did not go against the North Prince just because he saw him as worthless. Instead, he handed over his military power to Lu Chen at the first opportunity and actively cooperated with Lu Chen to accomplish the reform of North City.

Of course, the most crucial point was when Lu Chen gave the officials of North City the choice to leave or stay, and without hesitation, he chose to stay in North City.

If he hadn't made the right decision on any one thing at the time, it was hard to say if he would even be alive now, let alone have the status he had today.

He had now come to understand Lu Chen's character; although Lu Chen seemed to devolve power in every aspect, entrusting most matters to his ministers, Lu Chen's control over the court was extremely terrifying.

Lu Chen was different from traditional monarchs. Lu Chen made decisions only on the broader strategy, and then left all matters to his ministers to handle, while having the Brocade Guard supervise their execution.

If it were another emperor, attending court would be about trivial matters. But with Lu Chen, they only discussed state affairs, and weren't allowed to bring up trivial complaints.

As Li Rui was lost in thought, another servant suddenly came in. The servant rushed up to Li Rui and said, "Master, someone from the palace has come!"



At that word, Li Rui instantly snapped back to reality, his face turning deathly pale from fright. He knew that today's events would certainly catch the Emperor's attention, but he hadn't expected the Emperor to send someone so quickly.

However, Li Rui quickly regained his composure. He thought to himself that he hadn't actually accepted any gifts from those officials from the capital city, not even seen them, so the Emperor sending someone was likely just a reminder, not a summons for punishment.

With that in mind, Li Rui immediately said, "Please bring the person in quickly."

Soon, the servant brought in a female guard. Upon seeing Li Rui, she took out a Golden Waist Token and said directly, "Lord Li, his Majesty has a message: if officials from the capital city visit, you may have proper contact with them and explain the rules of the officials in North Country to them."

Upon hearing this, Li Rui was stunned.

He had initially thought that the Emperor was reminding him not to form factions, but he hadn't expected the Emperor to even allow him to meet those officials from the capital city.

Li Rui quickly grasped what the Emperor meant; the Emperor intended to use him as a mouthpiece to let the ministers from the capital city know in advance what should be done and what not, so that they could integrate into the new court more quickly.

Li Rui then said, "Please convey to his Majesty that I will certainly complete the task he has entrusted to me, making those people understand what they should do and what they shouldn't."

Hearing Li Rui's response, the female guard didn't say much and left straight away.

Chapter 789 Of course, I came here because I missed my Wanyan and Xue'er\_1

After the female guard sent by Lu Chen had left, Li Rui immediately instructed his servants to notify the Capital city officials who were still at the door and hadn't left, asking them to enter the hall together.

Upon hearing that Li Rui, the former third-ranked official of the North Country's court, wanted to see them, the Capital city officials were extremely pleased.

They were not fools and naturally understood that Li Rui's earlier claim of being ill was an excuse not to see them. Now that Li Rui wanted to see them, it was clear he had come around.

Soon, a group of officials from the Capital city arrived at the meeting hall of Li Mansion.

Once everyone had entered the reception hall, Li Rui spoke up directly, "This official knows why you have come to Li Mansion today. But before that, let me be frank, you should take back all the gifts you brought with you later."

"Yan County is not like the Capital city; it's easy to run into trouble with casual gift-giving here."

Hearing this, the officials were momentarily stunned, but having been in the civil service for many years, they quickly grasped Li Rui's meaning.

Li Rui continued, "Our Emperor is unlike any previous Emperor. To establish a firm footing in Yan County, you must quickly understand what kind of person the Emperor needs."

"If you have any questions, you can raise them now. This official can answer all of them today. However, after today, you cannot run to Li Mansion as you did today."

Hearing Li Rui speak so directly, an official from the Capital city immediately said, "Lord Li, this subordinate has a question and would like to seek advice from Lord Li."

Li Rui said, "If there's anything you don't understand, ask away."

The official asked, "Is it true that holding court sessions once every seven days will not affect the passage of state affairs?"

Li Rui replied, "No, it won't. Although court sessions occur once every seven days, the Emperor certainly does not do nothing in these seven days. The Emperor will handle all sorts of state affairs in the Imperial Study Room."

"The reason the Emperor changed court sessions to once every seven days is that the Emperor is aware that some ministers always raise trivial matters at the morning sessions, turning the court into a pointless exercise and wasting half a day's time, which significantly impacts the efficiency of officials."

"Without morning sessions, officials need to go to their respective workplaces at work hours, which in fact increases work efficiency."

Another official asked, "If there are no morning sessions, how will we know if the Emperor has any urgent matters?"

Li Rui responded, "Do you think the Emperor decided to hold court sessions once every seven days for no reason? During court sessions, the Emperor will arrange all the work for the coming seven days. If there's an emergency, the Emperor will naturally send someone to inform the senior departments, and then the senior departments will issue orders to their subordinates."

Li Rui glanced over the officials in the hall and continued, "Our Emperor values practical achievements and greatly dislikes bringing everything to the court for discussion. In the future, remember not to bring anything unrelated to state affairs to court."

"Especially matters of the Harem, which are the Emperor's family affairs—take great care not to touch upon them. Moreover, the Ministry of Rites in the new court is essentially a retirement department. If any of you end up there, you only need to follow the Emperor's arrangements. Don't incessantly talk about ritual and propriety; the Emperor dislikes nothing more than those who preach about moral principles but are idle in their duties."

Upon hearing this, one official was displeased and immediately said, "Lord Li, the son of Heaven has no personal matters; thus, the affairs of the Harem should also be considered state affairs."

Li Rui glanced at the man and then said, "This official is just reminding you. If you all do not heed my advice and something happens, don't blame this official."

Li Rui's tone was stern, and the man refrained from saying more.

Li Rui carried on, "There's another most crucial point: do not think about engaging in bribery. The Emperor has an institution specifically monitoring officials, called the Brocade Guard. The Brocade Guard is ubiquitous; whatever you do, the Emperor will know immediately."

Hearing Li Rui say this, the officials finally understood why he had asked them to take their gifts back.

At this moment, an official cautiously asked, "Lord Li, does this mean that whatever you tell us today will soon be known by His Majesty as well?"

Upon hearing this question, Li Rui laughed and then said, "His Majesty was already aware of your visit to the Li Mansion. What do you think was the reason I originally did not want to see you, but then suddenly decided I would?"

This...

The officials instantly understood Li Rui's implication—could it be that Li Rui speaking to them in this manner was by the palace's wishes?

No wonder Li Rui's words sounded like he was admonishing them; it turned out that these were the things the Emperor wanted to say to them, and Li Rui was merely conveying the Emperor's intentions.

Following that, Li Rui discussed with the officials present the government structure of Yan County and also talked about how the officials there were previously treated.

After listening to Li Rui, the officials from the Capital city gained a rough understanding of Yan County's bureaucratic scene and Lu Chen's style of conducting affairs.

...

Lu Chen and Zhuge Zhongguang discussed for nearly a day before finally deciding on the list of official appointments for the new court.

In the evening, Lu Chen initially planned to visit Yelv Nanyan, but he suddenly remembered something, and so he turned and went to the residence of Wu Junwan instead.

Currently, Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er were living together, after all, neither of them had formally married Lu Chen nor did they have an official status.

And despite their frequent bickering, Murong Xue'er and Wu Junwan had many common topics; both were connected to the Yue Emperor and were Lu Chen's women. Whether they discussed the Emperor or Lu Chen, they could always find common ground.

Now, as the sunset in the west, the red glow of the twilight shone upon the voluptuous and perfect figure of Wu Junwan, the scene like a beautiful painting.

Wu Junwan stood in the pavilion, while Murong Xue'er stood by her side. At this moment, Wu Junwan said, "Why don't you go to the Imperial Study Room and find that man?"

Murong Xue'er replied, "Isn't Princess Junwan also not going?"

Wu Junwan spoke indifferently, "This palace is now busy with many duties, unlike you who have nothing to do all day, spending every day in your room painting and thinking of men."

Ever since Lu Chen left the North Country, Murong Xue'er would often paint portraits of him in her room, longing for him as she gazed at the paintings.

Hearing Wu Junwan's words, Murong Xue'er raised her eyebrows slightly, then said, "Your Highness, peeping at others' belongings is not a good habit."

Just as Wu Junwan was about to say something, a familiar voice came from not far away, "Peeping at others' belongings is indeed not a good habit. Junwan, you must not do this again in the future."

Upon hearing this voice, the two women were momentarily stunned. As they regained their composure and looked toward the direction of the voice, they indeed saw that bad man who haunted their dreams and captivated their souls.

At that moment, Wu Junwan said, "Your Majesty, how come you are here today? Are you not afraid that the wives and concubines of the Harem will be jealous?"

After all, Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er still lacked any formal status, and they had followed Lu Chen later in the game. Strictly speaking, it was not yet their turn. Yet, here was Lu Chen seeking them out on just the third day.

Upon hearing Wu Junwan's question, Lu Chen performed his Shadow Shifting, appearing directly behind the two women, and then spread his arms, wrapping them around the soft waists of the two.

"I've come here, of course, because I missed my Wanyan and Xue'er."

Chapter 790 His Majesty is Truly Obsessed with Producing Heirs

As Lu Chen's voice fell, his claws slowly slid down from the waists of the two women, finally coming to rest on their buttocks.

Wu Junwan gave this lecherous man a white look and then said, "Your Majesty has come to find us, probably to inquire about what the Yue Emperor has been up to after Your Majesty's departure from Yan County."

Lu Chen smiled slightly, neither admitting nor denying it.

Indeed, he visited Wu Junwan today for exactly that reason.

Although he had reviewed the reports from the Brocade Guard, he still didn't know the specifics, and he was very curious about how Wu Junwan had declined the Yue Emperor's request for cooperation.

Lu Chen said, "Alright, let's not talk about that for now. I've just come from the Imperial Study Room after handling state affairs and am quite hungry now."

Upon hearing this, Wu Junwan immediately instructed the maid outside the pavilion, "Tell the Food House to prepare dinner, and inform them that His Majesty is here."

"Yes, Lady."

The maid immediately turned and left for the Food House.

At that moment, Lu Chen wrapped his arms around the waists of the two women and walked toward the palace interior, saying as they walked, "It's been almost a year since we last met; I wonder if the two ladies have missed me?"



Upon hearing this, Wu Junwan coldly replied, "With so many things for this palace to deal with daily, where is there time to think of men? However, this talented lady from the Great Jue, she spends all day in her room drawing portraits of your Majesty."

"Should she serve Your Majesty tonight, I guarantee she will take good care of you and make you very comfortable."

Murong Xue'er, who was beside them, did not get angry upon hearing Wu Junwan's words; instead, she calmly said, "I merely drew portraits of His Majesty. I'm not like some people who, while appearing dignified and noble on the surface, clutch their blankets at night and keep chanting 'Your Majesty, Your Majesty' nonstop."

Uh... this...

Just as Wu Junwan was about to retort Murong Xue'er, Lu Chen intervened, saying, "I didn't expect the two ladies to be having such a hard time. But don't worry, I'm back now, and tonight I'll make sure the two ladies have a satisfying rest."

Upon hearing this, both women simultaneously thought to themselves, sleep? They were afraid there'd be no sleep tonight.

Once the three of them entered the grand hall, it wasn't long before the palace servants and maids started serving dishes.

Lu Chen picked up his chopsticks, ate, and asked, "Junwan, I remember when I left Yan County, the Yue Emperor invited you to join her in causing destruction; how did you reject her later?"

Upon hearing Lu Chen's question, Wu Junwan replied, "Your Majesty indeed came for this matter. A man's mouth really can't be trusted."

Lu Chen laughed and said, "I'm just asking casually."

Wu Junwan answered directly, "I declined her outright. I told her that although you had left Yan County, Zhuge Zhongguang, the Pseudo Celestial, was still in control of Yan County, and it was highly likely that there were other powers behind you, making it very difficult to cause any chaos."

Lu Chen continued to ask, "She wasn't suspicious of you?"

Wu Junwan replied, "No, but she still sent people to try to steal the secrets of the North Country. Unfortunately, I found out about it beforehand and informed the Brocade Guard, which led to the failure of her plans."

Lu Chen curiously asked, "Was the Yue Emperor not willing to accept defeat?"

Wu Junwan answered indifferently, "I don't know."

"She hasn't written to me in a long time. With the current instability in the northern regions, her thoughts are all there."

Upon hearing this, Lu Chen paused in picking up his food, his hand suspended in midair, "The north? Is there unrest among the Barbarian Tribe?"

Wu Junwan said, "Your Brocade Guard is so capable, they couldn't possibly be unaware that the Barbarian Tribe has already united, could they?"

Lu Chen said, "I've heard something about that. It's said that the Barbarian Tribe seems to have a new Goddess, who appears to be quite formidable."

Wu Junwan replied, "Indeed, very formidable. For a woman to reunite the fragmented Barbarian Tribe, she must have not just methods, but also tremendous strength."

"Qingrou has sensed that this woman is planning to lead her troops southward, and it's going to happen within these few years."

Lu Chen said with a laugh, "Then she's got her work cut out for her. You can write to her when the time comes. If she faces any difficulties, she can ask Great Sum for help. I would be only too happy to assist her."

Wu Junwan glanced at Lu Chen and then said expressionlessly, "Do you really think she's a fool, not knowing what you are planning?"

Lu Chen replied with a smile, "I was just making conversation. Whether Great Jue can hold out until the Barbarian Tribe invades the south, that's yet to be seen."

Upon hearing this, Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er were taken aback.

What did Lu Chen mean by that?

Could it be...

He's planning to attack Great Yue?

Having regained her composure, Wu Junwan gazed at Lu Chen's face, asking tentatively, "Are you preparing to annihilate Great Yue?"

Lu Chen said indifferently, "Not for now, but if I were to annihilate anyone, it would be Great Wu first."

This...

At this moment, Wu Junwan felt a mixture of emotions since she herself was from Great Wu; even though she had now completely sided with Lu Chen, the thought of him wanting to extinguish Great Wu still made her feel uncomfortable.

Wu Junwan then asked, "If you really do annihilate Great Wu, what are your plans for the Great Martial Royal Family?"

Lu Chen replied without hesitation, "Give them some money, and allot them some land, so they can live the rest of their lives without worries about food and clothing."

Wu Junwan said, "It won't be that simple."

Wu Junwan didn't believe that Lu Chen would be at ease allowing the royal family of Great Wu to continue their existence. As long as members of Great Wu's royal family remained alive, it was likely that some of the people of Great Wu might harbor other intentions, which would not be conducive to Lu Chen's grand unification.

Before Lu Chen could say anything, Wu Junwan continued, "Even if you choose to let them live at first, in a few years, you will find a way to slowly get rid of them."

Lu Chen, smiling, said, "If you were to give me a few children and shelter them, perhaps I wouldn't have to do that."

Hearing this, Wu Junwan scoffed, "Your Majesty is truly persistent when it comes to producing heirs."

Lu Chen smiled and didn't say much.

They took about half an hour to finish their dinner, and afterwards, Lu Chen, embracing Wu Junwan and Murong Xue'er by their willowy waists, headed to the bathhouse, where he immediately started to take liberties with them.

Meanwhile.

In the Da Yue Dynasty, the Empress's Bedchamber.

The Yue Emperor was dressed in a bright red Phoenix Robe, crowned with the Phoenix Crown, seated on a Phoenix Chair inlaid with gold and gems.

She held in her hand a letter of intelligence recently delivered from Yan County.

After seeing the contents of the intelligence, the Yue Emperor fell into silence.

Eventually, the Yue Emperor slowly stood up and approached the bed, looking out at the dazzling starry sky through the window.

After a long while, the Yue Emperor asked the kneeling female guard beyond the curtains, "Is the source of this information reliable?"

The female guard replied, "Your Majesty, although this matter is extremely secretive, it still can be detected through some clues. After all, the Imperial Palace in Great Xia has suddenly seen an increase in the number of people; with the chaos of a motley crowd, there are always those who will accidentally reveal some details. The information brought back by our spies can almost certainly be confirmed as true."

Hearing the guard's answer, the Yue Emperor took another glance at the intelligence in her hand.

The report stated that not long after Wu Junwan went to the North Country, she had already taken over some of the industries there, and numerous maids were calling her Lady Wu.

Although most of the maids from the North Prince Mansion had been trained to know what to say and what not to, due to the construction of the Imperial Palace, many new recruits had entered the North Prince Mansion.

As a result, some of the new recruits couldn't keep their mouths shut and leaked information about Wu Junwan.

This was an unavoidable situation caused by the fact that during the construction of the Imperial Palace, Lu Chen was not in Yan County, and Mu Zixuan and the others had neglected many matters.

At this moment, the Yue Emperor descended into prolonged silence, the cold moonlight casting upon her, reflecting off her frosty yet stunning visage.

The Yue Emperor couldn't quite understand why Wu Junwan had never mentioned in her letters to herself that she had taken over some industries of the North Prince Mansion.

Most importantly, why were the maids and servants from the inner courtyard of the former North Prince Mansion addressing Wu Junwan as Lady Wu?

Add to this that Wu Junwan had declined her proposal, which unavoidably led the Yue Emperor to suspect whether Wu Junwan had already become that man's woman.

Thinking this, the Yue Emperor looked up once more towards the window, gazing at the full moon in the sky.

Past events she had shared with Wu Junwan began to flood into her mind.

After she and Wu Junwan left this world and entered the Misty World, they had endured many hardships and encountered numerous dangers; they could be said to be companions through life and death.

Therefore, although she followed the Unfeeling Tao, she placed immense trust in Wu Junwan, who held a very important place in her heart.

She had never contemplated that Wu Junwan would one day hide anything from her because of a man.