

Immortal 101

Chapter 101: Young Miss of the Wu Clan

However, Zu An's thoughts were soon brought back to the arithmetic class he was going to have at the Sky class. This was the first time he was going to make an appearance. Entering the class normally wouldn't highlight just how extraordinary he was.

After racking his brain for a way out, Zu An's eyes lit up. He made his way over to the administrative building, but the staff there told him that Shang Liuyu wasn't in the office but in her dormitory. So, Zu An began making his way over to the staff's dormitory.

Seeing this, the staff in the office couldn't help but mock him.

"Yet another one who has gone bonkers over Teacher Shang, huh?"

"Teacher Shang's charm is really on another level. Didn't you see how even Discipline Master Lu tries to capture her attention too?"

"Wait a moment, doesn't Lu De already have a wife?"

"It's the second spring of a middle-aged man. Well, you get it."

"It's one thing for Discipline Master Lu to make a move, but even this little fellow wants to court Teacher Shang too. He really should learn his place."

"Why didn't you tell him that Teacher Shang never allows anyone to enter her courtyard? That fellow's effort would only end in vain."

"Hah. A mere Yellow class student actually manages to become a teacher by pulling some connections or something. It would be good to make him suffer a bit."

...

Oblivious to the fact that he was being thought of as a joke back in the office, Zu An rushed over to the staff's dormitory. Following the instructions of the staff, he ran all the way to Shang Liuyu's residence.

Tok tok tok, Zu An knocked on her door.

At the same time, he secretly took out his key token to give it a try, but the residence showed no signs of opening. Indeed, there was no way the academy would have made such an elementary mistake with the dormitory.

"Who is it?"

A lethargic voice sounded from the courtyard. It had a chilly edge that relayed the impatience of its owner.

"Big sister Shang, it's me!" replied Zu An.

Naturally, he wouldn't call her Teacher Shang like others did. That would be too formal and distant!

“You were looking for me?” asked Shang Liuyu.

Zu An looked at the firmly closed door before him as he wondered what she meant by this. Given our ties, you wouldn’t even open the door for me? Still, considering that he was the one who had a favor to ask, he decided to answer honestly, “I have a melody which I need big sister Shang to help me play.”

There was a moment of silence in the courtyard before the door opened a little. Shang Liuyu’s cool voice sounded, “Come in.”

Without thinking much into it, Zu An walked in and found that Shang Liuyu’s residence looked much more picturesque than his. There was even a pool in her courtyard filled with clear water that glistened under the sunlight.

A private swimming pool? How extravagant!

Zu An felt that he should complain about this to Jiang Luofu about the difference in treatment between the two of them. The 7,500,000 silver taels he had spent shouldn’t go to vain!

“You have come up with a new melody?” a gentle voice sounded.

Zu An turned around, and his eyes immediately lit up.

Shang Liuyu was dressed in a loose robe that revealed her collar bone. She was busy wiping her wet hair, but there were still some water droplets trailing down her skin, as if she had just taken a bath. The length of the robe was of perfect length, exposing the beautiful curvature of her legs. Her fingernails were painted a light shade of pink, which brought attention to her slender fingers. She casually flung her hair sideways before lying down on a rattan chair hanging beneath a tree.

With a lazy vibe, she asked, “You didn’t come all the way here just to gape at me, right?”

“Ah, of course not! I have a melody which I need you to play for me.”

Zu An’s face actually turned red in her presence. Most women, when faced with the assessing stare of a man, would either get embarrassed or angry, but Shang Liuyu’s eyes carried an air of nonchalance, as if she had already seen past mortal desires. Her casual attitude made Zu An feel embarrassed about himself instead.

“What melody is it?” asked Shang Liuyu in curiosity.

In truth, there were plenty of people who used this excuse to approach her. It was hardly a secret that she was fond of good melodies, but most of them couldn’t even pique her interest. However, the melody Zu An played back at the gazebo amazed her, touching the deepest sentiments she had concealed in the bottom of her heart.

It was a melody that was different from how music was typically played in this world, but the path of music shared a commonality—it aimed to touch a person’s soul. It was the melody he played that filled her with curiosity and goodwill toward this young man. She couldn’t figure how someone as young as he was would be able to play such a beautiful and emotional melody.

“The name of this melody is called ‘God of Gamblers!’”

Zu An had been thinking about how he could make a suave appearance, so naturally, he turned to all of the cool entrances he had seen in films. In the end, he came to a conclusion. A suave entrance can't do without a BGM!

Unfortunately, this world didn't have voice recorders. He couldn't possibly play his own BGM while walking in. That would just look terribly awkward and underwhelming. He needed to find someone to play it for him. Of everyone he was acquainted with, the only one who could help him with this favor was only Shang Liuyu.

Though admittedly, it was also an excuse to find this beautiful teacher once more.

"God of Gamblers?" Shang Liuyu had a peculiar look in her eyes when she heard the name. "It does sound quite fitting with you. How does the melody go?"

Clearly, she had also heard about how Zu An won 7,500,000 silver taels in the Silverhook Casino.

"Let me demonstrate it once first." Zu An could remember how the melody roughly went, but playing it out was a different matter. After all, the BGM he had heard in his previous world wasn't played with a single instrument. It was a melody consisting of multiple instruments carefully synthesized together.

Initially, Shang Liuyu didn't think much of the matter, but as soon as Zu An began humming the melody, she sat upright to listen intently to him.

After Zu An finished humming the melody, he looked at her with an anxious look on his face as he asked, "How is it?"

Shang Liuyu breathed out deeply before saying, "This melody harnesses some sort of magic that compels one's heart to race passionately. I felt the shivers from it. It sounds a bit like the war songs of the beastmen, but it's different from that. How did you manage to do it?"

"Ahahaha, that's not important for now. I want to know if you're able to play it out in full," asked Zu An anxiously.

He was worried not about whether Shang Liuyu would like it or not but whether she could emulate it properly. After all, its popularity had already been tested in his previous life.

"This melody is a little weird. Let me give it a try. Can you hum it once more for me?" Shang Liuyu pulled out an unusual instrument from her residence that looked a little like a harp. The harp was made of a material that had a glistening texture like jade and emanated a faint blue light.

Shang Liuyu's graceful fingers strummed the strings on the harp, producing a sound that was very different from harps. The music range of the instrument seemed to be far wider, and it could produce sounds that the instruments in his previous life couldn't.

Shang Liuyu thought about the melody she had just heard as her fingers began moving along the 'harp'. For parts which she was uncertain about, she would turn to Zu An to seek clarification. Slowly but surely, the God of Gamblers BGM was being recreated in the world of cultivation.

"Why do you suddenly need me to play this melody?" Shang Liuyu slowly began to relax as the melody approached completion, so she turned to Zu An and asked out of curiosity.

Toward that question, Zu An replied, "Needless to say, it's to use it for my own background music..."

He began to explain how he was going to conduct an arithmetic class in the Sky class later on.

Shang Liuyu chuckled at his response. "You sure put in a lot of effort in order to change Chu First Miss' impression of you."

"It's not just for her. This is my first time teaching a class as a teacher, which makes my entrance even more important. Ah right, do you think I should put on some make-up? Do you think putting on a pair of glasses would make me look more mature?"

Before Shang Liuyu could answer, the voice of a young woman suddenly sounded, "I knew it! Shang Liuyu, you're hiding here!"

The voice had a clear and melodious quality to it, but it was a pity that it had an oppressive tone that left one feeling uncomfortable.

Zu An turned his gaze over. Standing by the door which he had forgotten to close earlier stood a woman dressed in red. She had an ostentatious pearl necklace hanging around her neck which highlighted her smooth complexion, as well as a jade bracelet around her wrist.

With a quick sweep, he could tell that all of the accessories the woman wore were expensive.

"Isn't this woman afraid of getting robbed flaunting her wealth openly like this?" murmured Zu An under his breath.

Even though the woman was wearing rather extravagantly, she didn't give off the crass scent of a nouveau riche. Admittedly though, it could be just her beautiful appearance at play here.

"You are?" Shang Liuyu looked at the woman standing by the doorway with doubtful eyes.

That woman's rage intensified. "Shang Liuyu, you don't know me?! I had taken one of your classes before!"

Shang Liuyu replied calmly, "I don't go through the trouble of remembering each and every one of my students' names.

She emanated an air of composure that seemed to curb the woman's fiery temper, leaving the latter with no room to act up.

It was then that a man walked up and introduced the woman, "This is the First Miss of the Sunspring Duke's Wu clan, Wu Qing."

Another man stood forward right after and added, "She's ranked fifth on the Sweetheart Ranking. Teacher Shang, how could you not have heard of someone as famous as her?"

"Fuck, Wu Qing?" exclaimed Zu An. He had never imagined that anyone would have such a weird name.[1]

However, his remark caused the trio to immediately turn their heads toward him. With a slightly awful look on her face, Wu Qing asked, "What did you just say?"

You have successfully trolled Wu Qing for +233 Rage!

Zu An belatedly realized what he had just said, so he quickly clarified, “No no, I mean it as an exclamation. I didn't mean that I want to fuck you or anything... Gah! Anyway, it's not what you're thinking!”

He felt like he was only worsening the situation with his explanation.

“How dare you use such vile words to take advantage of Miss Wu!” The two lackeys beside the woman looked at Zu An with an incredulous look on their faces as they began to berate him.

“State your name! I would like to see which clan you are from to dare act so insolently!” Wu Qing's face remained livid, as if a volcano on the verge of an explosion.

Chapter 102: Rumors

“I am no other than the renowned Shi Kun!” Zu An thumped his chest as he declared proudly.

Shang Liuyu was dumbfounded by what she had just heard. This fellow is far more shameless than I thought.

“Shi Kun? You're the Sixth Young Master of the Shi clan?” asked Wu Qing. “You do have a pretty face, but it turns out that you're just a shameless pervert, huh?”

Zu An nodded in agreement, “That's right, Shi Kun is a shameless pervert! Get that fact in your mind!”

Wu Qing was taken aback. She didn't expect the other party to admit it so candidly. “It looks like you still have some self-awareness.”

Seeing that she was about to be led astray, the two lackeys quickly reminded her with a whisper, “Young miss, that man is Zu An.”

Zu An had been causing a huge commotion in the academy over the last few days, so there was hardly anyone who didn't know of him. Wu Qing only failed to recognize him because she had her hands full with other matters and couldn't come to the academy.

“You dare to lie to me?” Wu Qing's face immediately reddened in anger. Just thinking about how she was taken for a fool earlier made her anger rage like an inferno.

You have successfully trolled Wu Qing for +600 Rage!

“Have you never been fooled before in your entire lifetime?” asked Zu An curiously.

“Of course not! Who would dare to lie to me?” Wu Qing harrumphed in response.

“Ah, that explains why you're so gullible.”

“...” Wu Qing.

You have successfully trolled Wu Qing for +666 Rage!

Wu Qing took a deep breath to calm herself down before saying, "So, you're the man chosen by Chu Chuyan?"

Zu An was surprised. "You're close with Chuyan?"

If the two of them were close friends, it didn't seem too appropriate for him to be earning Rage points from Wu Qing.

"Of course we're close. We can't be any closer with one another!" sneered Wu Qing. "I've heard that she has chosen a good-for-nothing as her husband, and I thought that it was just exaggeration. However, from the looks of it now, it seems like there's some truth to the rumors. Other than a good-for-nothing, you're also a shameless pervert too. It's no wonder you're so scorned in Brightmoon City!"

Hearing those words, Zu An heaved a sigh of relief. It's good that they aren't close to one another. Now that he thought about it, the Chu clan had mentioned that the Clans Tournament would be different from before because the Yuan clan had a ducal clan backing it, and the ducal clan seemed to be the Wu clan.

So, he walked up to Wu Qing and assessed her carefully. He had to admit that despite this woman's horrible temper, she did have a beautiful appearance. "Young miss Wu, you kept mentioning that I'm a shameless pervert, but how have I acted perverted in any way? Or could it be that your mind is filled with that kind of stuff?"

Standing in such proximity with a man left Wu Qing feeling flustered. She quickly backed off and said, "Just listen to your filthy mouth! What else could you be if not a shameless per..."

She wanted to berate Zu An, but recalling what she had just said, she suddenly found herself at a loss for words. She realized that if she were to insist that Zu An was a pervert, it would mean that she was harboring that sort of thoughts in her mind.

Seeing that their young miss was losing the fight here, the two men beside Wu Qing quickly stepped forward to back her up. "Zu An, how dare you make light of our young miss?"

Zu An looked at the two men standing before him in interest as he asked, "May I know who are you two?"

The man on the left raised his head proudly and declared, "I am Pan Long from Sunspring City's Pan clan!"

The man on the right also stuck his neck out and said, "I am Fu Feng from Sunspring City's Fu clan!"

The Pan clan and Fu clan were prominent clans, which was why the two of them could hold their heads up high. They couldn't compete with the massive Wu clan and the Chu clan, but they were at least on par with the Zheng clan, Yuan clan, and Wang clan.

The two of them had grown up with Wu Qing, and they were awed by her beauty from the very first meeting. On top of that, the Wu clan was a ducal clan too, which prompted the two of them to fawn on her in hopes that they could one day win her favor and rise to greater heights.

This was also the reason why they reacted so strongly when Zu An 'bullied' Wu Qing.

“Pan Long, Fu Feng?” remarked Zu An contemplatively. “Great names. They sound perfectly appropriate for the two of you!”[1]

Zu An took out a notebook from his robe and wrote down a few words. Then, he showed them to the two men and asked, “Is it this Pan and this Fu?”[2]

“Urk, it isn’t. It’s written like that.” The two of them subconsciously went along with Zu An’s flow and corrected his writing. However, they soon noticed that something was amiss. “Wait a moment, why are you trying to remember our names?”

“Hm? It’s nothing much,” replied Zu An calmly. “I’m thinking of failing you for your arithmetic class. I’m afraid that I might forget your names, so it would be good to jot it down in advance.”

“...” Pan Long.

“...” Fu Feng.

What the hell! Isn’t this an abuse of power?

It was also then that Wu Qing finally snapped out of her daze. Looking at the two petrified men beside her, she asked with a frown, “What are the two of you afraid of? He doesn’t have the authority to decide the scores of our arithmetic grades anyway!”

The two of them turned to Wu Qing and said with a tearful look on their faces, “Actually, he does have the authority. He’s our newly-appointed arithmetic teacher.”

“...” Wu Qing.

You fools! Why didn’t you tell me in advance?!

Zu An put on a smile and said, “Young miss, have you realized that you’ve offended someone you shouldn’t have? If you apologize to me right now, I might consider being the better man and forgive you for your offense.”

Wu Qing gritted her teeth in anger, “What’s a mere arithmetic teacher like you acting all pompously for? In the first place, arithmetic isn’t important to students from the Sky class at all!”

You have successfully trolled Wu Qing for +233 Rage!

“It’s of lesser importance, but if a proud young miss of a ducal clan like you were to fail her class, I reckon that you’d become the laughingstock of the entire academy, right?” Zu An smiled slyly.

Wu Qing gulped. The other party was right. She had a competitive streak in her, which was why she was determined to compete with Chu Chuyan in everything. If she were to fail a class, that would be a huge blow to her pride.

“I dare you to fail me then! You should know that my father is the Sunspring Duke. Even the academy dares not to take him lightly!” After the initial fluster, Wu Qing soon calmed down and realized that there was no reason for her to fear Zu An at all.

“That might be true for other teachers since their careers are at stake here. However, I’m just a temporary teacher. Once the royal palace sends a teacher over, I’ll be relieved of my duties. I don’t have any future here anyway, so what do I have to fear?”

Zu An thought about how office politics worked in his previous world. As long as one bore no expectations of career progression, there was no need to be scared of one’s superior.

Wu Qing was stunned. If Zu An really didn’t care about his own future, there would really be nothing she could do to him. But at the same time, she couldn’t possibly lower her head to apologize to him either. So, she could only turn her head away and harrumph, “Hmph! I didn’t come to look for you today!”

She turned her attention toward Shang Liuyu and said, “Shang Liuyu, it’s time to settle our scores!”

Shang Liuyu smiled back at Wu Qing and asked, “Have you forgotten that I’m a teacher too? Aren’t you afraid that I’d fail you for your foreign language class too?”

Wu Qing was rendered speechless. It took her awhile before she found her voice once more. “You aren’t as shameless as that fellow. Besides, you can’t possibly not care about your own future too!”

“That’s true. Looks like I can’t learn his tricks after all.” Shang Liuyu shot a glance at Zu An and smiled faintly. Then, she turned back to Wu Qing and asked, “So, what business do you have with me?”

“You’re asking the obvious, vixen! Why are you acting all innocent after stealing my boyfriend?” roared Wu Qing.

“Vixen?” This was the first time Shang Liuyu was hearing anyone calling her as such, and she couldn’t help but burst into laughter. “Who’s your boyfriend?”

“Have you stolen too many men that you can’t even remember yourself anymore?” exclaimed Wu Qing. “Needless to say, it’s Second Young Master Xie Xiu!”

Upon hearing Wu Qing claim that Xie Xiu was her boyfriend, both Pan Long and Fu Feng lowered their heads in disappointment.

“Xie Xiu?” Shang Liuyu repeated calmly. “You’re misunderstanding something here. I don’t have any relations with him. Putting him aside, I’m not in a relationship with any man at the moment.”

“But he told me that he has fallen in love with you! How could he possibly abandon me if you hadn’t seduced him?” roared Wu Qing.

Pan Long and Fu Feng couldn’t help but remind her softly, “Young miss, you aren’t officially together with Xie Xiu.”

Wu Qing glared at the two of them sharply. “Shut up!”

Pan Long and Fu Feng quickly zipped up their mouths with bitter smiles.

Zu An shook his head and said, “You and you, come over here.”

“What?” Pan Long and Fu Feng were wary as to what Zu An was up to, but they still did as the latter said anyway.

“As your teacher, I feel obliged to educate you about some life lessons. Have you ever heard of the phrase ‘bootlickers eventually get trampled by the boots they are licking’?” asked Zu An.

This was Pan Long and Fu Feng’s first time hearing about such a phrase, but they could easily guess what Zu An was driving at. Their faces flushed red, but they knew that they couldn’t afford to blow their top against a teacher. So, they could only curse him in their hearts.

You have successfully trolled Pan Long for +444 Rage!

You have successfully trolled Fu Feng for +444 Rage!

After dealing with the two annoying bootlickers, Zu An felt that there was a need to help clear the air for Shang Liuyu, so he turned to Wu Qing and said, “I’m familiar with Xie Xiu, and I’ve seen him breaking up with other women on many occasions. The reasons he offers are always varied. Are you sure that he isn’t just saying those words just to ditch you?”

Wu Qing was taken aback. Now that she thought about it, there was indeed such a possibility. Her face immediately reddened in embarrassment.

“The rest of you can leave now,” Shang Liuyu said with an utterly cold tone. No matter how good-tempered she was, there was no way she could tolerate these three running all the way here to criticize her as a vixen.

“I’ll look into the matter properly.” Wu Qing harrumphed before leaving awkwardly.

She had stomped here angrily, only to lose her confidence upon hearing Zu An’s words. It sure was a bad day for her

Not too long after heading out, Wu Qing suddenly paused a brief moment to look at Pan Long and Fu Feng. “Tell me the truth. Who is more beautiful, me or Shang Liuyu?”

“Of course it’s you!” Pan Long and Fu Feng replied without any hesitation. Despite saying so, the sight of Shang Liuyu’s beautiful collarbone and her fair skin was still lingering in their minds.

“Hmph, useless!” Women tended to be sensitive toward the insincere remarks men made, which was probably the reason why Wu Qing was able to see through their true thoughts right away. “That Shang Liuyu is indeed a vixen! How could she wear such indecent clothes to seduce men? Listen up, I have a mission for you two!”

“Young miss, feel free to pass down any instructions you have!” Pan Long and Fu Feng immediately straightened their posture.

Wu Qing’s lips curled up as she said, “I want you to spread the word that Shang Liuyu has been meeting Zu An in her residence dressed inappropriately..”

Hmph let’s see whether Xie Xiu will continue to like her once her reputation sours. Also, if others were to learn that Chu Chuyan’s husband has been cheating on her outside, it would surely be a huge blow to her!

Why am I so smart? I was actually able to think of a perfect plan to kill two birds in one stone.

“Ah? Is it really good to do that?” Pan Long and Fu Feng glanced at one another hesitantly. Both Shang Liuyu and Zu An were teachers, and they had a good impression of Shang Liuyu too.

“What’s so bad about that? It’s not like we’re lying anyway! Isn’t she dressed inappropriately earlier on?” Wu Qing harrumphed. “I’m only asking you to relay the truth here, but you can’t even do that much? What a disappointment!”

Pan Long and Fu Feng quickly replied anxiously, “Please leave it to us! We’ll definitely accomplish the task to your satisfaction!”

It was only then that Wu Qing’s mood improved a little. “That’s more like it!”

Chapter 103: Appearance

Meanwhile, Zu An looked at Shang Liuyu quietly for a moment before he remarked, “You sure have it tough as a teacher. Your students even stomped right up to your doorstep to torment you.”

Shang Liuyu rolled her eyes. “Isn’t it all because you didn’t shut the door properly? How else do you think they managed to get in here?”

“Ah, I forgot to close it in a moment of excitement,” replied Zu An sheepishly.

“Forget it. Let’s go through the melody once more to see if there are any problems with it.” Shang Liuyu placed her fingers on the harp once more and stroked it lightly, producing a passionate melody that sent one’s heart thumping.

The melody soon came to an end, and Zu An nodded his head in excitement. “That’s exactly what I had in mind! Big sister Shang, you are a true prodigy!”

“How can I be considered a prodigy? It’s the creator of this melody who is the true prodigy here.” At this point, Shang Liuyu looked at Zu An in interest and asked, “You really aren’t the creator of this melody?”

“It really isn’t me. I only happened to hear it in my dreams.” As thick-skinned as Zu An was, he wasn’t so shameless as to actually claim these songs as his own creation.

“I see. I didn’t expect you to be so humble.” Shang Liuyu picked up something that resembled a seashell from the side and passed it over to him. “Here, take this.”

Zu An was just about to correct Shang Liuyu’s misunderstanding when he found himself presented with a seashell. Perplexed, he asked, “What is it?”

“This item is able to record sounds it has just heard. You can use it to play that... background music when you enter the classroom later on,” answered Shang Liuyu.

“You aren’t coming with me?” Zu An asked in disappointment.

“I’m not about to embarrass myself publicly.” Shang Liuyu’s face reddened.

She felt like Zu An was really a bag of surprises; he could come up with all sorts of bizarre things even when it came to just teaching a class.

“Eesh, I see.” Seeing that there was no other choice, Zu An accepted the seashell. Under Shang Liuyu’s guidance, he soon understood how to use it.

Isn’t this practically a recorder?

Once again, Zu An was amazed by how wondrous this world of cultivation was. Despite being technologically underdeveloped, what it was lacking was compensated by the wonders brought about by ki. Many of the conveniences of the modern could be emulated through the use of artifacts and formations.

“Big sister Shang, do you have any hair wax that I can borrow?” asked Zu An.

“Hair wax?” Shang Liuyu didn’t understand what Zu An was asking for.

“Err, I’m referring to gel that helps to keep your hairdo in place,” Zu An roughly explained what hair wax did.

“Ah, I think I have something similar to that here,” replied Shang Liuyu. She headed into her residence for a while before returning with a bottle filled with some sort of gel. “What kind of hairdo are you going for?”

“I’m thinking of doing it like this...” Zu An described how a slick back hairstyle roughly looked like as he applied the gel on his hair and tried to shape it. However, his fingers turned out to be clumsier than he thought.

Shang Liuyu smiled at this sight and said, “I’ll help you.”

She ushered him to sit on a stool before helping him tidy up his hairdo.

Being in proximity with one another, Zu An could smell a light fragrance coming from her, and it made his heart thump. If he wasn’t mistaken, she should have just gotten out of the pool when he arrived, so there was no time for her to apply any fragrances or powder.

So how could she still smell so nice? Could it be the cosmetics she usually applied have seeped into her skin?

Shang Liuyu started off by tidying his back before moving over to the front to comb his fringe. She was so focused on the task that she subconsciously bent down a little, revealing a sight that made Zu An’s nose nearly spurt blood.

She had just finished bathing, so the robe she donned was a little loose. Previously, they were still standing a distance away, so all he could see was just bits of her shoulder, collarbone, and such. However, now that she was bending down a little right in front of him, her loose collar ended up drooping down a little, revealing her fair skin and attractive ridges.

Gulp~

Zu An mentally reminded himself to remain calm, but he couldn’t help but gulp down a mouthful of saliva.

The sound caught Shang Liuyu's notice, which brought her attention to his peculiar response. She lowered her head to take a look, and her face swiftly flushed red. She immediately shot to her feet and took several steps backward. There was a moment of silence before she spoke awkwardly, "It should be roughly done. You can head to class now."

Zu An was impressed by the composure she was showing as a mature woman, choosing to avert the matter and dampen it down. Had it been a younger girl, she would have likely started shrieking and caused a huge fuss.

But again, Shang Liuyu was in the midst of helping him when he accidentally took advantage of her. No matter how thick-skinned he might be, it was still quite an awkward situation for him too. "Thank you for your help today. I'll treat you to a meal next time."

Since Shang Liuyu was intentionally avoiding the topic, he wouldn't be so dumb as to intentionally bring it up. This was the kind of telepathic connection mature people shared with one another. Hmmm, I'm more of a youth right now though.

Shang Liuyu's expression gradually returned to normal. With a slight smile, she said, "There are plenty of people who want to treat me to a meal. It might take a long time before it reaches your turn."

"I'd expect no less from you." Knowing her explosive popularity in the academy, Zu An knew that her words were true. "If the opportunity arises then."

It was about time for the arithmetic class, so Zu An quickly waved her goodbye before heading for the Sky class.

...

Unlike the rowdy Yellow class, the Sky class was much quieter. It was filled with proud prodigies, after all. Even if they had time to spare, they would rather keep it to themselves so as to appear high and lofty. They felt that it was beneath them to fool around like how the students of the other classes did.

However, everyone's eyes still naturally drifted toward a certain person. Chu Chuyan was sitting quietly all on her own, but somehow, it felt like she was shrouded in a mysterious mist, reminiscent of a fairy descended from heaven.

As expected of the number one beauty!

This was the thought that surfaced in everyone's mind. It was rare to see Chu Chuyan around, even in the academy, and this made everyone treasure even more so treasure every glimpse they could get of her.

Shi Kun intentionally chose a position nearer to the back of the class so that he could fully appreciate her perfect figure. Yuan Wendong and the others sat around him, trying their best to butter him up in hopes to get into his good graces. Shi Kun would respond to their remarks from time to time, but his attention was clearly on the fairy sitting in front of him.

He noticed that the other students kept sneaking glances toward Chu Chuyan, and it made anger well up in his heart. How dare these men covet my woman?

But again, in a change of perspectives, it proved just how charming the woman he had chosen was. This thought alleviated his anger a little.

Isn't there another woman in the class who is rumored to equal Chu Chuyan in beauty called Pei Mianman or something? Why don't I see her around?

Most of the prodigies in the Sky class had their own businesses to deal with outside the academy, so there was no requirement on their attendance. As a result, it was rare for the whole class to be present on any given day. It wasn't too odd that Pei Mianman wasn't around today.

Ah right, there's also another beauty going by the name of Zheng Dan too, right?

Shi Kun's eyes drifted around, and he swiftly caught sight of a beautiful woman who emanated a traditional grace. Her gestures were gentle and demure, overflowing with feminine charm.

Even for someone with standards as high as Shi Kun couldn't deny that she was a ravishing woman.

"Sang Qian sure is lucky."

It was not a secret that Zheng Dan was Shang Qian's fiancé, so there was no way he wouldn't know about it.

What a pity!

Had it been anyone else, Shi Kun would have probably tried to snatch Zheng Dan over to his side. It wasn't as if he hadn't done it before over the years anyway. However, the Sang clan was currently favored by the emperor, so it wouldn't be wise to get on their bad side for the time being.

Fortunately, the Sang clan didn't have a stable foundation. If any mishap were to happen in the future... Hehehe, I reckon that he'd have no choice but to turn to me for help. By then, all I have to do is to point to Zheng Dan, and she'd be mine...

His imagination began to run wild as he thought about how he would slowly break her virtuousness and drag her toward the abyss. Eventually, she would lose herself and fall head over heels for him.

He had done such tricks plenty of times to be deeply familiar with how it went.

Toward these women, all he wanted was just the sense of exhilaration from successfully dominating them. He didn't bear any feelings for them, so he didn't particularly mind that they were married or not. On the contrary, conquering married women brought a greater thrill to him.

However, it wasn't the same for Chu Chuyan. He had devoted his feelings to her, and he wouldn't allow anyone to sully her.

Not too far away, Zheng Dan could sense Shi Kun's heated gaze, so she directed a faint smile toward him in response. She had long heard of the reputation of the Sixth Young Master of the Shi clan, and he was as dashing as the rumors put him out to be. It was just that his gaze felt a little uncomfortable.

In comparison, she felt that Zu An was more of a gentleman.

Haaa, it sure is a weird world we live in. A true gentleman has his reputation in shambles, but a wolf in sheep's clothing like Shi Kun enjoys such a good reputation.

As such thoughts surfaced in her mind, her eyes subconsciously moved toward Chu Chuyan, only to see her sitting there quietly like a noble princess.

Hmph! I wonder how you'd feel if you found out how helpless your husband is before my charm!

Zheng Dan couldn't really understand herself anymore. She never allowed any men to come close to her, disallowing even her fiancé to hold her hand. Yet, how in the world did she get so bold as to allow Zu An to...

Am I really going this far in order to prove my charm by snatching away Chu Chuyan's man?

For some reason, this thought left Zheng Dan feeling deeply uncomfortable. She noticed how the other male students were sneaking glances at Chu Chuyan, and that made her feel even more irritated. All of these lustful men!

It was then that the door to the classroom suddenly burst open. Everyone quickly turned their gazes over, thinking that the teacher had finally arrived. However, it was Wu Qing walking in with a frosty look on her face instead.

Wu Qing was actually quite a looker as well, and there were many students who were interested in getting close to her. However, the chilling aura she was emanating at this very moment kept everyone else at bay. No one wanted to get involved with her when she was in an irritated mood.

Without saying a word, Wu Qing walked over to her seat and sat down. It was then that she noticed Chu Chuyan sitting beside her, and her rage immediately flurried. So, she stood back up, stomped over to Chu Chuyan's side, and gazed down on her coldly. "Zu An is your husband?"

Chu Chuyan frowned upon hearing the question, but she still nodded in response. "Yes, that's right."

Her purpose of marrying Zu An was to sever the thoughts of those who were coming after her and the Chu clan, so there was no reason for her not to admit to it.

Shi Kun understood the rationale behind Chu Chuyan's actions too, but hearing his beloved woman acknowledging another man as her husband still left him feeling deeply uncomfortable. His face turned awfully livid as he became cognizant of a problem he had neglected till now.

He was aware that Chu Chuyan was still a maiden due to Snow, but no one else knew about that. Most people would have assumed that her chastity would have already been taken by now. So, if he were to marry her in the future, wouldn't everyone think that he had been cuckolded?

"Since he's your husband, shouldn't you keep a close eye on him? Why is he flirting around with other women?!" Wu Qing harrumphed coldly before stomping back to her seat.

Chu Chuyan was stunned. She had no idea what in the world Wu Qing was talking about here.

That being said, Wu Qing's words left plenty of room for speculations as the other students in the Sky class began whispering to one another. The desire to gossip was innate in all humans, even for lofty prodigies.

"Zu An actually tried to flirt with Wu Qing?"

“Holy! That man sure is a beast! He actually wants to monopolize the young misses of two ducal clans!”

“Despite having a wife as beautiful as Chu Chuyan, he still wants to find other women outside. Hmph, he really should learn his own place!”

“Haven’t you heard of the saying that the grass is always greener on the other side? Chu Chuyan might be a goddess to us, but Zu An has already had a taste of her, so naturally he doesn’t cherish her as much anymore. It’s always the things that are out of reach that look more attractive.”

“Oof! Why do your words feel like a knife stabbing into my heart?”

...

The gossips all around made Shi Kun’s eyelids twitch in horror. Does that fellow really wield such amazing capabilities?

It was then that a wild melody began playing in the air, causing goosebumps to rise amongst the students. It left their blood racing, as if they were about to march into a battle to save the world.

“What’s going on?”

The bewildered crowd turned their sights toward the entrance of the classroom, only to see a towering figure slowly making his way in. His hair was combed in a slick hairdo that no one had seen before, but for some reason, it looked pretty good. He wore a black uniform that made him look increasingly imposing with every step that he took.

“Who’s that guy?”

“That’s the uniform worn by the academy’s teacher’s right?”

“Rubbish! When has the teacher’s uniform looked so suave before?”

...

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan was feeling a little perplexed. Why does that person look oddly familiar to me?

Shi Kun was in the midst of taking a sip of water while formulating a plan to deal with Zu An when he finally caught a proper look at the person walking toward the podium. He immediately choked on his water, causing a mess.

Chapter 104: How Are You Going to Compete With Me?

Wait a moment! Isn’t that person on the podium Zu An?

Shi Kun rubbed his eyes, fearing that he was seeing things.

There were many people who shared the same thought as him. Almost every single student in the room was staring at Zu An with eyes widened in disbelief.

“How did that fellow make his hairdo? It looks pretty cool. Should I give it a try someday too? Also, what’s with the music? It really makes my heart pump fast,” murmured Xie Xiu softly.

“Now that I’m taking a closer look at him, he’s actually quite good-looking. He looks much more imposing in this dress-up than his casual look,” added Zheng Dan.

“Why does this fellow look much more pleasing to me than before? My gosh, I must be going mad!” Wu Qing harrumphed coldly.

Chu Chuyan also only started to recover from the initial shock at this point. She realized that she really wasn’t seeing things and that the person on the podium was no other than her husband. Even with her usual cold personality, she felt her face burning up. Had there been a hole right beside her, she might have just leaped in without a second’s hesitation.

“What are you doing?!” She transmitted her voice secretly to Zu An anxiously.

Zu An shot a glance at her, but he didn’t respond to her question.

Chu Chuyan bit her lips and carried on, “Stop messing around and go back!”

She had never felt so embarrassed in her entire life before. All her life, she had always been the one in control. Even in the academy, she was a lofty existence that no one dared to mess with.

But at this very moment, she felt like she was sitting on a bed of needles. She felt like everyone was directing weird stares at her, waiting to make a laughingstock of the Chu clan.

Meanwhile, Zu An had already gotten into position and had turned over to face the students before him. Upon noticing the furiously blushing Chu Chuyan, he put on a stern expression and said, “That student over there, please be reminded that we’re having a class over here. You should stop sending messages secretly to your teacher in the midst of the lesson.”

“Ohh~”

A commotion broke out within the class as they figured that Zu An was addressing Chu Chuyan over here. Considering their married status, it didn’t take a genius to figure out what they were whispering to one another about. A little bit of drama here and there was always welcomed.

However, not everyone was taking this well.

“Acting all chummy in public, don’t you have a sense of shame?” Wu Qing clicked her tongue in annoyance as she clutched the hems of her clothes tightly.

Zheng Dan also frowned at the remark too. “It looks like the two of them are closer than I thought. It might get a bit troublesome...”

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan felt an urge to cover her own face. She had never felt so embarrassed in her entire life. What in the world is wrong with that fellow’s mind?

Wait a moment, did he just say ‘teacher’?

Shi Kun also bore the same doubts in mind, so he gestured at his underlings. Unexpectedly, his underlings averted their gazes, not responding to him at all. Left with no choice, he could only step forward himself to challenge Zu An. “Take a look at your surroundings closely. You’re in the Sky class right now. This isn’t a place where someone from the Yellow class should be.”

It looks like these people are really inept. They sure don't know how to read the situation! I really should find myself new underlings soon!

"Oh? Did you just say that this isn't a place where I should be?" Zu An looked at Shi Kun with a playful look in his eyes.

"Of course. A person should know his place. There's nothing wrong with you being in the Yellow class; you're simply born with inferior talent. However, it would be a grave mistake if you try to forcefully overstep your boundaries in hopes of breaking into higher grounds."

Shi Kun was determined to trample Zu An all the way into the ground before everyone else. He wanted to see if the Chu clan would still accept that wastrel even after he was being humiliated before so many people.

"Look at what you're doing. What's with that earlier melody and your hairdo? All your desperate attempts to raise your standing look no more than a joke before prodigies like us."

He gestured to the people around him as he spoke, only to frown right after. He noticed that the atmosphere in the room had suddenly gotten weird, and everyone else was looking at him peculiarly. Even Yuan Wendong had a hesitant look on his face.

What's going on here?

Shi Kun suddenly felt a terrible premonition, as if something really bad was about to happen.

Chu Chuyan rose to her feet and looked at Shi Kun coldly, "Young master Shi, Zu An is my husband. Regardless of his level of competence, it's not your place to criticize him."

She might not be fond of Zu An, but she couldn't bring herself to sit still while others were putting down her husband right before her eyes.

Chu Chuyan's act of standing up for Zu An only further stoked Shi Kun's fury. However, he didn't allow his emotions to show through, still maintaining the perfect smile on his face. "Young miss Chu, you have misunderstood my words. I don't mean to criticize the Chu clan. I just think that someone as outstanding as you should have married an equally competent man. That fellow over there isn't worthy of you at all."

"Marry an equally competent man?" Chu Chuyan burst into laughter. "Such worldly standards bear no meaning to me. I think that Zu An is perfectly fine as he is."

She was outstanding enough as she was anyway; she didn't need her husband to be capable too. On the contrary, it wouldn't be a good thing if her husband was too competent.

Zu An felt deeply moved to hear those words.

I didn't think my stone-cold wife could actually be this warm. Ah? What's with this sudden influx of Rage points?

To his confusion, Zu An realized that he had received a huge wave of Rage points on the system. He turned to look at the students before him, only to see all of the male students glaring at him with infernos of rage burning in their eyes.

“Did he save the world in his previous life or something? How in the world did someone like him win the fancy of our goddess?”

“I finally understand why I couldn’t catch the attention of the goddess. It turns out that I was too outstanding all this while!”

“Who could have known that our goddess would have such an unusual taste? Instead of outstanding men, she prefers those who are average.”

“Tsk! You claim yourselves to be outstanding, but aren’t the rest of you nothing much before Chu Chuyan too?”

“Then what about young master Shi then? He should be outstanding enough for you, right? Yet, have you ever seen Chu Chuyan showing any interest in him before?”

...

The whisperings amongst the students in the classmate made Shi Kun’s eyelids twitch intensely. This woman actually put me down in public!!! But why don’t I feel angry at all? Instead, it only makes her feel different from the other women I have met in my life.

Hmph! Anyway, it’s all Zu An’s fault! Just what right do you have to enjoy Chu Chuyan’s affection?

Seeing that the situation had ripened enough, Zu An cleared his throat. He was perfectly fine with hiding behind his wife’s back, but this Shi Kun guy was really getting on his nerves.

“You said that I look no more than a joke before you people. May I know which group of people are you referring to here?”

Shi Kun was delighted to hear Zu An’s response. Chu Chuyan’s earlier interference had left him with no space to continue his attack, but this fellow was actually foolish enough to speak up at this juncture. Hmph, looks like he’s truly a good-for-nothing who can’t possibly accomplish any big. Just a small victory, and he lets it get over his head.

“Naturally, I’m referring to those of noble birth or possess outstanding aptitude for cultivation.” Shi Kun glanced at the crowd in the classroom. “To everyone in this room, you’re just a joke.”

With the standing and reputation of the Shi clan, he felt that there was no way those in the classroom would refute his words, especially not for an insignificant wastrel.

“Is that so?” Zu An turned to Xie Xiu and prompted him, “That male student who looks like a girl over there. Stop looking around, I’m talking to you. Do you think that I’m a joke?”

Xie Xiu looked stifled to be implicated in this mess. Why the hell are you dragging me down with you? He shot a glance at the livid Shi Kun before turning back to Zu An. In the end, he sighed deeply and said, “Of course not.”

In the first place, King Qi’s faction, which the Xie clan was in, was at loggerheads with the empress’ faction that the Shi clan was in, so there was no reason for Xie Xiu to defer to Shi Kun in the first place. On top of that, Zu An was a teacher of the academy, which gave him even less reason to side with Shi Kun.

Satisfied with the answer, Zu An allowed Xie Xiu to sit back down before pointing out another student. "That beautiful female student sitting on the front row, do you think that I'm a joke?"

Zheng Dan was rather pleased to be complimented 'beautiful' before the class, but being forced to stand against Shi Kun in public left goosebumps all over her arms. She could only give a vague response, "How could that be?"

Her fiancé was Sang Qian, who belonged on the same side with Shi Kun at the moment. However, considering Zu An's current standing as the academy's teacher, there was no way she would dare to openly label him as a joke.

That Shi Kun looks quite sharp-witted, so why is he so dull-headed right now?

Zu An nodded in satisfaction before moving his gaze toward Wu Qing. "Young miss Wu, do you think that I'm a joke?"

Wu Qing gritted her teeth. She was very tempted to nod her head, but after getting done in earlier on this very issue, there was no way she would foolishly leap into his trap once more. Besides, Xie Xiu had already made a stance earlier. There was no way she would oppose her big brother Xie Xiu in public. So, she could only indignantly harrumph, "I dare not to."

Chu Chuyan's eyes widened in bewilderment. What's going on today? Why are these people all speaking up for Zu An?

Furthermore, some of them were on bad terms with her, making it even more ridiculous in her view that they would actually side with Zu An.

All of a sudden, she thought about the inexplicable words that Wu Qing had uttered before her earlier, and a thought arose in her head. It can't be that that fellow has managed to hook up with Wu Qing, right?

It wasn't just Chu Chuyan who wasn't able to make sense of the situation. Shi Kun was utterly dumbfounded too. He couldn't figure what was wrong with these people. Why are they going against me over mere trash?

After questioning a few students, Zu An finally reined in his smile to look at the flabbergasted Shi Kun. With an authoritative voice, he ordered, "Go and stand outside the classroom."

Shi Kun laughed at the sheer ludicrousness of the situation. "Who do you think you are? How dare you order me around?"

Chu Chuyan was equally confused too. What's going on? This fellow is acting all weird today. No, it's not just him but everyone here!

Zu An sighed softly and said, "The rules of Brightmoon Academy dictates that students who talked back to their teacher during class are to be severely punished. In the worst-case scenario, they can even be expelled from the academy. Do you think that my words are just for show?"

Actually, he knew that there was only so much the rules could do. The academy couldn't possibly expel the Sixth Young Master of the prominent Shi clan over such a minor issue. However, if it was a minor punishment, the academy wouldn't say anything much about it.

“You, a teacher?” It was as if Shi Kun had heard the most hilarious joke in the world. He was just about to say something when Yuan Wendong anxiously pulled his sleeves to stop him.

“He really is the new arithmetic teacher of Brightmoon Academy.”

Shi Kun’s first thought was that Yuan Wendong was out of his mind. However, he soon saw a few other people nodding in agreement with a look of sympathy on their faces, and his smile immediately froze over.

“Bloody hell, why didn’t you say it earlier?!”

Shi Kun was so enraged that he broke out of his usual gentleman persona and cursed out loud.

“You didn’t ask us!”

Yuan Wendong felt wronged as well. There’s no one in the academy who doesn’t know about this matter. Don’t you have a powerful intelligence network? How am I to know that you hadn’t heard of this?

Shi Kun felt so suffocated that he could spurt blood. Why didn’t Snow or Mei Chaofeng tell me about this? They made me embarrass myself before the entire class! It’s no wonder why the atmosphere in the class felt a little off.

Fortunately, with his sharp wits, it didn’t take him long to find a way out of this quandary. “I just transferred over today, so I’m still ignorant about the affairs of this academy. Besides, you didn’t introduce yourself when you entered earlier, so I don’t think that I should be blamed for this misunderstanding.”

Zu An nodded in agreement. “You’re right. I reckon that you would feel indignant if I punish you just like that too. Well, since that’s the case, why don’t we resolve this problem through arithmetic instead? I’ll conduct a test today, and anyone who can’t answer the question correctly will have to stand outside the classroom. Does that sound fair?”

Those words immediately shocked almost every student present in the class. The sight of Yang Wei failing to answer even a single question correctly was still fresh in their minds.

Oblivious to the reactions of his classmates, Shi Kun was stunned for a moment before accepting the offer right away. “Yes, that sounds fine by me.”

He prided himself in being competent in both his cultivation and academics. He didn’t think that the questions Zu An came up with could possibly stump him. Besides, the bet involved not just him but everyone else in the class. He was confident that no one else in the class would be able to answer a question that even he couldn’t answer. Surely Zu An wouldn’t go to the extent of sending everyone out of the classroom, right? His wife was amongst the crowd after all!

“Alright, listen carefully.” Zu An began posing his question.

“This question involves two people, A and B. A only speaks lies whereas B only speaks the truth, but the two of them can only answer questions through nodding or shaking their heads. One day, you’re faced with two diverging roads, Road One and Road Two. One of them leads to the capital whereas the other one leads to a small village. It just so happens that A and B are standing before you at this very moment,

but you don't know who is A and who is B, and you don't know whether nodding means yes or no. Right now, you have to ask them a question and figure out which road leads to the capital. Given so, what's the question that you'll ask?"

The students in the classroom gasped upon hearing the question. As expected, it was indeed a tough question!

Shi Kun was dumbstruck by what he was hearing. Even after hearing the question in full, he was still having difficulties trying to comprehend what was going on. A long time later, he finally answered with a reddened face, "I don't know. However, I don't believe that any of the other students can answer the question either. I dare you to test her too!"

He pointed his finger at Chu Chuyan. He felt that even if he were to get punished, as long as Chu Chuyan was by his side, that would be pretty much a blessing in disguise. If you really want to send your wife into my arms, I'm more than happy to take her.

Hearing those words, Zu An walked over to Chu Chuyan's side and looked at her quietly. At this very moment, Chu Chuyan's mind was in a fluster. She was still having difficulties trying to snap out from her earlier shock, and the question Zu An posed earlier had stumped her as well.

One must know that she was famed as the number one prodigy of the academy for many years now, respected by all of the other students. If she couldn't even answer a question correctly here and ended up getting punished for it, her reputation would fall into shambles!

Zu An could see her panic through her eyes, and a smile crept onto his lips. "Are you ready? I'll be posing you a question now."

"Go ahead." Chu Chuyan had never felt so nervous before. Her mind had gone completely blank as her mind short-circuited from trying to figure out how the earlier question was supposed to be solved.

Then, right before everyone's eyes, Zu An asked, "Your question is what does $1+1$ equate to?"

Chapter 105: You May Look But Don't Laugh!

"What the hell? He's too shameless!"

"This is ridiculous!"

"I curse those who spread the stench of love in public to premature deaths!"

...

A commotion broke out in the classroom. Were it not for the fact that Zu An was a teacher, they would have surely drowned him in their saliva by now.

Interestingly, at odds with the fury and looks of envy coming from the male students, the female students had their eyes twinkling in excitement.

"Waa, how cool! If only I had such a domineering boyfriend too!"

“This is the kind of situation that I’ve only seen in the romance novels I have read!”

“If someone were to protect me like that too, I think that I just might faint from bliss.”

...

Chu Chuyan, with her sharp ears, could hear the whisperings loud and clear. A faint tinge of red had started spreading on her fair cheeks. She couldn’t comprehend what was going on here at all. I only haven’t been to the academy for a few days. How in the world did Zu An manage to become a teacher in the academy?

Her first thought was that everyone in the classroom was colluding together to fool her, but she immediately refuted that line of thought. Zu An didn’t have the connections to make the prodigies of the Sky class do his bidding, especially not Shi Kun.

Then, she remembered the bizarre look in her younger sister’s eyes yesterday, which looked almost as if she was going to laugh out loud but was desperately holding it in. From the looks of it, it would seem that she already knew about this matter but was intentionally concealing it.

That damned lass! She actually colluded with an outsider to prank her older sister. But... is Zu An really considered an outsider?

Zu An looked at the Rage points flowing in, and he felt that his students were simply too cute. I’ll give them a higher grade for their arithmetic scores later on... Well, except for a few people, that is. Heh, I’m that petty of a person!

Seeing that Chu Chuyan wasn’t responding at all, Zu An smiled and asked, “Why? Are you having difficulties with the question?”

“The answer is 2.” Chu Chuyan’s face was as red as an apple.

She had never expected things to turn out like that, but again, the earlier question was indeed beyond her ability to answer. She might be able to think of the answer if she was given more time to ruminate over it, but answering it on the spot was clearly impossible. Rather than to be sent out of the classroom and punished for getting the wrong answer, she would rather grab onto the Zu An’s helping line.

“That’s right. As expected of the number one prodigy of the Sky class. Alright, you may sit back down,” complimented Zu An.

Chu Chuyan usually kept her head up high regardless of the situation. Be it her background or her capability, she had the confidence to uphold her pride before anyone else. But at this very moment, her face was lowered all the way down. It was simply too awkward!

This fellow must be doing it on purpose! Even when other people are giving leeway, they would do it secretly so as to not get caught. Yet, this fellow goes around flaunting it as if he’s afraid that others wouldn’t know about it!

As compared to Chu Chuyan’s overflowing embarrassment, Shi Kun felt like he was on the verge of a mental breakdown. “The question you have posed is unfair!”

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +711 Rage!

Zu An shot a glance at him and asked, "Are you the teacher or am I the teacher?"

Shi Kun glared at Zu An coldly as he exclaimed, "If you are the teacher, you shouldn't show such blatant favoritism!"

Zu An shrugged calmly. "Since you know that I'm the teacher, you should also know that it's my right to choose the question I want to ask. The questions I come up with on the spot are random. You only have your own luck to blame if you got a more difficult question."

The other students were rendered speechless. How does this fellow spout such blatant lies without feeling embarrassed at all? We can all see that you're siding with your wife here, alright?

Shi Kun still wanted to protest against this matter, but Zu An cut him off. "As your teacher, I feel obliged to teach you a life lesson too. The concept of fairness doesn't exist in this world. Let's take young master Shi for example, you were born with a golden spoon in your mouth. You had the best teachers to build up your foundation from a young age, and you never had any lack of cultivation resources. In comparison, commoners struggle just to make a living. Do you know how much hard work they have to put in just to obtain a single ki stone? As such, even if their aptitude is on par with you, they still end up lagging behind you. Are you going to stand up for them and say that it's unfair then?"

"You..." Shi Kun was unable to refute Zu An's words.

The students in the classroom nodded in agreement. Most of them thought that Zu An had only become an arithmetic teacher out of his shamelessness and luck, so they looked down on him. Yet, who could have thought that he would actually be able to speak of such deep words?

Indeed, true fairness never existed in this world. Whatever semblance of fairness that could be seen on the surface were just stability measures implemented by the ruling class to placate the less privileged.

Most of the students in the Sky class came from prominent backgrounds, but there were also ordinary civilians amongst them too. They related deeply with Zu An's words. It was luck that they were born with superior cultivation aptitude, but nevertheless, they still had to work harder than anyone else just to keep up with those who were privileged to have a strong backing. All of their experiences made them cognizant of just how unfair the world was.

Chu Chuyan also raised her head then to look at the towering figure standing on the podium. For a moment, she found herself dazed. Is this the same man I know of? Had I been too busy with the clan's affairs that I ended up neglecting him, not even trying to understand who he is as a person?

However, the infuriated Shi Kun wasn't willing to let things rest like that. "You're just forcing your twisted logic here. We can find any teacher here, and I'm certain that they'll agree that the questions you have asked are biased!"

Zu An shrugged. "Yes, I'm indeed intentionally siding with Chu Chuyan. What do you intend to do about that? If I don't side with my own wife, who else should I be siding with? You? It's not as if you're my sugarbaby. Even if I'm looking for a sugarbaby, Xie Xiu over there looks much better than you!"

Hearing Zu An calling her as his wife, Chu Chuyan, for the first time in her life, felt cherished and cared for. Over the years, it had always been her holding the fort for the Chu clan, sheltering it from storms. It felt weird to be on the receiving end, but it warmed her heart.

But what did that fellow mean by sugarbaby?

Meanwhile, Xie Xiu was intending to enjoy the show quietly by the sideline. As someone from King Qi's faction, he was more than delighted to see Shi Kun from the empress' faction getting embarrassed in public. Besides, the two clans had been vying over the Chu clan, so he would be more than delighted to see an escalation in conflict between the two.

Yet, who could have thought that Zu An would suddenly call his name? And furthermore, sugarbaby?

His face immediately turned as red as an apple. His feminine appearance had always been a thorn in his heart, and no one had dared to speak about it in his presence before. Yet, when Zu An mentioned it right before the class, he oddly found himself not being as angry as he thought he would. It just felt a little awkward and embarrassing.

I guess this fellow has always been too crass that anything he says just feels normal at this point, that's why I don't feel too mad about his remark.

"But still, he really is a weirdo!" Xie Xiu might not be particularly angry about it, but he felt that there was a need to return the favor in the future.

Meanwhile, Wu Qing's eyes widened in astonishment. It can't be that Big brother Xie Xiu has rejected me because he's in a relationship with this fellow?

Several images of two bodies pressed tightly against one another surfaced in her mind, causing her to shudder uncontrollably. Unable to bear the notion of it, she shot a piercing glare at Zu An. This hateful fellow actually wants to steal my man, huh?!

The star of the show, Shi Kun, looked as if someone had forced shit down his throat. Due to his beautiful appearance, there were people who had secretly called him a 'boy toy' behind his back jokingly, and he would always make sure to dig those people out and send them to the maker.

Yet, he was actually being told that he was beneath Xie Xiu even as a boy toy? For some reason, that remark made him even more infuriated? Are you saying that I'm less charming than him?!

For someone who had always taken pride in his appearance, he couldn't accept this!

"Zu An, you better not go too far! I might not be able to touch you in the academy, but outside, I have plenty of ways to make you die a horrible death!"

Shi Kun had never thought that he would hate a person so much. It had always been his creed to exact vengeance against anyone who dared to stand against him right away, so he had hardly any enemies around. Zu An was the only one who was still prancing around him after so long.

To make things worse, Zu An's identity did make it a lot trickier to deal with him, even if he were to pull the connections of the Shi clan too.

Thinking up to this point, Shi Kun couldn't help but begrudge Snow for her incompetence. Why didn't you get rid of this disgusting man earlier? If only you have succeeded, I wouldn't have to go through this public humiliation!

Shi Kun's threat made Chu Chuyan's face turn cold. However, before she could say anything at all, Zu An had already begun shouting in agitation, "Everyone, you must bear witness to this! That fellow said with his own mouth that he would kill me. If anything happens to me in the future, the murderer must be no other than him!"

All of the students in the classroom were pretty much numb to Zu An's shamelessness by now. They could only direct looks of sympathy toward Shi Kun.

Shi Kun felt incredibly stifled. The anger must have really gone to his head for him to actually make such a careless remark in public.

Then, Zu An's expression changed back to that of a stern teacher once more, and he said authoritatively, "Shi Kun, you have talked back to your teacher multiple times over the course of the lesson. Going by the academy rules, I punish you to stand at the center of the field till noon."

"You're punishing me?" It was so ridiculous that Shi Kun began laughing instead. "What can you do about me if I refuse to go?"

With his background, he could easily study at the best academies in the capital. He couldn't care less about his candidature in a mere Brightmoon Academy.

"If you refuse, I'll report the matter to the academy. Of course, with your background, I reckon that the academy wouldn't expel you. However, you need not think about entering the Ursae Dungeon this time around.

Zu An was curious as to why Shi Kun would suddenly appear here. Given his background as the offspring of one of the prominent ducal clans in the capital, there was no reason for him to travel all the way here just to attend Brightmoon Academy.

Initially, he thought that Shi Kun was here for Chu Chuyan, but to go so far for a woman, even if Shi Kun was truly a devoted man, it was unlikely that the elders of the Shi clan would allow him to fool around like this.

It was then he recalled the news about the Ursae Dungeon opening in advance, and the timing of Shi Kun's arrival seemed far too exact for it to just be a coincidence.

And just as Zu An expected, Shi Kun's smile cracked upon hearing the remark. He had indeed come to Brightmoon City for the Ursae Dungeon, namely because he received reliable intelligence that an Evanescent Lotus would be blooming very soon in the dungeon. One must know that even a single leaf from it could raise one's cultivation by a step. It was hard to resist such great temptation.

He would really be foolish if he lost this opportunity over a mere squabble with someone of the lowest level.

So, he took a deep breath and harrumphed, "I just have to stand on the field, right? Fine! I'll report today's affairs to the academy as well. I believe that the academy won't condone your wilful actions either!"

"Here, wear this notice around your neck." Zu An suddenly pulled a wooden notice out of nowhere and passed it over to Shi Kun.

Shi Kun was taken aback for a moment. He took a look at the words on the wooden notice, and he nearly fainted from anger.

"I, Shi Kun, have been punished to stand here for talking back to my teacher. You may look, but please do not laugh."

Chapter 106: Even Though You Keep Rejecting Me

Shi Kun's eyelids twitched uncontrollably. In truth, being punished to stand on the field was really nothing much. He was used to being in the center of attention anyway. Someone of his appearance would naturally be in the center of attention no matter where he went. With his sharp wits, he could easily turn the punishment into a fan meeting.

He was only so infuriated because he found the idea of doing Zu An's bidding humiliating.

However, if he had to wear this wooden notice around him, the nature of the punishment changed. It would make it as if he was a pet that was displayed in public for everyone to see.

"What do you mean by this?" Shi Kun glared at Zu An angrily.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +444 Rage!

"I'm doing this out of consideration of your reputation," replied Zu An with a smile. "Just imagine how humiliating about if the Sixth Young Master of the Shi clan were to be mocked by a crowd! That's why I specially prepared this wooden notice to remind them not to laugh. It's a show of goodwill on my part."

Goodwill, my head!

Shi Kun felt that he was really going insane. It was then that he was reminded of another problem here. "Wait a moment, when did you prepare the token? It can't be that you were planning to deal with me right from the start?"

Zu An shrugged calmly. "I was just preparing for it in case the need arises. Who could have known that you would be so cooperative? With how proactive you were, I'd feel embarrassed if I don't bring this out."

"..." Shi Kun.

You have successfully trolled Shi Kun for +813 Rage!

The students in the classroom waited patiently, thinking that Shi Kun would blow up on Zu An. If so, Chu Chuyan would have to step forward to protect Zu An. Perhaps, the upper echelons of the academy might even be alarmed.

Yup, this is much more interesting than attending Yang Wei's lessons. Come, bring us another dozen of such teachers!

Chu Chuyan was also keeping a close eye on the situation. If Shi Kun were to make a move, Zu An would be in grave danger. She was prepared to step in and protect Zu An if the need arises.

Unexpectedly, Shi Kun took a deep breath before revealing an amicable smile. "Yes, I was indeed too rash to earlier that I unintentionally talked back to you. It's only right for me to be punished. Rules have to be upheld in order to ensure discipline in the academy."

Saying those words, he grabbed the wooden notice and walked out of the classroom calmly. His movements were so elegant that he felt like an enlightened sage for a moment there.

The eyes of a few female students in the class immediately began to twinkle.

"Waa, how cool!"

"Young master Shi is truly refined like a true gentleman."

"He must have lost his cool for a moment after meeting his love rival."

"I never knew he was so sentimental. I'm getting more and more fond of him."

...

Zu An was surprised. He thought that Shi Kun would fight back violently, and he had a countermeasure for that too. Unexpectedly, the latter surrendered just like that.

Is he backing down in order to protect his reputation before his fangirls? That doesn't make sense though.

By this moment, Shi Kun had already walked out of the classroom, and the smile on his face immediately vanished without a trace. It was replaced with coldness.

Hmph, I got careless earlier on. I shouldn't have left such words behind. If something happens to that fellow, the suspicion would be on me. No matter how angry I am now, I have to remain a composed exterior so that I can at least shirk off responsibility if others question me in the future.

He had already made up his mind that he would make that disgusting fellow vanish from the face of the world.

Naturally, he wouldn't foolishly follow Zu An's and hang the wooden notice around his neck. While making his way to the field, he casually swiped his hand over the notice and erased the words on it. He tucked the wooden notice under his arms casually, and it gave him a cool impression.

It was then that a figure suddenly appeared beside him. It was the old man who had been following him all this while. "Young master, should I make a move and kill that little bastard?"

Shi Kun waved his hand and replied, "There's no rush. If he dies right after having a conflict with us, the suspicion will be on us. The Chu clan's strength shouldn't be underestimated. If our actions push them toward King Qi's side, we would have made a huge loss."

"But that bastard actually dared to treat you in such a manner. Even I feel angry just by watching it!" the old man harrumphed. He had seen and heard everything that happened earlier in the classroom clearly..

"Don't worry, someone else will be dealing with it. It's going to be the Clans Tournament between the Chu and Yuan clan tomorrow. Call Yuan Wendong over later at night... No, I shouldn't make a move myself. I'll leave it to you to think of a way to settle Yuan Wendong. Tell him to feign an accident and kill

Zu An on the dueling ring tomorrow. Even at the very least, he should cripple the latter,” said Shi Kun coldly.

Over the years, there hadn't a single person who had offended him who got away scot-free.

Soon, it was the end of class, and the students swiftly noticed Shi Kun standing on the field. Out of curiosity, they gathered around the area, intrigued as to why he was standing there. Gossip spread quickly, and it didn't take long for them to hear that Shi Kun was being punished for talking back to his teacher in the classroom.

Many of Shi Kun's fangirls immediately flew into a state of rage.

“That Zu An is too shameless! Isn't he openly picking on young master Shi?”

“Indeed! Teacher like him is actually being openly biased toward his wife. He gave Chu Chuyan such a simple question only to make things hard for young master Shi. I'm going to report him for this!”

“Yes, we should report him together!”

...

Compared to the indignant female students, the male students took it much better. Ever since Shi Kun arrived, all of these women seemed to have gotten into a frenzy, which displeased them by quite a bit. Thus, they were more than glad to see Shi Kun placed in such an embarrassing position.

There were quite a few of them who wanted to take this opportunity to mock Shi Kun, but before they could get close, they were already forced to retreat by a powerful aura.

“Scram!” the old man beside Shi Kun spat coldly.

The students found themselves shuddering uncontrollably in the face of the old man, and it was only then that they were reminded of the fact that Shi Kun was someone whom they couldn't afford to offend. So, they quickly backed off.

Over in the staff office, Disciple Master Lu De's gazed down at the field as his eyes narrowed slightly.

I can't gauge the extent of that old man's strength. Are even the servants of the Shi clan that powerful? It looks like I've been underestimating the accumulation of the Shi clan. It's indeed best not to get involved with those prominent clans. Hmph! It feels like trouble keeps rolling in ever since Zu An arrived at the academy!

Meanwhile, Zu An was marveling at how fast Rage points were being delivered into his account. It's no wonder why there are so many boy bands in my previous life. Women sure don't hold back anything for their idols!

“Brother-in-law, brother-in-law! How did my big sister react earlier during your lesson? Hurry up and tell me about it!” Chu Huanzhao dashed over to Zu An's sight excitedly. She was initially intending on skipping class to peek at the scene with her own eyes, but she stumbled upon Lu De as soon as she walked out of the classroom. Horrified, she could only quickly returned back in and wait impatiently until the end of the class.

Nevertheless, her curiosity had been tickling her heart all this while, so she rushed out as soon as the class was over.

“How could you collude with this fellow to dupe?!” The expectant look on Chu Huanzhao’s face immediately left Chu Chuyan fuming once more. She reached out to grab her little sister by her ear.

“Hehehe, it looks like my big sister must have shown quite an interesting reaction back there!” Chu Huanzhao immediately sought refuge behind Zu An as she exclaimed excitedly.

Chu Chuyan glared at her in annoyance before slowly turning her gaze back to Zu An with intrigue in her eyes. “How did you manage to become an arithmetic teacher?”

She simply couldn’t have imagined how such a turn of affairs happened.

“I still have plenty of surprises waiting for you to uncover,” replied Zu An gleefully.

Chu Chuyan chuckled softly. “Yes, you did surprise me today. However, now that you have openly offended the Sixth Young Master of the Shi clan, you might face danger in the future.”

“What can I do when that fellow covets my wife? If I don’t teach him a lesson, he might just climb all over me!” Zu An harrumphed..

“Who’s your wife!” Chu Chuyan’s face reddened. However, as soon as those words came out of her mouth, she suddenly remembered the current relationship between the two of them and sighed deeply. It looks like I still haven’t managed to get used to my new identity.

“Anyway, you should be careful for the time being. Try to stay by my side if possible lest Shi Kun sends someone to deal with you,” reminded Chu Chuyan.

“Honey, even though you keep rejecting me, it seems like you still care about my safety,” remarked Zu An with a smile.

“I told you not to call me that!” Chu Chuyan glared sharply at him. “I just don’t want you to come to harm because of me.”

Zu An glanced at Shi Kun at afar and smiled, “Rest assured, he probably won’t send anyone after me in the next two days. It’s going to be the Clans Tournament the day after tomorrow anyway. Since he can kill me openly on the dueling ring, there’s no reason for him to do something excessive.”

Thinking from Shi Kun’s standpoint, he would surely choose to make a move on himself during the Clans Tournament.

Chu Chuyan fell into deep thought as she realized what Zu An said made sense too. She raised her head, only to be faced with Zu An’s confident expression. At that very moment, she suddenly felt that he was very different from how she thought him out to be.

Nothing worthy of note happened afterward, and the day passed by quickly. When classes were finally over for the day, Zu An wanted to head to Shang Liuyu’s residence to return the recording seashell to her. However, looking at the two sisters standing beside him, he changed his mind.

It didn’t feel like a wise move to talk about another woman before them.

They left the academy and got onto their carriages. Under the escort of the Chu clan's guards, they returned to the Chu Estate. Cheng Shouping had come to fetch Zu An, as usual, only to find himself abandoned outside.

Usually, I'd at least be able to walk with the young master and the second miss, but now I can only trail behind them. Ahhh, it feels like the first miss isn't as approachable as the second miss. If only the young master married the second miss...

However, he soon thought about it from another perspective.

If the young master and the first miss get closer with one another, a day will come that he becomes officially acknowledged as the son-in-law of the Chu clan. By then, my standing will rise as well. Hmmm, if the young master marries the second miss too, will my standing rise even higher?

Cheng Shouping quickly stifled those thoughts.

You must be joking! The young master is just a little better looking and luckier than me. Other than that, there's nothing he's really better than me at. How could something like that possibly occur to him?

Dinnertime, Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru called them over once more, hoping to talk to them about the Clans Tournament tomorrow.

Zu An couldn't help but think of how things had changed from when he first arrived here. Back then, he could only eat his meal all alone in his room, but now, he was frequently joining them at the main table. On top of that, Chu Chuyan seemed to have smiled at him several times today.

Pui pui pui, why am I getting so happy over just a few smiles? I'd really be a good-for-nothing if I get satisfied with just this much!

Zu An eventually concluded that it was all because Chu Chuyan was too pretty. Humans were visual creatures, so it couldn't be helped that he would succumb easily to someone as beautiful as Chu Chuyan.

But speaking of which, I'm quite good-looking too. Why doesn't my wife drool in my presence then? This doesn't make sense!

While Zu An was still in his daze, Chu Huanzhao had already begun chattering off about how Zu An had become an arithmetic teacher in the academy, though she did exaggerate some of the details. Honestly, she felt that she was going to blow up from bottling up such explosive gossip for so long that it felt great to vent it out.

"It really is heartening to hear that Zu An has managed to become the arithmetic teacher of Brightmoon Academy!" Chu Zhongtian smiled from the bottom of his heart. He thought that it was a pity that his son-in-law was a good-for-nothing, but it turned out that he was good-for-something after all. Needless to say, this was something worth celebrating.

Qin Wanru was surprised to hear the news too. She stared at Zu An for a while, but the images of the lackadaisical man sitting before her and a teacher of the academy simply wouldn't overlap. It just so happened that Zu An giggled at that moment too, which somehow irked her. So, she ended up harrumphing, "To think that you would get so gleeful just because you became an arithmetic teacher! In

the first place, you are just a temporary teacher who would be replaced once the royal court appoints a new teacher over. Furthermore, based on what I've heard from Huanzhao, you picked on young master Shi in class? Aren't you getting ahead of yourself just because you have managed to grasp onto some power? You're really a disappointment!"

Zu An could only shake his head helplessly. I sure am unlucky to get a mother-in-law who picks faults with whatever I do.

Seeing this, Chu Huanzhao couldn't help but stand up for Zu An, "Mother, it was Shi Kun who went overboard today. You shouldn't blame brother-in-law for this. Right now, I'm more worried that someone will try to hurt Zu An on the dueling ring tomorrow."

Chapter 107: The Sharp-witted Brat

"Try to hurt him?" Qin Wanru was taken aback. She instinctively responded in turn, "What's so great about him that someone would try to hurt him? Instead of thinking about these meaningless things, why don't you focus on the fight against the Yuan clan tomorrow?"

Chu Chuyan looked a little conflicted at Qin Wanru's words, hesitating whether she should talk about the matter.

Chu Huanzhao, on the other hand, was not as patient. "Mother, do you know that Yuan Wendong has already publicly declared that he would cripple my brother-in-law during the Clans Tournament? As if that wasn't enough, my brother-in-law also riled up Shi Kun today. I can tell that Shi Kun is a narrow-minded fellow, so he would surely try to exact his vengeance here!"

To that, Qin Wanru answered, "Isn't it perfect that Yuan Wendong has fallen for our plan? As for Zu An's safety, we won't have to worry about that since we won't be needing him to get on the dueling ring in the end. Besides, your father and I will be there too. Do you think that we would watch quietly as that Yuan fellow harmed Zu An?"

"I'm just afraid that the Yuan clan has some other plans in mind. For some reason, I've been feeling a little jittery about this," said Chu Chuyan.

"Yes, it would be best to be careful. We'll have Hong Xingying take the first match. He's one of the stronger ones in his generation, and he's not the strongest one in our Chu clan either. It would be apt to have him take the first match and try out the Yuan clan," said Chu Zhongtian. "I've called them back a few days ago in order to train them. I don't think they would be too much problem dealing with the Yuan clan or the Wu clan."

Zu An thought about how regretful he was when he didn't see Hong Xingying in class earlier today, but it turned out that he had been called back for special training.

Qin Wanru turned to Zu An and said, "I know that you have your differences with Hong Xingying. I don't care how the two of you are usually, but you aren't to provoke him tomorrow lest he performs less than satisfactory due to his mood."

Chu Huanzhao couldn't stand the favoritism going on. "Mother, my brother-in-law is going to fight tomorrow too! Shouldn't you care about his mood too?"

Qin Wanru rolled her eyes. "He's just there to stall Yuan Wendong. He won't even need to get on the field!"

Chu Zhongtian burst into laughter, saying, "Zu An, you don't have to get too worried. If it ever gets to your turn, you can just admit defeat."

Even an honest man like Chu Zhongtian was agreeing with his wife's view.

Zu An was already used to this, so he replied with a smile, "Don't worry. If I do need to fight tomorrow, it would mean that the Chu clan is in a dangerous position. If so, I'll try my best to turn things around."

He felt that it was all fate that he was queued at the very last. After all, the star of the show usually made their appearance at the very back, right?

"Pui! Shouldn't you say something nicer here?" Qin Wanru glared at Zu An, unhappy at how he was speaking such inauspicious words.

Feeling irked, she turned to her second daughter and said, "Huanzhao, instead of worrying about others, you should worry about yourself instead. You spend your days idling and fooling around, resulting in your cultivation reaching only the third rank thus far. You'll be the second last one to go up tomorrow. Your older sister should be able to settle the tournament in the first few matches, so hopefully, you wouldn't have to join the battle and get hurt."

"Orh~" Chu Huanzhao pouted in dissatisfaction. However, the thought that she was right in front of her brother-in-law lifted her mood a little.

Chu Zhongtian turned to Chu Chuyan and said, "Tomorrow, you, Hong Xingying, Yue Shan, Chu Hongcai, and Chu Yucheng will be going up. These five matches should be a takeaway. As long as we take another match aside from those, we should be able to clinch the victory."

Zu An secretly tugged Chu Huanzhao sleeves and asked softly, "Who's Chu Hongcai and Chu Yucheng?"

Chu Huanzhao raised her head to glance at her mother and big sister, acting almost as if a student checking out whether the teacher was paying attention to her, before quickly explaining the situation to Zu An, "Chu Hongcai is the son of my second uncle, serving as the vice-captain of our guards. He was responsible for protecting our clan's spirit creek, but it ended up getting polluted the other day. Out of reproach, he has been reflecting quietly on it over the days, which is why you don't see him around.

"As for Chu Yucheng, he's the son of my third uncle. He has a chubby appearance that was quite cute when he was younger, but he simply became fat once he grew up. There's nothing particularly special about him."

Zu An glanced at Chu Zhongtian. The second branch and third branch all bore sons, but all of you have are daughters. It looks like you aren't putting in enough effort.

It was not that Zu An was discriminating against women, but for prominent clans, it was important for them to bear sons for the sake of their inheritance. If Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru were to have sons, they wouldn't have needed to sacrifice Chu Chuyan to marry him at the start.

Hmmm, then I actually should be thanking my father-in-law for failing in that responsibility then!

It was also about this moment that Qin Wanru noticed their interactions, and her face immediately frowned in displeasure. “Huanzhao, if you’re done with dinner, you should head off to your room right away. You need to get plenty of sleep so as to not affect your performance tomorrow.”

Just what’s wrong with my two daughters? How can their eyes be that bad? It’s one thing for my older daughter to marry Zu An—she was going for an average person in the first place—but what’s going on with my second daughter? Why is she getting closer and closer to Zu An?

Chu Huanzhao murmured in displeasure, “Didn’t you just say that you don’t need me on the field tomorrow?”

However, when she found herself with her mother’s raging eyes, she could only reluctantly return back to her room.

Qin Wanru then turned to look at Zu An. “You should return too. We still need to discuss the details regarding tomorrow’s tournament.”

Her attitude made it clear that Zu An was unqualified to participate in the discussions. In the first place, Zu An’s only duty here was to tie down Yuan Wendong, so there was no need for him to participate in the discussions.

Zu An shrugged calmly in response. There’s nothing meaningful here anyway. I might as well head back earlier.

As he closed the door, he could vaguely hear some words coming from within.

“The one who is the most formidable in the Yuan clan should be Yuan Wendong. The others aren’t a threat at all. As for the Wu clan, most of their juniors aren’t able to compete with us, so they aren’t a threat either...”

As soon as Zu An walked out from the hall, Cheng Shouping rushed forward to his side with a fawning smile. “Young master, did you have a pleasant meal?”

Seeing this, Zu An suddenly felt that it wasn’t that bad to have such an attendant by his side. An idea flickered across his mind, and he grabbed Cheng Shouping’s shoulder and pulled him over to the side. “For the Clans Tournament tomorrow, are there any bets going on in the city?”

Cheng Shouping nodded in response. “There are. It looks like most people are more optimistic about our Chu clan. They’re staking their bets on our first miss’ win...”

Zu An quickly interjected, “Let’s not talk about the others. What’s my current payout ratio?”

Cheng Shouping had a bizarre look on his face as he raised a single finger up.

“1:10?” Zu An frowned. “It’s a bit low, but I guess it’s not too bad.”

He was just about to grab some banknotes from his robe when Cheng Shouping interrupted him, “Young master, it’s not 1:10 but 1:100.”

Cheng Shouping thought that the prideful young master would be angered, but surprisingly, the latter began laughing heartily. “1:100? Hahahaha! It looks like heaven is on my side! I’m going to strike it rich!”

Cheng Shouping blinked his eyes in bewilderment. What’s going on? Did the young master suffered too many shocks recently and went insane?

Zu An suddenly noticed another problem and hurriedly asked, “Who are the dealers? It can’t be just the Silverhook Casino, right?”

The Silverhook Casino couldn’t pay him the 7,500,000 silver taels it owed him previously. It was unlikely that they could fork out the money to pay him if he were to make a killing from them once more.

Toward that, Cheng Shouping shook his head and replied, “Nah. The Silverhook Casino have suffered a huge blow from the loss against you back then. Their finances are in trouble, and they have sullied their reputation as well. Their business is doing badly at the moment. The other clans in the city are making use of this opportunity to silently push out their own gambling business.”

Zu An’s eyes lit up. “That sounds perfect! Here is 20,000 silver taels. I want you to bet on my victory!”

A moment later, he changed his mind and took back 10,000 silver taels. “Forget it, it’ll do for you just to buy 10,000 taels.”

Based on what he had seen thus far, this world was tragically horrible in mathematics. That could be easily seen from the payout rates in casinos. They didn’t put in place safeguard measures against freak accidents, such that if someone were to really luck out, he could potentially bankrupt the casino. The previous incident between him and the Silverhook Casino was one perfect example.

Zu An was worried that the same would happen this time around. Instead of risking the casino defaulting on the payment altogether, he would rather reduce his winning to something that the casino was still able to accept. This way, he would at least be able to get his money. So, he chose to just bet 10,000 silver taels.

However, Cheng Shouping flew into a fluster upon hearing those words. “Young master, you shouldn’t squander money away like that even if you have the means to do so!”

“You don’t know anything at all. Just do as I say! It’s not convenient for me to head out right now, so I need you to do it in my place,” Zu An harrumphed.

Cheng Shouping grumbled under his breath, “If you’re really that confident, why did you take 10,000 silver taels back then? Would anyone be worried about winning too much money? In the end, you’re just afraid of losing and want to cut your losses.”

“What did you say?” Zu An glared sharply at Cheng Shouping.

“N-nothing much!” Cheng Shouping replied with a beaming smile. “Young master, the Chu clan strictly forbids gambling. I dare not to break its rules.”

“All you have to do is to make sure that no one finds out, no?” Zu An stuffed a hundred silver taels into Cheng Shouping’s clothes. “Here, this is your bonus for running an errand for me. I’ll give you some dividends after I earn some money from the bet.”

Cheng Shouping's eyes lit up. His attitude made a 180-degrees change right away. "Sure thing! I'll get it done right away!"

With that, he rushed right out of the room.

Zu An was surprised at just how motivated he was. That fellow won't try to run away with my money, right? But again, the servants in this world have a contract on them, and the outside world is dangerous too. He doesn't have anywhere to run to.

...

Meanwhile, Cheng Shouping made his way toward the casino while deep in thought.

Our young master simply wanted to bet 10,000 silver taels on himself because he's dissatisfied with how everyone looks down on him. He has 7,500,000 silver taels on him anyway, so losing 10,000 silver taels is no big deal.

However, as the young master's study companion, it's my duty to share his worries. How can I watch as he loses money? Alright, I'll bet on the young master's opponent winning then! By then, when the young master loses the duel but still receives the money, he'll praise me for my sharp wits!

Hahaha, I sure am sharp!

Meanwhile, Zu An returned back to his residence, only to leap in shock. He realized that Old Mi was waiting for him inside.

"Elder, you're here." Zu An was as obedient as a man could be at this very moment. He didn't dare to put on his usual unruly act at all.

Old Mi nodded in response before saying, "You progressed too quickly previously that I forgot to remind you. You mustn't use the Sunflower Phantasm I taught you unless it comes to a desperate situation. Otherwise, it will likely bring you danger."

"Ah?" Zu An was rendered speechless.

I spent so much effort to learn my 'Bixie Swordplay', but all of a sudden, I can't use it anymore?

Chapter 108: Secret Plans

Old Mi was feeling quite blue-balled at the situation. Ah, that's not right since I don't have my balls anymore. Well, just something like that.

He only taught Sunflower Phantasm to Zu An because it wasn't easy for him to find a suitable cauldron, so he didn't want the latter to come to any mishap before he finally possessed the latter.

However, he didn't expect Zu An to actually grasp the Sunflower Phantasm so quickly. There were nine levels to the Sunflower Phantasm, and the first level allowed one to maneuver freely even amidst the encirclement of cultivators of the same rank. Even if the opponent was a rank or two higher than him, there would be nothing to fear at all. If one could master it to the ninth level, even Masters would find it hard to nick one's sleeves.

Most people would take several months just to grasp the first level, so Old Mi thought that several nights of effort learning the Sunflower Phantasm would just barely give Zu An the ability to protect himself during the Clans Tournament.

However, Zu An was unexpectedly talented in the movement skill, mastering the first level in a huff. In fact, he might have already reached the second level even. If he were to use it on the dueling ring tomorrow, it could spell trouble for Old Mi. While it was unlikely for anyone to be able to identify this movement skill in Brightmoon City, it was still better to be safe than sorry.

The more Old Mi thought about it, the more nervous he felt. So, he decided to come over to warn Zu An in advance.

Seeing that Zu An was shocked by what he had said, he carried on, "I'll teach you another trick to alter the ki pathway a little. That way, it won't be easy for others to see through the origin of your movement skill."

Zu An was delighted to hear that. "Elder, you're incredible! I didn't know you have the ability to change such a formidable movement skill so easily!"

In his heart, however, he was alarmed to know that his movement skill was a taboo in the world of cultivation. He was reminded of how Old Mi had warned him that he mustn't reveal the name of his movement skill, and now he was worried about him executing it too, even going to the extent of coming over to make some modifications. Just what could Old Mi be hiding here?

I must be more careful, or else I might just get done in by him one day.

While Zu An was practicing the newly revised version of Sunflower Phantasm, Cheng Shouping strolled by the major casinos in the city before finally choosing one that had a slightly higher payout for Zu An's loss.

"If he knows that I changed his bet, would he beat me to death?" Cheng Shouping suddenly hesitated a little.

However, he soon persuaded himself otherwise.

I'm only doing this out of concern for the young master so that he doesn't lose his money along with his pride. There are some things that our masters cannot say to us as it undermines their pride, and it's at times like this that we servants have to deduce their true intention.

To this day, he still couldn't understand why the Madam got angry at him when she said that she would bring in some concubines for the Master and he caringly brought a bunch of ladies in for her to choose from.

Anyway, having convinced himself that this was the right thing to date, he betted all 10,000 silver taels on Zu An's loss.

Shortly after he left, a man and a woman walked out of the casino. The man had a tall and dashing appearance whereas the woman looked dignified and elegant. They looked like a good pair.

"Young master, young miss."

The attendant who was in charge of receiving bets bowed to the couple. If Zu An was here, he would have immediately recognized the two of them to be familiar faces.

The man was no other than Sang Qian, and the woman was Zheng Dan.

“Are you sure that man is Zu An’s study companion?” Sang Qian looked at Cheng Shouping’s departing silhouette as he asked with a deep voice.

After the mishap at Silverhook Casino, he secretly supported the Zheng clan to establish a new casino in the city. The Zheng clan was already dabbling in the gambling business, and the timely support from the Sang clan further reinforced its foundation, allowing them to swiftly rise to power.

“Yes, he definitely is,” the attendant replied. “His name is Cheng Shouping, and he’s Zu An only servant.”

“He betted on Zu An’s loss earlier?” Sang Qian couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

“Yes, he betted 10,000 silver taels on it,” reported the attendant.

Zheng Dan frowned. “How could a servant like him possibly have 10,000 silver taels? He must have done it under Zu An’s instructions. Still, I didn’t expect Zu An to actually bet on his own loss.”

Sang Qian laughed heartily. “After how he kept provoking Yuan Wendong time and time again, we thought that he might actually have some trump card up his sleeves, so we made sure to keep an eye out for his movements. Yet, who could have thought that he has already resigned himself to his loss? Hah, I guess we were expecting too much out of someone who came from the streets. Even after becoming the young master of the Chu clan, he still can’t kick off his habit of taking small little advantages.”

Zheng Dan frowned a little upon hearing those words as she thought about the gentlemanly young man who refused to take advantage of her despite her attempts at seduction, as well as the imposing fellow who overwhelmed everyone who stood in his way.

All of the evidence she had seen thus far showed that Zu An was not an ordinary person.

“Send someone to inform Shi Kun that his worry is unfounded. That fellow is not a threat at all,” said Sang Qian with a smile. “Also, make sure to tamper with the bet the study companion made earlier on.”

The attendant nodded in response, “Don’t worry, I’ve already tampered with it. The bet paper was written using special ink. Tomorrow, the surface ink will recede, and the underlying layer will surface. It’ll show as him betting for Zu An’s victory instead.”

“Well done!” complimented Sang Qian. “You want to recoup your loss on the dueling ring through your bet? Dream on, I won’t allow you!”

All of a sudden, he remembered something and frowned, “Wait a moment, why did that fellow only bet 10,000 silver taels? Doesn’t he have much more money than that?”

Zheng Dan put on a tender smile and said, “Big brother Sang, have you forgotten? Most of what he earned from Silverhook Casino is just an empty cheque. He can’t possibly take it out to gamble.”

"That's true." Sang Qian nodded. "Even so, he should have 40,000 to 50,000 on him at the moment. Yet, he could only bring himself to take out 10,000 silver taels for this bet. I guess he simply can't rid himself of the miserly nature he picked up from the street."

Zheng Dan found herself disagreeing with Sang Qian's words. Somehow, she couldn't associate that man she had been trying to seduce with the word 'miserly'. She hesitated for a moment before saying, "Is it possible that he's spreading his bet over several casinos?"

Sang Qian nodded in realization. "Yes, that is possible. Send someone to look into it right away. He might be betting a smaller amount on our side to make us put our guard down while betting more elsewhere."

"I don't think he has the connections to know that this casino is under us," said Zheng Dan.

"While the possibility is low, it's better for us to be safe than sorry," said Sang Qian. "Now that we're talking about him, what's your progress with him so far?"

Zheng Dan's face reddened. She shook her head and said, "I've had two encounters with him thus far, but I can't figure out where he's hiding the debt note at."

She had searched him from head to toe, but she wasn't able to find the debt note anywhere. Where could he be hiding it? Could it be in the Chu clan?

"You need to hurry up with that. As long as we can get our hands on the debt note, we'll be able to put the Silverhook Casino and the Plum Blossom Sect under our control anytime we want," said Sang Qian.

"I know that." Zheng Dan wondered if she should find a chance to drop by the Chu clan, but she knew that such a move could incur the suspicion of the Chu clan.

"Did that fellow take advantage of you?" Sang Qian suddenly asked suspiciously while eyeing him nervously.

Zheng Dan immediately thought of the rough sensation of Zu An's hands on her thigh, and her heart skipped a beat. However, she maintained a poker face and replied calmly, "Rest assured, how could I possibly allow that fellow to take advantage of me?"

"That's good." Sang Qian heaved a sigh of relief.

...

Meanwhile, in the Yuan clan, a group of people was sitting in a secret meeting room with grave looks on their faces. Someone knocked on the door, and Yuan Wendong headed out for a while. When he finally returned, there was a smile on his face.

"Sang Qian just sent news that Zu An has no trump cards at all. He secretly betted on his own loss."

The crowd burst into laughter. They turned to look at the beautiful woman sporting a ponytail and said, "As I told you, Miss Snow, you're getting too worried over nothing!"

Needless to say, the young woman was Snow. It wasn't convenient for Shi Kun to make a move himself, so he sent her over to come into contact with the Yuan clan to warn them.

"He betted on his own loss?" Snow was confused.

Others might not know better, but she knew deep well that Zu An had been hiding his true abilities thus far.

"Young master Yuan, you should still be careful tomorrow. Even though Zu An is only a third rank cultivator, his fighting prowess far surpasses that. You mustn't let your guard down."

Snow was reminded of how she failed her assassination attempt on Zu An despite going all out. While part of the reason was due to the sudden stomachache she had, Zu An's surprisingly great strength played a huge part in that too.

However, Yuan Wendong shrugged off her concerns, saying, "No matter how powerful he is, isn't he just a third rank cultivator? No matter what he tries to pull, there's no way he can turn the tables against a fifth rank cultivator like me!"

The others agreed with Yuan Wendong's words. In their view, there was a limit to how powerful a third rank cultivator could be.

One of the elders in the secret meeting room chirped in, "If Zu An has no trump cards prepared, aren't we making a mountain out of a molehill to send our young master after him? It seems like an awful waste."

"That bastard Zu An has humiliated me many times now. I have to settle the grudge with him, or else others might just take me for a pushover. Besides, even though that fellow appears to be a wastrel, his capability definitely far surpasses what he shows on the surface. He might have some ideas in mind. Even Miss Snow has come all the way here to warn us that he isn't as simple as we think him out to be, so I believe that there's a need to be warier.

"In any case, I'll make sure I trample him into the ground tomorrow. I'll show him that a good-for-nothing will always be a good-for-nothing. He might have thought that he's smart for concealing his true ability, but I'll show him that his little tricks are nothing more than jokes before true prodigies like me!"

"But if you were to go up against him, the rest of us might not be enough to deal with the experts of the Chu clan," someone said worriedly.

"Rest assured, we have someone to deal with Chu Chuyan. May I invite Mister Wu in!" Yuan Wendong stood up as he gestured toward the wall by the side.

The wall slowly opened, and a middle-aged man slowly walked in. Even the composed Snow couldn't help but pale in astonishment. This pressure... This fellow is a sixth rank cultivator?

Yuan Wendong bowed at the middle-aged man before introducing him to the crowd, "May I introduce to you Elder Wu Di from the Wu clan. He's a sixth rank cultivator. No matter how powerful Chu Chuyan is, she's still no more than a fifth rank cultivator. As all of us know, there's a huge gap between the fifth rank and the sixth rank. With his help, we'll surely be able to win the battle tomorrow!"

A fifth rank cultivator would be able to tap into the elemental energies of the world whereas a sixth rank cultivator could morph them into a defensive layer around him. This enhancement in ability was more than enough for any sixth rank cultivator to defeat any fifth rank cultivator.

The Yuan clan was overjoyed to see that a sixth rank cultivator was going to join their line-up. With this, they were certain of their victory.

However, Snow couldn't help but pose a doubt, "This is the Clans Tournament. Both sides are sending their juniors down. Considering this elder's age, putting aside the Chu clan, even the city lord wouldn't agree to it."

Chapter 109: You Think I Wouldn't Recognize You Just Because You're Wearing a Hat?

"Miss Snow, you need not worry. We've already made preparations in advance," Yuan Wendong said with a smile. He took out a mask that was as thin as a cicada's wing and said, "This is a mask made by one of the runemasters hired by our clan. With this, he'll be able to disguise himself as a young man."

One of the main reasons why the Yuan clan dared to challenge the Chu clan was because they had the backing of the Wu clan. The Wu clan had dispatched a group of experts to assist them in the Clans Tournament.

While both the Yuan clan and Chu clan knew what was going on, there was still a need to keep up the pretense. Otherwise, if the crowd were to recognize that everyone on the Yuan clan's side was actually from the Wu clan, they would be embarrassed too.

In order to solve this problem, the Yuan clan and the Wu clan figured out a solution, and that was to have their runemasters craft a batch of masks to disguise their identities. These masks looked identical to a human's face, making it impossible to tell the difference unless one stared at it up close.

As soon as the middle-aged man named Wu Di put on the mask, he turned into a cold-faced youth. The crowd assessed him from multiple angles, but they were unable to find anything that could give away his identity.

Snow was both amazed and horrified at the same time. "With such masks, wouldn't you be able to impersonate anyone you want to?"

If someone were to impersonate her young master, wouldn't she be unable to tell the difference too?

Toward that, Yuan Wendong shook his head and replied, "How could it be that easy to impersonate another person? No matter how well made the mask is, it can only alter a person's appearance. Impersonation requires far greater skill than that, such as imitating the voice, gestures, and everything else."

In truth, Yuan Wendong had the same thoughts in mind when he first saw the mask. He thought that he could turn into anyone he wanted and strut right into another house and sleep with another man's wife.

But how could there be something that convenient in the world?

Snow calmed down a little after hearing those words. She turned her attention back to the Clans Tournament, thinking that given how confident Yuan Wendong was about this matter, even if Zu An survived the ordeal by some stroke of luck, he would end up crippled at the very least.

What a pity that I'm not making a move myself!

Just thinking about how her maidenly body had been sullied by that despicable fellow made her bite down on her lips hatefully.

...

“Ah choo~”

Zu An sneezed. Now, which beautiful lady is thinking about me this time around?

For the last few hours, Old Mi made him practice the modified version of the Sunflower Phantasm, and only after ensuring that it had been distorted to a point where it couldn't be recognized anymore did he finally leave with a contented smile on his face.

With this, Zu An finally had some time to himself. He lay down on his bed to look at the Rage points he had collected in total.

Hmm, 27,489, huh? That's less than I thought.

While it looked like a substantial amount, the disastrous success rate of the lottery meant that it was unlikely for him to obtain anything much.

And as if the world was determined to prove him right, what he received subsequently were 'Thanks for participating' and 27 Ki Fruits. As for skills and artifacts, they had done well avoiding Zu An this time around.

“I knew that I shouldn't have bore any expectations!” Zu An harrumphed indignantly.

Nevertheless, he still swallowed the 27 Ki Fruits right away.

The fourth formation requires 233 Ki Fruits in total, so he only managed to fill a tenth of it in total despite his efforts. While mumbling grudgeful words toward the keyboard, he gradually drifted off to sleep...

By the time Cheng Shouping returned, Zu An was already fast asleep, so he didn't interrupt him. He decided to tell Zu An about the matter after the latter lost the duel tomorrow.

Hehe, the young master would surely be upset after losing the battle. If I take out the bet paper then and show him that I managed to win some money for him, he would surely be delighted. At least, that would assuage his hurt soul.

I wonder how much money would the young master bestow upon me then...

...

Soon, it was finally the day for the Clans Tournament. In order to ensure fairness, both clans decided to hold it in an empty lot in the middle of the city.

Many of the juniors of prominent clans in Brightmoon City gathered around the area early in the morning, wanting to join in the rare commotion. It wasn't every day that one got to see the juniors of two prominent clans sparring with one another. Even if not to join in the commotion, they could also potentially pick up a thing or two from the battle, and that would make their trip here more than worth the effort and time.

Naturally, the Chu clan and Yuan clan arrived the earliest as the juniors who were participating in the duel later on had to familiarize themselves with the fighting grounds.

As for Zu An, who was there just to fill up the slots, everyone implicitly thought that it didn't matter whether he came in advance or not. Zu An himself also didn't have the self-awareness of a participant of the tournament either, so it never crossed his mind that he should try to familiarize himself with the grounds. Instead, he sat on a chair while glancing around, seemingly marveling at the grandeur of the event.

Taking all of this into sight, Qin Wanru couldn't help but frown at how much of a bumpkin he was being. However, in view that they were in public right now, it wouldn't be proper for her to reprimand him before everyone else. So, she could only harrumph coldly and turn her head away.

This was the first time Zu An was seeing the sons from the second branch and third branch.

The second branch's Chu Hongcai looked like an outstanding young man. Instead of inheriting his father's dark, brooding look, Chu Hongcai commanded a proud and reticent aura from his bones.

According to the rumors, he used to be quite a prominent person in the Chu clan, but he looked exceptionally toned down today. Perhaps he was still blaming himself for failing to prevent the pollution of the spirit creek.

As for the third branch's Chu Yucheng, he was an adorable little fatty. He had small beady eyes and a round physique. There was absolutely no doubt at all that he was the blood-related son of the third branch's Chu Yuepo.

Compared to Chu Hongcai, he was much more amicable. He even approached Zu An on his own accord to chat with him.

After the interactions he had with them, Zu An felt that the sons of the second branch and third branch were really much more pleasing as compared to their fathers. He could still remember how Chu Tiesheng and Chu Yuepo used that mocking tone of theirs to put him down in the ancestral hall back then.

Hm, is it possible for this little fatty to have inherited his father's genes though? Maybe under his kind exterior hides a sinister soul?

Zu An suddenly felt a bit wary of Chu Hongcai. He subconsciously shot a glance at Chu Yuepo and Chu Tiesheng. The former was chatting with those around him about something whereas the latter was staring at...

Hmm, is he staring at Qin Wanru right now?

Given that this was a public event, it went without saying that Qin Wanru had made sure to dress herself up properly. She had put on all sorts of expensive jewelry to accentuate her noble disposition and her silk dress she wore showcased her beautiful figure perfectly.

Haa, why did Chu Huanzhao not inherit her mother's voluptuous genes?

Seemingly sensing Zu An's gaze, Qin Wanru turned her head over and shot him a stern glare.

You have successfully trolled Qin Wanru for +69 Rage!

Zu An felt a little stifled. I'm not the one ogling at you, so why are you getting mad at me?

But when he turned over to look at Chu Tiesheng, the latter was already chatting with a few others around him. It made him wonder if his eyes were playing tricks on him.

"The patriarch of the Wang clan has arrived!"

Zu An turned his gaze over and saw a thin middle-aged man leading a group of people onto the field.

He had heard that the four prominent merchant clans in Brightmoon City were the Chu clan, Yuan clan, Zheng clan, and Wang clan. This was the first time he was meeting anyone from the Wang clan.

Chu Zhongtian and Qin Wanru stood up and welcomed those from the Wang clan with a smile, and it didn't take long for them to start chatting merrily with one another.

Zu An was surprised by that sight. He turned to Chu Huanzhao and asked, "What's the background of those from the Wang clan that your father is welcoming them personally?"

If there was another person that was here to fill in the numbers, just like Zu An, that person would definitely be Chu Huanzhao. She also had no interest to familiarize herself with the fighting grounds, and she showed none of the tension someone who was about to face an important battle would have either. Instead, she was looking around with an excited look on her face.

Upon seeing Zu An's question, she replied, "I don't think they have any particular background. I only know that the Wang clan is on good terms with us."

Chu Chuyan, who was resting by the side all this while, opened her eyes and explained, "The Wang clan specializes in agricultural products, and the largest tavern in Brightmoon City is managed by them. Our Chu clan is on good terms with them because we have many business connections with one another. Our Chu clan requires permits from the royal court in order to sell salt, and the royal court distributes permits based on how much rations the merchant sends toward the borders. Our Chu clan doesn't specialize in agricultural products, so we need the Wang clan's help on this aspect. That's also the reason why my parents regard them so highly. Huanzhao, you should stop idling your time away. How could you not know something as basic as that?"

Chu Huanzhao stuck her tongue out as she grabbed her older sister's arm and said coyly, "We have you around anyway~"

Chu Chuyan looked at her little sister dotingly before shaking her head helplessly.

Meanwhile, Zu An looked at Chu Huanzhao in scorn. Hah, looks like my sister-in-law is also a wastrel too. Huh, why did I use 'also' here?

"The patriarch of the Zheng Clan has arrived!"

Compared to the Wang clan, Chu Zhongtian was much less amicable to the Zheng clan. They simply nodded slightly to acknowledge each other's presence. The patriarch of the Zheng clan, Zheng Yutang, didn't even bother to exchange pleasantries, walking straight toward the Yuan clan's area and started chatting off with them.

Zu An assessed Zheng Yutang closely and found that he had quite a suave appearance. Despite reaching middle age, he had a charming presence that gave others a good impression of him. It was no wonder why he had a beautiful daughter like Zheng Dan.

All of a sudden, he realized that there was a beautiful woman dressed in a traditional qipao looking at him with a faint smile hanging on her lips. Who else could it be other than Zheng Dan?

Zu An blinked at her in response, and for a moment, sparks seemed to fly. Zheng Dan's face immediately reddened, which caused her to turn her head away.

"Big sis, big sis! My brother-in-law and Zheng Dan were exchanging flirting looks with one another!" Chu Huanzhao tattled on Zu An.

"I wasn't! I didn't! Stop spouting lies!" Despite being caught red-handed, Zu An refuted it without any hesitation.

"But I saw it with my own eyes. You even winked at her!" Chu Huanzhao bellowed angrily.

Chu Chuyan frowned a little. "Quieten down! What if others hear it?"

It was fortunate that the clearing was quite noisy, so no one really paid notice to Chu Huanzhao's shouting.

After berating Chu Huanzhao, Chu Chuyan turned to look at Zu An with eyes as calm as the water of a deep lake, asking, "Are you close with Zheng Dan?"

For some reason, Chu Chuyan's pure eyes made Zu An feel a little guilt-ridden. "I can't say that we're close. I just happened to save her once."

He quickly explained their relationship with one another, though it went without saying that he excluded the events that transpired in his staff dormitory.

"You don't need to be afraid. I'm not scolding you over here," Chu Chuyan replied with a smile. "If you're really able to capture Zheng Dan's heart and pull the Zheng clan over to our side, I would be more than overjoyed."

Zu An blinked his eyes doubtfully. Is she laying a trap here for me to jump in?

"Big sister~" Chu Huanzhao immediately protested toward how nonchalant Chu Chuyan was taking this matter. What's this? Why is she even less agitated than I am? It's your husband we're talking about here!

However, Chu Chuyan continued mumbling under her breath, analyzing the situation, "It's just a pity that Zheng Dan and Sang Qian are engaged with one another. If you snatch her over to your side, it'll turn the Sang clan completely against you. It seems like the cons outweigh the pros..."

Zu An was completely speechless. Wait a moment, are you seriously analyzing the feasibility of the matter?!?!

"Principal Jiang of Brightmoon Academy has arrived!"

Upon hearing those words, be it the Chu clan or the Yuan clan, everyone immediately stopped their chatter and headed over to welcome Jiang Luofu. This showed just how high a standing Jiang Luofu had in Brightmoon City.

However, incongruous exclamations soon echoed amidst the crowd.

“Woah, those legs! I can get off on them for several days without any problem!”

“Where did she buy her stockings from? I should get a pair for my wife too!”

“Hah, do you think that yellow-faced woman you have back at home can be put on the same level as Principal Jiang?”

“Aiyo, I’ll just blindfold her, alright? Just the stocking is enough to fulfill my fantasies!”

“Do you want to die? How can you gossip about Principal Jiang like that?”

...

Zu An swiftly noticed a familiar face amidst the crowd—Ji Dengtu. He was hiding amidst the crowd, peeking at the beautiful ladies present.

Hah, did you think that I wouldn’t recognize you just because you’re wearing a hat? You should first do something about that perverted look on your face!

Without a doubt, Ji Dengtu was here to have a feast for his eyes. But surprisingly, he isn’t looking at Principal Jiang at all...?

Chapter 110: Boring

Ji Dengtu’s eyes were flickering around the place. Every time he saw a beautiful woman, a perverted smile reminiscent of that of famous detective Mouri Kogoro would creep onto his face.

Upon careful look, Zu An sharply noticed that the ones Ji Dengtu had his eyes on were mostly mature women, especially married ones. He had no hesitation ogling at the wives of the patriarchs present, though his focus was still mainly on Qin Wanru. He was staring so hard that it felt like his eyes would just pop out.

Zu An felt a little stressed about this. He wondered if he should tell his father-in-law about this matter. After all, Chu Zhongtian did treat him pretty well, so he would feel bad if he got cuckolded.

But again, it was not as if Ji Dengtu was really doing anything at all. His act of ogling at married women was both pathetic and hair-raisingly creepy, but it wasn’t causing any real harm at all. Besides, he was still counting on Ji Dengtu to cure ‘little Zu An’. It wouldn’t be wise to get on his bad side.

This brought the same question back to Zu An’s mind. Given how licentious Ji Dengtu was, why wasn’t he ogling at Principal Jiang then? Putting aside Jiang Luofu’s looks, just her legs were more than enough to drive any men into a frenzy. Wei Suo’s infatuation was more than enough to say something about it, but it was as if Ji Dengtu was blind to it.

Now that he was thinking about the matter, the four women Ji Dengtu mentioned back then were Yu Yanluo, Shang Liuyu, Qiu Honglei, and Qin Wanru; there wasn't any mention of Jiang Luofu at all.

That doesn't make sense. Shang Liuyu is from the academy as well, so logically speaking, he should have thought of Jiang Luofu as well. There must be something deeper to this.

"I'm truly thankful to you for being willing to make time to become the judge of the tournament. With this, there should be no question about the fairness of the verdict."

Jiang Luofu was as cold as she usually was, but men tended to dig into that. The crowd of men around her had heated looks in their eyes, and their eyes couldn't help but flicker downward to look at her legs.

And that was with the high-level of self-control that these distinguished individuals had. As for the other men in the clearing, they were staring so hard that it looked almost as if they wanted to dive into her skirt.

Amidst this group of people, the only one who had clear eyes was Chu Zhongtian. His eyes were without lust. Due to that, Jiang Luofu had a better impression of his gentlemanly gestures, replying, "You're flattering me. The Chu and Yuan clan have many offspring in our academy. I'm just doing my part for my students."

...

While they were trading pleasantries, Zu An was scoffing under his breath, "It looks like he has been henpecked for too long that he dares not show any hint of cheating at all. Qin Wanru is glaring at him by the side after all."

Weak!

Zu An felt that his father-in-law should learn a thing or two from him. Look at how Chuyan doesn't mind me looking up other women at all.

But of course, there was no way he would say those words aloud. If Chu Zhongtian were to know that he had been 'bullying' his daughter in such a manner, he would surely get a hell of a pummeling.

"The city lord has arrived!"

A huge procession of soldiers walked into the clearing under the lead of a slightly tubby middle-aged man. Despite his tummy sticking out a little, he still had a dashing appearance that left no doubt that he was a looker in his younger years. He was the city lord of Brightmoon City, Xie Yi.

Xie Xiu was trailing behind him with the usual subtle smile hanging on his lips. His cool appearance won him fervent exclamations from the female spectators gathered around.

The disparity in treatment left Zu An feeling deeply jealous.

In terms of appearance, I'm definitely not beneath Xie Xiu. So why am I not as popular as he is? Is it because my usual lackadaisical attitude has fully concealed my true charms?

Haaa, women sure are shallow. Why can't they see the interesting soul that lies inside of me?

Ehh, wait a moment! Who is that beautiful woman standing next to Xie Xiu? Is it his new girlfriend? That fellow sure has a way with women. He always has a new woman by his side every few days, and every single one of them commands incredible charm. The one he has with him today is even more gorgeous than usual.

That woman had a shapely oval face complemented by her pointed eyebrows and snowy complexion. Her light green dress showcased her slender waist that one could easily wrap one's arm around.

In terms of appearance and disposition, she definitely didn't lose out to Zheng Dan or Wu Qing. But unlike Zheng Dan had a demure charm and Wu Qing's fiery character, she commanded a natural tranquil grace that left one feeling at peace just by standing next to her.

So this is what they meant by a refined, scholarly vibe!

Zu An took a closer look, and for some reason, he felt that the woman bore a bit of resemblance to Xie Xiu. It was then that a sharp, biting remark suddenly sounded right beside him, "Pervert. You're looking at women again."

Zu An turned over and saw Chu Huanzhao staring at him sharply. He burst into laughter and replied, "If I'm a pervert, aren't you the same too?"

"How am I a pervert?" Chu Huanzhao asked in confusion.

"You kept staring at your brother-in-law's handsome visage. How is your action different from me staring at other women?" Chu Chuyan had just gotten up to accompany her parents to greet the various prominent figures arriving at the scene. She was likely to become the future matriarch of the Chu clan after all, so it would be good for her to get acquainted with these people.

It was for that reason that Zu An was able to make these kinds of jokes.

"Who is staring at you?!" Chu Huanzhao's face reddened.

"If you weren't staring at me, how do you know that I've been looking at other women?" Zu An refuted.

"I..." Chu Huanzhao was at a loss for words for a moment, but it didn't take her long to come up with an excuse. "I'm just reminding you that it won't be long before the tournament starts. You need to calm down and stop looking around."

Seeing how Chu Huanzhao's face was already bright red, Zu An couldn't bring himself to tease her anymore. "I know, I know. Oh yeah, do you know who that woman standing beside Xie Xiu is?"

"Ah, she's Xie Xiu's older sister, Xie Daoyun. She's known as Brightmoon City's most talented lady. Hmph! Instead of cultivating, she chooses to spend her time studying what zither and chess. She's just wasting her life!" Chu Huanzhao said with a pout.

Zu An was amused to hear those remarks. "Are you sure you are in a position to criticize her? Is your cultivation higher than her, or do you have some remarkable talents that she doesn't have?"

Chu Huanzhao immediately threw a tantrum. "I'll sever ties with you if you continue acting like that!"

Zu An laughed heartily. He was just about to say something when he heard a sweet chuckle sounding behind him. "Looks like a lot of interesting things happened in the days I'm not around?"

A rousing fragrance drifted into the area. Zu An turned his head around, only to see a captivating figure standing before his eyes. Peach blossom eyes that were overflowing with sentiments, and a pair of proud, sinful humps that provoked evil thoughts in men... Who else could it be if not Pei Mianman?

"Big sister Pei~" Chu Huanzhao greeted Pei Mianman.

Pei Mianman had a friendly relationship with the Chu clan, and she was Chu Chuyan's close friend too. Naturally, she was acquainted with Chu Huanzhao too.

Pei Mianman giggled softly beneath her lips before replying, "Your mouth has gotten much sweeter over the last few days."

She took a seat before Chu Huanzhao and began chatting with her.

Chu Huanzhao couldn't help but notice the proud mountains she carried around with her, and she lowered her head to look at her own unimpressive plain. Her lips subconsciously pouted a little, and with a deflated voice, she asked, "Big sister Pei, why haven't I seen you around in the last few days?"

"I had some matters to attend to outside."

"Ohhh. You're the same as my big sister. It feels like you're always preoccupied with something."

...

Seeing how Pei Mianman was acting as if she didn't know him at all, Zu An couldn't help but wonder if all women were born actors. With no one to talk to, he could only sit there quietly. However, he couldn't help but smell the light fragrance Pei Mianman was giving off, and his eyes kept drifting toward her curvaceous body.

Well, this is not too bad too.

"You said that you would help me find the accounting booklet I was looking for. Any clues so far?"

Zu An was still feasting on the beautiful sight when Pei Mianman's voice suddenly sounded in his ears, causing him to jolt in fright. He quickly turned his head over, only to see that her back was still facing her. She was still chatting merrily with Chu Huanzhao.

Woah, this woman sure is a sinister one. Is she honestly trying to seduce a married man right in front of his sister-in-law?

Zu An was amazed.

"Hey, I'm asking you a question. Why aren't you answering?"

Zu An knew that she was relaying her message to him through ki, but the thing was that he had no idea how to do it. We will be exposed the moment I open my mouth!

So, he placed his finger on her back and started writing: What about you? You said that you would help me chase Chu Chuyan? Is there any progress?

There were so many things keeping him busy during this period of time, so why in the world would he bother with whatever accounting book Pei Mianman was looking for?

When his finger touched Pei Mianman's back, her body suddenly stiffened. A flicker of black flame flickered into existence around her. However, when she realized that Zu An was just writing on her back, the black flame gradually dissipated.

"You don't know how to transmit your voice through ki?" Pei Mianman was baffled.

One must know that they had really gone head-on against one another that night. Despite being a fifth rank cultivator, she was unable to curb him without using her elemental ability. Given how powerful Zu An was, it was hard to believe that he was unable to transmit his voice through ki.

Wait a moment, isn't he making use of this opportunity to take advantage of me?

Coldness flickered across her eyes. There was still a smile on her face as she continued to converse with Chu Huanzhao, but a sliver of killing intent flickered across the depths of her eyes.

You have successfully trolled Pei Mianman for +399 Rage!

Zu An wasn't some dense dolt either. He could quickly figure out what Pei Mianman was thinking, so he hurriedly explained: My cultivation is pretty half-assed. I've never gone through systemic education, so I can't do most of the tricks other cultivators are able to.

Pei Mianman couldn't help but wiggle her body a little. Zu An's moving finger was tickling her.

Thinking about Zu An's history, she thought that his explanation wasn't entirely implausible. "Don't touch me anymore. I'll teach you how to transmit your voice through ki."

Noticing Pei Mianman's unnatural wiggling, Chu Huanzhao asked, "Big sister Pei, what's wrong?"

"It's nothing. I just suddenly felt an itch on my back." Pei Mianman's face reddened.

It's lucky that the one sitting before me is the dumber younger sister. If it had been Chu Chuyan instead, there's no way my interactions with Zu An could have escaped her notice.

Though now that I think about it, it would actually be quite exciting to do this in front of her with her husband. It's just a pity that this fellow isn't her real husband. Ahh, that makes everything boring.

Just like that, Pei Mianman continued chatting with Chu Huanzhao while imparting to Zu An the way to transmit his voice via ki. It didn't take long for him to master the skill, and they were soon chatting more smoothly with one another.

"Help me find the whereabouts of the accounting book first, and I'll help you chase Chu Chuyan."

Help me chase Chu Chuyan first, and I'll find the whereabouts of the accounting book for you."

"Are you testing my patience here?"

"Tsk. If that's the case, we can call off the deal. I'll tell the Chu clan about this, and we can just go back to how it was before."

"..."

The negotiations came to a bottleneck, bringing about an awkward silence. Fortunately, another commotion occurred at this moment.

“Governor Sang has arrived!”

“The Sunspring Duke has arrived!”

“Young master Shi has arrived!”

...

With the arrival of so many notable figures, even Chu Huanzhao ended up turning her gaze over curiously, remarking, “Sang Hong used to be the Vice Minister of Finance managing the salt and arms trade, but he suddenly got dispatched to the Linchuan Commandery to serve as the governor. It sure is a coincidence that our clan deals in salt too, huh? Only a fool wouldn’t be able to tell that he’s being sent here to deal with us!

“That Sunspring Duke is another one. Putting aside the fact that he’s Wu Qing’s father, the Wu clan has never been on good terms with us before either.

“That Shi clan is also on bad terms with us too. Looks like all of the bad eggs have come together to form a carton of skunks.”

Pei Mianman smiled quietly at this sight. She was more than pleased with how things were turning out.