

Immortal 1121

Chapter 1121: Pressured Into a Corner

Chairs ground against the floor as many officials got up and backed away. A large space opened up around Yu Yanluo. It was clear that after seeing the striking resemblance between Yu Yanluo and the Medusa Empress, the others already believed what Xu Yu and Xiao Yao had said.

Zu An had also examined the sculpture in that scene carefully. At first glance, the sculpture did seem to greatly resemble Yu Yanluo, but upon closer inspection, there seemed to be quite a few differences.

The sculpture's age and temperament made her seem a bit more mature, and a sort of bewitching and dignified presence emanated from her. It made one feel as if they were looking at a powerful and dignified fiend deity, one who looked over all of the world's suffering. Her eyes in particular looked beautiful and dangerous. Even looking at them through the screen had made the spectators' fine hairs stand up.

Yu Yanluo's presence, on the other hand, made people feel comfortable and relaxed. Perhaps because she had inherited her father's outstanding genes, her face was more delicate and gentle. Comparatively speaking, she was a bit prettier.

Just then, Xiao Yao said, "This is the sculpture the Snake race built for the last generation's Medusa. All you need is one look to understand that everything I said was true."

Even the officials who were closest to the Yu clan looked at Yu Yanluo in shock. They didn't dare speak another word for Yu Yanluo.

Yu Yanluo didn't retort, and instead stared at the stone sculpture in a daze. There even seemed to be some tears flickering in her eyes.

Zu An sighed. Come on, I know you're moved because you're seeing your mother, but you can't give it all away now, can you? Helpless to do anything else, he could only get up and say, "Using a recording mirror alone to prove Madam Yu is the Medusa is stretching it a bit, don't you think? After all, it's possible to falsify a recording too."

He had just seen Yu Yanluo tamper with a recording stone herself. How the tides had turned.

Whenever he had spoken up for Yu Yanluo before, some officials had voiced their agreement, but this time, there were none. Even though there was no conclusive proof, they had all realized what was going on when they saw the statue's appearance.

Xiao Yao shook his head. Xu Yu asked, "Sir Zu, are you saying that Brother Xiao forged the recording stone? Brother Xiao might behave a bit wanton and unrestrained normally, but he's an upright person. Everyone knows his deeds from his earlier years. Why would someone like him produce something like a forgery?"

Zu An said, "Madam Yu has always been gentle and kind. Why are all of you so certain that she's from the fiend races?"

Xu Yu's breath caught briefly. But as someone who occupied such an important position, his reactions were fast too. He replied, "This humble official knows that Sir Zu has always been quite close to Madam

Yu, so you aren't willing to believe this matter. If Sir Zu still doesn't believe me, we can have a specialist examine this recording stone to check for signs of forgery."

Zu An sighed in admiration inwardly. Xu Yu had made it sound as if he had only spoken up because of his relationship with Yu Yanluo and not for public justice, which greatly reduced the credibility of his future statement.

"Whether or not the recording stone is real or fake, naturally, it needs to be sent back to the capital to be examined by a specialist." He did his best to stall for time, continuing, "Let's not discuss whether it's real for now. Nothing is too bizarre in this world; two people being unrelated by blood, and yet bearing remarkably similar appearances, is something that's happened before. Are you going to claim Madam Yu is the Medusa just because she looks like this stone statue?"

Xu Yu calmly said, "The world is indeed large, but everyone, please think back to the past. There were only rumors about how those two met back then; no one truly saw any of it. But now, Madam Yu looks identical to the female Medusa. Furthermore, the Yu clan has covered up their trade with the fiend races. This is already enough proof."

The other officials who were close to Xu Yu all voiced their agreement. Many people even began to criticize Zu An, accusing him of defending Yu Yanluo out of lust.

Zu An exclaimed furiously, "Who were the ones who were frantically trying to curry favor with Madam Yu earlier? And yet all of you are now calling me the one who covets beauty?!"

His cultivation had been growing more and more profound. Furthermore, now that his soul had formed, his rage-filled glare had a powerful intimidation effect. Many of the officials mumbled complaints, but they didn't dare to maintain eye contact with him.

Yu Yanluo finally snapped out of her daze and said, "This humble one will not claim to have strived to my utmost, but I have done many good things for Cloudcenter Commandery, and even the world's people. I have never performed any outrageous acts. If the reason Sir Xu has called me over today is only for such senseless things, then pardon me for not keeping everyone company any longer."

She was a clan leader, and between that and her bloodline, she wasn't as weak as an ordinary woman. Staying further would prove disadvantageous for her, so her first priority was to return to her base camp first. She would gather the forces loyal to her, then respond.

"You want to leave?" Xiao Yao retorted with a cold expression. He drew his sword and blocked her path.

Yu Yanluo didn't feel any fear. With a wave of her hand, the World Painting emerged to protect her. She said, "Could it be that you all wish to condemn me without proof..."

However, her expression suddenly changed halfway through her sentence. The World Painting fell to the ground, and she also fell backward weakly.

Zu An moved quickly to support her, asking, "What's wrong?"

Yu Yanluo's complexion was pale. She stared at the teacup on the table and exclaimed, "I was poisoned!"

Because of her shocking beauty, many people had targeted her with ulterior motives. She was normally always careful whenever she ate or drank. But this time, since it was a gathering of the high-level figures of Cloudcenter Commandery, and even Zu An and the Imperial Envoy were present, she hadn't expected someone to poison her in such a situation. That was how she had fallen prey to the plot.

Zu An glared at Xu Yu and called out, "Mister Xu, you dare feed us poison? What exactly are you planning?"

The other officials were alarmed. They began to transfer their ki to examine their own conditions. Xu Yu reached out his hand to appease them, saying, "Don't worry, everyone. Only Yu Yanluo's tea had Hundred Flora Powder added to it."

Xiao Yao frowned and asked, "Xu Yu, what is the meaning of this?" As a proud and aloof individual, he naturally couldn't bear to see such treacherous behavior.

Xu Yu explained, "Brother Xiao, I know your sword skills are great, but if you really fought, it would be bad regardless of which side was injured. That's why I sought out this drug to first restrain the suspect. Once we've reported things to the court, his majesty will come to a decision. Brother Xiao, please don't worry. This drug temporarily prevents one from using ki; it isn't a highly toxic drug."

Even though Xiao Yao was discontent, there wasn't much he could say. Instead, Zu An said coldly, "Sir Xu, the Imperial Envoy is here, and yet you didn't discuss things with him and instead acted on your own. Furthermore, you've used an underhanded method. Do you have no respect for the court's laws?"

Xu Yu cupped his hands toward Sang Hong and explained "The reason why I didn't contact Sir Sang ahead of time is mainly because Yu Yanluo's status is too important. A slight mishap would throw all of Cloudcenter Commandery into turmoil and calamity. Furthermore, it's clear to see that Sir Zu and Yu Yanluo are close friends. For fear that someone might act on impulse, I had to act first. I hope Sir Sang can forgive me."

The expressions of those present turned strange, because things really had turned out as Xu Yu had expected. Zu An had long been protecting Yu Yanluo. If they had told him ahead of time, Yu Yanluo might already have been prepared for this situation.

Zu An was about to speak when Sang Hong interrupted, saying, "Sir Xu was indeed considering the bigger picture." Then, he looked at Zu An and continued, "Sir Zu, Madam Yu has saved you before, so it is only natural that you are worried about her. However, this case is related to the human and fiend races' thousand-year grudge; it is not something to treat lightly. We will investigate the truth. If Madam Yu was wrongly blamed, we will naturally uphold justice for her."

Xu Yu felt deep admiration. This Sang Hong was an old fox after all. He had downplayed Zu An's act of saving Yu Yanluo as just a repayment of gratitude, which made it seem that he wasn't coveting beauty or acting against the court. Not even his majesty could punish Zu An over the matter in the future. Furthermore, Sang Hong had inserted himself into the investigation. Even if more intelligence arrived, he could no longer hide it from Sang Hong.

Sang Hong spoke to Zu An through ki, sounding a bit anxious. "Ah Zu, the humans and fiends have a deep grudge of blood; it's not something anyone can resolve. Don't involve yourself. Even if you aren't worried about yourself, you have to think about the people waiting for you back at the capital!"

He knew that Zu An normally acted carefree, but he actually had a stubborn side to him deep down. If Zu An really did fall for this situation, the consequences would be difficult to fix. He didn't want his own daughter to become a widow before she even married, or for his grandson to lose a father before he was even born.

Zu An's expression changed several times. He was clearly carrying out an intense internal struggle.

Yu Yanluo's lips moved slightly as she said softly, "Sir Zu, lower your head. I have something to say to you."

Zu An knew she couldn't use her ki normally and couldn't communicate in private through ki. He lowered his head and moved over. Yu Yanluo gestured towards him, saying in a gentle and soft voice, "Move a bit closer."

Even though Sang Hong didn't feel much for the other sex anymore, he was still a bit shaken up when he heard that. This woman really is a seductive fox after all! No wonder Zu An was smitten by her. For the sake of his own daughter, he was naturally unhappy to see a rival as powerful as Yu Yanluo.

The other officials felt great jealousy. Yu Yanluo looked as if she were about to bite down on Zu An's ear as her lips moved slightly. Even though they knew she was the Medusa and felt a bit of fear, this woman was still just too beautiful!

There were countless people who had fantasized about this woman speaking words of endearment to them. They had never expected to see her act so intimate with another man that way. Many people even regretted not speaking out for her earlier. So what if she was a Medusa? Wasn't her father also a human who had married a Medusa?

Chapter 1122: Reason for Her Death

Yu Yanluo's ki was sealed, so she couldn't send a ki transmission. There were many cultivators present as well, so even if she spoke quietly, they could still hear her. That was why her lips were almost pressed up against Zu An's ear.

The physical contact between his ear and her lips made the onlookers' hearts beat rapidly. The surrounding men were all incredibly envious. But as the one directly involved, Zu An couldn't bring himself to feel any sense of romance at all.

"Ah Zu, there is already nothing we can do about this. It will be futile no matter how much you argue for my sake. There is no need for you to waste your energy anymore." Yu Yanluo's breath had the fragrance of orchids, and her voice was gentle.

Zu An said through ki, "At worst, I'll just break you out of here."

Yu Yanluo felt her heart throb. She secretly sized up the man, a light blush crossing her pale cheeks. However, in the end, she still said, "You cannot act recklessly like that. There are so many officials here, and all of them are powerful cultivators. The master rank cultivator Xiao Yao is here as well. You cannot ruin your own future because of me."

Official ranks in this world correlated with one's cultivation. Those present were all among Cloudcenter Commandery's higher level figures. Their cultivation wasn't low. Most of them were far inferior to Zu An, but added all together, he wasn't their match.

Seeing that he was going to refuse, Yu Yanluo sighed and added quietly, "I know that you are really strong, but even if you save me, how will you deal with the aftermath?"

"Would helping me in front of the Imperial Envoy and all of these court officials not be the same as rebelling against the court? Then, would you not become a wanted criminal? I do not want you to end up like that."

Zu An replied seriously, "There are many things in this world that can't be weighed based on interests. We're friends who have experienced life and death together. You've saved my life too. How can I just watch as something happens to you?"

Yu Yanluo was stunned. She asked with a complicated expression, "Would you still be my friend if I really were the Medusa?"

She obviously knew just how great of a grudge the human race felt towards the fiend races after remaining in human society for so long, as well as what kind of existence the Medusa was to them.

Zu An chuckled and replied, "There are good and bad humans, and the same is true for the fiend races. Even if you are the Medusa, you're probably a nice Medusa, and furthermore my friend. I've always been someone who judges individuals myself; it doesn't matter if that person is a human or a fiend. There's no harm in telling you that I actually have several fiend race friends."

Yu Yanluo felt warm inside when she sensed the sincerity in his voice. She bit her lip and said quietly, "Ah Zu, if you really want to help me, contact Maid Xing about what happened here, and have her get into contact with Uncle Fu. Tell them to bring... bring our clansmen back home first."

The ones she was talking about were clearly not the Yu clan, but rather the Snake race. There was no point in hiding things from Zu An anymore. There wouldn't be any immediate danger to her life even if she were caught, due to her status, but her clansmen would definitely be assaulted viciously. She naturally had to help them evacuate.

"I got it." Zu An thought to himself, Maid Xing is probably part of the Snake race too. He was planning to discuss things with her and see if there was any way to save Yu Yanluo.

Uncle Fu's cultivation wasn't bad either. Back then, when Zu An had fought against King Qi in the capital, it was precisely because Han Fengqiu was apprehensive toward Uncle Fu that he hadn't gone all out against Zu An.

But Zu An hadn't seen the man at all after coming to Cloudcenter Commandery. He didn't know where Uncle Fu had gone.

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All of the surrounding officials were filled with jealousy when they saw the two of them whisper toward each other like lovers.

How was this an arrest? It was more like a couple flirting!

But for fear of Zu An's identity and the intimidating aura he had just displayed, no one dared to say anything. They all glared at Xu Yu, hinting that it was time for him to do something.

Xu Yu coughed and said, "Sir Zu and Madam Yu's relationship seems to be quite good." He wouldn't act all jealous like those other officials, of course. That way, there would still be a bit of face left for everyone.

Yu Yanluo sat up and said calmly, "Sir Zu is a close friend of mine. He was worried that I was framed by someone, which is why we talked for a bit. Sir Zu told me that there will be a fair trial awaiting me in the court, and I felt that what Sir Zu said was reasonable. That is why I am willing to cooperate with your investigation."

Sang Hong was surprised. Yu Yanluo had completely left Zu An out of being implicated! Even if news of what had happened reached the ears of the capital's court, the nobles wouldn't be able to blame Zu An at all. Instead, they would feel that he had done his duty by convincing Yu Yanluo.

How does Ah Zu, this kid, always manage to receive sincere treatment from women?

Even the renowned Yu Yanluo is acting like this... I guess Zheng Dan and the others' reactions are understandable.

Sigh, how great would it be if Qian'er had been like this?

I can only place my hopes on Qian'er's son...

Someone quickly escorted Yu Yanluo out. With her status, there was no way she would be shackled. Instead, an expert sealed her acupoints, making sure she couldn't move even after the drug she ingested wore off.

Furthermore, a specially made room had been prepared as her prison. Xu Yu and the Imperial Envoy's men would both watch over the place to prevent either side from crossing the line.

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Zu An took the chance to pull Xiao Yao aside. He asked, "Brother Xiao, don't tell me you didn't hear the ki transmission I sent you?"

"I did," Xiao Yao replied. He was surprisingly quiet and still. His expression was extremely grave.

"You knew she was your junior sister, but you still ended up doing that to her?" Zu An asked, confused. "Are you still bitter about what the libationer did to you back then, to the point that you'd feel hatred for anyone from the academy?"

"Of course not. I respect my master a lot. It was my own unworthiness that cut my prospects short and humiliated that elder. How can I blame my teacher?" Xiao Yao replied, sounding moved.

"Then why aren't you protecting your fellow disciple? Why are you doing this to Yu Yanluo?" Zu An asked with a frown.

Xiao Yao had a look of grief on his face, as if he were immersed in the past. Only after a long time had passed did he ask, "Do you know how Manman's mother died?"

Zu An was surprised, replying, "I heard her injuries caused her to lose her cultivation. Later on, she ran into danger again and couldn't protect herself..."

"The one who hurt her back then was me, because..." Xiao Yao stopped. Only after a while did he say with a sigh, "In short, due to various coincidences of fate, she ended up being injured by me. Most of her cultivation was lost. However, the real reason for her death was because of poison."

"Poison?" Zu An felt a weight drop in his stomach. He's suddenly bringing this up? Don't tell me...

"Indeed, it was the Medusa's poison!" Hatred flickered through Xiao Yao's eyes as he spoke.

Zu An was speechless. This is really bad! We're done for! Manman's mom was killed by the Medusa, so how could she live in harmony with someone like Yu Yanluo?

And now that he knew the truth, he couldn't just act as if he didn't!

Xiao Yao continued, "The Medusas have the ability to petrify others with their eyes. They can make anything they look at turn into stone. However, they can't always use their eyes every time, so they use their blood to create a kind of poison. That poison can make the bodies of those afflicted slowly turn to stone, leaving no choice but to watch as they slowly die.

"The reason why Manman's mother lost all of her cultivation was only partly because I injured her severely. The other reason was because she was poisoned by the Medusa. She could only exhaust all of her cultivation to slow down the effects of the poison. Even if that accident hadn't happened, she would still have been doomed.

"I've been searching for the Medusa's whereabouts all this time, and I finally found some clues. How can I forget the promise I made to her in the past just because of sympathy for a fellow disciple?"

Zu An thought to himself, Isn't it because you liked Manman's mom...

However, he finally realized an important point, replying, "But Yu Yanluo is still too young. She shouldn't have anything to do with the death of Manman's mother, right?"

But Xiao Yao sneered and replied, "How old do you think Yu Yanluo is?"

"Uh, eighteen? Twenty-eight?"

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After having several guesses refuted, Zu An's expression changed. He exclaimed, "You're not saying she's eighty, are you?"

Even though he knew this was a world of cultivation and both humans and fiend races lived longer than people in his previous world, and that they also had ways to maintain their appearance, it was still horrifying to think that such a breathtaking woman was so old.

Chapter 1123: Shelter

Xiao Yao's breath caught. He said, "Let's not go that far. Her real age is a mystery, but she was already famous in the capital decades ago. She's definitely not in her twenties; she's at the very least from the same generation as Manman's mother. That makes her a likely suspect as the source of the poison."

Zu An said seriously, "Judging from my time spent with her, I know that even though she does have some cards up her sleeves, her nature is kind. She shouldn't be the type who would inflict harm and evil on others."

"How long have you even known her? You can know someone for some time without knowing their true nature," Xiao Yao replied. He was still unconvinced and looked at Zu An, saying, "Little brother, lust can lead to bitter consequences. Don't lose yourself over beauty."

Zu An cursed inwardly. If you hadn't lost yourself over Manman's mother, why would a tremendous genius like you become a stinky drunkard now? However, he replied, "Brother Xiao, you can question my attentiveness, but don't tell me you don't even trust the libationer's insight?"

Xiao Yao became quiet for a moment. A while later, he said, "I'll personally confirm things with master once I return. But until then, she needs to be detained so she doesn't bring chaos to the world."

Zu An was speechless. Seeing how stubborn Xiao Yao was, he gave up on persuasion. Instead, he said, "She's your junior sister, so out of respect for your fellow disciple, I hope you can ensure her safety during the trip to the capital and not let those with different intentions harm her."

He was worried about Yu Yanluo, since she was trapped in that room all alone. Even though Sang Hong was going to be watching over her, it was hard to say what Xu Yu's intentions and objectives were. Zu An felt as if there were a large rock weighing down on his thoughts.

Yu Yanluo was also too beautiful. It had still been okay when she had her clan's experts and her own cultivation to protect her, but now, she was completely restrained. It was hard to say whether anyone would have other thoughts.

Xiao Yao nodded and said, "Don't worry. With me there, no one will be able to harm her."

Zu An naturally trusted Xiao Yao's moral character. Now that he had received such a promise, he left, relieved.

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Zu An quickly rushed over to the Yu clan's territory, but he discovered that Yu Manor had been devastated. The carefully trimmed trees and plants were a terrible mess. Many tables and chairs had been cruelly overturned. The maids were sobbing, while the servant boys were all furious.

Zu An quickly found someone and asked what was happening. Because he often came and went through Yu Manor, many people recognized him. When they saw him, they immediately began to sob and cry out, "Sir Zu, will you save our madam?"

"What happened? Where are Gong Pan and the others?" Zu An asked, looking around. He didn't see the familiar guard captain.

"All of them were captured..." Several people spoke up at once.

Zu An finally found out what had happened after a long time had passed. After Yu Yanluo was invited to the Civil Affairs Manor, Xu Yu had already sent over troops to arrest everyone related to the Yu clan.

The pretext he had used for that was that there had been people in the Yu clan colluding with the fiend races, so Yu Xuansu and many others were going to be brought back for investigation. Gong Pan had been listed as one of them too.

Since Yu Yanluo wasn't there, the entire Yu clan had been left without a leader. They didn't dare to go against the court's troops. Furthermore, the assault had happened too suddenly, and Yu Xuansu had gotten a guilty conscience. That was why the Yu clan hadn't been able to mobilize in time, and were only able to watch helplessly as those people were dragged away.

"Where is Maid Xing?" Zu An asked. He thought to himself, Xu Yu really is a shrewd schemer. He didn't even give the others a chance to be rescued and dragged all of them away.

"Big sister Maid Xing fought back and fled, retaliating and wounding many soldiers. Will she become wanted by the court?" a lesser maid asked in a shy and scared voice. She knew just how great of a crime it was to publicly go against the court.

Zu An wasn't in the mood to explain the young girl's doubts and hurriedly asked, "Which direction did she escape in?"

"Over there. There are many soldiers chasing after her." The lesser maid pointed in a direction. As soon as she finished speaking, Zu An instantly vanished.

The lesser maids looked at each other in dismay. They began to talk among each other in confusion.

"Is Sir Zu going to save big sister Maid Xing?"

"Probably..."

"But isn't he a court official?"

"But he has a good relationship with the madam. I trust him."

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Zu An ran quickly. Because it had already been some time since Maid Xing's escape, he both released his soul and used the jade badge to search for clues.

A while later, he found some traces of combat and continued to follow the trail. Eventually, he saw a group of soldiers looking around. He thought of something and showed himself.

"Sir Zu!" a soldier called out. Zu An was already quite a well-known person in Cloudcenter Commandery. Some officers had quickly recognized him.

"What are all of you doing?" Zu An asked despite already knowing the answer.

"We're chasing after a major criminal who fled," the soldier replied.

"Did you catch that person yet?" Zu An looked around. He sighed in relief when he didn't see Maid Xing.

"We haven't. That criminal is extremely cunning, and her cultivation is high too. We ended up letting her get away. However, the city gates have already been sealed. She won't be able to hide for long if we keep searching," the soldier vowed.

Zu An secretly rejoiced. He patted the soldier's shoulder and said, "You've done well. Find that female criminal as soon as possible."

The soldier quickly became happy when he heard praise from an important official. The Imperial Envoy's minister patted my shoulder! He must think highly of me! Doesn't this mean I'll soon be enjoying the peak of my life?

Zu An was obviously not in the mood to wonder what the soldiers were thinking. He walked along the street while thinking, Yu Yanluo told me to contact Maid Xing, but what do I do now that I can't even find her?

Cloudcenter Commandery is so large, where would I even go to find her?

He suddenly realized something and thought, Where would I go right now if I were Maid Xing?

She would probably have been in a safe place that had been prepared ahead of time, but that was usually the greatest secret of a clan, something he would only know if he asked Yu Yanluo.

But Yu Yanluo's arrest was a huge matter. The entire city would probably know about it soon. Even if Xu Yu kept the information confidential, Maid Xing would know that Yu Yanluo's Snake race identity had been exposed.

Yu Yanluo trusted her quite a bit, so Maid Xing probably wouldn't be hiding in that safe place. Instead, she would be trying to think of a way to save Yu Yanluo and her clansmen. However, her strength alone definitely wouldn't be enough. Thus, she would have to seek external help.

Then, who would she choose to request help from first?

Zu An's first reaction was himself, but he quickly rejected that thought. Maid Xing might not have known about his true relationship with Yu Yanluo, and he was a member of the Imperial Envoy as well. Yu Yanluo had even been captured by court officials, with soldiers looking everywhere for Maid Xing. The risk would be way too high if she tried to seek him out. But who else would she reach out to?

Zu An thought of something. He quickly rushed toward the Duke Manor.

Jian Yanyou was Yu Yanluo's husband. Even though the two had never consummated their marriage, their relationship had always been good. Their many years of collaboration were something Maid Xing should have known clearly. Furthermore, Jian Yanyou was the glorious duke. He would have the strength to help Yu Yanluo.

Zu An suddenly heard sounds of fighting in a remote alley through his keen soul senses, some distance away from the Duke Manor. He quickly looked over. He saw Maid Xing currently surrounded by a group of troops.

Maid Xing's entire body was drenched in blood, and she was full of resentment. If not because she had been severely injured while breaking out of the Yu clan's encirclement, why would she be suffering at the hands of such ordinary soldiers?

Sensing her strength gradually wane, she knew she was probably finished. She felt a wave of despair. Originally, she had thought that everything would be okay once the madam returned, but then she had received news that the madam had been caught.

It was obvious that the truth of the Snake race had been exposed. Not only had she failed to save the madam, she hadn't saved her clansmen either. Do the heavens really wish for the end of my clan?

Suddenly, a black figure darted out, and the surrounding soldiers all collapsed. Maid Xing was alarmed and was about to face the new enemy when she heard a gentle voice saying, "Don't be scared. It's me. The madam told me to come and save you."

"Young master Zu!" Maid Xing exclaimed, overjoyed to see him. As Yu Yanluo's personal maid, she knew her master treated the man quite well.

The reason why she hadn't sought him out in the temporary official residence was because she had been worried that the security there would be too tight, and that she would be walking straight into a trap. But now that Zu An had proactively helped her, she thought that the madam's judgment hadn't been mistaken after all.

Because of her excessive blood loss, as her mind eased up, her body became weak. She staggered and almost fell. However, Zu An supported her and fed her a Soul Return Pill.

Maid Xing was shocked when she sensed the medicinal effects quickly dissolving and spreading within her. She even recovered a good amount of her strength. She cried, "Young master Zu, you actually wasted such precious medicine on me!"

"Your injuries were too severe, so ordinary medicines won't be of much help. Even the most precious medicines aren't as precious as one's life," Zu An said seriously. "Let's not worry about the medicine for now. Madam Yu told me to seek you out and have you contact Uncle Fu, then for the two of you to escort your clansmen to safety."

Maid Xing stared at him blankly. Endless thoughts went through her head. In all her years in human society, she had learned clearly how they viewed the fiend races. However, Zu An knew their identity, and yet he was still helping them. He had even fed such a precious medicine to a maid. No wonder the madam treated him so well; this man was different from most men to begin with.

Suddenly, a mass of footsteps rang out. Several people had rushed over when they heard the news, calling out, "There's been news that the criminal was found just now. Hurry!"

Maid Xing worried that Zu An might not be able to win against them. Zu An was also a court official. If he fought against them, there would be no way to hide the truth. At that point, there would be no place left for him in this world.

Chapter 1124: I Am the Law!

"Young master Zu, you need not worry about me. Please save the madam." At that moment, Maid Xing made a decision to sacrifice herself. She didn't want to become a burden and drag Zu An down.

Zu An didn't reply and instead grabbed her shoulder. With a few leaps, they landed a few streets away. But he quickly frowned, because more and more people rushed over after hearing the news. The encirclement became more and more dangerous. It was becoming extremely difficult for him to hide with someone else in broad daylight.

He only felt an instant of hesitation. He took Maid Xing with him in a different direction, quickly arriving outside the Duke Manor. Maid Xing was overjoyed, exclaiming, "We can seek out the duke for help!"

Zu An thought, I wonder what kind of an expression she'll have if she finds out I'm the duke. He didn't reply and instead jumped straight over the courtyard walls with her.

Maid Xing was shocked. She watched as Zu An proficiently avoided the patrols along the way, almost as if he were in his own home.

When they finally gained a bit of a breather, Zu An asked, "Are Liu Ji and Chu Ji trustworthy?" He needed someone to help him take care of the wounded Maid Xing.

Maid Xing said, "Let us seek out Chu Ji. She is one of our clansmen." Her words implied that Liu Ji was a human.

Zu An was stunned. So he had already unknowingly become someone like 'that'? No wonder Chu Ji's waist was so slender, and she knew how to use her hips...

But it wasn't the time to think about all that. He quickly brought Maid Xing to Chu Ji's residence. However, Maid Xing asked in confusion, "Huh? Why does young master Zu know where Chu Ji lives?"

She had every reason to be confused. The location of wives and children in a manor was confidential to the outside world. Even inside the Duke Manor, only the maids who worked in the courtyard would know such information. No one else would.

Zu An was speechless. What could he even say? That he had been there quite often before?

He placed Maid Xing down outside Chu Ji's room and said, "You should talk to her. I'll take care of some of our pursuers."

He couldn't meet with Chu Ji in his current state. He didn't want their relationship to become too complicated. He quickly disappeared outside the courtyard after knocking on the door, and watched from afar. He only left in relief after Chu Ji emerged and took Maid Xing inside.

Outside, many soldiers were clamoring noisily. They clearly wanted to storm in and investigate.

Zu An used 'Face of a Thousand Identities' to change into Jian Yanyou's appearance. Then, he found a random servant to use the Kawaii Waifu Voice Changer. Afterward, he went to his place of seclusion, pretending to have just come out.

"What happened? Why is it so noisy outside?" Zu An asked in a dignified manner using Jian Yanyou's voice.

"Duke, you've come out?" a lesser servant outside immediately replied. He continued angrily, "Some soldiers claim to have chased a criminal all the way here. They want to enter to carry out an investigation. Just where did they get the courage to demand something so preposterous?!" As a member of the Duke Manor, he wasn't happy at all to see someone disturb them like this.

Zu An didn't say anything and walked straight toward the entrance. Even from afar, he could see that the manor's guards were already confronting the troops. He called out, "Do you have no idea what kind of place this is? Is the Duke Manor even a place you can search as you please?!"

A military officer from the soldiers' side said haughtily, "We are trying to arrest a fiend race criminal. Someone saw her run in this direction, which is why we want to investigate inside. You keep coming up with all sorts of excuses. Are you shielding a fiend race criminal?!"

The guards immediately lost some confidence when they heard the incident was related to the fiend races. They didn't dare to bear such an accusation.

Zu An gave the surroundings a rough scan with his soul. There were quite a few soldiers present. But as for the random excuse they used, saying they had seen a criminal run inside, Zu An had personally escorted Maid Xing. If he couldn't even discern whether those soldiers had seen them or not, he would have cultivated to his current level for nothing.

These people had clearly prepared in advance. Xu Yu knew about Yu Yanluo and Jian Yanyou's relationship and had suspected that Maid Xing would escape toward the Duke Manor. That was why he had sent people over to search the area; it also served as a warning to Jian Yanyou not to interfere.

"Move aside already. If you let that fiend race criminal escape, all of your clans will be eradicated!" the officer roared aggressively.

The guards didn't know what to do, and felt incredibly wronged. Who would have dared to strut around in front of the Duke Manor that way before? But recently, Second Master Jian, Uncle Ming, and several others had passed away one after another. The duke had disappeared for a long time as well, and he had gone into long-term seclusion after returning. The entire manor seemed to have lost its pillars of support. Faced with the overbearing soldiers, none of the guards dared to take on the accusation of sheltering people from the fiend races.

Just then, someone let out a cold snort and said, "How bold. All of you actually dare to behave so atrociously in my manor."

All of the guards were pleasantly surprised when they heard that voice. The officer's expression changed.

"Commandery Duke!" Many guards bowed down toward Zu An in greeting. Even many of the soldiers did the same.

Zu An looked at the officer who had still been acting haughtily a moment before and asked coldly, "Who are you?"

"I am the Martial Affairs Manor's Assistant Regional Commander Fei Xun," the officer quickly replied.

"Fei Xun? Why have I never heard that name before?" Zu An replied with a frown. He and Yu Yanluo had reviewed all of the Martial Affairs Manor's important officers previously, when they had been fighting over control of the Martial Affairs Manor. However, he had absolutely no impression of Fei Xun.

"I was recently promoted by Sir Xu," Fei Xun quickly said. The pressure of facing the duke was a bit too great, but when he mentioned Xu Yu, he immediately felt more confident again.

"Xu Yu..." Zu An sneered. As expected, dogs who bite don't bark... He had been fighting so bitterly against Jian Taiding before, and yet now, it turned out this fellow Xu Yu had secretly planted many of his own trusted aides in various key positions.

“Was the duke not training in seclusion? Why did you emerge so quickly?” Fei Xun asked to test the waters.

“So it was because you saw that I was in seclusion that you wanted to take the chance to show off your strength,” Zu An said, his expression darkening. “If I were not here, does that mean you would have taken apart this entire Duke Manor?”

Fei Xun’s expression changed and he said in embarrassment, “This humble official would not dare! It is only because we are here to capture a fiend race criminal that we are here. I hope that you can forgive us if we have offended the duke in any way.”

“If you are chasing a fiend race criminal, go and chase them. Why are you causing trouble in the manor?” Zu An berated him.

Fei Xun said grimly, “Because we saw that fiend race criminal escape into the Duke Manor.”

“Who saw it? Have them come out and speak clearly.” Zu An knew Fei Xun was speaking drivel, just throwing out a shot in the dark.

Fei Xun secretly gave a few of his subordinates a look. Those people felt guilty and lowered their heads, not willing to look him in the eye. Trash! he cursed inwardly. With things the way they were, he could only step forward and say, “Replying to the duke, I saw it!”

He knew he had personally been promoted by Xu Yu. The reason for that was because he listened to instructions and was bold. If he disappointed Sir Xu here, his prospects would also be finished.

Either way, Yu Yanluo was a fiend race individual, so the Yu clan was already doomed. Jian Taiding was already dead, too. The Jian clan’s smuggling deal with the fiend races had already been confirmed. The Jian clan would most likely be finished as well after the follow-up investigation.

Furthermore, Jian Yanyou had disappeared for so long. Cloudcenter Commandery had already completely changed. Even though he had come back, he had been seriously injured, and Xu Yu’s people had heard that he would need to remain in seclusion for a long time to keep his life.

In that case, what did he have to fear? Fortune favored the bold!

If he could face the duke head-on without backing down here, his prestige would rise. Once the Jian clan and Yu clan’s positions of authority opened up, he would be able to climb up the ranks easily.

“You saw it?” Zu An asked as his expression grew cold. He obviously knew Fei Xun was lying.

“Indeed, I saw it. I must ask the duke to step aside and let us search for the fiend race criminal. Otherwise, if they escape, the manor will be unable to escape blame. I believe that the duke does not wish for such trouble either.” Fei Xun understood what kind of situation he was in. He straightened his waist.

He was a glorious court official, and the Imperial Envoy was still stationed in the city. Even if the duke was unhappy, he didn’t believe the duke would really do anything to him. That would be publicly going against the court!

The Jian clan was already tottering on the verge of collapse. Jian Yanyou couldn't even protect himself; how could he make such an unwise choice? Fei Xun became more and more excited the more he thought about that. Soon, news of him publicly shaming the duke would spread throughout the entirety of Cloudcenter Commandery.

Times had changed; it was now time for people like him to rise up.

The soldiers were becoming more and more eager over time. When he saw the bloodthirsty glint in their eyes, Zu An immediately knew what they were all thinking.

“Guards, send someone to break this man’s legs. Cloudcenter Commandery does not permit the existence of someone this bold and domineering,” Zu An ordered.

The guards were stunned. Then, they immediately rushed toward Fei Xun. They had all been furious at how arrogantly this guy had been acting, and now, the tides were finally changing.

Fei Xun was stunned. He clearly hadn’t expected to hear such an order. He felt shocked and furious, exclaiming, “We are carrying out our duty, and yet you dare attack us? Are you looking down on the law?!”

You have successfully trolled Fei Xun for +253 +253 +253...

His subordinates drew their blades one after another. It looked as if a battle might happen at any time.

The Duke Manor’s guards felt troubled. There were so many soldiers on the other side. If they really fought, there would definitely be great casualties. Things would really get out of hand then.

Zu An harrumphed. He swung his hands outward, and a powerful force swept toward Fei Xun’s legs.

With a brittle crack, Fei Xun’s legs broke, and his entire body came crashing down, bringing him to his knees.

Zu An remarked coldly, “What kind of place is Cloudcenter Commandery? Here, I am the law!”

Chapter 1125: Important Person

Zu An had clearly acted so forcefully as a deliberate show of strength. Xu Yu’s men were trying to step all over the Duke Manor. If he didn’t do anything, his subordinates would immediately lose morale. At that point, the other party would only press forward bit by bit.

Those were words he had often heard the arrogant villains in TV shows say. He had always wanted to try it himself. He hadn’t expected to actually get a chance to do so.

I have to admit, it does feel pretty freaking good.

No wonder all those villains loved saying these things!

As for the consequences, he couldn't care less. Xu Yu had been scheming and using underhanded tricks against him. With his current cultivation, if the court criticized him, the fact that the other party had offended the Duke Manor in the first place would be a huge crime, let alone the fact that the Imperial Envoy consisted of his own people anyway. They had absolutely no chance.

Huh? Wait, why do I sound more and more like a villain now?

At first, he thought the other party might resist or shout aggressively. He had already made plans for what to do then. Surprisingly, however, no one disagreed with his actions, as if they had been completely expected.

Fei Xun endured the intense pain and cupped his hands apologetically, saying, "This lowly one has acted too impetuously today and offended the duke. I hope the duke can overlook this matter."

There would obviously be no need to fear a seriously injured and dying cripple of a duke. But the cultivation the duke had displayed in that instant made it seem as if he hadn't been injured at all!

Fei Xun had been incited a bit by his superiors, but he wasn't stupid. How could he continue to clash with the other side in such a situation? He quickly called back his subordinates and left, looking like a sorry sight. As for the arrest of the fiend race criminal, he didn't dare to say even a single word about that

After the soldiers left, the servants and maids in the manor all rushed toward Zu An, crying, "Duke!"

Their fears and glory were completely tied to their master. The more powerful their duke was, the greater the glory they would feel. Otherwise, they would be completely helpless if random scoundrels tried to take advantage of them.

Someone quickly reported to him about what had happened to Yu Yanluo. Zu An said, "I understand. Summon General Wang, General Li, General Chen ... to the manor for a discussion."

The people he named were all of Jian Yanyou's remaining trusted aides in the Duke Manor. There were also some people who had good relationships with the Yu clan.

...

After giving out his orders, Zu An then went to the inner courtyard to find Chu Ji. There, Chu Ji was sobbing as she chatted with Maid Xing. She quickly got up and kneeled down when she saw him, crying, "Please save the madam, my duke!"

Zu An supported her back up and said, "I have heard everything that has happened. Do not cry anymore." Then, he gave Maid Xing a look and asked, "Where are your clansmen hiding? I will first arrange for all of you to leave the city."

Maid Xing was a bit alarmed. For some reason, she felt as if the other person was somewhat familiar when he talked to her. She was just about to reply when she hesitated. If the duke was deliberately currying favor with her, her clansmen would be in danger.

As Yu Yanluo's personal maid, she obviously knew that the two of them were only husband and wife in name. Only once before, and quite recently, did the two seem to have slept together. She had asked Yu Yanluo about it after the fact, and she had said that nothing of the sort had happened between them. As such, she worried that the duke might betray them at the most crucial moment.

Chu Ji spoke up just then, saying, "Big Sis Maid Xing, the duke is completely trustworthy."

Others might not know, but she understood their relationship the best. The madam had even taken the man in to impersonate the duke, so he was definitely trustworthy. She and Liu Ji had made guesses as to his real identity in private, but they had tacitly agreed not to explore it further.

Maid Xing was incredibly shocked. But when she thought about how Chu Ji was the duke's spouse, there likely weren't too many problems with what she said. Besides, she really didn't have many others to ask for help at the moment. As such, she replied, "Recently, life for our clansmen in the north has been too difficult. That was why the madam arranged some work for them on the other side.

"The local products there were used to exchange for daily necessities like food and medicines, but it had to be done in absolute secrecy. Things would become very bad if even the slightest leak occurred. That is why we carefully chose some quick-witted clansmen to come into Cloudcenter Commandery and work in certain businesses. At the same time, we took in some talented clansmen to study human society. That way, they could use their knowledge to improve their hometown.

"The madam was worried that there might be danger, so she did not have our clansmen remain in the Yu clan, instead arranging them in hidden places throughout the city. Now, it seems the madam really had deep foresight."

Zu An thought to himself, Yu Yanluo was probably also extremely conflicted back then. On one hand, she would have wanted to do everything she could to take care of her clansmen. On the other hand, the fiend races and humans had fought for a millennium, so she would have been worried that it would end up harming her father's Yu clan.

"Right, where is Uncle Fu? Are you able to contact him?" he asked. The elder who had driven Yu Yanluo's carriage in the past appeared in his mind. Uncle Fu's cultivation was quite formidable. With his help, Yu Yanluo wouldn't have been captured so easily.

"The madam arranged for him to deal with some goods that were stolen in the neighboring commandery. It should be about time for him to return. As long as we can leave the city, I have ways to contact him," Maid Xing replied.

Chu Ji said, "But the entire city is locked down right now, so it will be difficult to leave the city. Furthermore, the duke is also someone who is being watched carefully. He will also be in great danger if he uses his name to bring all of you out of the city."

Maid Xing felt conflicted and quickly said, "I would not dare to have the duke take such a risk. Whether or not we can leave the city is a small matter. However, I earnestly request for the duke to save the madam."

Zu An thought for a bit, then replied, "Do not panic. I will save the madam, and I will try to find a way to send all of you out as well. You should first contact the clansmen left in the city so they do not end up exposing themselves in their alarm. It would be much more difficult to save them then. Maid Xing, you should not show yourself since everyone is searching for you right now."

Chu Ji said, "Then I will contact them."

Zu An gave her a look and replied, "Be careful. I am sure that there are people watching our Duke Manor right now."

Chu Ji blushed when she sensed his concern. She lowered her head in embarrassment and said, "Do not worry. I have been trained in these matters before; it should be okay."

Zu An nodded. After they exchanged a few more words, someone arrived to report to Zu An that the generals were already rushing over.

"They have already started moving that quickly?" Zu An was surprised. Soon afterward, however, he found out that after something had happened to Yu Yanluo, many had subconsciously chosen to consult with him, so they had ended up bumping into each other over the same matter.

...

Zu An thus carried out a discussion with the generals in a private room. Soon afterward, a group of people left with grave expressions. A short time later, several armies gathered outside the city domineeringly.

In order to keep the other force in check, the main forces of the Martial Affairs Manor were practically all stationed on the city outskirts. The city guards were all nervous, guarding the gates carefully. At the same time, they issued reports to Xu Yu.

But Xu Yu wasn't in the mood to deal with those matters right now. 'Jian Yanyou' and his generals had arrived with their respective personal troops.

Xu Yu had his subordinates make preparations, while he himself greeted the party at the entrance with a smile. He remarked, "Is the duke not supposed to be resting? I did not expect you to have recovered so quickly."

Xiao Yao also stood next to him while holding his sword, clearly on guard against any sudden attacks. Sang Hong had also rushed over when he heard the news.

Zu An's gaze scanned over those present and he said coldly, "This world might already have been flipped on its head if I had still not made an appearance."

Xu Yu shook his head and replied, "In the end, this world is the Great Zhou Dynasty and his majesty's world. It cannot be changed."

Zu An knew Xu Yu was saying that on purpose to pressure him using the court and the emperor. He said indifferently, "I, Jian Yanyou, consider myself to have lived cautiously and conscientiously all these years. Even though I do not claim to have made heroic contributions to the court, I have done my fair share. However, why is Sir Xu unable to distinguish between right and wrong, arresting my very own wife?!"

Xu Yu replied, "The duke misunderstands. This official has no intention of going against the duke. The reason why we must capture Yu Yanluo is only because she is the Medusa, a fiend race individual who has been hiding in human society!"

The ordinary soldiers on Zu An's side looked at each other in dismay when they heard that. They had only known that Yu Yanluo had been captured previously, but hadn't known the exact reason. When they heard she was the Medusa, they all had confused expressions.

The generals frowned. They hadn't really believed the rumors they had heard previously. They hadn't expected that to really be the reason.

"A bunch of nonsense!" Zu An roared. "Do you think I could not even distinguish whether my wife was a human or a fiend for myself? Would I need an outsider to tell me?"

His subordinates all nodded when they heard that. The small disturbance quickly fell silent. In their opinion, those accusations had just been made arbitrarily by Xu Yu.

Xu Yu replied, "The fiend races have always been crafty; it is not strange at all to have been deceived. To be honest, I am ashamed to have been fooled by Madam Yu's beauty myself, and only recently did I discover the truth. The duke does not need to concern yourself over such things. Bring out the proof for the duke to see."

Zu An obviously knew what the proof was. If he allowed it to be shown, his troops' morale would drop. He raised his hand and stopped Xu Yu, replying, "There is no need! From the years we have spent together, I know what kind of person my own wife is. She normally would not even harm a chicken; she would shed tears if an ant were accidentally trampled. She is such a kindhearted woman, and yet you all accuse her of being a fiend race individual? What a joke! Even if there is any proof, it was definitely forged!"

When all the soldiers recalled Yu Yanluo's unmatched grace and the warmth she treated others with, all of them voiced their grievances. Let alone the ordinary soldiers, even the generals refused to believe that Yu Yanluo was some Medusa.

Xu Yu frowned and said, "According to what I know, the duke and the madam are only husband and wife in name; the two of you do not live together. It is natural for you to not know her true self."

Many people immediately began to whisper among each other. Only a few people had known Jian Yanyou and Yu Yanluo's true relationship. When the others found out that the two were only husband and wife in name, many of them were extremely shocked.

Some of the officials even began to breathe harder. These two weren't even really husband and wife? Then didn't that mean Yu Yanluo was still a virgin? Didn't that mean they still had a chance? However, they all felt worried when they thought about how Yu Yanluo might be the Medusa.

"Hmph, you should stop trying to sow dissent regarding our relationship," Zu An replied. "The reason why we have lived apart is because we are both leaders of our clans, and we have many things to take care of. That has never affected our feelings for each other, and we meet in private often. I definitely know more about her than Sir Xu."

Since both sides were sticking to their own story, Zu An's subordinates obviously trusted what the duke said. Meanwhile, Xu Yu's faction believed in him more. Both sides were stuck at an impasse.

Xu Yu's face darkened. He replied, "Commandery Duke, could it be that you are insisting on shielding a fiend race individual?"

"Do not try to attack me with random accusations. I am merely trying to save my innocent wife!" Zu An exclaimed, appearing behind him. The guards behind him drew their longswords. A harsh and austere mood rapidly swept through the place. "I am going to bring the madam back today. If anyone stands in my way, do not blame me for being merciless!"

Chapter 1126: Do Whatever They Please

Xu Yu's expression changed and he asked, "Duke, do you know that you are rebelling right now?"

Zu An said indifferently, "I only know that I am saving my wife. Since she has not harmed the people or disrespected the royal family, and you alone are blaming her, how is this considered a rebellion?"

Xu Yu said, "All the other officials have seen the proof already. They know the entire sequence of events. But since the duke refuses to see the proof, there is not much I can do."

Zu An cut him off and replied, "If his majesty has not looked over the matter, and if the court's three ministers have not held a joint hearing, there is naturally no crime. With her status and identity, how can she be someone you can punish and arrest just because of your personal beliefs?" He continued, "Go and ask if the Yu clan's people agree, if the Jian clan's people agree, and even if the people of Cloudcenter Commandery agree!"

His subordinates roared when they heard that, their voices louder than ever.

The expressions of all the officials present changed. Even Sang Hong began to think to himself. The Jian and Yu clans' influence is great. Even though many important figures from both clans were removed from their positions, it isn't enough to affect the balance of power too much.

Furthermore, the Jian and Yu clan had always had good reputations among the people. Yu Yanluo in particular had the greatest popularity among the people. If there really were a conflict, there would be some risk of Cloudcenter Commandery being split apart.

Sang Hong was about to step forward to act as a mediator, when Xu Yu suddenly waved his hand and a yellow item appeared in his hands. He said, "Who says his majesty does not know about this? This is an Imperial Edict his majesty gave me. He gave me the authority to deal with the matter of Yu Yanluo's fiend race identity!"

The others cried out in alarm when they saw the yellow edict. Even the Jian and Yu clan's people looked at each other in dismay as a clamor broke out.

Zu An's expression darkened. He had had a similar edict before, so he obviously knew this one was real. He had always been curious as to who the one behind Xu Yu was. Now, it turned out to have actually been the emperor.

Who would've thought, who would've thought... It looked as if he had sent me and Sang Hong here as the Imperial Envoy to deal with the Yu clan, but he had already arranged for Xu Yu to deal the fatal blow at the crucial time, he thought. He had to admit the emperor's decision was formidable. It had completely caught him off guard.

Xu Yu raised the Imperial Edict for everyone to see. Then, he looked at Zu An, saying, "Duke, please do not make this huge mistake all because of a woman."

Before Zu An even had time to reply, his subordinate generals had already stepped forward to whisper to him, worried that he might make a rash decision.

"Duke, please keep your composure!"

"Exactly! Since his majesty has already issued an edict, there might really be something wrong with Madam Yu."

“There is no need for us to ruin the Jian clan as well because of the Yu clan’s affairs...”

...

Zu An looked at his subordinates. None of them were as confident as before. Fear flickered in their eyes. Even the people from the Yu clan had lost all courage, clearly becoming devoid of morale.

It seemed the emperor's power had already been deeply ingrained in the hearts of the people. They had all immediately lost their confidence when they realized they were facing the emperor.

He was just about to tell them that he'd shoulder all of the responsibility when a chill suddenly swept through the air, followed by a faint fragrance. That scent was extremely graceful. It wasn't the scent of any of the fragrances one could buy off the streets; rather, it resembled a natural fragrance.

Zu An frowned, thinking, Why did she show up?

The smell was extremely familiar; it belonged to White Jade Sect Master Yan Xuehen. That old spinster was always trying to break him and Chu Chuyan apart, and on several occasions they had almost faced each other as enemies. That was why he didn't have much of a good impression toward her.

But that wasn't how the others felt. They all voiced their surprise, their eyes filled with amazement.

Even though there was a veil covering her face, just her fair white skin and moving eyes were enough to prove that she was an exceptional beauty. Her entire figure looked even more stunning because she was floating in midair. Her white clothes fluttered behind her, making her look like a goddess.

Many ordinary soldiers really did call her a goddess. Even many officials who were no strangers to women were inwardly surprised that there was actually someone else who was comparable to Yu Yanluo. Even Zu An had to admit that even though this stone cold woman was a bit annoying, she was quite pretty.

In terms of appearance, Yun Jianyue wasn't inferior to her, but Yun Jianyue was the Devil Sect Master. She carried a somewhat more vicious aura, making her more unapproachable. Yan Xuehen's aura was ephemeral, and yet somehow more approachable, making ordinary people worship her like a goddess, while Yun Jianyue's aura wasn't.

“Sect Master Yan!” Xu Yu exclaimed. He was one of Cloudcenter Commandery's authorities, so he knew who Yan Xuehen was.

Even Sang Hong greeted her. Even though Yan Xuehen didn't have any rank or post, her grandmaster rank cultivation made her far too important.

Xiao Yao's eyes that were usually turbid from drinking lit up, as if he were eager to try challenging her. It seemed almost as if he couldn't hold his sword back and was about to have a taste of a grandmaster's skills himself.

Yan Xuehen remained indifferent. She didn't respond to his provocative expression at all, looking at him no differently from an ordinary person. Then, she nodded slightly to the others as a courtesy before saying, “I heard that something major happened here, so I wanted to come and take a look. I have heard most of the story along the way. In order to prevent Cloudcenter Commandery's common people from

being caught up in chaos, can both sides stop here as a favor for me?" Then, she looked at both parties with her beautiful eyes.

Xu Yu frowned. Even though he was holding the Imperial Edict in his hands, he didn't have the confidence to really go against a grandmaster. With her cultivation, she could easily end his life before he could finish chanting the Imperial Edict.

Even if he took a thousand steps back and assumed he could manage to use the Imperial Edict, his majesty would definitely blame him afterward. After all, he would have offended a grandmaster and the powerful sect behind her. He would be blamed for doing a poor job no matter what.

Furthermore, the Jian and Yu clan's forces couldn't be ignored. If they really did fight against each other, the situation would easily go beyond his control.

He instantly understood all of that. Thus, he smiled and said, "Sect Master Yan is a compassionate person, and a model for our generation. How can this official disregard the safety of the commoners and raise arms? However, I am not alone in this matter, so I cannot make the decision here."

Zu An praised Xu Yu inwardly. This old fox immediately threw a thorn at me, making it so that if I persist in this matter, it'll seem as if I don't care about the common people.

Yan Xuehen also gave him a look and asked, "What does the duke think?"

With things the way they were, Zu An knew that using force was already impossible. Forget about the imperial decree, just Yan Xuehen alone wasn't someone he could defeat. He thought for a bit, then said, "I am not someone who likes to make trouble without reason. However, the events that transpired today are a bit too excessive; everything has been presented one-sidedly by Sir Xu. At the very least, I should be allowed to meet my wife to hear the whole story."

Zu An wouldn't be Zu An if he didn't take advantage of Yan Xuehen's presence.

Xu Yu frowned. He obviously didn't want Jian Yanyou to meet Yu Yanluo. His first impulse was to reject the request.

But Yan Xuehen said, "Indeed, I have some things I wish to inquire about with Madam Yu as well. You should come with me."

Xu Yu's breath caught for a moment, and he immediately felt a stomach full of anger. At first, Yan Xuehen had at least looked as if she were discussing things with him. And yet now, she hadn't even asked him and had instead just made a decision for him.

Do all grandmasters just do whatever they please?

I have an Imperial Edict, you know?!

But those were grievances he could only bottle up. He obviously couldn't afford to offend a grandmaster at this stage of the plan. Thus, he said, "There will be no problem at all for the two of you to meet with Yu Yanluo. However, we cannot permit any other followers."

He was scared that Jian Yanyou would take the chance to grab Yu Yanluo and run. If it were just Jian Yanyou alone, it would be easier for him to keep the situation under control. After all, even though Jian Yanyou's cultivation was high, he was injured.

Zu An obviously had no objections. Thus, he walked over alongside Yan Xuehen. Yan Xuehen didn't want to be monitored by anyone, so Xu Yu and the others could only wait outside.

Seeing that there was no one around them, Zu An looked at the figure in white beside her. How old is this woman? Her experience and prestige are greater than Yu Yanluo's. But she can't be that old, can she?

"What are you looking at?" Yan Xuehen snapped, suddenly turning around and looking at him coldly. The senses of a grandmaster were extremely sharp. It was as if she had eyes in the back of her head.

Zu An said, "I am just curious as to why the sect master would help me." He had realized that Yan Xuehen had appeared to be neutral, but she had actually slightly favored his side.

Yan Xuehen gave him a look and replied, "Why would you ask something like that? The White Jade Sect and the Jian clan have worked together for so many years. Who would I help, if not you?"

Chapter 1127: Who Would You Choose?

Zu An was alarmed. Only then did he remember that Jian Taiding had been Yan Xuehen's junior brother, an important figure in the White Jade Sect. Their relationship was obviously special. He quickly yawned and said, "There have been too many things that happened recently, so I was worried that it might have affected our relationship."

"You are nervous?" Yan Xuehen asked suspiciously. The physiological changes in Jian Yanyou didn't escape her perception.

Zu An thought, Women really are sharp. Any man who marries her won't be able to do anything secretly. He reacted quickly and said, "I publicly challenged the court, and Xu Yu even took out the Imperial Edict. That means his majesty already planned to deal with our two clans beforehand. How could I not be nervous?"

Yan Xuehen nodded, clearly acknowledging his explanation. But she didn't comment on it at all. It was obvious that she wanted to maintain White Jade Sect's current situation and didn't want to get involved in the court's conflict.

The two continued forward. Because of what had just happened, Yan Xuehen just felt that it was a bit strange having the duke walking behind her. As such, she waited for him to walk past before catching up to him again.

The two walked into the prison side by side. However, Zu An felt somewhat confused. They had been enemies whenever they met before, and yet now, they were actually able to walk so close to each other.

I wonder if this stone cold woman would want to rip me to shreds out of embarrassment if she found out who I was...

Soon afterward, the two of them arrived at the room where Yu Yanluo had been locked up. Zu An suddenly realized they'd be done for if Yu Yanluo acted strangely and Yan Xuehen caught that slip-up, however.

There's no way she cultivated to grandmaster level just for decoration, right?

But he had learned his lesson previously, and deliberately controlled his heart rate so that Yan Xuehen wouldn't notice anything.

When Yu Yanluo saw the two of them, she looked shocked for a moment. It was clear that she would never have expected the two to arrive together. But she reacted quickly and bowed toward the two of them, saying, "Sect Master Yan, Yanyou, I did not expect the two of you to see me in such a sorry state today."

Yan Xuehen was somewhat shocked, replying, "Madam Yu's prowess in self-restraint leaves even me in admiration. You are in such a dire situation, and yet you do not seem to be alarmed in the slightest."

"Life and death are ruled by fate," Yu Yanluo said with a smile. "Furthermore, I believe that there are people who will prove my innocence."

Yan Xuehen harrumphed. "Madam, I do not advise you to have high hopes for the emperor. Zhao Han liked you before, but he is a ruthless ruler. He has clearly schemed against you this time, so your hopes for him to return your innocence will most likely lead to disappointment."

Yu Yanluo chuckled. She didn't say anything. She wasn't talking about the emperor, but rather...

She subconsciously looked at Zu An. A hint of a gentle expression appeared in her eyes.

How sharp was a grandmaster's perception? Yan Xuehen was confused. According to her sources, the two should only have been husband and wife in name! Why did it seem as if the two of them actually shared some feelings? And just now, Jian Yanyou had almost acted impulsively for this woman.

But unfortunately, those thoughts could only remain suspicions. She just assumed too many things had happened recently, resulting in both sides ending up getting closer. After all, it was difficult to imagine someone being able to become exactly like another person in this world. Not even a grandmaster like her was able to notice any flaws.

She wasn't interested in their affairs at all, as long as it didn't involve Zu An. Hmph, Yu Yanluo and that brat Zu An's relationship seemed to be pretty good. I even felt a bit of pity for my disciple.

Chuyan is a very single-minded person. She has not had the time to manage that brat during her time in the White Jade Sect, and yet now, this kid is flirting with all of these women? He does not have the integrity of a man at all!

I will have to tell Chuyan everything that happened once I return. This brat, Zu An, has been following Yu Yanluo's every beck and call, and she even fell in love with him!

Letting your cultivation path be affected because of someone like this is not worth it.

Yan Xuehen always grew furious whenever she saw that man and his mischievous behavior.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +55 +55 +55...

Meanwhile, Zu An couldn't help but look at the frozen goddess. She looked so high and noble on the outside, but she was actually angry? This woman didn't seem to be as calm and indifferent as she looked; instead, she held quite the grudge.

If Yan Xuehen were to know that she had been seen through by the man next to her, she might just kill him to silence him forever on the spot.

She collected her thoughts and looked at Yu Yanluo, saying, "I only came today to verify one matter."

Zu An coughed and added, "I was only able to come here because of Sect Master Yan's help..."

He then gave Yu Yanluo a rough recap of everything that had happened. The main reason for that was because he didn't want Yu Yanluo to offend Yan Xuehen without knowing anything. They really couldn't afford to have a grandmaster added to their list of opponents.

Yu Yanluo gestured to indicate that she understood, then showed Yan Xuehen a kind smile. She said, "Please feel free to ask me anything you wish, Sect Master Yan."

Yan Xuehen didn't ask Zu An to leave and asked, "After our last meeting, I inspected my junior brother's remains. He indeed died because of the Parasite clan. I initially thought it had nothing to do with you, but then I heard that you were the Medusa. Could it be that you were already colluding secretly with Uncle Ming secretly to begin with, scheming with the fiend races?" Her voice became increasingly cold toward the end, and her eyes began to shine with a clear light.

Zu An was stunned, thinking, Is this another eye technique?

Yu Yanluo shook her head and said, "I did not know that Uncle Ming was actually just a parasite impostor, so how could I have colluded with him? Over the years, I have not done anything to harm the human race. If the sect master does not trust me, please feel free to look into it."

"There is no need," Yan Xuehen said, and her eyes returned to normal. Then, she gave Zu An a look and said, "I have already finished. If you have anything else to ask, hurry up."

Zu An was shocked, but he said, "I have some personal things to say to my wife. Could the sect master give us some privacy?"

Yan Xuehen was speechless. I didn't even ask you to leave when I asked about 'that' before, but now you're the one turning your back on me instead? But even though she wasn't too happy about it, seeing how they were husband and wife, she didn't actually want to listen to such things either.

"Then I'll be going first," she said coldly before walking outside.

Zu An quickly reminded her, "Sect master, you cannot eavesdrop now!"

The senses of a grandmaster were too frightening. Even if she went outside, she could still easily hear their conversation.

Yan Xuehen staggered and almost fell over. Her chest rose and fell deeply several times, and she said while glowering, "Do you take me for someone that shameless?!"

When did Jian Yanyou become so similar to that Zu An? Ahh, so annoying!

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +365 +365 +365...

When Zu An saw the Rage points, he thought to himself, What White Jade Sect's 'free of all emotions' doctrine? This woman is all cool and indifferent normally, but she's actually pretty fiery inside!

When she left, he quickly sent a ki transmission, telling Yu Yanluo about what had happened in the Yu clan, including how he had already saved Maid Xing and other such things. Even though Yan Xuehen most likely wouldn't eavesdrop, he couldn't take the risk.

"It seems the emperor was determined to deal with our two clans after all." Yu Yanluo's expression was cold as she spoke. The plan to capture her and attack the clan at the same time indicated that the other side had clearly been scheming against them for a long time already. She told Zu An, "Thank you for everything you have done. Otherwise, we might really have been finished this time."

"How can I do nothing while all this is happening?" Zu An replied. He continued, "The question now is, now that Xu Yu has the Imperial Edict, and I can't use the Jian or Yu clan's power to save you, what do I do?"

Yu Yanluo blushed when she heard that. She replied, "I will definitely be guarded heavily here. Help me save Maid Xing and the others first, or they might be exposed as time goes on."

"Okay," Zu An agreed. However, he fell silent.

"What is wrong?" Yu Yanluo asked curiously when she saw how Zu An seemed to be preoccupied with many thoughts.

Zu An said, "I have a question to ask you. I heard Xiao Yao mention..."

He told her about Pei Mianman's mother and how she had died from a Medusa's poison. Then, he carefully looked at Yu Yanluo and asked, "Does this matter have anything to do with you?"

Yu Yanluo didn't reply directly. Instead, she looked at him with a similarly strange expression and asked, "If I told you I was related, who... would you choose to help?"

Chapter 1128: Business Deal

Zu An frowned. He had never expected such a result. He had really never imagined that the death of Big Manman's mother would really have something to do with Yu Yanluo! But if that really was the case, he couldn't let down Manman here.

Suddenly, Yu Yanluo smiled and said, "Look at how scared you are. Miss Pei must be quite important to you. Do not worry; her mother's death has nothing to do with me. Furthermore, I believe it has nothing to do with my mother either."

Zu An was confused. He asked, "Then why would you say that just now?"

Yu Yanluo looked at him with a complicated expression, replying, "Can I not tease you once in a while? But the result leaves me a bit brokenhearted."

Zu An was speechless. He realized that Yu Yanluo knew what he had decided from his change in expression.

Fortunately, Yu Yanluo broke the silence at a critical time. "According to what you are saying, the poison her mother suffered from was exclusive to the Medusa King race. That was what I was confused about at first. But thinking about it, I never harmed her mother, and there is even less of a chance that my mother would have had any dealings with her."

"That's good then." Zu An sighed in relief. He continued, "Then what I'm the most worried about now is how I am going to save you."

Yu Yanluo shook her head and replied, "I have already received your good intentions. However, the way things are, it would be far too dangerous for you to save me. The fact that you can help my clansmen escape this city already leaves me endlessly grateful; how can I make you take that kind of risk?"

Zu An's mood was extremely heavy. He replied, "Then I'll bring Maid Xing and the others to safety first before thinking about anything else."

They both exchanged some information, then Zu An bid her goodbye. After all, the longer Maid Xing and the others remained in the city, the more dangerous it would be for them.

"My husband!" Yu Yanluo suddenly called out to him emotionally after he had just taken a few steps.

Zu An turned around in shock. Yu Yanluo's face was entirely red, her fingers sticking through the cell bars. She was worried that Yan Xuehen might hear her, which was why she didn't dare to call him by his real name. Even so, the incredibly sweet voice she had called out with just then was shocking.

"Thank you," Yu Yanluo said. Her eyelashes trembled slightly. She was too embarrassed to even meet Zu An's gaze.

Zu An laughed straightforwardly and replied, "Just how many times have you thanked me already? You do not have to do that, because I am your man, hahaha..." He disappeared through the entrance, leaving behind a trail of laughter.

Yu Yanluo's face heated up. She could almost hear the sound of her own heart pounding.

She couldn't help but recall that young man she had met back on Brightmoon City's outskirts. He had just been like a newborn calf back then, shouting noisily about how he was going to become her man. She had only treated it as a joke back then.

Now, however, when she heard similar words, even though he had done so using Jian Yanyou's identity so that Yan Xuehen wouldn't think anything was strange, why did she feel so embarrassed?

As Zu An exited the prison, Yan Xuehen was standing outside expressionlessly. Even though she did her best to maintain her calm and collected appearance, Zu An still saw the discontent between her brows. He smiled in her direction, saying, "I have troubled the sect master."

Yan Xuehen was speechless. She felt terrible. She wanted to say something, and yet she felt that commenting would ruin her image in front of other people, so she just swallowed her words back down. She only forced out a cold grunt before turning around and leaving.

Xu Yu was waiting outside anxiously. He sighed in relief when he saw the two of them come out. Yan Xuehen gave him a nod and said, "I have already asked what I needed to ask. I hope you can all consider Cloudcenter Commandery's ordinary people when you express opinions, and to not rashly resort to arms."

She rose into the air and disappeared into the horizon after she finished speaking, not waiting for any responses from anyone. Her long hair fluttered around, her white dress pure as snow. She was too beautiful; the onlookers sighed in amazement as they watched her leave.

Farther out, the commoners even thought they had seen a goddess. Some even knelt down excitedly to pray toward the direction she was flying in.

Zu An raised his head and stared in Yan Xuehen's direction for a bit. He frowned, thinking, This woman's taste is really questionable... She actually wears pants under her dress? What's the point in even wearing a dress at that point?

Yan Xuehen sensed something and instinctively brought her legs closer together. She turned around to look beneath her in confusion, but she didn't know what was wrong either, so she could only speed up and leave as soon as possible.

Zu An jumped in fright when he saw her turn around. Are the senses of a grandmaster really that ridiculous?! Looks like I have to be more careful next time I make fun of her.

Xu Yu's voice interrupted his thoughts. "I believe that the duke is at ease now, yes? We have treated Madam Yu with great courtesy and without any negligence."

Zu An harrumphed. "I hope to treat Sir Xu with such courtesy in our Duke Manor one day too."

Xu Yu didn't get upset and replied, "I will definitely pay the duke a visit next time."

Since the other party wasn't slipping up at all, Zu An couldn't really act out either. He said, "Sir Xu, do not blame me for becoming hostile if even a single hair is missing from Yanluo's head."

Xu Yu knew that there was no danger left. He said with a smile, "Even if the duke does not trust me, you should trust Sir Sang. He will be watching over her as well."

Sang Hong cursed inwardly. This old fox is clearly trying to drag me into the water too! But with the way things were, he could only step forward and say, "Indeed, I will definitely ensure Madam Yu's safety."

Only then did Zu An harrumph and storm off as if he were upset.

The Military Affairs Manor's generals and the Jian clan's people sighed in relief. They had been worried that there might really be conflict and that they would have to fight against each other. They would really be in a bad situation then. The Yu clan people were comparatively more disappointed, but they couldn't bring themselves to publicly go against the court and the emperor either.

...

Once they returned to the Duke Manor, a group of people went over to dissuade Zu An from acting again. They even brought up the time when Brightmoon Duke's army had been suppressed by the Imperial Edict. They were worried that their duke would act on impulse and lead troops over to attack

the Martial Affairs Manor again. If that happened, it would be hard to ensure the safety of their people back home. The entire commandery would be in chaos.

Zu An knew that those subordinates had been scared badly by the Imperial Edict. He wasn't in the mood to talk to them, so he had them leave after saying a few things.

By the time he returned to the rear courtyard, Chu Ji had already returned. Zu An told the two women what had just happened. The two women immediately felt despair when they learned that Xu Yu had an Imperial Edict.

However, Zu An consoled them and said, "There is no need for you to worry. Saving your clansmen is the most important thing right now. That was what the madam was most worried about as well."

Chu Ji told him that she had already contacted her clansmen and told them not to act recklessly. They were all preparing to leave the city. At the same time, she mentioned that there were troops looking everywhere for them, and they wouldn't be able to hide forever if that continued.

Looks like we need to move quickly. The longer we drag things out, the more dangerous it will become, Zu An thought to himself.

Maid Xing said worriedly, "Xu Yu will definitely have his men watch the Duke Manor. Your respected self will be in trouble if you show yourself like this!"

If Zu An escorted the Snake race out of the city and was caught doing so, that would be absolute proof of collusion with the fiend races. At that time, forget about saving Yu Yanluo, even a duke like him would be put behind bars.

"Exactly! I only noticed it just now when I came back. There are a lot more soldiers in the surroundings," Chu Ji also said worriedly.

"There is someone who can help us. You should all rest for now; I am going to make a trip," Zu An said, then got up to leave.

...

Zu An left through the secret passage to avoid prying eyes. Then, he found a chance to change his appearance. Soon afterward, he arrived at a residence.

When he arrived, servants quickly brought him in, taking him to see a woman with a charming appearance. She wasn't surprised to see him at all, instead giggling as she said, "I've been waiting for you for soooo long already! Why did it take you that long?"

Zu An was stunned. He asked, "You knew I was coming?"

The woman was none other than Tang Tian'er, the young miss of the Zhenyuan Merchant Group.

"Something happened to Yu Yanluo, and you're her little sweetheart. How can you not be worried?" Tang Tian'er replied as she leisurely prepared some tea.

Zu An's face darkened. He shot back, "What 'little sweetheart'? We're only friends."

"Really?" Tang Tian'er didn't express her opinion as she poured some hot water over tea leaves. She tossed away the first batch, then added some things from different containers. Only then did she bring a cup over to Zu An. She said, "You should try a bit of our Cloudcenter Commandery's specialty, Honey Mint Tea. How is it?"

Zu An wasn't scared of poison anyway, so he raised the cup and took a sip. He immediately sighed in amazement, saying, "The style is totally different from that of the Central Plains, but it's full of fragrance. Its taste is just as sweet as the lady's."

Seeing that he drank what she had given him without any hesitation, Tang Tian'er had a big smile on her face. She said, "The young master always knows how to make a young lady happy. No wonder Madam Yu treats you differently from other men. Unfortunately, this cup of tea tastes sour to me."

"Sour?" Zu An frowned. He gave it another taste, and yet he couldn't taste the slightest bit of sourness.

Tang Tian'er sighed and remarked, "The young master doesn't even think about me at all, and he's only seeking me out because of another woman. How can I not feel sour at heart?"

Zu An was speechless. He exclaimed, "Are you getting lost in your own lies? When have the two of us ever had anything?"

"Oh my, I'll feel brokenhearted if you say that, you know?" Tang Tian'er replied, looking as if she were about to cry.

Zu An felt his scalp go numb. He asked, "Can you talk properly, please?"

"Hmph, what a heartless man. Since you don't cherish old feelings, we'll just treat this like official business," Tang Tian'er replied, then returned to her usual appearance. There weren't any signs of her previous laughter and tears as she continued, "You want me to help you, but I have to make it clear that first of all, I don't have the ability to save Yu Yanluo."

Zu An said seriously, "I obviously wouldn't make you take risks like that. I just wanted to send some goods out of the city through your merchant group's channels."

"Are they goods or people?" Tang Tian'er asked with an ambiguous smile. However, she didn't wait for him to answer and continued, "That's not impossible, but what's in it for me?"

Chapter 1129: You Owe Me

Zu An asked seriously, "What kinds of benefits does the lady want? As long as I can do it, I won't shirk responsibility."

"Tsk, you don't even have a shred of sincerity." Tang Tian'er harrumphed. "Forget it; I haven't thought of what I want, so I'll tell you in the future when I think of something. You'd better not go back on your word!"

Zu An frowned. Such conditions that weren't clearly established were the most troublesome. Who knew what she would ask for later? But seeing that she had agreed, he still sighed in relief and said, "Thank you, Miss Tang."

"You're asking me for help because of another girl! Just the thought makes me annoyed..." Tang Tian'er pursed her lips and spoke as if she were angry. She said, "Treat my injuries first. We'll consider this interest."

"Injuries?" Zu An asked, surprised. "The lady is injured?"

Seeing his nervous reaction, Tang Tian'er finally felt a bit better. She replied, "I'm not. But that ki of yours feels pretty good, so I'm just treating it as a massage."

Only then did Zu An remember that she had had a strange reaction when he treated her the first time. Back then, he had used a fake drug to threaten her, and yet she hadn't seemed to care much about it. She had instead asked for that treatment as a reward instead.

He had been a bit confused at first, but later on, when he treated Yu Yanluo, her reaction had been similar to Tang Tian'er's. That made Zu An realize that Tang Tian'er's reaction wasn't an exception.

Since when did my ki have that kind of function? he thought. But the time he had last spent with Mi Li had been too short. He hadn't had time to ask her whether the Primordial Origin Sutra had that function or not.

"Since you're not injured, I'll give you a massage. You can treat it as my thanks," Zu An said, not thinking too much of it. He thought to himself that there were sims from his past world who had gone much further to be with pretty girls.

Tang Tian'er became vigilant, replying, "I already said this was just interest! You'd better not think this is enough to pay me back already."

"Yes, yes, yes," Zu An replied. He couldn't help but laugh when he saw her miserly appearance. The girl was still pretty cute sometimes.

He moved behind Tang Tian'er, then placed his hands on her shoulders. Then, he began to gently massage her. Her shoulders were slender and soft, and her collarbone looked exquisite and pretty from that angle. As expected of someone who could even make a bunch of experienced perverts from the Hub of Freedom go crazy for her.

"Ah, go softer; you're hurting me," Tang Tian'er said as her body went taut.

"Okay," Zu An replied. Only then did he realize that as his cultivation had risen, he was still too strong even though he had intentionally held back.

But wasn't Tang Tian'er's body a bit too weak? For better or for worse, she was also a cultivator.

Zu An reined in his strength a bit more, and only then did Tang Tian'er nod in satisfaction. She closed her eyes, and her entire body gradually softened.

A while later, Tang Tian'er looked backward at Zu An, commenting, "Huh? Why don't I feel that feeling from before? Are you not trying hard enough?"

Zu An was speechless. He had wanted to see just where the problem lay, which was why he hadn't used his ki. Now, it seemed that it wasn't mere physical contact that had created that feeling; it was ki after all.

He was surprised. This time, he didn't use the Primordial Origin Sutra and instead used his Phoenix Nirvana Sutra, infusing a bit of true ki into her body.

"Mmm..." Tang Tian'er released a sweet moan. A blissful smile appeared on her face. She closed her eyes in satisfaction, saying, "That's it."

Zu An was confused. He had thought that it was the Primordial Origin Sutra, but now, it seemed as if the Phoenix Nirvana Sutra had a similar effect? He wasn't convinced and switched to the Heaven Devouring Sutra. He didn't suck away her cultivation, but still used the technique's ki.

Tang Tian'er inadvertently twisted her body around. Zu An asked, "What's wrong? You don't feel anything anymore?"

"No..." Tang Tian'er replied, blushing. One of her calves moved up a bit as she continued, "It's just that the feeling is a bit different from before; it's a different feeling of happiness."

"How do I say this? It's like... I like watermelons, but I also like grapes. Even though they're different, I still like them."

Zu An was speechless. What the hell is going on? These entirely different types of ki can achieve similar results?

Then does that mean it's me? Is it because of the transcendent aptitude?

The gorgeous principal previously told me that my blood essence was an extraordinary elixir for the people of this world, that it was like the flesh of Xuanzang from Journey to the West.

Sure, it can treat injuries, but this kind of thing has never happened before, right?

Don't tell me this only happens after reaching a certain level of cultivation?

...

All kinds of possibilities appeared in his head. Unfortunately, there was no way for him to confirm any of those thoughts. It would have to wait until Mi Li recovered and could explain everything to him.

But his moment of distraction came at a cost for Tang Tian'er. Because he hadn't focused on controlling himself, several types of ki entered her body at the same time. At that instant, she felt as if she had been battered again and again. The feeling was already way more intense than she could endure, but she couldn't bring herself to stop him either.

Just like that, her entire body jerked back and forth repeatedly. She had been sitting in a dignified posture at first, but her legs began to cross and intersect. She changed her sitting posture many times in a row.

Her personal maid Little Chan was about to bring in some refreshments, but she heard some embarrassing moans from outside the door. She jumped in alarm; her first reaction was that the young miss was being abused.

She was just about to come to Tang Tian'er's rescue when she heard her master say, "Please... A bit slower..." She immediately stopped, her expression becoming extremely strange.

The young miss seems to be willing...

Heavens! There have been so many people who have tried to approach the young miss because of her status over the years, but even though she faced them all with a smile, she has always ruthlessly rejected them.

Little Chan had viewed the young miss as her idol, someone who had the men of this world within the palm of her hand. But what in the world was happening now? She thought back to that guy named Zu An. She had snuck some looks at him back then and thought he was pretty handsome and confident. No wonder the young miss liked him.

But wasn't the young miss changing her mind a bit too quickly? That man had almost been within her grasp, and yet she didn't seem to cherish that relationship at all.

As someone who worked at the Zhenyuan Merchant Group with people from all sorts of backgrounds, and someone who had experience in the Hub of Freedom, Little Chan obviously knew what kind of natural disposition men had. She just felt that the young miss' decision was a bit too sloppy.

But in the end, Tang Tian'er was her master. Since she had made the decision, what could a maid like her do?

Little Chan was a bit curious at first and wanted to peep in. However, she knew the young miss' nature. If her master were pissed off badly, Tang Tian'er might just marry her off to some scary bandit.

Thus, she could only quietly back off. She blushed when she heard certain sounds on and off, muttering. "They're making so much noise; is the young miss not embarrassed?"

For fear of the young miss' reputation being tarnished, Little Chan quickly went out and made sure none of the servants could approach the place.

Her movements didn't escape Zu An's detection. He was quite curious. Why was the maid acting all secretly? Because of that moment of distraction, however, he unknowingly used a bit more force.

"Ah!" Tang Tian'er cried out in alarm. Then, her entire body trembled. She quickly pushed Zu An away, then her legs curled up on the chair, her arms wrapping around her knees. She seemed as if she were enduring a lot of pain.

Zu An jumped in fright. He exclaimed, "What's wrong? Did I hurt you?"

"N... No. You can go back for now. I'll take care of what I promised you." Tang Tian'er buried her head in her knees. Her beautiful hair was scattered everywhere.

"Are you really okay?" Zu An asked, still in doubt.

"I already told you I'm fine! Just go already." Tang Tian'er seemed to be sobbing a bit.

Zu An thought to himself, The thoughts of a young lady really are fickle. They had been fine just a moment before, and yet now they were already falling out with each other. He said as he left, "Then you should get some proper rest."

Tang Tian'er sighed in relief when she heard him leave. She raised her head and held her cheeks in her palms. Her face was boiling hot. She mumbled to himself, "Tang Tian'er, Tang Tian'er, have you gone mad? How could you let him..."

...

Meanwhile, Zu An left the Zhenyuan Merchant Group. Now that he had dealt with the matter of Maid Xing, the only thing left was the matter of saving Yu Yanluo.

Suddenly, however, someone he had never expected to see blocked his way.

Chapter 1130: Not a Single One Is Normal

Even though it had recently stopped snowing in Cloudcenter Commandery, it was still incredibly cold. The people coming and going were almost all wrapped up tightly in heavy clothes.

And yet, the woman standing in front of Zu An was dressed lightly. Her long and straight legs were only covered in black stockings, drawing the attention of all the men walking by. Even though she was clearly extremely beautiful, people's eyes still couldn't help but be drawn toward those legs. Her snow-white skin formed a powerful contrast with her black stockings' lace border. Just a single glance would make it hard to shift one's gaze away.

If anyone else dressed like that, they might easily appear flirtatious and seductive. And yet, when she wore them, it carried no such worldly feeling at all. That, paired with her slender and elegant neck, as well as her delicate hair bun, made her seem even more noble and refined.

Zu An was surprised and happy to see her. He asked, "Big sis principal, why are you here?"

Considering those distinct stockings and those long and beautiful legs, who else could it be but Jiang Luofu?

"What, are you not happy to see me?" Jiang Luofu replied with a smile.

"Of course I am! I'm so happy that I can't believe what I'm seeing," Zu An said as he walked over, feeling extremely moved.

"That mouth of yours is just as sweet as usual," Jiang Luofu remarked, turning to stand shoulder to shoulder with him. She asked, "Should we find a place to sit down first?"

"Okay," Zu An replied. There were too many eyes and ears watching the temporary residence. She clearly had something to say to him. As such, he brought her to a nearby teahouse.

The teahouse was bustling with people, who were all chatting happily at their respective tables. When Jiang Luofu entered, however, the entire building fell silent. None of the customers' eyes could leave her legs.

Jiang Luofu was already used to such sights. She walked past them naturally, her high heels tapping against the ground. The sounds those high heels made seemed as if they were pounding down on the onlookers' very hearts, making their heartbeats pound just as fiercely.

Zu An sighed in amazement. Only someone with Jiang Luofu's powerful presence could properly intimidate the masses. If it were anyone else, a bunch of perverts would already have surrounded a woman as pretty as her.

As those beautiful legs disappeared step by step into the second floor, waves of sighs followed. Then, all the conversations changed as people tried to guess which clan this woman was from. They all began trying to figure out her family background.

"You seem to be laughing at me," Jiang Luofu remarked, looking at Zu An with an ambiguous smile when they arrived in a private room upstairs.

"It's not that I'm laughing at you, but that I'm worried you might be cold," Zu An replied. He had seen that even though there was a fur coat covering the upper half of Jiang Luofu's body, her lower half was only covered by a skirt and black silk stockings. He felt as if even his own legs were becoming cold just from looking at her.

"Aren't beautiful things meant to be appreciated?" Jiang Luofu replied naturally with a chuckle.

Zu An really wanted to drag Yan Xuehen over and have her hear that. Wearing pants under a dress, is that something a human would do?

"Furthermore, an ordinary person might feel cold if they were dressed like this, but we're cultivators, so what is there to worry about?" Jiang Luofu crossed her legs in a different posture as she spoke.

Zu An was stunned. Only then did he realize that he had only subconsciously felt that Jiang Luofu might be cold because Yu Yanluo feared the cold.

Right, we're all cultivators. Who cares about a bit of cold?

Yu Yanluo's cultivation is so high, so the fact that she's scared of the cold is strange in itself.

Now that he thought about it, that was probably a characteristic of the Medusas. The Snake race preferred hotter climates rather than colder ones to begin with. They would go into hibernation as soon as winter hit. Even though the Medusas were higher-level and didn't need to go into hibernation, winters would definitely be uncomfortable for them.

"Transcendent aptitude really is frightening. When I had just known you, you had just begun to cultivate. And yet now, just how much time has passed? Your cultivation has already surpassed mine," Jiang Luofu said with a sigh. She felt as if all of that were a dream or something. If she hadn't experienced it herself, it really would be hard for her to imagine someone's cultivation speed being so fast.

Zu An thought to himself that he hadn't reached his current level by only relying on his transcendent level aptitude, but he couldn't really explain those details to her. He said, "Big sis principal is being too humble. I haven't caught up to you yet; you've made great progress in your cultivation as well."

Jiang Luofu rolled her eyes and said, "There's no need for you to flatter me. I'm not the type to be envious of others. The stronger you are, the happier I'll be."

Zu An chuckled. He poured a cup of tea for her and asked, "When did big sis principal get here?"

"It's already been a while. I know about quite a few of your feats," Jiang Luofu replied. She raised the teacup to her lips, a hint of a smile appearing in her eyes.

Zu An was alarmed. Why did she sound all secretive? He quickly said, "It's a good thing that big sis came; your fellow junior sister is in trouble..." He gave her a rough summary of Yu Yanluo's identity and their experiences.

"That was the same matter I wanted to talk to you about this time," Jiang Luofu said in a deeply moved manner. "At first, I was confused as to why my teacher sent me to Cloudcenter Commandery, but it turns out it was because of that. I didn't know that Yu Yanluo was precisely our mysterious sixth sister."

Zu An was stunned. The libationer's deep and profound appearance emerged in his mind. What in the world is he thinking? If you knew something was going to happen here, why didn't you try to stop it beforehand?

"That third brother of yours really is too unreasonable! He even did something like this to his own fellow junior sister," he couldn't help but say disdainfully.

"Third brother experienced some things in the past. I was even convinced that he had passed on. But now, not only is he alive, his cultivation has even climbed up a notch. Even though he looks slovenly and drunk all day, his sword dao is still something few can match," Jiang Luofu said, feeling deeply moved. "The reason third brother acted that way is probably because of what happened back then."

"Just how are he and Manman's mother related?" Zu An asked curiously. He couldn't help but feel that their relationship was strange somehow. He definitely didn't want to gain some weird father-in-law out of nowhere.

Jiang Luofu hesitated, but in the end, she said, "You're not an outsider anymore, so there's no harm in telling you these things. Still, you can't tell anyone about this, or else it might bring great harm to Pei Mianman."

Zu An was stunned. Judging from how she was talking about the subject, it seemed there was a huge drama surrounding it. "Of course."

Jiang Luofu then said, "Third brother possessed powerful comprehension prowess. At a young age, he had already fully inherited teacher's sword. Teacher had personally evaluated him back then, stating that he was destined to break through into the grandmaster rank."

Zu An already knew that even though there were many cultivators in this world, there were extremely few who could become grandmasters. There were countless stunning talents who failed to pass that great trial. For Xiao Yao to have received such an evaluation at his young age, it was easy to see just how high his comprehension prowess was.

Jiang Luofu began to recount the events of the past. "For fear that he would become proud and arrogant, which would actually become unfavorable for his cultivation, teacher sent him into the world of warriors to train himself. Third brother relied on his sword to carve out a reputation for himself. There were even some who called him the Sword Immortal. His natural disposition was to hate evil, taking it upon himself to eliminate demons. Back then, there were still many fiend race individuals left in

the human side of the world who brought calamity. That was why he single-handedly wiped out many of them.”

“That continued until he met Pei Mianman’s mother.” Jiang Luofu paused. She looked at Zu An with her beautiful eyes and asked, “Do you believe in love at first sight?”

Zu An chuckle and replied, “You mean when I saw big sis principal for the first time as I entered your office?”

Jiang Luofu’s cheeks turned a bit red. She harrumphed. “You really are slick-tongued.” Even though that was what she said, she didn’t get upset and continued, “That was the case when third brother first saw Pei Mianman’s mother. However, their identities doomed them to forever be apart. In the end, third brother decided to remain true to his own dao and attacked Pei Mianman’s mother.”

“Wait.” Zu An frowned. “Wasn’t his dao eliminating evil? Why would he attack Pei Mianman’s mother? Unless...”

“Indeed.” Jiang Luofu sighed. “Pei Mianman’s mother was from the Demon Race. Didn’t you find Pei Mianman’s fire element extremely strange? It’s a pitch-black flame. That’s an ability that came from the Demon Race, and furthermore an extremely rare ability.”

Zu An was speechless.

Heavens, please stop messing with me! It was Yu Yanluo earlier, and now it’s Pei Mianman?

Can I not have a single normal girl around me?