

Immortal 1311

Chapter 1311: A Grudge Must Be Repaid

That night, Zhang Ji and Chu Ji came to seek him out several times. Zu An had to admit that sometimes, the affairs of the world were just that strange. They had clearly never discussed anything among themselves beforehand, and yet things coincidentally turned out the same way. For instance, they all brought different kinds of soup. However, they had one thing in common, which was that they were all nourishing soups.

Zu An really was getting very worked up from eating all of those foods. He had been doing his best to hold it in, and yet now, these three seductresses kept teasing him using all sorts of tricks. He tried tactfully refusing several times, to the extent where he even said outright that he couldn't let down the duke and the madam.

However, Liu Ji smashed straight through his bottom line by retorting, "You might not be letting them down, but what about us?"

Zu An was no herbivore. Liu Ji had completely stirred up the flame within him. In the end, just like that, whether it meant letting down the duke or the madam, he spent the restless night with them.

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The next morning, after he dealt with the various affairs of the manor, he quickly returned to the Imperial Envoy residence. When he returned to his room, he saw Yan Xuehen sitting inside with a completely cold expression.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +147 +147 +147...

"Where did you go last night?!" Yan Xuehen exclaimed. The previous night, she had intended to discuss the matter of returning to the fiend race's side with Zu An, but she couldn't find him anywhere!

Her first thought had been that something had happened to him. After thinking it over, though, she felt that with Zu An's official rank and cultivation, there likely wasn't anyone in Cloudcenter Commandery who could threaten him. As such, she had decided to just stay put and wait for him. The entire time, because she was scared of being discovered, she had fled whenever there was even a bit of activity. And yet, in the end, Zu An hadn't come back after an entire night.

She felt that ever since she had met Zu An, her unshakable daoist state had been pretty much completely ruined. Now, her emotions were even stronger than before.

"I..." Zu An trailed off. He had a guilty conscience and didn't know how to explain himself.

Yan Xuehen saw his appearance and jumped in fright, asking, "What's going on? Why do you look so weak?"

Zu An was stunned. He looked in the mirror and saw that he had two black circles beneath his eyes, and his complexion was haggard. His expression suddenly became a bit strange as he thought, Human bodies aren't made of steel after all... Those three seductresses could grind even an iron rod into a needle. However, he replied, "It might be because I've been constantly running back and forth. I had to deal with some personal affairs last night and wasn't able to rest either."

Yan Xuehen's face reddened. She remembered how Zu An had carried her almost all the way. Later on, they had done 'that' in the hot springs... No wonder he was so tired. As such, her anger completely disappeared, instead replaced with an apologetic feeling and gentle concern. She said, "In that case, you should rest well. We can leave tomorrow."

Zu An had initially thought that it would be fine to leave on that day, but he was actually a bit tired. Thus, he didn't refuse. He asked, "Right, what did you eat yesterday?"

After some hesitation, Yan Xuehen said, "Sir Sang invited me to the banquet, but I don't like those types of gatherings and didn't go. I thought you were going to come back eventually anyway, and it would be fine to have a meal then. But in the end..."

Zu An's eyes widened. He asked, "Then... You didn't eat anything all day?"

Yan Xuehen proudly said, "Cultivators like me can go for several days without eating or drinking anyway. Furthermore, I cultivate a technique that emphasizes peace of mind. It's normal to fast, so I don't feel hungry."

As soon as she finished her sentence, however, her stomach growled. Yan Xuehen was speechless. Her fair and clear face immediately turned completely red.

Zu An didn't try to tease her and instead said in consolation, "Of course it would be fine if you skip a few meals at other times, but you're injured right now! We also exhausted so much energy on the way here, so you need to replenish your energy. I haven't eaten yet either, but I know some good places in Cloudcenter City. Even though they aren't that famous, their food is authentic."

Yan Xuehen wanted to refuse at first, but when her stomach growled again, she was too embarrassed to keep protesting. Thus, Zu An took her to different breakfast booths to try the local specialties. Yan Xuehen was alarmed when she saw the bustling morning market. She had previously felt that such noisy places were annoying, but for some reason, she now felt that they were just another facet of the world. Perhaps these were precious things that she had already forgotten about for too long?

There were all kinds of delicacies everywhere. Yan Xuehen no longer acted like her usual goddess-like self, instead eating until her mouth was covered in oil. Zu An chuckled, reaching out to help her wipe the corners of her lips. However, Yan Xuehen's face reddened and she took a step back to avoid his hand. Then, she quickly took out her handkerchief to wipe her mouth.

Zu An didn't feel offended and knew that it was just her nature. There was no way she would accept him that quickly. The fact that she was willing to come out to have breakfast with him was already a huge improvement.

After finishing breakfast, the two returned to the Imperial Envoy residence. They were both a bit tired, so they decided to get some rest.

Zu An jokingly suggested sleeping together; he would sleep on the floor, while she could take the bed. However, Yan Xuehen got so angry she almost slashed him with her sword.

In the end, Yan Xuehen slept next door to him. The two were both experts, though. Even though there was a wall between them, they could hear each other's breathing. They both quickly calmed down and entered the land of dreams.

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They dozed off into the evening. When Zu An woke up, he felt incredibly refreshed, while Yan Xuehen's face also seemed to be glowing. For cultivators like them, that amount of sleep was already enough for them to recover.

Zu An went to find Sang Hong in order to say goodbye. Sang Hong said seriously, "I will tell the world that you went off to investigate whether or not there are other spatial cracks. However, this pretext will not last for too long, so you should return as quickly as possible."

"I will. Sect Master Yan is coming with me too. Even if you don't trust me, you trust her, right?" Zu An replied with a chuckle.

Yan Xuehen secretly pinched him. How many times has this guy made use of my reputation already? My reputation really is going to be done for one day.

Sure enough, when he heard that Yan Xuehen was going with him, Sang Hong sighed in relief. He said, "Of course I will not worry any further if Goddess Yan is traveling with you. I wish the two of you a smooth journey."

The two waved each other farewell. Afterward, Zu An and Yan Xuehen didn't disturb anyone else and headed to a secluded place. Zu An took out the Wind Fire Wheels, then reflexively squatted down. He patted his back, gesturing for her to get on.

Yan Xuehen's expression became a bit unnatural as she said, "There's no need. My injuries have recovered quite a bit. I'll just hold your arm."

Zu An knew that she was easily embarrassed and didn't force it. He got on the Wind Fire Wheels, then flew into the sky while holding her arm. The oxygen in the sky was thin, and the winds were biting cold. However, it wasn't that big of a threat to the two of them.

Zu An asked, "Should we go through the Great Snowy Mountain again?"

Yan Xuehen said in assent, "That path is the shortest. We'll be able to avoid the more dangerous areas after the last lesson."

Zu An thought that made sense, so he continued to fly toward the Great Snowy Mountain. Along the way, he breathed in the elegant fragrance of the beauty at his side.

His thoughts were just starting to stir when Yan Xuehen warned him ahead of time, "If you suddenly speed up and stop again, don't blame me for becoming hostile."

Zu An's face heated up. It seemed what he had done last time hadn't fooled her. He could only give up on those thoughts when he heard that.

Soon afterward, they entered the Great Snowy Mountain. Both of them became nervous, worried that something might happen. Fortunately, they had already become familiar with the safe route. Their luck was better the second time, so they didn't encounter anything dangerous.

As they passed the hot spring, Zu An couldn't help but suggest, "Should we take a break in that hot spring again?"

The memory of the previous time appeared in Yan Xuehen's mind when Zu An mentioned that place. She blushed with embarrassment and looked away without saying a word. Zu An knew that she was easily embarrassed and didn't tease her anymore. He could only give up on that tempting thought.

Just like that, the two crossed the borders of the Great Snowy Mountain and arrived in the fiend race territory. Then, Zu An headed directly for the Fiend King Court.

Several days later, he caught up to Yu Yanluo's group; they were staying in a certain tribe's territory. Yan Xuehen immediately separated from Zu An when she saw them, seemingly scared that they would notice something.

"Ah Zu!" Yu Yanluo exclaimed, leaping into his arms when she saw him.

Yan Xuehen raised her eyebrows, but she didn't say anything. She could only walk to one side, feeling mysteriously annoyed.

There was a stalk of grass hanging from Yun Jianyue's mouth as she reclined lazily on a tree branch. When she saw Yan Xuehen, her eyes immediately lit up. She quickly jumped down to complain, "Stone cold woman, do you know how bored I was after you two left? This fiend race territory is huge, but there's almost no one here. There were several days where we didn't even see a single person! I was so bored I almost considered chasing after some chickens for amusement! Thank goodness you're back."

Yan Xuehen frowned and harrumphed. "So what if I am back? It is not as if I will play with you."

Yun Jianyue giggled, replying, "Aren't we acting too unfamiliar with each other here? Let's head inside first."

A crafty glint flickered through Yan Xuehen's eyes, but she didn't reveal anything else. When they entered the room, Yun Jianyue closed the door behind them.

Yan Xuehen asked with a frown, "So? What is it?"

Yun Jianyue rubbed her hands and replied, "How is bullying chickens more fun than bullying you? Stone cold woman, has your little butt missed the feeling of my hand?"

She pounced after speaking, but her smile quickly froze. She looked down and saw that a finger had struck her major acupoint. She exclaimed in disbelief, "You've recovered?"

A hint of a smile appeared in Yan Xuehen's usually cold and indifferent eyes. She replied, "Witch, who would have thought that something like this would happen to even someone like you?"

Then, she pulled Yun Jianyue's dress straight down, and loud slaps rang out.

Smack smack smack!

A grudge had to be properly repaid!

Chapter 1312: Slip of the Tongue

Yun Jianyue almost fainted, crying out, "You'd better stop right now!"

Yan Xuehen's normally gentle and refined face now bore a strangely excited look. She replied, "Oh? This really doesn't feel that bad. No wonder you would always come after me every few days."

Immediately after, a few more smacks followed.

Yun Jianyue was beyond humiliated. The difference between her expectations and reality was too great! She had been excited to harass Yan Xuehen just moments before, wishing to get rid of her boredom after several few days. She had never expected to be the one who got spanked instead! The reversal of her expectations made her especially sensitive.

"Just how did you recover?!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed, trying to divert her attention. Please stop, my back is already burning...

"Do you want to know? Why don't you beg me?" Yan Xuehen replied, feeling incredibly refreshed. She hadn't even felt so happy when she broke through into the grandmaster rank back then. Only a few days before in the Great Snowy Mountain...

Her face reddened when she thought of that. What am I thinking of that guy for? She raised her hand and brought it back down ferociously to hide her own embarrassment.

Yun Jianyue was about to faint. She had felt pretty good when she bullied this stone cold woman, but she hadn't expected the sensation of being beaten to be like this! She began to panic when she saw the other party getting more and more worked up. She decided that she had to deal with this disaster first before anything else. Later, once she regained her freedom, she would properly settle the debt.

Thus, she said, "Okay, I really do want to know. You can just think of it as me begging you. How did you recover so quickly?"

Yan Xuehen had struggled against her rival for many years, and yet this was the first time she had seen Yun Jianyue submit. It really felt incredible. However, she harrumphed. "What do you mean, I can think of it as begging? I don't sense a shred of sincerity. That doesn't count!"

Yun Jianyue gritted her teeth. As someone from the Devil Sect, she fully understood how to be flexible. At the moment, she had no choice but to lower her head. She could only grit her teeth and say, "I beg you, please tell me how you recovered that quickly."

When she saw how Yun Jianyue was furious, and yet couldn't do a thing to her, Yan Xuehen smiled and replied, "Your voice is too quiet, I can't hear you."

"Stone cold woman, you're doing this on purpose!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed furiously. With their cultivation, even if their voices were as quiet as a mosquito's buzz, they could still hear each other clearly. There was no way Yan Xuehen hadn't heard her!

"If I say I can't hear you, I can't hear you. What, are you unhappy with what I said?" Yan Xuehen replied, sending her palm smashing down again. When she saw the ripple that followed, she thought to herself, This witch really is pretty perky down there.

"Fine, I'm begging you! You heard me this time, right?!" Yun Jianyue cried. She really was curious. After all, at their cultivation levels, they normally wouldn't get injured; but if they did, it wasn't something they could recover from that quickly.

She knew just how bad Yan Xuehen's injuries had been. They definitely hadn't been the sort that could heal in under half a year, let alone a mere few days.

When she heard Yun Jianyue beg several times, Yan Xuehen raised her brows. Her beautiful eyes flickered with a crafty look and she replied, "I did hear you, but why should I tell you?"

Wasn't the reason she had healed because of Zu An's strange technique? That method was so embarrassing. She wouldn't talk about it even if she were beaten to death.

Yun Jianyue was speechless. Only a while later did she realize that she had been duped. She exclaimed, "Stone cold woman, when did you become so crafty? Didn't you refrain from lying in the past?!"

"I didn't lie though. I only said you could beg if you wanted to know, but I never said I would tell you if you begged," Yan Xuehen said, even as her face reddened. She wouldn't have done such a thing before, but a few days prior, Zu An had taught her how to tell a lie without speaking anything other than the truth. She had discovered that she could no longer go back after that.

Yun Jianyue was stunned. When did this stone cold woman's rigid block-like brain become so cunning? Don't tell me that in the past few days with Zu An...

Smack!

Just then, another palm slammed down. The fiery pain stopped Yun Jianyue from thinking further. She was so angry she fired all manner of curses at Yan Xuehen. The harder she cursed, though, the heavier those strikes became. Yan Xuehen still remembered the feeling of being pressed down and beaten clearly, so how could she let her rival go that easily?

The door opened up with a creak. Then, Zu An called out, "What are you two doing? Why does it sound as if a pig... is being slaughtered..."

When he entered the room and saw a white expanse, as well as a mysterious 'absolute domain', Zu An couldn't finish speaking. He was completely petrified. Meanwhile, Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue were both stunned. Neither had expected to draw Zu An over.

Yan Xuehen was alarmed. She had also had her dress pulled down by Yun Jianyue down to the knees and been spanked the same way, and Zu An had gotten a complete view of her too. Even though the two of them had already experienced the most intimate skinship, she still felt so embarrassed she wanted to crawl into a hole whenever she remembered that memory.

Yun Jianyue felt an explosion go off in her mind. She was normally high and mighty, someone who looked down on the world. And yet today, her most embarrassing and private parts had been seen by a man.

If it had been anyone else, she could just kill them to silence them. If she was really furious, she would just burn them to ashes. But how could she kill Zu An? Whether it was his relationship with Honglei or with her, she couldn't kill him!

Ahhh! How am I going to face anyone in the future?!

Yan Xuehen finally reacted to what was going on. She pulled a cloth from off to the side to cover Yun Jianyue's red handprint-covered bottom. She coughed lightly and asked, "Why didn't you knock before you entered?"

Zu An reacted quickly as well, replying, "Huh? Was it because I practiced too hard recently? Why can't I see anything in front of me?"

He groped around in front of him as he spoke, as if he had gone blind. He even 'accidentally' bumped into a doorpost, committed to the act, and left while massaging his head. However, he considerably closed the door behind him.

Yan Xuehen burst out laughing. This guy really knew how to put on an act.

When she heard her rival's laughter, Yun Jianyue became even more furious. She exclaimed, "You're laughing? You still have the nerve to laugh?! I didn't expect a stone cold woman like you to be that ruthless! You already screwed me over that badly, and yet you still have the nerve to laugh!"

Yan Xuehen harrumphed. "He just took a look; it's not as if you were even hurt at all. What are you howling like this for? It's not as if I... ahem..." She suddenly caught herself and shut her mouth.

Yun Jianyue was furious. "Am I the Devil Sect's witch, or are you? You can actually talk about something like that in such an indifferent manner?!"

"Alright, alright. Seeing how you did suffer a bit today, I'll just let you off for now," Yan Xuehen said. After being interrupted like that, she wasn't in the mood to continue anymore either. As she left, however, she was concerned that it wouldn't be too safe to leave Yun Jianyue lying alone inside. She reached out her hand, and a strand of ki undid the other woman's restrictions.

"Stone cold woman, I'm going to fight you to the death!" Yun Jianyue exclaimed. A surge of ferocity erupted from the room, and she shot out like a streak of lightning.

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The loud noises happening outside made Yu Yanluo, who was in another room, worried. She wondered, "What happened to them? Why are they fighting against each other like this?"

Even though the two grandmasters had been arch-nemeses before, after being around each other for so long, they had become comrades. Why were they fighting against each other that way at the moment?

The enchanting scene he had witnessed appeared in Zu An's mind. He felt his face heat up a bit. He quickly hid his reaction and said, "It'd be stranger if they weren't fighting. Don't worry; their cultivation ranks are pretty much equal. They can't do much to each other."

Sure enough, even after fighting all day and leveling several mountains, neither could do much against the other.

In the end, Zu An went out and hollered, "Are you two done yet? Come in for dinner already. We still have to continue on our journey tomorrow."

Because of what had happened in the hot springs, Zu An's vigorous side was already deeply ingrained in Yan Xuehen's memory. She instinctively stopped.

Yun Jianyue was someone who did whatever she wanted to do, so she normally wouldn't listen to Zu An in such a situation. However, he had just seen her most private side, so she was completely lacking in confidence and also just stopped at that.

Yu Yanluo was really shocked when she saw that. She had thought that Ah Zu's advice wouldn't do a thing, and yet these two insufferably arrogant grandmasters actually listened?

The two still sat far away from each other while eating. Whenever their eyes occasionally met, sparks flew.

Yu Yanluo was worried that they might fight again. She quickly went over to smooth things over, asking, "Ah Zu, how did big sis Yan recover from her injuries?"

"Of course it's because of my hard work..." Zu An subconsciously replied, but he immediately cried out 'Not good!' inwardly. Sure enough, three penetrating gazes instantly focused on him.

Chapter 1313: Fiend Race King Court

Yan Xuehen's expression instantly changed. She had a guilty conscience and was worried that Zu An would tell the truth.

Yu Yanluo's gaze also became a bit suspicious. She subconsciously thought of Zu An's Primordial Origin Sutra. After all, that was how she had been treated back then. However, she thought, Sect Master Yan wouldn't agree to that kind of method, would she?

Yun Jianyue's thoughts didn't wander in that direction. However, the look in her eyes still seemed lethal. It turned out that the main perpetrator behind Yan Xuehen's bullying was this guy! When she remembered how he had seen her most private parts, her entire body felt uncomfortable.

You have successfully trolled Yun Jianyue for +444 +444 +444...

Zu An jumped in fright when he saw the Rage points that followed. He quickly said, "What I meant was that I noticed several hot springs in the Great Snowy Mountain that were rich with ki. I brought her there and let her soak inside, and there really were miraculous effects!"

Yan Xuehen thought to herself, This guy doesn't even bat an eyelid when telling lies. You were frozen stiff back then, and I was clearly the one who found that hot spring and took you there. Of course, she wouldn't be so stupid as to correct him. That excuse was perfect for explaining her recovery.

Sure enough, when they heard about the earth immortal snow lady's pursuit, both of the women's expressions changed. When they heard that the two had not only managed to escape, but had even found a miraculous hot spring, they felt as if they really had taken a trip to death's door and back.

"That hot spring really is miraculous. Even I want to soak inside if there's a chance," Yu Yanluo said with starry eyes.

"Count me in too," Yun Jianyue added in an aloof manner.

Yan Xuehen felt a bit guilty. The hot spring did indeed have miraculous effects, but the actual treatment was still because of Zu An... If the two went to that hot spring, they would immediately suspect what Zu An had said.

Sigh, forget it. If push comes to shove, I just won't stay around these two. Even if they're suspicious, they can't come to me for confirmation.

With a sigh of amazement, Yun Jianyue said, "No wonder the Great Snowy Mountain has always been a forbidden area all these years. It turns out there was actually such a powerful being inside!"

Yan Xuehen instinctively nodded, saying, "Indeed. Furthermore, in my opinion, that snow lady is probably not the only powerful being in the Great Snowy Mountain."

Yun Jianyue subconsciously nodded. When she noticed that it was Yan Xuehen who had spoken, though, she harrumphed and looked away.

Zu An quickly joined in to mediate things, adding, "That's why places like the Great Snowy Mountain are best avoided if possible. We only went around the borders, and yet we already ran into someone who was that frightening. If we really went deeper in, it would just mean certain death."

The women both nodded in agreement and didn't think about the hot springs in the Great Snowy Mountain anymore. Yan Xuehen sighed in relief. Afterward, Zu An told them about what had happened in Cloudcenter Commandery.

Yun Jianyue couldn't help but harrumph. "That damned emperor really can't tell what's good or bad for him. You worked so hard for him, and yet he ended up treating you like this. In my opinion, it's not that bad of an idea to just leave the court. Just come to the Holy Sect, and I'll make you a..." Halfway through her sentence, she suddenly remembered that Zu An had seen her most intimate parts. Her face reddened, and she couldn't finish speaking.

Yan Xuehen naturally knew why she would act like that, but Yu Yanluo was left in the dark. She felt that the others were all acting strange for some reason, as if they were keeping something from her. However, she was more concerned with something else. She said, "Ah Zu, what Sir Sang said is true. It's too dangerous for you to stay in the fiend race territory. After all, you defeated the Golden Crow Crown Prince. No matter how generous the Fiend Emperor is, he wouldn't let you go."

Zu An said with a smile, "Don't worry. I have a way of dealing with that." Afterward, he took out a thin mask and continued, "Since I've been away for a few days, I'll just change my face and name. The people here will just think that I've already returned to the human side. They won't even know I'm here."

Even though 'Face of a Thousand Identities' was much better, he would have to use the Kawaii Waifu Voice Changer each time before using it. That would be complete social suicide! The masks he had obtained from the Blackwind Stockade were still more convenient.

The women immediately felt a bit strange when they saw him become a completely different person, but they were still amazed by the masks.

"So what name are you planning to use?" Yu Yanluo asked curiously.

Zu An blurted out, "Yan Zu will work."

That way, even if the three girls were used to calling him Ah Zu, it wouldn't draw any suspicion. Furthermore, if that Fiend race spy made more reports to the human race, he could push all of the responsibility onto this Yan Zu. Then, he wouldn't be suspected anymore.

“Yan Zu?” Yu Yanluo was touched. ‘Zu’ was obviously the same one as ‘Ah Zu’, but wouldn’t ‘Yan’ be the ‘Yan’ in her name? That name was wonderful.[1]

Yan Xuehen blushed and her heartbeat quickened. Why are you using my surname for your new name? Is this to hint at something, or to express something?[2] Ahhh! It’ll be bad if the other two notice something.

Yun Jianyue’s eyes narrowed. ‘Yan’ was a particle of the name ‘Chuyan’. If you use Chuyan’s name, what about our Honglei?

How could Zu An have predicted that a random name would spur on the three women’s crazy imaginations?

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Afterward, Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen fought constantly against each other. Yu Yanluo and Zu An wanted to stop them at first, but eventually, they became numb, letting the grandmasters do what they wanted.

Zu An initially wanted to find a chance to have a good talk with Yan Xuehen. However, Yun Jianyue kept fighting against her, so he couldn’t approach her at all. He could only give up on that thought. Instead, he began to study the ‘Lion’s Roar’ skill he had looted from Shi Ling, as well as the even more profound ‘One Drop of Heaven’s Essence’.

Just like that, time passed without them realizing it. Finally, they got close to the Fiend Race King Court. When he saw the majestic city on the horizon, Zu An said with a sigh of amazement, “And here I thought that the Fiend King Court would be some large tents gathered together. I didn’t expect it to be a place on par with our own capital city.”

Even though the details were a bit rough compared to the capital, that just gave the city a different kind of aesthetic. Furthermore, it made use of all sorts of beautiful colors, blending together a sense of grandeur and vigor.

Yan Xuehen said, “When the Fiend races were at their strongest, this was where they were ruled from. Now, even though it is a bit more worn-out than before, with their strength and appreciation for beauty, they still have the ability to rebuild such a great city.”

Yun Jianyue nodded and said, “If we put aside the grudges between our races, the fiend races indeed have many things we can learn from.”

Yu Yanluo was about to say something when her eyes narrowed. She said, “That group seems to be coming for us. Everyone, be careful.”

A group of mounted troops rushed over. However, they weren’t riding horses, but rather ferocious lions. The riders quickly stopped in front of Zu An’s party. The lions released low growls, while the giant lizards from the Snake race flicked their tongues. Their vertical pupils contained a dangerous glint.

“Where is the Medusa Queen?” the three riders at the front of the troop asked. They gave off an impressive aura. They had decent appearances too, but unfortunately, their voices were unkind.

“The Lion race!” the Snake race’s representatives exclaimed. They noticed that the riders had something in common, in the form of light brown beards all around their faces. That was the distinctive trait of the Lion Race. The more golden their beard, the greater the density of their bloodline was, which often indicated greater power. The three at the forefront had beards that were especially striking.

Outside the carriage, Maid Xing asked, “Why are you looking for our queen?”

One of the lions said with a snort, “I am looking for your queen. You do not have the right to speak to me.”

Zu An frowned and asked, “Are those from the Lion Race usually this arrogant?”

Yu Yanluo, worried that he would act out of anger, quickly said, “I’ll go out and take a look. Now that we’re at the Fiend Race King Court, it’s better to keep a low profile.”

She opened the door and walked out, declaring, “I am the Medusa Queen you are looking for. Why have you approached us?”

The riders in front looked arrogant and proud at first, but when they saw Yu Yanluo, they all seemed enamored. They looked at her face with eyes full of desire, and their eyes darted all over her body.

“I have heard of the Medusa Queen’s incredible beauty. Now that we have seen you ourselves, we know that your reputation was not in vain,” the one in the lead said with a sigh of admiration. “I am the Lion King’s third son Shi Min, while these are my fifth brother Shi Gong and seventh brother Shi Rong. We did not come with any ill intentions. We merely wish for the Medusa Queen to hand over the human who bullied our eighth brother.”

The ones inside the carriage frowned. How did these men know that the one who had beaten up Shi Ling was Zu An?

1. The ‘Yan’ in ‘Yan Zu’ means ‘accomplished or ‘elegant’. It’s different from the ‘Yan’ in ‘Yanluo’, which means ‘smoke’ or ‘mist’.

2. The ‘Yan’ surname is also different, meaning ‘swallow’ as in the bird.

Chapter 1314: Bogus Accusations

Yu Yanluo’s beautiful brows furrowed as she replied, “I do not know what you are talking about.”

Shi Rong harrumphed. “Don’t try to play dumb. Back then, in an ancient tomb near Bluefield Country, wasn’t it the human traveling with you who used despicable methods to scheme against eighth brother, causing him to remain unconscious even now?”

Zu An’s group looked at each other in dismay. They all saw the confusion in each other’s eyes. Shi Ling had indeed been injured quite badly back then, but it shouldn’t have been to the point that he would still be unconscious, right?

They suddenly realized something. Western Lion Shi Qian was inside his little brother, and he seemed to have used the ‘Forbidden Devil’s Seed’ technique. Had he chosen to keep Shi Ling asleep because he was worried that it might be exposed?

Yu Yanluo had similar thoughts. She said in a manner that was neither servile nor overbearing, "That was a fair, decisive battle between both parties. The other races who were present can attest to that. Furthermore, even though Shi Ling was injured in that battle, it should not have been to the extent that he is still unconscious. As for why that is the case, I suggest you ask your eldest brother."

They were in public, so she didn't mention the Forbidden Devil's Seed. Otherwise, her relationship with the Lion race could end up completely in tatters and irreconcilable. She was still a clan leader, after all. She had many things she needed to consider.

Shi Gong exclaimed furiously, "What is the meaning of this? You actually dare to drive a wedge between us brothers?!"

Shi Min stopped him from moving forward. He cupped his hands toward Yu Yanluo and said, "Medusa Queen, we are acting courteous toward you out of consideration for your status as a queen. As long as you hand over that human, we will let bygones be bygones. Otherwise..."

His implied threat was clear.

Yu Yanluo was a bit upset. If they were to really compare status, these Lion race princes were all her juniors. And yet, they actually dared to speak to her that way! Still, she endured it in the end and said, "The one you spoke of parted ways with us after we left that tomb. I do not know where he is now."

She didn't fear these little lions; what she was worried about was the Fiend King Court receiving news that Zu An was still there. That would bring him too much danger.

Shi Min glowered and said, "Medusa Queen, we've already shown you enough sincerity. Don't you think you're being too unappreciative?"

Yu Yanluo's expression turned cold and she replied, "I am the ruler of a clan, someone who is on the level of your father. Who gave you the courage to speak to me like this?"

Shi Gong roared with laughter, saying, "Respect isn't something won by relying on glib lips. I'm already giving you quite a bit of face by calling you Medusa Queen. Your cultivation hasn't even reached the master rank, while our Lion race has many individuals stronger than you. Even someone like you still wants to consider yourself on par with my father?"

Three of the brothers had arrived this time. Apart from the seventh brother Shi Rong, who was only at the ninth rank, Shi Gong and his third brother Shi Min were both at the master rank. The riders that accompanied them were all carefully selected elites from the clan as well, so they naturally didn't need to worry about a mere ninth rank Medusa Queen.

Yu Yanluo's expression turned cold. The fiend races had always been unreasonable; to them, the one with the biggest fist was right. She had half a mind to teach the insolent Lion Race princes a lesson. Her Medusa Eye was special, as its power couldn't be judged by cultivation rank alone.

Just then, a figure jumped out of the carriage and said, "Clan leader, kings should face kings, while generals should face generals. Only if the Lion King personally came would it be worth your personal interference. Why would these minor characters need you to step in personally? Please let this subordinate take care of things."

Yu Yanluo grinned when she saw Zu An. This guy... He's always so good at taunting others.

Sure enough, the Lion ace princes' expressions turned grim. They yelled, "Where did this scoundrel come from? State your name!"

You have successfully trolled Shi Min for +277 +277 +277...

You have successfully trolled Shi Gong for +277 +277 +277...

You have successfully trolled Shi Rong for +277 +277 +277...

"Listen up, this uncle is Medusa Queen's Big Stick General, Yan Zu! You dared to treat my queen with disrespect, so I will make sure you pay dearly for it!" Zu An shouted.

Yu Yanluo blushed, thinking, What 'my queen', what 'big stick'? Why do I feel as if he's hinting at something?

Inside the carriage, Yun Jianyue remarked with a frown, "What kind of name is that? It sounds awful."

Yan Xuehen was alarmed, however, because she had personally experienced it. She harrumphed inwardly. This guy really is a rascal.

The Lion race princes didn't think of the same thing, however. After all, the Medusa Queen was a well-known beauty, while this guy was only a subordinate of hers.

"What kind of knock-off general is that? I've never heard of such a thing," Seventh Prince Shi Rong cursed. "You aren't qualified to face us."

Then, he pointed at one of the clan's generals. That person was at the peak of the eighth rank, and he had always acted valiantly. In Shi Rong's opinion, he was already enough to defeat the talent-starved Snake race. The Snake race's queen was only at the ninth rank, and their two elders were only around the eighth or ninth rank. How strong could the rest even be?

The Lion race general wanted to show off in front of the three princes. At the same time, when he saw how pretty the Medusa Queen was, his male instincts made him want to show off his strength even more. As such, he slammed his fist toward Zu An, intending to eliminate him immediately.

However, his eyes suddenly blurred, and he discovered that he had been sent flying.

How?! he thought just before fainting. Then, he slammed into the ground, stirring up a cloud of dust.

Inside the carriage, Yun Jianyue nodded and said, "This guy is starting to look more and more like a proper master. His choice of timing and strength is something not even the two of us might be able to surpass."

"He has been fighting exceptionally strong opponents all this time, constantly wandering along the brink of life and death. His real strength far exceeds that of his peers," Yan Xuehen added, also feeling a bit of admiration. In the end, she added, "Furthermore, he even saw your butt, so of course his knowledge and experiences are profound."

Yun Jianyue almost coughed out a mouthful of blood. She yelled, "Stone cold woman, I'm going to fight you to the death!"

Then, sounds of fighting filled the carriage. Fortunately, they knew their limits. They were worried that they'd destroy Yu Yanluo's carriage, so they only used martial arts movements and didn't actually use ki.

Outside, Yu Yanluo and Maid Xing both facepalmed. Those two are going at it again.

The three Lion race princes didn't have the leisure of paying attention to what was happening inside the carriage. Instead, they looked at Zu An with serious expressions. Everything had happened so quickly that they hadn't even seen what was going on.

Shi Min suddenly thought of something and asked, "Are you that human who hurt my eighth brother?"

Zu An said in a regretful tone, "That incredibly handsome, elegant, suave, confident, awesome, and spectacular guy whom any woman would instantly fall for... Sigh, if I had even a fraction of his skills, I would be smiling even in my dreams."

Yu Yanluo's face heated up. This guy really had the shame to say such things!

The two women inside the carriage both inadvertently stopped as well. They both harrumphed. "This guy really is shameless."

The Lion race princes didn't know what was going on. When they heard how much this guy worshiped that human, they were horrified. Is that person really so formidable?

The seventh prince, Shi Rong, was full of youthful vigor and couldn't sit still anymore. He said, "Hmph, I found you annoying from the very start. This prince will teach you a proper lesson."

He was just about to act when someone shouted from a distance, "Who dares to cause trouble in the Fiend King Court?!"

Then, a troop of riders rushed over. Unlike the crude and tattered outfits of the ordinary fiends on the way, these riders were dressed in golden armor. Their helmet, sleeves, and belts all had a Golden Crow insignia on them.

"Golden Crow Guards?" Yu Yanluo muttered with a frown. When the Golden Crow Crown Prince had come to the Snake race territory, he had been escorted by similar golden-armored warriors. Of course, those warriors had been slightly higher ranked. Still, those who could dress that way near the Fiend King Court could only be the Fiend Emperor's imperial guards.

The one in the lead looked quite young. He was dressed in bright blue clothes, with a dark golden belt around his waist, and his hair was meticulously combed. His appearance made him look quite refined, but his long and slender eyes made him seem a bit unapproachable.

Shi Min reacted quickly and shouted first. "Sir Imperial Clan Director has come at an excellent time. These people have disregarded the Fiend Emperor's prohibition and actually dared to openly attack our subordinate in the Fiend King Court's surroundings! I ask for sir to bring justice in our place!"

Yu Yanluo panicked and said, "This sir over here, please do not listen to their one-sided..."

She was cut off impatiently by the official before she could even finish speaking. "Does this official need to be reminded of how to do my job?"

Chapter 1315: First and Second Empress

The person looked refined, but when he opened his mouth and spoke, his teeth were completely black, making his appearance seem eerie.

Zu An frowned. He had been able to tell for some time that this person's attitude toward them wasn't that friendly. After all, considering Yu Yanluo's stunning appearance, most men would subconsciously become a bit kinder when they saw her, wanting to leave her with a better impression. Such treatment could only mean that the two sides shared a grudge.

The fact that the man could reach the position of Imperial Clan Director at his age meant his family background must be excellent.

Huh? Wait a second. An Imperial Clan Director who manages the imperial clan's children?

Just then, Maid Xing told Zu An through ki transmission, "This Imperial Clan Director is named Heichi Ran. His father is the court's Grand Secretary Heichi Fei. Apart from that, he has another identity, which is the country's maternal uncle. His younger sister is the Fiend Emperor's first empress, and the crown prince was born to that first empress."

Zu An thought to himself, No wonder. He had defeated the Golden Crow Crown Prince, causing his prestige to plummet. How could the prince's in-laws be happy about that? Yu Yanluo had clearly been caught up in the drama caused by his own mistake.

Wait, since there's a first empress, doesn't that mean there's a second empress?

Still, now wasn't the time to be asking those kinds of questions.

Heichi Ran gave the area a casual glance, then said with a cold expression, "The Fiend Emperor has issued an order forbidding fights between the different clans. You actually dare to publicly go against this order? Men, arrest him and throw him into prison."

"Understood!" the Golden Crow Guards replied, stepping out to arrest Zu An.

Zu An said gravely, "Your honor hasn't even asked any questions before deciding on an arrest. I fear this won't be enough to convince the masses."

"And who are you?" Heichi Ran asked, giving him a sidelong glance. The black teeth in his mouth were especially striking. No wonder their surname was Heichi. It really was fitting![1]

The Lion race's representatives said with a smile, "He said he was the Medusa Queen's 'Big Stick General' or something."

Heichi Ran sneered. Because of his official post, he knew a bit about all of the clans' major positions. When had he ever heard of a Big Stick General? It was clearly some fake title, so he didn't treat it as a big deal. He said, "It seems even nobodies are calling themselves generals now. There is no room for you to speak in a conversation between high ranking officers like us."

Zu An's expression turned cold. This guy really needed a good beating! After all, he even dared to beat up the Golden Crow Crown Prince, let alone some shoddy Imperial Clan Director.

He was just about to act when a group of riders sped over and a voice called out. "Which bastard dared to hurt my big brother? Do you dare to fight against me?!"

As soon as the voice spoke, a group of soldiers quickly arrived. Unlike Heichi Ran's troops, who flickered with golden radiance, the second group was covered entirely in black armor. Furthermore, their bodies emanated a powerful vicious aura, clearly honed on the battlefield.

The one in the lead wore a large black cloak, with a black and gold crow embroidered on his clothes. He was eight feet tall with a stalwart figure. His appearance was grand and majestic, and the strong horse he rode made his presence seem even more extraordinary.

Zu An's expression turned serious. This person's aura was powerful; he was clearly already at the master rank. Furthermore, he didn't seem to be weaker than the Golden Crow Crown Prince he had fought before.

In the human world, he had always heard that the fiend races were in decline. Now that he had seen it, though, he knew that the younger generation was full of incredibly outstanding figures. Even though the grandmasters Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue had explained to him that it was due to their bloodline inheritance, and that there was an upper bound to the number of true cultivators, Zu AN saw that they weren't few in number at all. Would that end up being a great disaster for the human race?

When he saw the new group of people, Heichi Ran's expression changed as well. However, he quickly hid it and asked, "Why did second prince come here?"

Zu An was moved. Second prince? That meant he was the Golden Crow Crown Prince's younger brother!

I really did start a crazy feud. First, it was the Lion race's princes who came to get revenge for their younger brother, and now, the Golden Crow race's prince is here to get revenge for his older brother as well?

The Golden Crow Second Prince said seriously, "I heard that the Snake race's envoy arrived at the King Court, so of course I needed to see which human could defeat my brother the crown prince. I believe that human most likely used some sinister scheme. As the younger brother, I will defeat him to get revenge for my older brother."

Heichi Ran's eyelids twitched. Even though the prince was openly saying that he was getting revenge for his older brother, why did this blockhead have to say it so loudly? He kept repeating that the crown prince had been defeated by a human to outsiders!

If the crown prince lost, but he won, it was indeed possible that some would take it as a display of the brothers' camaraderie. However, those who knew about the Fiend King Court's situation knew clearly that the second prince was stepping on the crown prince to further his own prestige!

As such, Heichi Ran said unhappily, "That is not a matter second prince needs to trouble yourself with. I already asked just now. That human has already returned to the human world."

When he heard their tone, Zu An thought that maybe he was the one who had misunderstood. These two didn't seem to have such a good relationship.

“He actually went back?” the Golden Crow Second Prince asked, sounding greatly disappointed. “That makes sense, I suppose. He won against big brother crown prince, so why would he dare to come to the Fiend King Court to throw his life away? Hahaha~”

He led his subordinates back into the city while laughing loudly. It seemed that if the one who defeated the Golden Crow Crown Prince wasn’t here, even all of these people added together wouldn’t be able to interest him.

Heichi Ran’s face darkened, almost becoming as black as his teeth. He roared furiously, “What are you all standing around for? Arrest them!”

“Understood!” The Golden Crow Guards all seemed to have woken up from a dream. They pounced at the Snake race’s envoy.

The Snake race’s guards all drew their weapons to resist. However, there was a huge gap in strength, and they were in the Fiend King Court. If a dispute really did break out, they might not be able to make it out alive.

Zu An stood in front of the others and yelled, “Who dares?!”

His voice echoed outward like a thunderclap. The Golden Crow Guards’ faces all turned pale, and many of their horses even rose up in fear. The place quickly became chaotic.

Shi Min and the other brothers exchanged a look. Why did that seem like their king race’s extreme skill, Lion’s Roar? How was that possible? Even among the Lion race, not many people even had the right to learn that.

Heichi Ran remarked grimly, “What? Are you all resisting arrest?”

Yu Yanluo stepped forward and took out a Golden Crow Token. She said calmly, “I am the leader of the Snake race, and I have come to join the general assembly while holding a Golden Crow Token. However, I am being arrested before I have even entered the Fiend King Court. Did the Fiend Emperor gather us to hold a meeting, or is he merely using this as an excuse to capture all of the clan leaders in one go?”

They were already close to the Fiend Race King Court. Some other small clan leaders and representatives were around them. When they heard that, they all voiced their agreement, feeling that they were in danger.

When he saw that the surrounding crowd was getting worked up, Heichi Ran’s expression changed. He was worried that something big would happen, so he quickly said, “Do not try to incite the public. It is a fact that you all injured someone, which goes against the Fiend Emperor’s orders. That is why I have to ask you all to come back with me for an investigation. As for whether or not you are guilty, the Fiend Emperor will decide that himself. Or, could it be that you are all questioning the Fiend Emperor’s wisdom?”

Inwardly, he sneered. Once you’re all arrested, I’ll keep you all in custody for a while. The Fiend Emperor has so many things to deal with; why would he care about something trivial like this?

Yu Yanluo had managed a great clan for many years. She had seen all sorts of treacherous people and schemes, so how could she fall for something like that so easily? She replied, “We do not dare to

question the Fiend Emperor's wisdom, but the Fiend Emperor has appointed so many officials precisely to share his burden. If the Fiend Emperor needs to personally look into a matter, I fear that the Fiend Emperor will blame this sir for neglecting your duty."

Heichi Ran's expression became unpleasant. This witch really is eloquent with her speech.

Yu Yanluo didn't give him the time to argue and continued, "As for who made the first move, many people passed by here. Sir can go and ask them for confirmation."

Shi Min said coldly, "Of course it was your side who attacked first. What do you all say?" He scanned the surroundings with his sharp eyes while speaking. A pressure began to spread outward.

However, the smaller clans kept quiet out of fear. Who dared to offend the powerful Lion Race in order to uphold public justice? Yu Yanluo frowned. The situation really was quite problematic.

Zu An roared with laughter and said, "You're relying on your master rank cultivation to intimidate others as if others can't do the same." Then, he released a similarly powerful pressure outward. It was even a bit more terrifying than Shi Min's.

Forget about the Lion race princes, even Heichi Ran's expression changed. When did the Snake race become this powerful? Even a knockoff general has master rank cultivation.

If the other man's appearance and cultivation rank hadn't been different from what the Golden Crow Crown Prince had described, he would have suspected that this was the one who had defeated the crown prince.

While the two sides were locked in a stalemate, a beautiful sound rang through the air, followed by a refreshing fragrance. Several strange beasts pulled a gorgeous and fragrant carriage over, accompanied by many eunuchs and maids. There were also some elite Golden Crow Guards on alert, guarding against possible dangers.

As a gentle breeze brushed past and the fragrant carriage's veil fluttered, it seemed to tug at the onlookers' very heartstrings. All manner of pearl curtains and bells adorned the top of the carriage. The pleasant sounds must have been made from those little trinkets.

As the curtains fluttered, the onlookers could vaguely make out a beautiful figure seated upright in the carriage.

When they saw the carriage, the Golden Crow soldiers all dismounted. Heichi Ran led them in greeting her. "I greet the second empress!"

1. Heichi literally means 'black teeth'. 🐼

Chapter 1316: Unforeseen Developments

Second empress? Zu An's expression was a bit strange. Just moments before, he had been wondering if there was a second empress; now, sure enough, one really had come out.

Maid Xing spoke quietly, clearly trying to resolve their confusion. "The Fiend Emperor's original madam first empress already passed away many years ago. Later, another woman became the empress, so the

world calls her the second empress.” She was Yu Yanluo’s personal maid, similar to a supervising secretary. Naturally, she gathered information in advance, then offered it when needed.

Zu An suddenly realized with a start, No wonder this second prince and the first prince don’t get along. He wondered which side this second empress was on. Perhaps... Was she in a faction of her own?

A soft and pleasant voice asked, “What happened over here? Why is it so noisy?”

All of the men present trembled when those words were spoken. The voice was just too soothing, and yet its tone was extremely dignified and proper. Not only that; it would make one unable to help but think of the bedroom, wishing to take her into their embrace and treasure her for a whole night.

However, they quickly snapped out of their daze. This was the Fiend Emperor’s woman, and she definitely wasn’t someone they could have such thoughts about. As such, all of them stared directly at the ground, lowering their heads respectfully.

Inside the Snake race’s carriage, Yun Jianyue raised a brow and remarked, “Another expert in charm techniques.”

Yan Xuehen nodded and said, “As expected of a fiend woman, full of witchcraft.”

She reflexively looked at Zu An. She felt that Zu An already had so many exceptional beauties, and previously, with her... Thus, he likely wouldn’t end up bewitched by the second empress.

To her surprise, however, Zu An stared directly at the carriage. She was utterly furious!

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +233 +233 +233...

When he noticed the Rage points arriving through the backend, Zu An couldn’t help but chuckle. He didn’t panic and just felt happy. At least Yan Xuehen’s emotions had still been stirred because of him!

Naturally, he hadn’t stared at the second empress because he really did covet her beauty. Rather, just then, his soul sensed that she seemed to have observed him closely for a moment, so he had returned the look with puzzlement.

Even though Heichi Ran was from the first empress’ faction, she had already passed away. The second empress was the official empress, so he didn’t dare to show any negligence in his behavior. He quickly gave her a summary of what had happened without daring to be too partial.

The second empress remained quiet for a moment before saying gently, “The Medusa Queen is the ruler of a race. If she experiences unfair treatment, it will easily cause the hearts of the other clans to turn against us. This empress believes that this was merely a small misunderstanding that should not be a big deal to clear up. Lion race’s princes, what do you think?”

Shi Min and the others were obviously dissatisfied, but they didn’t dare to show the empress disrespect. They could only say quietly, “The second empress’ words are absolutely wise.”

Either way, they would all meet in the Fiend King Court. There would be more than enough opportunities to get revenge.

"That is good, then," the woman in the carriage said, nodding in satisfaction. Then, she looked at Yu Yanluo and said, "Medusa Queen, I heard that you only recently returned to the Fiend races. This is a good chance for you to get closer to the other clan leaders."

"Thank you for your reminder, second empress." Yu Yanluo naturally acted politely, as the empress had helped her.

The second empress voiced her affirmation, then gently waved her hand, gesturing for the carriage to continue forward.

Hechi Ran had just shown hostility to the Snake race, but now that the second empress had spoken, he had no choice but to back down. Staying there would be way too embarrassing, so he decided to just escort the second empress back to the palace.

Even though Shi Min and the others were eager to seize the opportunity, so many people were watching, so they couldn't publicly go against the second empress' orders. Instead, Shi Min sneered and said to Zu An's group, "Count yourselves lucky today. We'll see who saves you next time."

Zu An sighed and said, "It should be you people who are grateful for the second empress, that she appeared to save you."

"Let's see if your mouth is still that tough the next time we meet." Shi Min and the others harrumphed. Then, they swaggered off on their lions.

Forget about the Lion race's princes, even those from the other races just thought Zu An was shooting his mouth off. Zu An didn't explain himself either. He returned to the carriage and began to discuss things with the three women.

Yan Xuehen was the first to say, "These fiend races really have no sense of established rules. They act out as soon as they do not agree with someone. You have offended so many people, so things might be troublesome in the future."

Yu Yanluo instead smiled and said, "In my opinion, that might not be the case. This situation is much better than what we predicted."

Yan Xuehen was stunned, asking, "What do you mean?"

Yu Yanluo explained, "At first, we were worried that once Ah Zu entered the King Court, the Fiend Emperor and the Golden Crow Crown Prince would get revenge on him, so that was why he had no choice but to change his appearance and name. From what I saw just now, though, the Golden Crow Crown Prince isn't the one who controls the entire clan. The second prince clearly doesn't get along with him either. Even though the second empress didn't express anything, we can infer a few things from her decision to help us out of that situation. She's definitely not of one mind with the Golden Crow Crown Prince."

"Stone cold woman, the world you've lived in so far is just too posh and pretty. Of course you haven't seen these rougher parts of society." Yun Jianyue harrumphed. "Actually, it makes sense if you just think about it a bit. The Golden Crow Crown Prince was born from the first empress, while this second empress is his stepmother. Judging from her looks, she might not even be older than the Golden Crow Crown Prince. If the Golden Crow Crown Prince really became the Fiend Emperor, what would happen

to such a young empress like her? Furthermore, she still has a son herself, a son who is second in line. Even though he's still young, any mother would make considerations for their own son."

Yan Xuehen didn't retort this time. She knew that her knowledge in that regard was inferior. After all, she cultivated the Unshakable Daoist Manual, which stressed untainted thoughts. She obviously didn't want to dive deeper into such interpersonal relationships and taint the purity of her own thoughts.

Yu Yanluo said with a sigh of praise, "Big sis Yun's analysis is correct. Currently, there are at least two powers who are keeping the Golden Crow Crown Prince in check. That's why the risk we faced was quite a bit smaller than we expected.

"Of course, we can't be blindly optimistic either. The successor's ceremony is going to happen soon, which will settle everything. So, if these forces are going to fight over something, it'll definitely happen soon. We absolutely can't allow ourselves to be unknowingly swept up in it." She looked at Zu An after speaking, as if she knew he was going to start something.

Zu An laughed and said, "I fear that might not be up to us. I have a premonition that from the moment we arrived in the Fiend King Court, we were already destined to be involved even if we don't want to be."

The girls became quiet. They knew that what he said had a large chance of being true.

...

Zu An's group drew close to the Fiend King Court's city gates. Because the general assembly was of utmost importance, the guards registered the identities of every single person. Zu An, of course, had already prepared his new identity. Next, however, those soldiers asked for Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue's names.

As human race grandmasters, their names were familiar to the fiend races' upper echelon, so they obviously couldn't leave behind their real names. As such, Yun Jianyue said, "My name is Yun Zouyan[1]."

Yan Xuehen's eyes twitched, but she was struck by inspiration too. She said, "I am Yan Chouyun[2]."

The soldier who registered their names was stunned. What kind of weird names were those? As such, he asked the two women to remove their masks. What kind of individuals were Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen, though? They were obviously unwilling.

As the situation grew even more tense, however, a loud and straightforward laugh resounded. A voice called out, "These are my friends. I can testify for them."

Zu An turned around and saw Kong Qing. At his side was a woman dressed strangely in bridal clothes; it was Paper Bride.

"So it was Sir Kong," the soldiers said. Kong Qing's status clearly wasn't low. When they saw him, they didn't trouble the two women anymore and let them straight through.

When they entered, Yu Yanluo said gently, "Thank you, Sir Kong."

“Madam Yu is being too polite,” Kong Qing said with a smile. “I came specially to welcome you all. Hm? Why don’t I see brother Zu?”

Even Paper Bride couldn't help but crane her neck. Unfortunately, Zu An was nowhere to be seen, so she regained her usual half-dead appearance.

Yu Yanluo was already prepared for that question and answered, “He already returned to Cloudcenter Commandery.”

Kong Qing nodded and said, “That’s a wise choice. Coming to the Fiend King Court would be too dangerous. Hm? I don’t seem to have met these people here before.”

Yu Yanluo gave them a rough introduction. Kong Qing said with a sigh of amazement, “The Snake race is full of talents after all.”

He noticed that he couldn't see through those individuals. Does the Snake race really have such powerful backing? Ever since something had happened to the previous Medusa Queen, the Snake race had fallen apart. He had never heard of them having such powerful cultivators before!

“Sir Kong praises us too much,” Yu Yanluo said politely. She didn’t explain anything and continued, “I’ve long heard of the Peacock King’s reputation. This is a good chance to properly greet him.”

Kong Qing said with a forced smile, “I fear that wouldn’t be too convenient.”

“Why is that?” Yu Yanluo asked in confusion. If they hadn’t intended to meet, why had Kong Qing been sent over to welcome them?

Kong Qing said with a sigh, “Right now, forget about our Peacock King, it’d be hard for you to meet even the Golden-Winged Peng King or the Elf King.”

1. This name translates to ‘Yun gives Yan a beating’. ㄟ

2. ‘Yan whips/thrashes Yun’. ㄟ

Chapter 1317: Sealed

Yu Yanluo suddenly realized something. “Don’t tell me... Something happened to them?”

Those kings had special status among the fiend races. Like the Golden Crow race, they were considered part of the winged races. That was why they were a bit closer to the Golden Crow royal family than the other clans.

After some hesitation, Kong Qing still said in the end, “We already got to know each other in Cloudcenter Commandery, and you’re young master Zu’s good friend too, so I won’t hide this from you.

“Something has indeed happened to them. I’ll talk about our own wise king first. The Fiend Emperor knows that his heaven and man deterioration draws near. However, the Peacock, Golden Peng, and Elf races have tremendous authority and strength. Fearing that the Golden Crow Crown Prince would be too weak and unable to completely subdue these three clans, he decided to use marriage to bring him powerful allies.

“Our clan’s Princess Nanwu, regardless of status, age, or appearance, is one of the most suitable candidates. Our wise king had the intention of marrying into the royal family, but no one expected Princess Nanwu herself to be so opposed to that. She felt that she didn’t like the Golden Crow Crown Prince and was unwilling to marry him.

“Still, she understood the wise king’s intentions, so she didn’t try to defend herself. Our people all thought she was willing to go through with it, so no one was sent to keep an eye on her. And yet, in the end, she found a chance to secretly leave home. Of course, her pretext was that she was going to create an information network in the human world.”

Kong Qing paused for a moment before asking, “Did young master Zu really not come?”

Paper Bride, who had previously been bored to death, perked up her ears.

“Why is Sir Kong so interested in him?” Yu Yanluo asked. Even Yu Yanluo and Yan Xuehen were curious. It really was a bit strange for him to be so interested in Zu An.

“It’s nothing much. I heard that he was the princess’ good friend, so the wise king was a bit curious about him,” Kong Qing said with a smile.

Princess Nanwu’s standards were so high that she wasn’t even willing to marry the Golden Crow Crown Prince, even turning down the offer to become the future Fiend Empress. And yet, she had given her precious first feather to Zu An! Forget about the wise king, not even Kong Qing himself could resist such drama.

Previously, he had thought that the princess might have been duped by this human somehow. Even though Zu An’s performance in Cloudcenter Commandery was already quite outstanding, he was still quite lacking compared to the Golden Crow Crown Prince, who had already been famous for many years. And yet, who would have thought that not long afterward, there would be news of the Golden Crow Crown Prince’s defeat at Zu An’s hands!

At the time, Kong Qing really felt endless admiration for the princess. She really had an eye for people!

“The princess’ good friend?” Three sharp pairs of eyes landed on Zu An at the same time. When did this guy become close to the Peacock race’s princess? However, the three immediately looked away to avoid revealing anything, because they didn’t want to expose his identity.

Yun Jianyue asked curiously, “Is the princess you’re speaking of Kong Nanjing?”

Zu An had saved her not too long before, and it wouldn’t be too surprising if a young lady like her had experienced her first awakening of love.

“Of course not,” Kong Qing said while shaking his head. “The one I’m speaking of is Princess Nanwu.”

The three women’s expressions immediately became strange. This woman had even fled the marriage intended to make her the future Fiend Empress! Was it because of him?

Just what kind of crazy luck with women does he have? How did he manage to even steal the heart of a fiend race princess tens of thousands of miles away?!

Yu Yanluo suddenly felt a bit jealous. No wonder Zu An wanted to beat up the Golden Crow Crown Prince so badly... She had thought that he did it because of her, but as it turned out, it was actually for the sake of the Peacock race's princess!

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue's expressions became dangerous. No wonder this guy made that bet to have the crown princess. So he already calculated all of this!

Zu An really wanted to cry out in injustice when he saw the Rage points pouring in. I'm only normal friends with Kong Nanwu...

Kong Qing said apologetically, "Right, I have to apologize in place of Princess Changning. It was because of a slip of the tongue on her part that the fact of Zu An being with the Snake race was exposed. That was why the Lion race began to trouble you all. I wanted to come and help you out of that situation, but when I learned that the second empress was passing by, I decided to just wait by the city gates."

Everything suddenly made sense. They had been wondering how the Lion race had found them so quickly. It turned out to be because Kong Nanjing had ratted them out! Even though that woman was fairly decent-looking, she really was a bit low on the intelligence scale.

"It doesn't matter. There were some others there back then, so there was no hiding it," Yu Yanluo said. She naturally didn't hold it against them, especially when the Peacock race was treating them with such sincerity.

"As expected, Madam Yu truly has the bearing of an influential figure," Kong Qing said in praise. He continued, "Because Princess Nanwu clearly fled to avoid this arranged marriage, the royal family has been extremely unhappy. Our wise king had no choice but to take responsibility and resign from his post to quell the Fiend Emperor's anger. That's why the wise king actually feels guilty right now. Between that and the Golden Peng King's situation, the wise king is worried that there might be unnecessary... trouble. That's why he's basically refused to see any guests."

The party exchanged a look. Apart from the dispute between the princes and second empress, the Fiend King Court's clans were also in conflict, both covertly and openly!

"Did something happen to the Golden Peng race?" Yu Yanluo asked curiously.

Kong Qing looked all around him. Then, he said in a hushed voice, "Not long ago, the Golden Peng King was invited into the palace for a feast, but after the banquet, the next day, the people of the manor found him dead."

Those present were all horrified. The Golden Peng King's status was extraordinary! Furthermore, he was an incredibly well-known expert, and yet he had died just like that!

Yun Jianyue didn't hesitate and directly asked, "Then did the Fiend Emperor kill him?"

Kong Qing jumped in fright, quickly stopping her and saying, "This lady, you must not speak carelessly! Slandering the Fiend Emperor even in private conversations is a huge offense, let alone such a sensitive matter as this."

After some hesitation, he added, "That suspicion has indeed spread through the streets, but the Golden Peng King didn't show any signs of wounds or poisoning. Furthermore, the Fiend Emperor was in

incredible grief, personally presiding over his burial. He also promoted their heir, the Little Golden Peng King, into the new Golden Peng King, wishing him great success. The Little Golden Peng King has expressed his loyalty several times as well, which is why the rumors had nothing to continue from."

Yan Xuehen said indifferently, "To acquire something, you must give up something for a time."

Yun Jianyue's eyes lit up and she added, "Not bad, stone cold woman. I have a newfound respect for your intelligence."

Yan Xuehen was speechless. Even though she didn't like political schemes, she had always been a smart person. Figuring something like that out wasn't too difficult. However, this woman made her sound like some idiot or something.

Kong Qing chuckled in embarrassment and said, "That's something everyone has their own opinions about. It's enough as long as we have our own ideas. However, it really isn't too appropriate to discuss further."

These two women really are fierce! Yet they clearly look like delicate and dainty beauties...

Yu Yanluo said with a frown, "Kong Nanwu has already left, but isn't there still Kong Nanjing? From what I've heard, she seems to be a strong candidate to become the crown princess."

Kong Qing wanted to say something, but he stopped. In the end, he said, "Princess Changning is indeed outstanding as well, but due to various factors, her desire to become the crown princess is unfortunately just wishful thinking."

The others had strange expressions. They had never expected him to provide such an evaluation of the situation. If this reached Kong Nanjing's ears, wouldn't she go absolutely insane?

Kong Qing continued, "There have only ever been two candidates for the position of crown princess. One is Princess Nanwu, while the other is the Elf race's Princess Snow."

That immediately caught Zu An's attention. He had finally received news about Snow again!

"Princess Nanwu's outstanding qualities need no further introduction. Meanwhile, this Princess Snow has also truly shocked everyone," Kong Qing said in admiration. "For the sake of saving her clansmen, she didn't hesitate to enter the human world. For fear that she would be too beautiful, bringing unnecessary trouble, she had the Elf King seal her appearance. But now that she's returned, she no longer needs to have such misgivings, and can finally show her face to the world. That's why, after the Golden Crow Crown Prince met Princess Snow, he was actually more biased towards choosing Princess Snow. Now that Princess Nanwu has fled her home, the most likely crown princess candidate title has naturally fallen onto Princess Snow."

Zu An was stunned. She had her appearance sealed?

However, he didn't feel happy about that at all. The only thing he remembered quite vividly was Snow's playful and somewhat feisty nature. And yet now, they were telling him that she had already changed? Zu An suddenly felt a bit dejected. She didn't have her body possessed by someone, right?

He had already experienced similar things several times, so it was hard for him not to interpret the situation in such a treacherous way.

Chapter 1318: Worry

“Then why did something happen to the Elf King?” Yu Yanluo asked in confusion.

Kong Qing sighed. “Tremendous glory can beget tremendous disaster through a moment’s carelessness. Normally, being favored by the Golden Crow Crown Prince and being chosen as the crown princess to become the Fiend Empress is something countless young ladies can only dream of. However, that’s exactly what makes it strange. Our princess doesn’t want to become the crown princess, and Princess Snow was similarly unwilling. She directly refused.

“After being refused again and again, it wasn’t just the Golden Crow Crown Prince; even the Fiend Emperor could no longer stand it. He even began to wonder whether these clans were disloyal, so he used the Elf race’s defeat against the humans as an excuse to imprison him. However, those with discerning insight could all tell that it was completely normal for there to be losses in battle sometimes. Someone of the Elf King’s status being imprisoned wouldn’t make sense, so it must be related to Princess Snow. He likely used that as a pretext to make her give in.”

Zu An was worried. He hadn’t expected Snow to experience such a difficult situation after returning to the fiend races. She had to choose between a lifetime of happiness and her own father. How was she supposed to make a decision like that?

Yu Yanluo voiced her surprise. “Was it that time when the State Duke of Triumph commanded the army? When I was in the human world, I heard that the fiend races slaughtered everyone in a border city down to the last citizen, which was why the court was furious and sent him out.”

Kong Qing harrumphed. “The humans have always crafted treacherous schemes, always finding excuses to start things. To the best of my knowledge, either the slaughter you speak of never existed at all, or it wasn’t done by the fiend races. The humans just used that as an excuse to invade the fiend races.”

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue both frowned. They were clearly unhappy with his verbal attack on the humans. The grudge between the fiend races and the humans was no joke. Slandering each other was a common occurrence, so what he said might not necessarily be true. Only Zu An was startled. He had a suspicion, but he immediately discounted it. If it were true, that would be too horrifying.

Yu Yanluo smiled, clearly not intending to argue about the subject. She asked, “Right, what is the current situation in the Fiend King Court like?”

Maid Xing had collected some intelligence, but with her status, and the fact that she couldn’t go too far, she could only gather some surface-level information. The exact circumstances in the Fiend King Court were something only the officials who were in the area would know about.

Perhaps because of his business relations with Yu Yanluo, or as a favor for Zu An, Kong Qing didn’t hide anything and replied frankly, “You now know the situation of the three great kings. The major powers after them are the Golden Crow Crown Prince faction’s Imperial Uncle Heichi Fei, as well as the Imperial Family Director Heichi Ran, who’s part of the direct line of descent.”

“Apart from the Heichi father and son, there are some others you need to be a bit mindful of. The Left Guard General Ma Tian is a powerful cultivator from the Horse race, and the Right Guard General Niu Dao is an expert from the Minotaur race...”

“Minotaur race?” Zu An asked in surprise. There really was a race like that?

“Yes. Is there something strange about the Minotaur race?” Kong Qing asked in puzzlement.

“It’s nothing.” Zu An chuckled in embarrassment. He couldn't really explain what being cucked by a minotaur meant.[1]

Kong Qing set aside his confusion and continued to explain, “Apart from that, there are a few Golden Crow royal family members. There is the Prosperous King Wu Cheng, Composed King Wu Pei, and Martial Guard General Nine Suns King Wu Chengdu, who is both the commander of the Golden Crow Guards and an assistant to the crown prince. So, if you encounter any of them, it would be best to avoid them so they don’t cause you trouble for the crown prince’s sake.”

The human race and fiend races had fought for a thousand years. Both had learned from each other’s merits, integrating aspects of the other side into their own systems. That was why their overall official structure shared similarities.

Zu An couldn't help but roast them inwardly. These fiend race kings really name themselves willy-nilly! However, when he remembered that he had received the names Phoenix Man, Green Hat, and now Great Lady Count, he no longer had the courage to mock them anymore.

Kong Qing took a drink of water to ease his throat before continuing, “Apart from the crown prince’s faction, there’s the second prince’s faction. Even though the second prince was born of a concubine, his cultivation is profound, and he excels in battle. He has been praised as one of the fiend races’ Four Great Generals.”

“Fiend races’ Four Great Generals?” Zu An repeated in surprise.

Kong Qing thought to himself, How does this guy not even know these basics? It seems that after the last generation Medusa Queen’s incident and the following divide, the Snake race really did experience a serious decline. He said, “The fiend races’ Four Great Generals refer to the second prince, the Little Golden Peng King, the Scorpion King, and Flying Leopard King. Not only are their cultivation ranks profound, they’re also good at commanding troops. They’ve earned outstanding contributions in the war against the human race in recent years.

“The Scorpion King is currently fighting against the humans in the front lines, while the Flying Leopard King is overseeing the borders. The second prince and Little Golden Peng King have remained in the capital. They each have a powerful army only loyal to them, which is why even if the second prince and the Golden Crow Crown Prince don’t get along, the crown prince can’t do much to him.”

Yan Xuehen asked with a frown, “Do these kings not have proper names?”

Kong Qing gave her a look of doubt, but he still explained, “The fiend races are different from the human race. The more respected a fiend’s status is, the more often they’re referred to by their title instead of their real name, as a source of honor and glory. After all, if everyone acknowledges that you can bear the title, that means you have sufficient strength and backing.”

Zu An thought, No wonder the Rage points didn’t show any specific names. So that was the reason behind it.

Kong Qing continued, "Furthermore, there's another faction belonging to the second empress. The second prince is a Great General, and he's also in charge of supervising the Fiend King Court's officials, but unfortunately, he's too young. Even though the second empress is competent and skilled, many people feel that she reached her current position through her looks, so they haven't truly acknowledged her.

"Of course, there are also the Demon race, Dragon race, beast races, ocean races, and others who command extremely high status, but their authority is mainly concentrated in their local areas. They're nothing more than passing travelers in the capital city..."

Yu Yanluo said appreciatively, "Thank you for helping us with our confusion, Sir Kong. Otherwise, we really would be acting blindly here."

"The madam speaks too seriously. Our clans have always had a good relationship, let alone the fact that our relationship with young master Zu plays a part now," Kong Qing said with a smile. "The Fiend King Court is experiencing troubled times, so having another friend is better than having another enemy."

Yu Yanluo was surprised by Kong Qing's implications. Even the Peacock King race felt a strong sense of danger... It seemed the Fiend King Court really did have many things stirring in the shadows.

"Madam, why not stay in our Peacock Race's residence for now?" Kong Qing offered.

"There's no need. The Snake race still has a meager dwelling in the king city," Yu Yanluo said, refusing with a smile. If they stayed in the Peacock race's residence, others would likely assume she had completely defected to the Peacock Wise King's side. That would affect their independence when interacting with the other races in the future.

"Then I'll see you all off to that area. The Fiend King Court is still rather large and easy to get lost in if one doesn't visit frequently," Kong Qing said, not pressing the issue. He had clearly suspected that things would be like this.

"Then I'll have to trouble Sir Kong," Yu Yanluo said, bowing slightly.

...

After that, Maid Xing provided an address and Kong Qing guided their group over.

When they reached their destination, even though the area it was located in was bustling, the courtyard was fairly run-down. It was filled with dried branches and leaves, as well as quite a bit of accumulated snow. There were only two old Snake race servants there, standing around lethargically.

"We've put on an embarrassing showing for Sir Kong," Yu Yanluo said, feeling a bit embarrassed. After what happened to her mother, she had never returned to the Snake race. That was why even though the Snake race had once been a great clan, it had been in disorder and decline since. She hadn't expected their residence in Fiend King City to have become dilapidated to such an extent.

Not only were they losing face in front of the Peacock race, she had embarrassed herself in front of Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue too. She wasn't too worried about Zu An, because she knew that he didn't care about such things, but she didn't want to seem inferior in any way in front of the two women.

“Madam speaks too seriously. Now that the madam has returned, the Snake race will definitely become great once more. I’ll send over some people to clean this area up, as well as provide some daily living supplies,” Kong Qing said. He chatted with them for a while longer, then got up to excuse himself, not wishing to disturb them anymore.

...

After seeing Kong Qing’s group out, Yun Jianyue said with a sigh of amazement, “This Kong Qing is a pretty smooth talker.”

“He wouldn’t have been sent over to take charge of Cloudcenter Commandery’s affairs otherwise,” Yu Yanluo said.

Yan Xuehen frowned and said, “Judging from how enthusiastic he looks, he must have been taken care of quite well by your Yu clan.”

Yu Yanluo knew that Yan Xuehen’s sense of justice made her naturally reject interaction with the fiend races. She explained, “He rarely had dealings with the Yu clan before. It was mainly handled through the Jian clan. After all, we were husband and wife, so he treated us with some friendliness. However, considering our current relationship, I feel as if the reason he’s being so enthusiastic is because of Ah Zu.”

When he saw the three women turn their attention to him, Zu An chuckled in embarrassment. He said, “Kong Nanwu and I only met once...” He gave them a rough summary of what happened in the capital before concluding, “In my opinion, the reason he’s so friendly might be that I beat up the Golden Crow Crown Prince. Peacock Wise King had no choice but to resign, so their race must have felt some resentment over that.”

“That is indeed a possibility.” The women nodded, accepting his explanation. After all, no matter how they thought about it, they didn’t think his charm was strong enough to make even the peacock princess lose her head over him.

After making up a random excuse, Zu An left to look around the area alone. Based on what Kong Qing had said, he was really worried about Snow’s situation.

The Elf Manor wasn’t too hard to find. Zu An had the gatekeeper contact Snow and tell her that an old friend was here to visit her. The gatekeeper didn’t trouble him, but instead said, “You really came at a bad time. Princess Snow was invited into the palace early in the morning and hasn’t returned yet.”

“She still hasn’t returned yet?” Zu An asked, looking at the horizon. The sunset was already nearing its end, and the sky was about to darken. Why hadn’t she returned yet?

1. ‘Minotaur’, or ‘Tauren’ in Chinese, is ‘Niu Tou Ren’, abbreviated NTR. You can guess the rest. 🐉

Chapter 1319: Fiend Imperial Palace

What Zu An was most worried about was that the king manor was just making up an excuse to chase away unwanted guests. As such, he went around a corner, and when he saw that there was no one around him, he jumped over the courtyard wall. The courtyard wall had some defensive formations, but with his master rank cultivation, avoiding them wasn’t particularly difficult.

There were some guards patrolling the surroundings, but compared to human residences that were typically heavily guarded, the fiend races' security was crude; it could even be considered sloppy. Even the security of a king manor like this couldn't compare to that of a mid-ranked human minister's home.

He initially planned to seize a random maid to ask about Snow's room, but he suddenly saw some maids rushing toward a room while carrying teacups. Judging from their private conversations, it seemed that they were discussing Princess Snow. Furthermore, it seemed that they hadn't reached a conclusion even after discussing it all day.

Zu An was surprised. He quietly followed along, but he didn't dare to get too close. He wasn't cocky to the point that he believed he could make the entire world his enemy. Since this was a meeting of some of the Elf King Manor's big shots, there would definitely be some powerful cultivators there. It would be troublesome if he ended up being exposed. Using his soul to search the inside wasn't too appropriate either, as other master rank or even stronger cultivators would detect it.

As such, he used the jade badge to control a fat yellow cat as it walked lazily around the meeting hall. Inside, voices continuously rose and fell.

"Why has Princess Snow not returned yet? Could it be that something has happened?"

"What could possibly happen in the imperial palace?"

"It is precisely because she is in the imperial palace that something might have happened! What if the Golden Crow Crown Prince uses force against Princess Snow? It would all be over then, no?"

"Even if nothing happened, what hour is it already? The palace gates are already about to close. If she spends the night in the imperial palace, what will those outside say about it? Princess Snow's reputation will be completely done for!"

The entire hall fell silent. Zu An's expression grew grim. Snow was in danger after all...

Just then, another voice spoke up. "Actually, if we look at it from another perspective, this might not necessarily be a bad thing."

"What do you mean?"

"Think about it for a minute! What kind of glory and honor would it mean to become the crown princess? She will soon become the next Fiend Empress. Countless young ladies dream of that, and yet will never be able to experience it. At that time, whether it comes to her future or the future of the entire Elf race, it will be a great result."

"Princess Snow has already sacrificed enough for our Elf race, though. She has experienced so many difficulties in human society and rescued so many of our clansmen. And yet we are still going to ask her to make more sacrifices? Is this not too much?" someone immediately objected, and many others agreed.

Zu An felt a bit more at ease. These elves weren't entirely lacking in conscience. There were at least some people who remembered Snow's sacrifice for so many years.

"How can something like that be considered a sacrifice? What kind of glory and honor would it represent to become the crown princess and future Fiend Empress?"

“Not to mention that our Elf King is currently imprisoned. We all know the reason why that happened. If Princess Snow does not marry the crown prince, do you all have a way of saving the Elf King?”

The room fell silent. It was clear that none of them were confident in their ability to save the Elf King.

Zu An didn't continue listening. The Elf race's people all had their own thoughts, but he didn't feel any such hesitation. At that moment, the top priority was clearly to save Snow first. He quickly left the Elf Manor, heading straight toward the Fiend Imperial Palace.

...

Even though he had never been to the Fiend King Court before, the imperial palace was naturally the most grand and majestic location. It wasn't too hard to find.

Unlike the red walls and yellow tiles of the human imperial city, the Fiend Imperial Palace was adorned in blue and gold. Practically all of the gold was even made of real gold.

Zu An cursed inwardly, Damn, these fiend races really are rich and overbearing! They actually used real gold? Aren't they scared that ordinary people will just shave some off?

Apart from that, the Fiend Imperial Palace's entrances were much taller and wider than the other parts, to the point that the proportions were a bit unbalanced. However, that unexpectedly added a strange sense of harmony to the place, creating an unusual sort of pressure.

Almost every single building within had many large, thick pillars. Among humans, pillars were smooth and even; in contrast, the surface of the pillars here either had jagged or wavy patterns. Many pillars even bore different kinds of carvings.

Zu An looked around for a bit, but he couldn't help but frown. He didn't know if it was because the sky was turning dark, but defensive formations were already being activated around the city walls. Those formations were much more profound than the ones in the Elf King Manor.

In truth, with his cultivation, it still wouldn't have been too difficult for him to go inside. However, there was a mysterious pressure emanating from the entire palace. Zu An knew it was the aura of the Fiend Emperor.

When he thought about how the Fiend Emperor and Zhao Han were equally famous, he didn't dare to show the slightest bit of carelessness. If he were to be detected by the defensive formation after going in, he would be one thousand percent dead.

Even so, the formations wouldn't be able to stop him, because he also had 'Face of a Thousand Identities'.

He initially thought about entering as the Golden Crow Crown Prince, but after thinking about it, he felt that identity would be too conspicuous. The Golden Crow Guards would probably know if he was in the imperial palace or not. If they saw a Golden Crow Crown Prince walk in from outside when he was supposed to be inside, they would all know there was something wrong.

He thought for a bit, then decided to change into Heichi Ran. That guy's appearance was surprisingly easy to imitate; the hardest part was his pitch-black teeth. Zu An even worried about being unable to completely copy Heichi Ran and considered painting his teeth black with charcoal. However, when he

took out a mirror, he saw that he was completely identical. He was once again amazed by the miraculousness of 'Face of a Thousand Identities'.

Afterward, he found some random passerby to activate the Kawaii Waifu Voice Changer, then strutted through the palace gates.

"Halt!" the guards called out, stopping him. However when they saw who he was, they all bowed respectfully. "So it was Sir Director."

Zu An sighed in relief. He had been worried that Heichi Ran might have left again after escorting the second empress back. Now, it seemed there would be no issue. Thus, he nodded in the way Heichi Ran had before, saying, "I'm going to see the crown prince for something."

He had chosen to change into Heichi Ran precisely because of the man's relationship with the crown prince. Heichi Ran's paternal aunt was the crown prince's birth mother. With such a relationship, it wasn't strange for him to visit the crown prince.

As expected, the guards didn't feel suspicious. They stepped aside and said, "Sir Heichi, please enter."

Zu An hadn't expected things to go that smoothly and walked directly in.

However, as soon as he stepped through the palace gates, a voice called out from behind him. "Wait!"

Zu An was alarmed. As expected, it was too early to feel happy. When he turned around, he saw a golden-armored general walk over with a group of guards. He complained inwardly, This is bad. Even though he could impersonate Heichi Ran, he couldn't copy his memories! He didn't know the guards in the palace at all.

"Sir Heichi, why did you return again?" the general asked. He had a long face, which made it look strangely narrow.

Zu An was startled. He recalled Kong Qing's description of the palace situation and replied, "General Ma, the crown prince needed me for something, so how could I not return?"

"The crown prince was looking for you? Why didn't I hear about this?" the general asked. He didn't question the way he had been addressed, meaning he was the Left Guard General Ma Tian. He glanced outside and asked, "Hm? Why don't I see your attendants?"

Zu An reacted quickly and said, "It's because the matter is classified, so I didn't bring anyone with me."

Ma Tian didn't press the matter when he heard how secret the subject was. After all, Heichi Ran was closer to the crown prince than him. He glanced at the horizon, sounding troubled as he said, "But the palace gates have already closed, and you should know the rules. Outside subjects can't enter after the gate closes unless the Fiend Emperor or the crown prince have given the order."

Zu An protested inwardly, Where the hell am I supposed to get some written orders?

When he saw his troubled expression, Ma Tian didn't want to offend him and asked, "Is Sir Director's concern urgent? If not, please return tomorrow. If it is, why don't I immediately make a report to the crown prince for you?"

Zu An thought to himself, If you make a report to the crown prince, everything will be exposed! And yet, he had no reason to stop him.

However, his mind moved quickly and he suddenly took out something, saying, "I don't have a written order, but the crown prince had someone give this to me."

Pika's Thoughts

Ah yes, the floor is made out of floor.

Chapter 1320: Heartbreaking Words

Ma Tian gave the token a look, then quickly bowed and said, "So it was the crown prince's Golden Crow Token. Sir Heichi, please!"

Zu An had gotten the token from the grandmaster who showed up to protect the Golden Crow Crown Prince after Zu An won, as an invitation to the Fiend King Court. Of course, the grandmaster might not have had good intentions. It was most likely intended to allow the Golden Crow Crown Prince to wash away his earlier shame after Zu An came to the court.

However, they could never have expected Zu An to use it to enter the imperial palace!

Zu An had already noticed that the Golden Crow token Yu Yanluo used and the one he had were different. Later, he had learned that the one that she had was the Golden Crow Token that the Fiend Emperor issued to bring the clan leaders to the Fiend King Court, but apart from that, it didn't have much use. On the contrary, the token Zu An had was the Golden Crow Crown Prince's, which was much more useful.

Zu An sighed in relief. Looks like my luck isn't bad.

He returned Ma Tian's greeting, while also politely refusing the offer to help him deliver the message to the crown prince. Ma Tian didn't press the issue; as the head of palace security, he had a guard bring Zu An over instead.

Zu An secretly examined his surroundings along the way. He noticed that the fiend races' imperial palace was actually quite different from the human race's. Along the way, he saw many fountains and all sorts of sculptures. Almost all of them were depictions of the fiend races' different species, as if the statues were for the purpose of winning over the hearts of those races.

Zu An had no intention to just appreciate the scenery, though. He quickly used the jade badge, engraving the surrounding map into his mind. He had never been inside before, so if he had to flee in the future, he would only have a good chance if he familiarized himself with the layout.

Meanwhile, he found a chance to ask, "By the way, I heard that Princess Snow entered the palace; is that right?"

"That's right. Princess Snow really is pretty, and she is very friendly. She even gave us a smile when she entered through the palace gates this morning," the guard answered with a foolish smile, seemingly still immersed in a beautiful memory from that morning.

Zu An was speechless. Friendly? He really couldn't associate that sharp-tongued young lady with such a description. Ever since he had arrived in the fiend race territory, however, according to the intelligence he had obtained, Snow's reputation among the people was quite high.

My Snow, you absolutely can't let some old freak possess you!

"I heard that she hadn't left the palace yet, though?" Zu An pretended to ask carelessly.

"Right! It seems as if the crown princess candidate is going to be decided today," the guard said with an envious expression, seemingly wishing he were the crown prince.

Zu An was furious, but he didn't dare to show it on the surface. He replied, "Oh? That makes sense, I guess. If she stays the night in the imperial palace, even if nothing happens, the outside world will believe that she's the royal family's woman."

"Exactly!" the guard replied. "Earlier, after Princess Snow paid her respects to the Fiend Emperor, the palace's imperial concubines held her back to chat with her for a while. Later, the crown prince looked for a way to keep her... Heh, the raw rice is going to be fully cooked soon!"

...

Meanwhile, in a remote palace room, a flower vase shattered. A delicate and exquisite figure staggered around, trying to avoid something. She had knocked over the vase while trying to get out of the way. She tried to open the door in her confusion. However, light flickered across it, pushing her away.

The young lady was dressed in an emerald green dress that gave off a sense of brimming natural vitality at a mere glance. Her hair was arranged into many meticulous braids, adorned with an assortment of gorgeous ornaments. Under the illumination of the room's candlelight, they truly looked bright and dazzling.

Not too far away, a well-dressed man slowly walked over. When he saw the young lady's beauty and her unmatched, goddess-like daintiness, he began breathing heavily. He said, "Princess Snow, this residence is special. You cannot leave unless I let you."

The man was, of course, the Golden Crow Crown Prince. Meanwhile, the goddess-like woman was the Elf race's princess, Qiao Xueying.

At that moment, Qiao Xueying's snow-white skin was already covered in an unnatural blush. She said hatefully, "You told me that there was some progress regarding my father's situation and called me over to discuss that, but it was actually just to drug me!"

The Golden Crow Crown Prince wasn't in a rush to close in. Either way, the woman before him was already a thoroughly prepared meal that couldn't fly away. He was more interested in slowly subduing both her body and mind.

"There really is progress, though. As long as you obediently marry me and become the crown princess, your father will become the country's father. How could someone like that be locked up in prison?" he replied. He only felt a greater desire to conquer the woman when he saw her panicked and shy expression.

Hmph, that slut Kong Nanwu actually ran away! Thankfully, Princess Snow is just as beautiful. I'm going to subdue Princess Snow first, then seize Kong Nanwu for my harem after. You're my woman no matter where you run off to!

Qiao Xueying exclaimed with a mix of nervousness and fury, "You are the respected fiend race crown prince, and yet you actually did something as shameful as this!"

"Passionate love between a man and a woman has always been natural to begin with. How can that be considered shameful?" the Golden Crow Crown Prince replied, seemingly disagreeing. "Let alone the fact that both of our parents have already consented to the marriage. Everyone in the fiend race territory already views you as the crown princess. Is it not to be expected for a married couple to become a bit more intimate?"

Qiao Xueying spat furiously, "I didn't agree to it! If they agree, why don't you marry them?!"

The Golden Crow Crown Prince harrumphed. "Do you know how many women in this world want to marry this crown prince? Why do you keep acting as if you don't know what's good for you?"

"Then isn't that perfect? Just go and marry all those girls who want to be with you!" Qiao Xueying cried. She was really starting to be flustered..

"This crown prince doesn't have any interest in them; I like you," the Golden Crow Crown Prince said, carefully admiring the young lady before him. He found her more beautiful the more he looked at her. She wasn't even inferior to the Medusa Queen and those other women he had met in the Snake race's territory before...

His expression stiffened when he thought of that. Pah pah pah! Why am I thinking about that day again? Damn it!

Qiao Xueying asked somewhat helplessly, "Just what part of me do you like? Can't I just change that part?"

The Golden Crow Crown Prince said with a scowl, "My patience has a limit."

Qiao Xueying bit her thin lip. She could only change the topic to stall for time, even though she didn't know what meaning there would be to do that. She asked, "Just how did you poison me? I was clearly extremely careful earlier."

She was no fool, after all. There was no way she would be completely unguarded if the Golden Crow Crown Prince sought her out. Ever since she had arrived, she hadn't eaten a single thing, nor had she drunk a sip of water. How could she have expected she would still be drugged?

The Golden Crow Crown Prince obviously knew that she was stalling for time, but he didn't care. After all, he had abundant time; he had all night to slowly play with her. The longer they delayed, the greater the medicine's effects would be, too. At that point, the woman would feel extremely hot inside.

A strange and fanatical smile appeared on the Golden Crow Crown Prince's face when he thought of that. He said, "Indeed, you were quite guarded. However, you can choose not to eat or drink, but you must breathe, no?"

Qiao Xueying was shocked. Her gaze moved to the calmly burning candle flame and she asked, "Your poison was from a candle?"

"Princess Snow is sharp. As expected of the woman I have chosen," the Golden Crow Crown Prince said.

When he saw the blush on her skin, he felt that her naturally quiet and exquisite beauty was being emphasized with a hint of charming seduction. He began breathing heavily, feeling as if he were already struggling to hold back.

Qiao Xueying really panicked when she saw the crown prince approach step by step. However, her cultivation wasn't a match for the Golden Crow Crown Prince, and she had been drugged. This was his territory, no less. There really was nothing she could do!

However, she suddenly recalled a rumor regarding the Golden Crow Crown Prince and quickly asked, "Didn't you always ask why I didn't want to marry you?"

Sure enough, the Golden Crow Crown Prince was distracted when he heard that, replying, "Why?"

"Because I already have someone I like," Qiao Xueying replied. Zu An appeared in her mind, and she felt aggrieved inside. It looks as if the two of us were destined to meet, but not fated to be together in this life.

The Golden Crow Crown Prince frowned. However, when he looked at Qiao Xueying's fair and alluring appearance in the candlelight, he suppressed the displeasure within him and said, "It doesn't matter. A woman as beautiful as you would naturally have many pursuers. However, you will only belong to this crown prince alone."

If it were any other woman, he would already believe that her thoughts were unclean. Considering Princess Snow's appearance and status, however, it was enough for him to make an exception.

A strange expression appeared on Qiao Xueying's face as she replied, "Did you mishear what I said? I said I already have a man. The two of us have already joined together in perfect harmony..." In order to completely make him give up, she added more frankly, "My body is already completely his shape. Don't tell me you don't mind that?"

"What?!" The Golden Crow Crown Prince felt as if he had heard a thunderbolt strike. His entire body immediately froze in place.