

Immortal 1361

Chapter 1361: Extreme Joy into Extreme Sorrow

After all, such a chaotic, winner-takes-all system not only tested individual strength, but also the connections of the various races—whether or not they had discussed things with the other races beforehand, and were able to work together to fight against a common enemy.

Apart from that, it also tested the candidates' mental strength, as well as their ability to size up the situation. That was why, in such a tournament, the winning candidates often didn't have cultivation ranks as high as the others, but in terms of desperate struggle and scheming, they were without equal. That was why every single fight would usually last a long time before victory and defeat could be decided.

However, Zu An's group had finished so quickly, and in such a dramatic manner.

In the distance, Shi Rong, who had been glancing over from time to time, said, "That guy really has dogshit luck! He actually won by a fluke because of that Giant Maggot race cultivator's skill."

Shi Min's expression was also a bit stiff. In the end, he said, "Do not lower your guard. That Giant Maggot race cultivator is not ordinary. That skill just now was their race's extreme art, 'Shit Mountains Shit Seas[1]'. Both the gas and the liquid are poisonous. Even though you will not die from it, it can make you dizzy and cause you to faint. Furthermore, as long as you still breathe, it is impossible to escape from. It really is difficult to defend against."

"Damn it all! There was actually such a disgusting skill?!" Shi Rong couldn't hold back his curses. It was just too gross.

Shi Gong said in relief, "Fortunately, we were able to adjust the drawing of matchups. We won't end up facing that Giant Maggot race cultivator. Otherwise, even if we won, we could end up puking our own guts out."

Shi Min's face twitched when he saw the yellow liquid everywhere in the distance. He said, "That is indeed the case. However, the way that Yan Zu avoided the skill is clearly quite special. We cannot be careless later."

The other two nodded, but they didn't really agree. They concentrated more of their attention on the Giant Maggot race warrior.

The other races' competitors had similar thoughts.

"How great would it have been if we were in that group? As long as we evaded in time, we could move on without even fighting."

"You should just be grateful for what you have right now. If you were really in that group, you might have already been lying in that yellow pool and eaten your fill of shit."

"Ugh... Can you not be so disgusting? What if my luck had been good enough to let me avoid it?"

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Meanwhile, on Zu An's side, Yun Jianyue and Yan Xuehen both turned around. They didn't want to look at the scene any more than they had to. At the same time, they raised a ki wall around themselves to prevent the foul stench from approaching.

Yan Xuehen couldn't help but shoot Zu An a glare, exclaiming, "Why did you have to hit his freaking stomach?"

Zu An looked wronged, protesting, "I didn't know he would have such a disgusting skill either!"

Yun Jianyue couldn't help but say, "Following you always leads to bad things."

If she had encountered something so gross, she would have already erased it from this world. However, when she recalled its disgusting skill, she couldn't even muster any killing intent. She just didn't want to fight against it.

The Giant Maggot cultivator scratched his head. He said in a simple and honest manner, "Sorry, everyone. I'll clean everything up now."

Then, his stomach shriveled up; he inhaled fiercely, and the sea of yellow liquid was sucked back into his mouth. The ground immediately returned to normal, leaving behind only a faint stench and the others from the group lying around in disarray. He released a long, extremely loud belch of satisfaction after swallowing all of the liquid.

Everyone watching was speechless. Now, even those with the toughest minds couldn't help but bend over and throw up. The individuals who were watching from the most respected seats all broke character too.

Chi Wen cursed, "Why is there someone this gross? He actually eats shit!"

As soon as he spoke, he remembered that he had soaked the thing Zu An scammed him with. He could no longer hold himself back. He turned to one side and began to vomit.

Shang Liuyu had always liked clean environments. She immediately floated into the distance, acting as if she didn't know him.

A woman like Suolun Shi couldn't handle such a scene. With a brush of her sleeves, she left. She didn't want to watch the rest of the competition anymore.

The Peacock Wise King was old and wise. He tried to explain, "This is an innate ability of the Giant Maggot race. In the past, this skill established tremendous achievements in the battle against the human race... Ugh..."

The other contenders seemed to be unable to stand the smell and began to speed up their battles. Soon, the ten winners of each group were decided, much more quickly than in the past.

As for the ones who had drunk their fill of the 'yellow soup', they were all brought to the doctors. As for whether or not they'd just end their lives out of shame, or if it would leave behind trauma, they would have to seek out their own form of spirituality to cleanse themselves.

There were many capable individuals in the fiend races' court. Several officials emerged with darkened faces. They first washed the entire stage with water element techniques, then used flames to sterilize every inch of the ground. Finally, they used powerful winds to eliminate all of the remaining smell.

If it hadn't been the royal family's altar, with their violent temper, they might have just blown the entire place up with fireballs and not gone through all the trouble.

Even so, no one was willing to fight in the plaza anymore. The officials also considered the people's feelings, so they temporarily abandoned the venue. The following competitions were thus carried out in smaller sites.

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The next stage was none other than the knockout competition. If nothing unexpected happened, the Snake race's side would face the Lion race's three princes.

Yun Jianyue's opponent was Shi Min, Yan Xuehen's opponent was Shi Gong, and Zu An's opponent was Shi Rong.

When he saw how Shi Rong kneaded his fists while looking over with an immensely proud smile, Zu An was speechless. This guy definitely chose me on purpose and wants to torment me himself. What a pity! There's a huge 'pleasant surprise' waiting for him.

Since the group stage had ended earlier than in previous years, and the Golden Crow Crown Prince who had been seated on the elevated platform was also a bit impatient to witness the Snake race's misery, the knockout competition started ahead of time.

Cries of complaint immediately rose as a result. Other than Zu An's group, where the ten competitors who made it through hadn't really wasted too much energy, many of the other groups had experienced a bloody battle. They were all wounded to some degree.

Unfortunately, the Golden Crow Crown Prince's mind was already made up. He simply said, "You may be injured, but everyone else is injured too. This is still fair..."

Many people were unhappy, but this individual would become the new Fiend Emperor soon, so no one wanted to offend him. They all took the chance to take some pills and treat their wounds.

The knockout competition began soon afterward. The matches weren't held one at a time, but rather simultaneously for the sake of speed.

Zu An was a bit worried about the two women, and spoke to them before the battle. "Shi Min and Shi Gong are both master ranks, while the two of you are injured. You two have only recovered around nine ranks of strength, so it'll be hard to face them. If the situation looks unfavorable, you should just admit defeat. You're wearing masks anyway, so no one will know who you are."

Yu Yanluo said reassuringly, "Either way, the Snake race has already become used to only having a single delegate seat. We absolutely can't let this matter place you two in danger."

"Admit defeat? I didn't even admit defeat when I was seriously injured by that damn Zhao Han. And yet you think these two little lions are worth it?" Yun Jianyue sneered in disdain.

Zu An was speechless. Why do I feel a sense of déjà vu...

Yan Xuehen explained, "Worry not. It is not as if those with higher cultivations always win. After all, both that witch and I are grandmasters. Our use of power and technique is definitely not something two low-level master rank juniors can compare to. Rather, you are the one who needs to be careful. Do not accidentally expose your identity."

Zu An sighed in relief when he heard Yan Xuehen's explanation. He really had been overthinking things. These two were awe-inspiring grandmasters, after all!

The competition quickly began. Shi Rong walked toward Zu An with a malicious smile and sneered, "Damn brat, you didn't imagine you would run into me again, did you?"

Zu An sighed and replied, "Why wouldn't I be able to imagine something like that? Do you think everyone else is as mentally deficient as you?"

Shi Rong was speechless. Is there something wrong with this guy's head? He still dares to provoke me at this kind of time?!

You have successfully trolled Shi Rong for +666 +666 +666...

"Very good. You've successfully aroused my anger. I'll crush your bones segment by segment, and teach you the consequences of having a shameless mouth," Shi Rong said coldly.

After speaking, he couldn't hold back anymore. He sent a Mad Lion's Hegemon Fist at Zu An.

However, everything before his eyes darkened a second later. He noticed that a foot had appeared in front of his face.

Bang!

Just like that, he was sent flying.

1. A reference to 'nine mountains and eight seas' from Buddhism. 九山八海

Chapter 1362: Suspicion

"What?!"

Forget about Shi Rong, whose head was ringing; even the spectators watching in the distance were completely stupefied.

Almost every person who could join such a general assembly was intelligent. They had immediately realized that something was up when they saw that the Lion race had just happened to draw the same lots as the Snake race. Many of them knew about the conflict between the Lion and Snake races, and assumed the situation had been set up by the Lion race.

Only those who held high authority had realized that the Lion race didn't have enough influence to affect the opponent selection. The only one who had the ability to do such a thing was probably the one seated atop the elevated platform. As such, that battle immediately drew their attention. Some were worried about Zu An's group, but most of them just intended to watch the drama play out.

There were some others who had recently become friendly with Yu Yanluo. However, they were starting to reconsider and weigh their options. After all, if the Snake race ended up offending the next Fiend Emperor, they could end up having to clearly draw a line between the Snake race and themselves.

Previously, apart from Shang Liuyu and a few others, the others had just been waiting to see the Lion race princes viciously beat up the Snake race's competitors. How could they have expected that Shi Rong would immediately be sent flying with a kick?!

The Lion King, Shi Zhentian, had been chatting leisurely to those around him with a smile. When he saw that, he immediately sat up straight. His smile also froze on his face.

Just then, the nearby Hu Qianxiao roared with laughter. "Oh my, I didn't expect the glorious Lion race's prince to actually be instantly defeated by some nobody! Tsk tsk tsk, the Lion race still has the nerve to strut around? You should just change your name to Weak Chicken race in the future!"

In the distance, the Chicken race shot him a look of resentment. What in the world did we do to deserve that?!

Shi Zhentian's face was ashen. He didn't reply and instead roared, "Shi Rong, what were you taught? You should never underestimate your enemy. What in the world are you doing?!"

He had thought that things were already in the bag, which was why he hadn't paid attention to the details in the arena. He had believed that the Snake race's representative had no chance of instantly defeating Shi Rong.

The others suddenly realized what had happened when they heard that. So Shi Rong was just careless! No wonder.

Hu Qianxiao remarked mockingly, "What are you screaming your head off for? What, could it be that you're going to personally go up there to fight in your son's place?"

Shi Zhentian harrumphed and said, "Hu Qianxiao, you should not get excited too early. Who knows, your own son might just end up getting upset too."

"Sorry to inform you, but my sons are all doing quite well. Victory will be decided soon," Hu Qianxiao replied, laughing complacently.

Shi Zhentian glanced over to the side. Sure enough, Hu Yong and the others' opponents couldn't even retaliate at all. They would have no problem seizing victory.

His face twitched when he saw that. He had lost so much face in front of his old nemesis today. Once they got back, he had to give that brat Shi Rong a good beating.

When Shi Rong heard his father's roar, the dizziness that had begun to set in faded, and his head started to clear. He stood up again, his eyes completely red as he stared at Zu An. He bellowed, "You bastard, you're dead for sure now!"

You have successfully trolled Shi Rong for +999 +999 +999...

There were so many people watching, and yet the person he had been looking down on stepped on his face! How could a proud and haughty member of the Lion race possibly take such humiliation?

Zu An smiled and retorted, “So the Lion Race’s renowned ‘Lion’s Roar’ skill is done through shooting your mouth off!”

In the distance, Hu Qianxiao smacked his thigh and cried, “This kid is pretty interesting! I’m starting to like him more and more!”

Shi Zhentian’s face darkened. There was a hint of killing intent in his eyes when he looked at Zu An.

You have successfully trolled Shi Zhentian for +444 +444 +444...

When he saw the incoming Rage points, Zu An gave Shi Zhentian a look. However, he didn’t treat it as a big deal. Either way, after what had happened with Shi Ling and the events in the Jade Garden, their enmity for each other was already set in stone. Tacking on some more didn’t make a difference at all.

“An opening!” Seeing that his opponent had actually looked away during a fight, Shi Rong was shocked and happy. He threw a fist at Zu An, and this time, he didn’t hold back at all. Against someone like this, whom he had such a huge grudge against, so what if he killed his opponent on the spot?

To his surprise, however, Zu An seemed as if he could see the future! He raised a leg and sent a kick at an impossible angle. Shi Rong wanted to dodge, but he found that no matter how he tried to change his own direction, the leg still followed him. Eventually, when he used up his spurt of energy and slowed down for a split second, the opponent’s foot smashed into his face again.

Bang!

Shi Rong fell heavily to the ground like a sandbag, and he was unable to crawl back to his feet for a long time.

“Huh?” Shi Zhentian exclaimed. His brows furrowed. Even though Shi Rong’s cultivation was only at the peak of the ninth rank, making him one of the weaker sons, he was also young. In terms of talent, he was one of the best among his age. And yet, why did it seem as if he didn’t have any strength to retaliate?

Could it be that this opponent is far stronger than him?

According to his observations, though, Zu An’s aura was also around the ninth rank. His cultivation should have been on par with Shi Rong. So how had he done that?

How could he know that Zu An had Yun Jianyue’s Mirror Mirage and Yan Xuehen’s Unshakable Daoist State? Now, his mastery of hiding his aura had already fully matured. Unless he intentionally revealed it, it would be difficult for others to see through to his true strength.

On top of that, he had been able to defeat Shi Rong so easily due to having already fought against Shi Ling, and even the Western Lion, before. He already had a very good understanding of the Mad Lion’s Hegemon Fist.

Shi Rong’s achievements in the skill were still a bit lacking, on top of that. For those who were familiar with the skill, it would be easy to notice the flaws.

How could the Lion race know that this Yan Zu was actually so familiar with one of their ultimate skills, though? The situation only made him seem more suspicious.

"I'm going to fight you to the death!" Shi Rong yelled. As he stood up again, blood came out of his nose and tears came out of his eyes. He charged at Zu An as if he had gone mad.

You have successfully trolled Shi Rong for +999 +999 +999...

Hu Qianxiao roared with laughter when he saw that. "Brother Shi, your beloved son is actually crying from getting beaten up, ahahahaha!"

Shi Zhentian was speechless. His face became completely red. However, the way things were going, he really didn't have the confidence to retort.

Shi Rong screamed miserably as he was sent flying again. All of the weaknesses of his moves had already been exploited by Zu An when he was fighting normally. Now that he had flown into a rage, his moves were riddled with even more holes.

He tried to get back up, but this time, Zu An didn't let him do as he wished. Instead, Zu An stepped firmly on his face, pressing him against the floor.

Shi Rong struggled with everything he had. His fingers even started to draw deep grooves into the floor around him, but his opponent's foot was like a mountain, preventing him from getting back up.

Even though his injuries weren't all that severe, the humiliation he was experiencing was far more than he could take. Filled with anger and panic, he coughed up a mouthful of blood. Then, he fainted.

You have successfully trolled Shi Rong for +1024 +1024 +1024...

Zu An was a bit regretful. Why is this guy so weak?

He had planned to farm some Rage points from this guy, and yet he ended up just fainting?

He was about to find some water to wake Shi Rong up when someone roared in rage, "Stop!"

A terrifying gale swept toward Zu An, unleashing great pressure. His expression turned grave. He was about to defend himself when another figure rushed forth. The two figures exchanged a palm.

Boooooom!

Many competitors nearby were knocked down from the blast wave.

"Brother Shi, the younger generation is having a normal competition here. Don't you think it's inappropriate to interrupt them?" The one who had emerged to protect Zu An was naturally Hu Qianxiao. Seeing the Lion race humiliated so badly felt like eating ice-cold watermelon in the middle of the hottest months of summer! He felt absolutely incredible.

"My clan's Rong'er has already fainted, and yet this scoundrel wanted to kill him. Of course I needed to step forward to stop him," Shi Zhentian said, thinking quickly and finding an excuse.

Zu An shrugged and said, "I only wanted to wake him up. How could I kill him?"

"Would you be that kind? Who would believe that?!" Shi Zhentian spat coldly.

Zu An said with a grin, "They owe me a hundred thousand heaven-grade ki stones, you know? Who's going to pay up if they die?"

Shi Zhentian was speechless.

He had heard about that matter, and had given his three sons a vicious scolding. He had planned to take the chance to cripple the Snake race's people in the arena; in that case, they would simply have to move on. How could he have expected that his own son would be the one to end up almost crippled?

Meanwhile, on the elevated platform, the Golden Crow Crown Prince had a puzzled expression. Since when did the Snake race have someone so capable?

Don't tell me it's none other than that hateful Zu An?

Chapter 1363: Invitation

However, the Golden Crow Crown Prince quickly shook his head.

They don't look similar, nor are their fighting styles similar. Even their auras are different. Looks like that slut Medusa Queen used her beauty to recruit a powerful cultivator from who knows where. That makes things tricky. This might not be enough to force out that Zu An.

This Shi Rong really is trash. At least there's still the stronger Shi Min and Shi Gong. The two of them can at least cripple two of the Snake race's experts, which might still be enough to bring out that hidden Zu An.

He quickly looked at the other two arenas, but then his smile suddenly froze.

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Meanwhile, Hu Qianxiao persisted with his mockery and ridicule, saying, "An honorable clan leader like you personally came down here? To bully the juniors like this, don't you feel even the slightest bit embarrassed for yourself?"

Shi Zhentian found it hard to hold his temper in check after being annoyed by Hu Qianxiao for so long. A vicious glint flickered through his eyes as he replied, "Cease your nonsense. How about exchanging some moves between the two of us?"

"Why not? Why don't we use this chance to see which one of us comes out on top?!" Hu Qianxiao replied. He definitely wouldn't feel any fear in such a situation. His aura also quickly surged.

A fight between them seemed about to break out, but there was no way the court's officials would let them fight there. They quickly rushed forward to stop the two. Some individuals who were on good terms with them also came out to mediate the situation. Only then did the two use that as a pretext to back down.

Shi Zhentian gave Zu An a long look before leaving, saying, "Little fellow, I will remember you."

Zu An said with a big smile, "It's great that you'll remember me. Be sure to pay the hundred thousand heaven-grade ki stones you owe me sooner!"

Shi Zhentian almost staggered and fell. He was a glorious grandmaster, and yet, why didn't this guy feel the slightest bit of fear? He harrumphed, then picked up Shi Rong's completely limp body before flying back to his seat.

You have successfully trolled Shi Zhentian for +444 +444 +444...

Hu Qianxiao's smile was so big the edges of his mouth were about to reach his ears. He asked, "Kid, what's your name?"

"You can call me Yan Zu," Zu An replied. He wasn't the type to turn down a friendly guy. Since this person was showing him good intentions, there was no reason to dislike him.

"Yan Zu, a good name. I have a good impression of you, hahaha," Hu Qianxiao said with a hearty laugh before returning to his seat.

When he returned, he began to mock and provoke Shi Zhentian again. Shi Zhentian was going mad with anger, but he sensibly chose not to pay his rival any attention. The only thing he wanted to see at the moment was his other two sons changing his mood.

Because of what had happened with Shi Rong, he was already furious. As such, he told them through ki transmission, "Min'er, Gong'er, do not show any mercy. Cripple those two Snake race people. It is fine even if you kill them; I will take care of the aftermath."

However, he didn't receive any response. When he looked up, he saw that Shi Gong was lying on the ground, groaning; clearly, he no longer had any strength to continue fighting.

Yan Xuehen simply stood there calmly. Even though her face looked ordinary, she still gave off an aloof and transcendent air, as if she were an untainted immortal from the ninth heaven.

"What the hell?!" Many people rubbed their eyes in disbelief. They hadn't expected they would actually be tempted by such an ordinary-looking woman.

Meanwhile, Shi Min was even worse off. He was lying on the ground, not moving at all. His arms and legs were all twisted at a strange angle; they were clearly broken.

Yun Jianyue stood before him like a world-shaking war goddess! Her wonderful figure and powerful body began to stir even more people's desires.

Many people began to ask around about the Snake race women. Even though they looked ordinary, they both had a mysterious charm, which was already enough to get the onlookers going.

Of course, what shocked them the most was the women's strength. They hadn't expected the two women to defeat the Lion race princes so easily! After all, the two princes were both already at the master rank. Even though they weren't that high up in the master rank, they were still master rank cultivators!

Zu An's fight had drawn most of the onlookers' attention, so they hadn't seen what had happened in the other arenas. The few who had watched the battle were also confused, however. At first, both sides clearly seemed evenly matched at first, but after mere moments, both Lion race princes ended up lying on the ground.

They had seen Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue's movements with their own eyes, and yet they couldn't understand why those simple movements were able to defeat the Lion race princes. It was as if the princes had allowed themselves to get beaten.

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On the elevated platform, the Golden Crow Crown Prince's eyes widened in absolute disbelief. He could believe that Shi Rong's defeat had been because his cultivation wasn't high enough, and the fact that he was still young meant he had more openings. However, Shi Min and Shi Gong were famous young experts. They definitely wouldn't make such rookie-level mistakes.

A single time might have just been a fluke, but three losses in a row? There were no such coincidences in this world.

Just who in the world were those two women? They clearly only had ki fluctuations around the ninth rank, but every time they attacked, their skills seemed extremely mysterious. He couldn't even see through them. Just where had the Medusa Queen found so many powerful cultivators?

No matter how he racked his brains, however, he couldn't associate the two ordinary-looking women with the two stunning beauties who had been with the Snake race before.

Shi Zhentian's body flickered, and he instantly reappeared next to his two sons. When he saw that their lives weren't in danger, he sighed in relief. However, when he saw Shi Min's broken arms and legs, his face couldn't help but darken. He stared at Yun Jianyue and spat, "Venomous woman, you really are vicious."

When she heard the words 'venomous woman', not only did she not get angry, Yun Jianyue even said with a smile, "Thank you for the praise."

Shi Zhentian was speechless. He thought, Why do all these Snake race competitors seem a bit off somehow?

It took him some time before he finally snapped out of his daze, saying, "Brash actions usually come with serious consequences."

As he spoke, he rushed forward in a flash. Yun Jianyue's face darkened; she was about to retaliate, but then a barrier of water appeared between the two of them, blocking Shi Zhentian's way out.

Shi Zhentian suddenly turned around. He saw Shang Liuyu walk over barefoot, every step seemingly creating water ripples. She said, "Lion King, victory and defeat between the different clans' competitors should be decided among themselves. A clan leader personally interfering goes against the rules."

Qiao Xueying also got up and said, "Indeed. Lion King, please conduct yourself with dignity."

Hu Qianxiao also laughed and said, "Brother Shi, it isn't embarrassing to lose, but if you lose and can't admit the loss, that really is utterly humiliating."

Shi Zhentian began breathing heavily. This guy was saying that it wasn't embarrassing to lose, but hadn't he been laughing more happily than anyone else earlier? If not for the fact that the Ocean races' mermaid princess had also stepped forward, he might have already started a fight against Hu Qianxiao.

What is with these Snake race people? They actually obtained the protection of the Ocean races and the Elf race?

He had heard about the Jade Garden event previously and knew that Shang Liuyu seemed to be familiar with the Snake race, but she hadn't acted too close to them. He hadn't expected that she would step forward without any hesitation to help the Snake race. That meant their relationship definitely wasn't ordinary.

What was up with the Elf race, though? If it were just Hu Qianxiao alone, he wouldn't feel any fear. But if the mysterious Ocean races were added to the mix, as well as the powerful Elf King Manor, he would have to reevaluate things.

He suddenly turned around to look at the Golden Crow Crown Prince on the elevated platform. This bastard was the one who had instructed them to face the Snake race, but he had never mentioned that the Snake race would be so difficult to deal with!

The Golden Crow Crown Prince looked a bit unhappy. This damn Lion race trash messed up all of my plans, yet you dare blame this crown prince?!

Shi Zhentian felt as if he had been schemed against. He wasn't going to cause any more trouble before finding out more about the situation. As such, he picked up his two sons and said, "Hmph, I just felt that she was a bit too vicious."

Yun Jianyue said indifferently, "The fact that I didn't take his life already counts as mercy."

Shi Zhentian was speechless.

Now, even Hu Qiantao had a strange expression. What is up with these Snake race people? They're clearly not that strong, and yet every single one of them speaks in such an overbearing manner! Does she know that she's facing a grandmaster?

Just then, the officials who were in charge of maintaining order reacted. They arrived to ask the Lion race's people to leave.

Shi Zhentian harrumphed, then stormed off with a wave of his sleeves. Not only had he been completely embarrassed, all three of his contestants had lost. The powerful and glorious Lion Race was actually left with only a single representative! He definitely had to return and think about how to deal with things. He had to consider what kind of price he would have to pay to buy seats from the other races.

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More and more races came to congratulate Yu Yanluo on her victory. The Snake race had gained four delegate seats. That was something only the most powerful clans had the right to, so of course they had to be on good terms with her.

Meanwhile, Zu An felt quite relaxed. He tried to find a chance to talk to Qiao Xueying, but he was stopped by a maid who said, "Excuse me, young master. Our clan leader requests the pleasure of meeting with you."

"I refuse," Zu An said, waving his hands impatiently. The only thing he wanted was to meet with Qiao Xueying; he wasn't in the mood to meet anyone else.

"My master said that you dirtied her bedsheet, so she needs to have a talk about compensation with you," the maid said calmly.

Zu An was speechless.

Chapter 1364: Empress, You Don't Want Something to Happen to Your Son, Right?

Who else would say something like that, other than the Second Empress?

Zu An thought, It seems she's still brooding over what Snow and I did on her bed.

If he didn't head over, who knew what that woman would do? He could only follow the maid. Fortunately, because there were just too many people at the general meeting, he didn't really have to worry too much about anyone following him.

The maid took him through the crowd, weaving from side to side. Eventually, she arrived at a remote forest near the plaza. There was a carriage parked there, but unlike the gorgeous carriage the Second Empress normally rode in, it was as low-profile as one could get.

"Master, I have brought the guest," the maid said, bowing in front of the carriage.

"Alright. You can withdraw for now," a soft and charming voice replied from inside the carriage.

"Understood." The maid bowed, then withdrew to take watch in the distance.

"You can come in," the seductive voice said.

Zu An was a bit shaken. No wonder people keep talking about how extraordinarily beautiful the Second Empress is. She really is a woman who can make you go crazy.

When he entered the carriage, he sensed a refreshing and penetrating fragrance that filled the air. It was Second Empress' unique fragrance. Zu An thought, Anyone would instantly recognize who she is, right? This kind of enchantment is too unique.

He noticed that the Second Empress' entire body was covered by a black cloak. Even so, he could see her exquisite figure through the voluminous garment.

"Does the empress need this subject for something?" Zu An asked. He was still wearing his mask, so he didn't know whether she was really looking for him.

"Your mask is surprisingly intricate. I actually cannot detect any sign of one at all," the Second Empress said, gently brushing a finger across his face. It was ice-cold to the touch and extremely soft.

Zu An quickly dodged backward. He replied with a straight face, "I wonder what Second Empress is talking about?"

"Since you came here, that means my suspicions are correct. I am the empress of a country, after all; this bit of investigation is still within my abilities," the Second Empress said with a smile. She continued, "Take off your mask already. Your real face is a bit more pleasing to look at."

Zu An knew he couldn't fool her and removed the mask. He sighed and said, "If you need me for something, then just come looking for me. Do you have to use that kind of pretext?"

"If not for that, would you have obediently come here?" the Second Empress replied, also lowering the hood of her cloak. The carriage interior immediately brightened despite its plain and simple appearance.

This woman really is something, Zu An thought with a sigh. However, in his current state, he naturally wouldn't be bewitched by beauty. He quickly snapped out of his daze and said, "You told something so private to your maid. Aren't you scared of any unwanted information leaking out?"

After all, if such a matter were exposed, forget about putting him and Snow in danger, not even the Second Empress would be able to handle the consequences. Furthermore, even if it weren't exposed, just that sentence would start a huge controversy if it were heard by others. Other people could even end up suspecting that there was something between the two of them.

"Don't worry, no one will believe a few maids," the Second Empress said calmly. She was clearly unworried.

Zu An knew that she was an intelligent woman. Since she had said that, it meant there was no problem. He asked, "What does the empress need me for?"

"What if I just missed you?" the Second Empress replied. She leaned against the window and rested her chin in one hand. Her body really was incredibly supple and strong.

Zu An couldn't help but chuckle, saying, "If the Fiend Emperor heard that, he might feel a bit hurt." No matter how conceited he was, he wouldn't believe that the Second Empress felt anything for him after just a few meetings.

"How can you be so cruel? I am being so sincere, and yet you are so cold and heartless!" the Second Empress replied resentfully.

Zu An raised a brow and replied, "Oh? In that case, let's not waste any time. Let's get a bit more intimate right now." He reached out to hug her as soon as he spoke.

The Second Empress' back arched backward as she avoided him. She said, "I just wanted to talk to you, and yet you are in such a rush for lust. I have really misjudged you." Her eyes had even started to become a bit red, as if she were extremely disappointed in him.

"Empress, we're all experienced people here, so let's not play these kinds of games. If you have something to say, please just say it," Zu An replied. If he were still inexperienced, he really might have been toyed with in the center of her palm.

"What an uninteresting man." The Second Empress harrumphed. Then, her frivolous smile gave way to a serious expression. She asked, "You still remember that you owe me a favor, right?"

"Yes. I'll work like an ox to repay the empress' favor," Zu An replied, looking at her with a smile. If she hadn't saved him that night, he and Snow might have been done for, back at the imperial palace.

"Work like an ox?" the Second Empress replied, blushing. "You are up to no good after all. You are still trying to take advantage of me even now."

Zu An was speechless. He had just said that on a whim; he really hadn't had any such thoughts when he said that. This woman is also an experienced veteran if she can even think along those lines.

The Second Empress' expression turned grave as she said, "There is no need for you to work like an ox. There just happens to be something I need your help with."

“What is it?” Zu An asked. He didn’t dare to show any carelessness. If the task was something even she couldn’t take care of, it definitely wouldn’t be easy.

The Second Empress lifted a corner of the curtain and looked in the direction of the altar. She said, “The succession ceremony is going to start tomorrow. The crown prince will become the new Fiend Emperor then. I heard about what happened in the arena today. The crown prince and the Snake race clearly do not get along with each other. If he becomes the Fiend Emperor, you will not have a good end.”

Zu An smiled and replied, “The Second Empress speaks too harshly. The Snake race is a great clan, after all; don’t tell me he’d dare to just eradicate us? There are so many clan leaders watching. He wouldn’t be so foolish as to cause the fiend races to fall apart, would he?”

“He wouldn’t eradicate the Snake race, but getting rid of the Medusa Queen and your group wouldn’t be a problem at all,” the Second Empress said. She had clearly done her homework beforehand. She continued, “Furthermore, your Snake race’s internal politics are unstable. Elders White and Blue have the real authority in the clan. As long as the crown prince supported them a bit, it would not be too hard at all to borrow them to eliminate the Medusa Queen.”

Zu An frowned. That would actually be quite troublesome. It wouldn’t be that big of a deal if it were just Elders White and Blue, but there was no way to stop the crown prince. If he became the Fiend Emperor, he would have too many methods to deal with Yu Yanluo.

When she saw him start to think to himself, a faint smile appeared on the Second Empress’ face. She said, “Apart from the Medusa Empress, the matter of you and Princess Snow needs to remain a secret too. If he becomes the Fiend Emperor, Princess Snow will be unable to refuse an invitation into his harem. If she does not go, will be going against the imperial decree. If she does go... I think I have no need to explain anything.”

Zu An harrumphed. “Did the Second Empress forget to mention something else? If the crown prince ascended to the throne, where would such a young empress like you go? Could it be that you really think he would respect you as an empress? The Golden Crow Crown Prince is quite lascivious, and the empress is so stunning. If he barged into your chambers in the middle of the night and said ‘Empress Dowager, you don’t want anything to happen to your son, right’, what would you do?”

“You bastard!” the Second Empress cried, her face turning completely red. Apart from helping her own son, she had decided to act precisely because she was worried about such a situation. However, she had no idea where this kid had learned to talk the way he did; his descriptions were just way too realistic! She even shivered a bit when she imagined the situation.

Zu An shrugged and said, “That’s why you’re clearly more worried than me, so why does it sound as if you’re trying to help me?”

The Second Empress took a few deep breaths before her rapidly rising and falling chest finally settled down. She replied, “Then, let us not beat around the bush. Our interests actually align in this case. Otherwise, if the crown prince entered the Imperial Tomb and the dust settled, neither of us would benefit. You should not act too smug, though. If that really happened, I would immediately report your affair with Princess Snow. Then, I would likely just experience a bit of humiliation, while you, Princess Snow, and the Medusa Queen would really meet tragic ends.”

Zu An suddenly sat up straight. Did I just hear the words 'Imperial Tomb'?

The Unknown Region was also in the Imperial Tomb! He had just been worried about how he would get in there.

Chapter 1365: Luring Through Benefits

However, Zu An didn't reveal what he was thinking as he replied, "Doesn't your highness think too highly of me? The Fiend Emperor is the glorious second most powerful individual in the entire world. If he wants to pass on his position to the Golden Crow Crown Prince, how could I possibly stop something like that?"

Seeing that Zu An no longer refused as firmly as he previously had, the Second Empress smiled. She said, "You have misunderstood. I am not telling you to stop the Fiend Emperor. After all, there is no one in this world with such skill. Instead, I want you to stop the Golden Crow Crown Prince."

Zu An frowned and asked, "Is there a difference between the two?"

"Of course there is a difference," the Second Empress said, straightening her back and pointing in a certain direction. She explained, "The so-called inheritance ceremony entails bringing the Golden Crow Crown Prince into the Imperial Tomb. There, he will obtain the acknowledgment of the previous Fiend Emperors. Then, the Fiend Emperor will pass on his cultivation to him. In that time, the Fiend Emperor will not be at his side, so as long as you can stop the Golden Crow Crown Prince from receiving the acknowledgment of the other Fiend Emperors, that should be enough."

Zu An sighed inwardly. This woman was already married and had a child, and yet she was still as alluring as a young lady. He had no idea how she managed it. However, he wasn't taken in by her charm and instead remained extremely rational. He replied, "Even though the current Fiend Emperor isn't there, don't the previous Fiend Emperors' heroic spirits still remain? Isn't that just courting death?"

The Second Empress shook her head and said, "It is not what you think. The so-called fiend races' heroic spirits are just a rumor. How could they possibly still exist now? Not even a heroic spirit would last for so long."

Zu An thought to himself, I've seen one that has lived for so long.

When she saw him fall silent, the Second Empress continued, "According to my investigations over the years, the so-called acknowledgment of the Fiend Emperor ancestors is just a formality. Apart from the single failure they once experienced, they always claim that each candidate has received acknowledgment. Additionally, if you think about it, if the fiend races' heroic spirits still existed, why would the fiend races have been chased by the human race all the way to this barren land?"

Zu An figured that made sense as well. He asked, "And what happened to that pitiful guy who was the one 'failure'?"

"He was nothing more than the sacrificial lamb used in a struggle over the throne, so they just said that the heroic spirits of past Fiend Emperors were unwilling to acknowledge him," the Second Empress explained. "It is because of that example that I have enough confidence to send you to stop the Golden Crow Crown Prince. Otherwise, I would just be mad."

“And what’s your proposed plan to ‘stop’ the crown prince?” Zu An asked seriously.

“The best choice is naturally to just kill him once you’re inside,” the Second Empress answered. When she noticed Zu An’s change in expression, she smiled sweetly and replied, “WOrry not. Why would I send you into a hopeless situation? When the time comes, you will not need to kill him. You only need to beat him black and blue. Of course, it would be even better if you left him with some clearly visible injuries. That way, I could use it as a pretext to start something, citing that as proof that he did not receive the recognition of the previous Fiend Emperors.”

Zu An thought to himself, This woman really is a deep schemer! It wouldn’t matter how the Golden Crow Crown Prince tried to argue against it then. After all, if people all saw him enter while perfectly alright, and he came back in a sorry state, that would mean the Fiend Emperors didn’t approve and shelter him.

“You’ve been the empress for so many years already, so you definitely have your own faction with quite a few capable individuals among them. Why do you have to choose me?” he asked. Because of the Unknown Region, he actually wanted to use the situation as a pretext to go out on a trip. However, he had to clarify the situation, or else he could end up as a happily scammed victim.

“I do have some people, but most of the major forces in the Fiend King Court know what is going on. The Fiend Emperor probably has an idea too. So, if I send them, no matter what happens, the Fiend Emperor will definitely know that I was the one causing trouble. From there on, forget about bringing down the crown prince, I might even end up in danger myself,” the Second Empress said, staring at Zu An with her long and bewitching eyes. She continued, “However, you are different. You do not have any kind of relationship with me on the surface, nor do you belong to any faction in the Fiend King Court. When the time comes, it will be easier for others to believe that it was just heaven’s will.”

She then added, “Furthermore, the Golden Crow Crown Prince is actually extremely talented. Forget about the younger generation, few people can match him even in the previous generation. There is likely no one else who could defeat him inside the Imperial Tomb.”

“Your highness overpraises me.” Zu An harrumphed. He continued, “The Imperial Tomb’s security is extremely strict, and there are all kinds of killing formations inside. I have no intention of throwing my life away.”

“You don’t need to worry about that,” the Second Empress said, handing him a token. She explained, “With this on you, the killing formations near you will not act against you. Even if you run into any guards, you can continue without being obstructed.”

Then, she took out a few sets of clothes from beneath her chair and added, “Of course, just in case, you can wear these Golden Crow Guard clothes. These are the clothes that only the Fiend Emperor’s most trusted aides can wear. With these two items, no one will stop you.”

Zu An was speechless. He replied, “By preparing all of this, it seems as if you were already certain that I’d agree, right?”

The Second Empress grinned and said, “That night, I had to hear the two of you go at it all night. If you wish to live along with Princess Snow, and if you want to protect that Medusa Queen, there is no reason

for you to want the Golden Crow Crown Prince on the throne. That is, unless you are an ungrateful and fickle person.”

Afterward, she paused for a moment. She moved close to Zu An’s face and looked at him with an ambiguous smile, asking, “Are you?”

At such a distance, the Second Empress’ perfect complexion was in full view. It didn’t carry a single blemish, and she exuded an alarming sense of temptation. Zu An could even clearly smell the natural fragrance coming from her body.

However, Zu An didn’t become flustered at all and said, “Please put away your enticing games. If you really want to make me fall for that, these small tricks aren’t enough to get me excited.”

The Second Empress smiled and said, “Of course I know that. You are someone who dared to press the crown princess-to-be beneath you on this empress’ bed and wantonly vent out your feelings towards her, so you must be shockingly brave. If you complete this task, the Second Imperial Prince is still young and will need help controlling the broader situation. You, as well as the Elf race and Snake race behind you, would be the best candidates. Who knows, you could even end up becoming the Second Empress’ imperial brother, you know?”

The term ‘imperial brother’ was a bit hard to describe. For example, there were Lu Buwei and Ying Zheng, Zhang Jizheng and Wan Li, Dorgon and Fulin...

It was often the case that a young Empress Dowager would join forces with a powerful subject to help a younger emperor maintain his position. Meanwhile, however, illicit things often went on between the Empress Dowager and the subject.

Zu An thought to himself, This woman really is good at this stuff. Even though he knew that what she was saying was false, any man’s heart rate would inevitably speed up from such an offer..

“Blank checks shouldn’t be recklessly written. I’ll take these things for now. I’ll return and think more about it,” he said, taking the token and the Golden Crow Guard uniform.

The Second Empress’ expression changed a bit. She said, “This matter is extremely important. If you do not give me a reply now and just take the items, how am I supposed to deal with the following issues?”

Zu An gave her a calm look and replied, “Could it be that you still have another candidate?”

The Second Empress’ expression changed. This matter was something she had already planned for a long time. She really did have some other candidates. Whether in terms of their cultivation or scheming ability, they were far inferior to the man before her. That made the chance of failure much greater. In that case, she could opt not to do anything to avoid bringing danger onto herself.

When she thought through all of that, she sighed in relief and said, “That makes sense as well. I believe you will make the right choice. We are natural allies.”

Zu An didn’t comment on that and instead bid her farewell.

Once he left, the maid from earlier walked up to the carriage and asked, “Your highness, are we letting him go just like that?”

The Second Empress had an enchanting smile on her face as she watched Zu An leave, saying, "Worry not. I trust him."

...

Meanwhile, Zu An put his mask back on and returned to the plaza. He then finally found a chance to chat with Snow. They shared stories of things that had happened since that night. He finally sighed in relief when he heard that she wasn't actually in any danger.

Since there were many pairs of eyes watching, the two couldn't really say too much to each other. After talking for a bit, they separated for the time being.

Once he returned to the Snake race's territory, Yun Jianyue frowned and asked, "Where did you run off to just now? Huh? Why is there such a girly smell on you? Did you go somewhere to cheat again?"

Yan Xuehen also looked at Zu An expressionlessly.

Zu An was speechless. Does this woman have the nose of a damn dog?!

Yu Yanluo said with a smile, "I actually feel that this smell is actually quite good, and it is also extremely special. I seem to have smelled it somewhere before..."

The three women all reacted at the same time.

"The Second Empress!"

After all, the Second Empress had passed by their group back by the palace gate.

Zu An gestured for them to be quiet, hissing, "Do you all want me dead or something?!"

Only then did he give them a rough account of what had just happened.

When they learned that the two hadn't had the type of private meeting they envisioned, their expressions became a bit better. Yun Jianyue even remarked, "What are you still hesitating over, then? This is such a great opportunity. Just go already!"

Chapter 1366: There Is More Than a Single Knife Poking Against Your Back

"That is far too dangerous, though. The Imperial Tomb is full of killing intent, and no one knows what the situation inside is like. And what is the truth behind the so-called Fiend Emperors' heroic spirits?" Yan Xuehen replied, shaking her head. "Furthermore, the succession ceremony is such a huge event; there is no way the Fiend Emperor would not get involved. At that point, if you really did something to the Golden Crow Crown Prince, even if you could escape from the Imperial Tomb, you would still end up suffering from the Fiend Emperor's pursuit..."

Yan Xuehen was stunned by the fact that she had said so much. She suddenly realized that she was worried about Zu An's safety. For fear of drawing the other girls' attention, she quickly added, "That would also implicate the Snake and Elf races."

Yu Yanluo frowned. Even though she didn't like living in the fiend race territories that much, she didn't wish for the Snake race to be destroyed because of her.

Yun Jianyue rolled her eyes and replied, "Stone cold woman, are you an idiot? We're just going in, so why do we have to mess with the crown prince and get involved in the succession fight? Can't we just borrow the token and clothes the Second Empress provided to head inside, and leave it at that?"

Yan Xuehen was stupefied. She couldn't even be bothered to pay attention to the insult. She slowly replied, "That kind of thing is... possible?"

Yu Yanluo gave Yun Jianyue a strange look. The Devil Sect really plays by all means, both fair and foul. This really is... shameless.

Still, she approved of that approach, because it was definitely the most suitable method.

"Why are you all looking at me like this?" Yun Jianyue asked a bit unhappily. "Did you all have childhoods that were a bit too sheltered or something? Isn't this the choice that makes the most sense? I'm sure the Second Empress doesn't intend for Little An to become some kind of 'imperial brother', and will just silence him as her first objective afterward. She might even use him to calm the hearts of the crown prince's faction later."

Zu An couldn't help but sigh with praise, saying, "Big sis Yun, you really are the most realistic and sober one of us all..."

Even though he had his own suspicions, his interactions with the Second Empress had actually been quite agreeable. It was hard for him to develop resentment for her due to her sweet and soft voice, so he had subconsciously never considered the absolute worst case scenario.

None of them were idiots. Now that Yun Jianyue had offered such an analysis, they immediately realized that she had described the most likely possibility.

Yu Yanluo nodded and said, "Indeed. In that case, we can't let her use us. We should exploit her first."

Zu An said somewhat worriedly, "But if the Golden Crow Crown Prince rises to the throne smoothly, I fear that he definitely wouldn't treat you well."

As for Snow, it was still alright. He would just take her far away if he had to. The Elf race was a king race to begin with. No matter how dissatisfied the Golden Crow Crown Prince was, he wouldn't dare to do anything to the Elf race.

"It's fine," Yu Yanluo said with a warm smile. "You'll already be back in the human world tomorrow. You won't have anything to do with our Snake race anymore. Furthermore, the Snake race is in a fairly secluded place, and we're a vigorous and tough race. Even if he tries to do something to us, he'll have to consider the effects it will have on the other races. He'll just play some dirty tricks at most. We'll just have to deal with those situations as they happen."

"Tsk tsk tsk, what a meticulous and careful flower we have here," Yun Jianyue said. She couldn't hold herself back from pinching Yu Yanluo's cheek. How could any man in the world resist a woman who was so beautiful and good at understanding others?

Yan Xuehen seemed a bit absent-minded. At that moment, it was hard to know what she was thinking.

...

When they returned to the Snake race's courtyard, they all tried to get as much rest as they could.

At first, Zu An wanted to keep Yu Yanluo from heading inside to provide support, because the Imperial Tomb was too dangerous. To his surprise, however, she refused that role no matter what, saying that a husband and wife had to stick together. She wasn't willing to stay in a safe place while her man would have to face danger. Zu An couldn't convince her otherwise and could only agree.

When she saw the two going back and forth like that, Yan Xuehen left with an emotionless expression. Yun Jianyue was also quite unhappy after being forced to watch the public display of affection. She muttered complaints and left too.

The Imperial Tomb would only open up right before the Golden Crow Crown Prince entered. If Zu An went over immediately, even if he had the token, he would be seen as suspicious. As such, they all returned to their own rooms to get some rest in preparation for the next day's adventure.

Yu Yanluo went with Maid Xing to arrange for external support after they were finished. She also left instructions on what to do if she never came back, and what to do with the Snake race and Yu clan. Maid Xing ended up being overcome with tears.

Meanwhile, Zu An returned to his room. He was almost as nervous as he had been before his college entrance exam. Just as looking at any more books or test papers the night before the test was completely useless, cultivating any further at that moment was also pointless.

However, there was still something he could still give a try, which was his Rage point system. Maybe it was just all in his mind, but he always felt that single pulls weren't all that great and that the ten multi-pull was easier to get lucky with. That was why he usually saved up quite a few Rage points first before trying his luck.

He was going to enter the Imperial Tomb tomorrow. Even though he had already experienced all kinds of things already, he didn't have any confidence this time. So, having a bit more strength to count on would still be good.

He washed his face and hands first as usual, then took out the assorted incense and other tools that he had already gathered a long time ago. There were even a few extra saucers to arrange all sorts of offerings. He made a spiritual prayer, then began his pulls.

The amount he had collected this time was quite sizable. He had a total of 621,375 points.

Zu An immediately pressed the key to start the lottery. As he saw the 'Thank you for playing' and 'Congratulations, you have won a Ki Fruit' messages flash by, his excitement quickly faded.

Only later, when the keyboard's flashing indicator stopped over the 'T' key, did he become madly excited.

Congratulations on winning the Goldensnake King's Eye!

"Goldensnake King's Eye? What is this?" Zu An exclaimed in confusion. Was it something similar to the Medusa's Eye? He wondered what kind of use it had. He quickly scrolled down to the skill description.

Goldensnake King's Eye skill description: At a certain moment in spacetime, there was a saying that went, 'The moment the Goldensnake King even glances at you, you've already been greened'.

Zu An was speechless. The hell is this?

Don't tell me you can steal someone's chastity with just a look or something?

He quickly continued reading.

Skill effect: When used on a couple or a pair of lovers, it will make them think that you cheated on their partner.

Friendly reminder: Beware of getting beaten when you use this skill.

Zu An was speechless. Damn, what kind of skill is this? What can I even do with this kind of thing?

Even if he intended to cheat, the fun was in the cheating! Why the hell would anyone want to let the other person find out?!

He noticed that the skill also had a second implication. It seemed to be able to make women think that their husbands or lovers had cheated on them... Is that even freaking okay?

Zu An couldn't help but shiver when he thought of that. I'll probably never use this skill on a woman in my entire life.

Even with the great event encroaching, he had only ended up getting this damned skill, so Zu An's mood became a bit worse. However, he continued to pull on the lottery. The light indicator flew to and fro, giving him more ki fruits and 'thank you' messages. His mood became even colder than the roaring wind and snow outside.

"Deities and buddhas, I prepared so many offerings for you. You can't just let me down like this, right?" Zu An muttered as he saw the number of pulls he could do rapidly decrease. He thought to himself, Should I not go through all this effort in the future?

Maybe it was a coincidence, but as soon as he spoke, the light indicator stopped over the 'K' key. Zu An's mood immediately lifted.

Congratulations on winning the Ikuu Experience Card!

What kind of stupid name is that? Huh? Why does this pronunciation sound a bit familiar?

He quickly continued reading the words on the screen.

Ikuu Experience Card skill description: If your back hurts, it might not be because of a blade. If you are screaming your heart and lungs out, it might not be because of pain. What rests on your shoulders might not necessarily be responsibility. Things you are forced to learn might not be a lesson!

Skill effect: Only effective on men. Once a target is selected, it will force them to experience a woman's perspective. They will feel as if they were being powerfully filled by a strong and robust man. One of the four scenarios above will be chosen, and they will continue to scream 'Ikuu ikuu~'.

Note: This skill is ineffective against those without any intimate experiences.

Zu An's jaw nearly dropped onto the ground when he saw the skill's description.

You know what, you win. What the hell is this? There really are all sorts of ridiculous skills...

Chapter 1367: Executed Without Exception

If one were to say that these skills were completely useless... No, they had some use. And yet, if one were to say that they were useful... No, they really weren't all that useful.

Still, Zu An had already gotten used to that over the years. If it weren't a freaking scam, it wouldn't be a skill from the Keyboard System. However, if the skills were used in an appropriate situation, they would often prove extremely useful.

Zu An had previously had some idea of where he could use the previous skills, but this time, he couldn't think of anything at all, no matter how he tried.

Sigh, it's better than nothing, I guess.

Zu An could only console himself that way. Then, he began to search through the other things he had obtained from the pulls this time. He had obtained a total of 608 Ki Fruits and nothing else. He was a bit regretful to find that unfortunately, there were no Tiger Talismans. It would have been great if he could get some more valkyries.

Then, he summoned Daji and Mo Xi. He initially wanted to raise Mo Xi's level a bit, but when he saw the wild and arrogant expression in her eyes, Zu An gave up on that thought. He'd give her some once she actually did some work for him. This woman liked that kind of business exchange, anyway. If there were no ki fruits, he wouldn't necessarily be able to make her do a thing.

Hmph, Daji is so much better!

He still had 306 Ki Fruits that he hadn't used the last time. Together with the amount he had just gotten, he had 914 in total. After some hesitation, though, he didn't use them in the end. They weren't enough to bring Daji to the eighth rank, so it wasn't worth the cost.

After all, all the opponents he would face in the Imperial Tomb were going to be incredibly powerful. Increasing Daji's skills by that tiny amount wouldn't do much. For some reason, he felt that saving the Ki Fruits would be the best choice.

He chatted with Daji and Mo Xi for a bit. Of course, he was the only one talking, while the two valkyries listened quietly. Even though he knew that the two valkyries didn't have souls at the moment, he felt that doing so would bring them closer to him.

Unfortunately, without any true communication, the effectiveness of such one-way 'conversation' was just a bit too low.

...

A night passed just like that. The next day, Zu An met the three women. They all had frowns on their faces.

There's a different smell on him. Did he secretly seek out Yu Yanluo last night? Even though Yan Xuehen knew that the two were lovers, and that it was normal even if they did something, her mood was still strange.

Yun Jianyue cursed, "You damn brat, what are you using all of your strength before a great battle for? Utter nonsense." If she hadn't been worried about Yu Yanluo's feelings, she would have already showered Zu An with curses.

Yu Yanluo was also confused. She knew that Zu An hadn't been with her last night. Just who had he been with, for him to have that kind of smell on him? Yun Jianyue or Yan Xuehen?

She managed to scare herself with that sudden thought. Those two were both among the very strongest in the world. Furthermore, with their personalities, it really was hard to imagine them having any such interactions with another man.

The three of them all became suspicious. The mood was bizarre. However, Zu An just assumed they were all a bit nervous before the great battle and didn't think too much about it.

...

They moved closer to the Imperial Tomb, where all sorts of races had gathered for a long and complicated procedure with a litany of rituals. The main idea was that the representatives would praise the crown prince for his integrity and talent, and affirm that he was going to become the next Fiend Emperor. Before that, however, he would have to enter the Imperial Tomb and undergo the tests of the previous ancestors.

After giving their praises, the representatives of the different races left, because based on past experience, the trial would take a single day at least, and several days at most. There was no need to stand outside at all. Furthermore, there was no such thing as a failure, so they knew it was just a formality. As such, the major figures of the different races didn't want to just idle around outside. Leaving behind their trusted aides to await further news was already giving the royal family enough face.

Zu An took the chance to confirm some things with the women.

Just then, the Second Empress asked through ki, "What is your decision?"

Zu An looked up at the elevated platform. The luxuriously dressed Second Empress was naturally graceful and stunning like a peony. She was clearly speaking to him, and yet she didn't look in his direction at all.

"Your highness really is composed. You're actually asking that kind of question at this kind of time," Zu An said with a chuckle.

When she noticed that Zu An could still transmit his voice clearly at such a distance, the Second Empress became more confident in his strength. She replied, "Who says I am composed? I wanted to ask you earlier, but the Fiend Emperor was present then. If I had sent a ki transmission then, there would be no way it could escape his detection."

"So you'll only speak to me once your husband leaves? That hurts," Zu An replied, feigning a sigh.

The Second Empress had a strange smile as she remarked, "Damn kid, you even dare to provoke me? You make it sound as if we are adulterers or something."

"Yesterday, didn't you say you would have the Second Crown Prince make me his imperial brother or something? Why are you backing out so quickly?" Zu An replied, sounding dissatisfied.

The Second Empress smiled in a lovable manner, replying, "I said that would happen once the task is complete. It sounds as if you agree, then."

Zu An said with a sigh, "Your highness is an incredible beauty. What man in this world could refuse you?"

In truth, he was going because it was an Unknown Region. If this vixen wanted to put on an act, he would just play along. Let's see who goes down first.

A slight blush appeared on the Second Empress' face. She replied, "You have so many beauties at your side, so why would you favor an old woman like me?"

"If your highness is an old woman, the other older women in this world would smile and laugh even in their dreams," Zu An replied. Meanwhile, he discussed the details with the other three women even while dealing with the Second Empress. He was in awe of his own skills at multitasking.

"Your tongue really is sweet. No wonder you have so many beautiful women around you." The Second Empress harrumphed. "The crown prince has already begun to move, so you should start setting out as well. Once this matter is over, this empress will invite you to my chambers for a slow chat."

Even though her voice was full of allure, there was a cold glint in her eyes. After something so big, how could she possibly spare his life? This damn kid really must think that this empress is a fickle woman!

Of course, she didn't mind using her own beauty as a fake ticket if it would make Zu An complete the mission with greater motivation.

Zu An pretended to be overjoyed to hear that turn of events. He replied, "I'll remember your highness' words! You can't go back on them later!"

"You are so annoying... I am already in the same boat as you, so how could I possibly go back on my words?" The Second Empress pouted playfully and said, "Then, I wish you a smooth journey."

"Your highness just needs to wait for my return," Zu An replied with a chuckle. He brought the three women toward the Imperial Tomb's hillside.

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"That kid has such a lowly smirk on his face. He's definitely thinking some bad thoughts." Yun Jianyue harrumphed.

Yan Xuehen remained expressionless as she replied, "He was probably chatting with the Second Empress just now, right?"

Yu Yanluo had an ambiguous smile as she asked, "What were they chatting about so happily?"

Zu An immediately began to sweat buckets. He thought he had done everything seamlessly, and yet these women had actually already noticed it. Why are all the women around me so freaking sharp?

"Ahem, we were talking about the details of the Imperial Tomb," he said. He naturally wouldn't be so stupid as to explain the details of the conversation. That really would create a hell battleground!

"Oh, it'll be much easier for us if she knows about the situation inside the Imperial Tomb," Yun Jianyue said. She was happy to hear that, and looked at him expectantly.

Zu An replied, "She's never entered the Imperial Tomb either and doesn't know much about the situation inside. She only told us that the guards and the killing formations in that direction are weaker, so we should enter from that side."

"You don't even know what the inside of the Imperial Tomb is like, and yet you were still chatting with her so happily?" Yun Jianyue exclaimed, looking extremely annoyed.

Yan Xuehen said, "Actually, we might not have to enter the Imperial Tomb. Our objective is the Unknown Region. We should just follow the map."

Yu Yanluo's eyes lit up as she remarked, "As expected of big sis Yan. I've been worrying about the inside of the Imperial Tomb the entire time."

Yan Xuehen chuckled and said, "It is still too early to feel happy. Who knows, the Unknown Region might be inside the Imperial Tomb, so we might still have to go in."

"Let's just take it one step at a time. It's useless thinking about all of this now," Yu Yanluo said. She looked at Yan Xuehen and continued, "Big sis Yan, your smile really is pretty. You've been smiling much more recently. This version of you is so much better."

Yan Xuehen was stunned. I've been smiling more recently?

"She never used to do that. Otherwise, why would I call her a stone cold woman?" Yun Jianyue harrumphed. "It's really strange now that I think about it. I've already known her for so many years, and yet she's smiled more recently than in her entire life before now. Did she recently hit puberty or something?"

"That's nonsense!" Yan Xuehen cried, her heart rate speeding up. She frowned.

Zu An was worried that their relationship could be exposed if the conversation went further. He quickly said, "Ahem, let's hurry and change clothes. We need to seize the moment."

Yun Jianyue's expression turned strange. "You're only making us change now? Damn kid, are you doing this on purpose to see us change clothes?"

When she said that, she suddenly remembered that he had already seen her completely. A blush spread across her normally dignified expression.

"Uh... Weren't we in that ceremony earlier? How could we have changed ahead of time?" Zu An replied. He took out the clothes and handed them to the women. "Don't worry, I'll use my divine sense to watch the surroundings for you. I won't let anyone see you all."

"You're not allowed to use your divine sense!" the three women blurted out at the same time. The one they were most guarded against was him!

In the end, in order to prove his own innocence, Zu An didn't turn around from start to finish. The three women were all experts, so they changed clothes almost instantly. There weren't any unnecessary scenes at all.

Then, the four of them headed toward the mountain where the Imperial Tomb was. Soon afterward, a troop of soldiers suddenly appeared and surrounded them, calling out, "The crown prince is experiencing his trial right now. All who trespass shall be executed without exception!"

Chapter 1368: Worst Case Situation

After they spoke, they drew their weapons and prepared to attack, but Zu An quickly took out his token.

"Huh?" The leader of the group voiced his surprise when he saw the token. He quickly stopped his subordinates and asked, "What brings you respected individuals here?"

"The court has been rather turbulent recently. We came on the Fiend Emperor's orders to secretly watch over the crown prince to prevent anything unexpected from happening," Zu An replied coldly. He had previously acted as an Imperial Envoy in the human world's Imperial Palace, so his behavior was professional.

Sure enough, the leader didn't suspect him and quickly stepped aside, saying, "Please come inside."

Just then, someone who looked like a deputy leader quickly stopped them and protested, "Leader, we didn't receive any orders like that!"

The leader quickly pulled his assistant aside and replied, "Are you stupid? Do you not recognize their uniform? Those are the Fiend Emperor's personal Golden Crow Guards! Apart from the Fiend Emperor himself, no one can make them do anything! Furthermore, they even have such a high-level Golden Crow Token that can get rid of all of the formations. Apart from someone acting under the Fiend Emperor's decree, who else would have this kind type of ability?"

The deputy leader was a bit shocked too, but he was still hesitant. He asked, "But why are the orders from the palace entirely different from this? They told us not to allow anyone in..."

"You blockhead!" The leader prodded the deputy's head as he replied, "Think about it! The Golden Crow Crown Prince went in to undergo the previous Fiend Emperors' trial. This is something related to the Fiend Emperor succession, so he shouldn't be getting any external help. Otherwise, there will be a problem with his legitimacy! That's why the Fiend Emperor can't openly talk about this and can only secretly send in some of his trusted aides."

Zu An and the others' cultivations were extremely high. Even though the two guards had lowered their voices, the conversation didn't escape the group's ears. They all endured their urge to laugh. They had been worried about what they would do if they were stopped or if anything else unexpected happened. And yet now, this guy who was too smart for his own good had saved them so much trouble.

The deputy leader was full of admiration; he was clearly already convinced. He asked, "But since this matter is so secretive, do you think the Fiend Emperor will silence us afterward?"

The leader was stunned. He clearly hadn't thought about that before. Now that he had been reminded, he was shocked. He exclaimed, "Damn, that really is a possibility! We're done for, we're done for! We absolutely have to keep this matter a secret! We have to tell everyone that if even a single word gets out, all of us are finished!"

"Okay!" The deputy leader nodded seriously.

Zu An nearly burst out laughing when he heard that. These two were really doing everything for them!

The two walked over just then and said, "Alright, there was a bit of a misunderstanding earlier. Sirs, we wish you a smooth journey."

Zu An pretended to nod in a cold and arrogant manner, then walked off pompously. The leader sighed when he saw that, saying, "As expected of the Fiend Emperor's personal guards, this kind of presence is completely different from that of normal Golden Crow Guards."

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When they were far away, Yun Jianyue finally couldn't hold herself back anymore and remarked with a laugh, "Those two really are something else... Why were we so worried before?"

Yan Xuehen also grinned and said, "Those two are indeed rather adorable. I hope we do not end up harming them later."

"Hmph, just false righteousness." Yun Jianyue harrumphed. She disliked that 'pitying mankind' side of Yan Xuehen the most.

Yan Xuehen's pretty brows rose. Yu Yanluo was worried that they would start fighting and quickly went over to mediate things, saying, "Let's take out the map and look at it to see where we should go."

Zu An cooperated and took out the map so they could look it over together. Only then did they manage to dissipate another storm. Then, the group quickly moved through the forest according to the map.

"Be careful!" Yan Xuehen suddenly cried, grabbing the others. At the same time, blue lines lit up around them. A wave of faint killing intent locked onto them. It was clear that the area was hiding a killing formation.

Just then, the token in Zu An's hand shone with a soft radiance. The formations seemed to have sensed something, as the blue lines gradually dimmed, eventually returning to their normal state.

The others sighed in relief. Even though a killing formation wouldn't take their lives with their cultivation, triggering the formation and drawing attention to their group was definitely unwanted.

"This Second Empress really is remarkable. She actually managed to get her hands on this kind of token," Yu Yanluo said with a sigh of praise.

"That's not all. Judging from what the guards outside were saying, these are the Fiend Emperor's secret guards' uniforms. Apart from the Fiend Emperor, they don't listen to anyone else. I really wonder how she got her hands on their uniforms," Yan Xuehen said in agreement.

"What are you all making such a big deal over this for? She's the empress herself, someone with extraordinary authority. She already bore disloyalty a long time ago, so she's naturally had her ways of scheming over the years," Yun Jianyue said. "Furthermore, she's so seductive in appearance and good at tempting others. Even if they were his secret guards, they probably couldn't resist her charms either."

Zu An couldn't help but say, "Anyone who could become the Fiend Emperor's secret guards would have definitely undergone strict training. Resistance to feminine charms is of the highest priority. They'd probably not be so easily confused, right?"

"I believe the secret guards would be able to withstand ordinary beauties, but the Second Empress is clearly a cut above. Her identity is also so noble and special," Yun Jianyue said. She looked Zu An up and down with a sneer, adding, "Even someone as experienced as you was confused, let alone those secret guards who live such boring lives."

Zu An hadn't expected to end up getting caught himself. He could only explain in embarrassment, "The two of us are innocent and clean."

Yun Jianyue rolled her eyes, clearly not believing that. Fortunately, the group was mostly focused on finding the Unknown Region. Their attention quickly shifted.

The security around the Imperial Tomb was strict on the outside, but there actually weren't that many guards inside. Inside, security was more reliant on hidden formations. However, when they sensed the token the group had, the formations ceased to activate.

Lord Sui's map only contained a rough approximation; there weren't too many details. The group had to feel their way around a bit. Eventually, they arrived in front of the mountain range at the very center.

"The map seems to be talking about this location. It should be inside," Yan Xuehen said, looking worriedly at the mountain.

Yu Yanluo's expression was grave as she said, "This is none other than the tomb of the previous Fiend Emperors."

Yun Jianyue said with a sigh, "I didn't expect us to have still arrived at the Imperial Tomb in the end."

No matter how fearless she was, she was still a bit scared when she thought about how this was where the previous Fiend Emperors' heroic spirits were supposed to be. Between that and the rumors surrounding Unknown Regions, she didn't know how many of them would come out alive, or if any of them would be able to.

"Big sis Yun, don't be scared. I'll protect you," Zu An said to soothe her. Unlike others, he had already entered several Unknown Regions, so his attitude was different.

"Hmph, who's scared?" Yun Jianyue retorted, her eyes widening. "Cultivators pursue progress. Seeking the dao is often a process accompanied by death. I was just worried because there are many things back in the Holy Sect that I haven't taken care of yet."

On the other hand, Yan Xuehen was calmer. At this point, she was more of a figurehead in the White Jade Sect, so she didn't have many concrete responsibilities. Furthermore, because of the matter with Zu An, she had no idea how she would face her disciple. If she really died inside, that would just solve all of those worries.

Yu Yanluo didn't say anything and just subconsciously leaned a bit closer to Zu An.

"Let's go," Yun Jianyue said. She was still a formidable individual, after all. She quickly sorted out her thoughts.

Afterward, they secretly approached the entrance of the Imperial Tomb. They saw that there was a group of guards there. The one in the lead was none other than the Black Teeth Race's leader, the national uncle Grand Secretary Heichi Fei.

"The secret guard story probably won't be enough to fool him," Yu Yanluo said a bit worriedly. This person was the maternal uncle of the crown prince, someone with tremendous authority. He frequently interacted with the Fiend Emperor as well. The chance of fooling him with the explanation that they were secret guards was extremely small.

"What are you so scared of? We'll just act together for a bit. It won't be difficult to kill him," Yun Jianyue said, her first thought being to solve the problem through violence.

"There are many others here, though; we might not be able to instantly subdue all of them. If one gets away and sounds the alarm, the Fiend Emperor will hear the news and arrive," Yan Xuehen said, shaking her head. The Fiend Emperor definitely wouldn't ignore something like that. With his strength, the limitations of space were already meaningless. If the Fiend Emperor came, all of them would die for certain.

"Fiend Emperor?" Zu An suddenly had a strange expression as he said, "I have a way."

Chapter 1369: Something In the Walls

"What way?" the women all asked, looking at him curiously.

Zu An didn't explain anything. However, face changed, and he quickly took on the Fiend Emperor's appearance.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue jumped in fright. They quickly backed away, their entire bodies stiffening as they got ready to attack at a moment's notice. Yu Yanluo, on the other hand, knew about Zu An's 'Face of a Thousand Identities' skill. Even though she was surprised, she quickly recovered.

"Don't be nervous, it's me," Zu An said.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue reacted with strange expressions, "Just how many freaking weird abilities do you have, brat?!"

The two of them moved around to inspect him, and saw that he was utterly identical to the Fiend Emperor they had seen on the elevated platform. Yan Xuehen said with a sigh of praise, "You can pretty much just head into the Imperial Palace and take the Fiend Emperor's place."

Yun Jianyue roared with laughter, remarking, "Then wouldn't Heichi Fei piss his pants out of fear when he sees you?"

Zu An shook his head with a pained smile, saying, "How could it be that simple? Even though I can change my appearance into the Fiend Emperor's, my voice can't become like his."

If he wanted his voice to be the same, he had to use the Kawaii Waifu Voice Changer to fool a guy first. They were in such a hurry; where would he go to find a man to fool?

"This is already enough," Yu Yanluo said. "From what we've seen, the Fiend Emperor is a habitually silent man who rarely speaks. Just leave it to us later. You don't have to say anything."

Yun Jianyue had a mocking smile as she remarked, "Kid, you really are quite the talent. This skill is freaking useful for secretly sleeping with others!"

"You can just change into a married woman's husband, and then you can sleep with any married woman you want! They'll think that you're their husband, so they'll receive you warmly while being completely in the dark..."

Zu An was alarmed when he heard that. He quickly replied in a serious tone, "Nonsense! How could I do something that despicable?"

Yan Xuehen glared at Yun Jianyue, saying, "You are a witch after all. Despite the kind of situation we are in, your head is still filled with such filthy stuff!"

Yun Jianyue turned around and gave her a glare, retorting, "Oh my, you're so noble and virtuous, so amazing! Freaking hypocrite."

Yu Yanluo quickly smoothed things over, saying, "Alright, alright, what's most important right now is entering the Imperial Tomb first."

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue were both some of the world's most powerful individuals. Even though they had constant petty arguments, it wouldn't reach a point where they would forget more important matters.

Zu An quickly changed into a new set of clothes. The group coordinated what they were going to say, and they strutted over to the Imperial Tomb.

The group didn't hide at all, so Heichi Fei's subordinates noticed them quickly. They all drew their weapons and surrounded them, calling out, "Show yourselves!"

Heichi Fei, who was seated in front of the entrance in meditation, sneered. The Crown Prince had ordered him to guard the entrance precisely because he was worried that someone would try to interfere with the succession process. Who would have thought that there really would be people who weren't scared of death?

The Black Teeth race was going through some trouble. First, Heichi Ran had been implicated in the crown prince's assassination, almost shaving a layer of skin off the Black Teeth race. Then, that grandson of his from a branch family, Heichi Gu, had disappeared mysteriously. Every detail available about that event pointed at a disaster.

The key was that today, the crown prince hadn't let Heichi Ran follow him into the Imperial Tomb. Even though the crown prince had told him that he was the only person he trusted and that he needed help guarding the entrance, Heichi Fei knew that because of the assassination, the crown prince was already on guard against the Black Teeth race.

The Golden Crow Crown Prince had only brought his trusted aides, who had already served him for many years. Furthermore, whether it was intentional or not, everyone he had brought had lower cultivation than himself. He was clearly worried that there could be something wrong with them; if that were the case, he would be able to subdue them at once. Meanwhile, Heichi Fei's cultivation was higher, which was why the crown prince didn't feel safe bringing him in as well.

Is the crown prince muddled? I'm his uncle! If he doesn't trust me, who can he trust? Heichi Ran thought.

That was why he had been quite upset the entire time and wanted someone to take his anger out on. When he opened his eyes and saw Zu An, however, he almost pissed his pants. He had been overbearing a moment before, but the next moment, he was already kneeling on the ground and calling out, "I greet your majesty the Fiend Emperor!"

The other guards also prostrated with fear, especially the ones who had shouted previously.

Zu An nodded and reached out his hand to gesture for them to stand up.

Yun Jianyue said coldly, "Step aside; his majesty is going to enter." With her cultivation, mimicking the voice of a man wasn't too difficult.

Even Yan Xuehen nodded. Only this witch could speak in such a cold and dignified manner. If it were her or Yu Yanluo, they couldn't mimic such a proud and aloof nature.

Sure enough, when Yun Jianyue spoke, Heichi Fei's subordinates moved aside out of shock. Even Heichi Fei instinctively stepped aside.

Zu An nodded and walked in with an indifferent expression.

As he watched Zu An's back recede, Heichi Fei gritted his teeth and called out, "Wait!"

Zu An and the others were alarmed. Were there any openings somewhere?

Yun Jianyue turned around and asked with a frown, "What is it?"

Heichi Fei braced himself and said, "Your majesty, the crown prince is currently undergoing the trial of the previous Fiend Emperors' heroic spirits. What is your majesty doing entering now?"

The question was something he had to ask because he was the Golden Crow Crown Prince's uncle, the one who had been the most loyal to the crown prince's faction for so many years. His own clan's success depended greatly on the crown prince's success.

The crown prince was undergoing his trial without any issues, and yet the Fiend Emperor had suddenly appeared. That was the greatest variable; who knew what he was thinking?

The Fiend Emperor's doting on the Second Empress was something everyone knew about. There were even rumors that the Fiend Emperor had thought about passing on the throne to the Second Imperial Prince. Unfortunately, the Second Imperial Prince was too young, and the Fiend Emperor couldn't last that much longer. Thus, that hadn't come true.

However, if the Fiend Emperor went in now, didn't that mean the Fiend Emperor had still been bewitched by that lowly woman after all, and that he was going to change successors?

"Does his majesty need to explain his decisions to you?" Yun Jianyue berated Heichi Fei. One had to admit that her performance was already perfect.

Unfortunately, Heichi Fei was also extremely sharp. He stared at Zu An with suspicion, asking, "Your majesty, why aren't you speaking?"

The women all felt a Thud! go off in their minds. They hadn't expected to not be able to avoid the problem in the end. It seemed they had to fight after all.

Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue exchanged a look. As old enemies, they had already developed a kind of tacit understanding. They communicated with their eyes that they would make their move together to see if they could instantly subdue the enemy. However, the two hadn't recovered from their injuries, so they didn't have absolute confidence. Meanwhile, there were still other experts there.

Zu An turned around and gave Heichi Fei a look. Heichi Fei's entire face immediately turned completely red, and he even began breathing heavily.

The three women thought that the man had seen some gaps and was about to make a move, but instead, Zu An was already taking large steps toward the Imperial Tomb.

The three women were stunned and quickly followed along. Meanwhile, Heichi Fei didn't do a thing the entire time, only standing there while shaking slightly, as if he had seen something infuriating, yet also terrifying.

...

When they entered the Imperial Tomb, Yun Jianyue finally couldn't hold it in anymore. She asked, "Little An, why did he suddenly become obedient?"

Zu An's expression became strange as he said, "It might be because he thinks that his own wife and the Fiend Emperor had an affair, and that the Fiend Emperor might silence him."

The three women were flabbergasted. What kind of reply was that?

How could they have known that in the moment of crisis, Zu An had suddenly used the Goldensnake King's Eye? In Heichi Fei's mind, the scene of the Fiend Emperor and his own wife going back and forth had immediately appeared.

Most importantly, the Fiend Emperor had been quite outstanding in his youth. When he was younger, he had tried to seduce Heichi Fei's wife. That was something he had only learned about from a coincidence.

However, the other party was the Fiend Emperor, and his cultivation was so high! Even though Heichi Fei knew about that, he could only submit to the humiliation. The Fiend Emperor had returned the favor as well, granting him all manner of glory and wealth. That was how the matter had been settled.

However, when he exchanged a look with Zu An, the scene of his wife screaming in pleasure under the Fiend Emperor had appeared in his mind. No matter how generous he was, seeing it for himself was something completely different.

Even though he felt anger, he felt even more fear. He was worried that the Fiend Emperor knew that he knew, and would want to silence him. How could he still be in the mood to stop him?

Zu An didn't know the truth. He only felt that even though the skill seemed pathetic, it really had some use.

...

The group quickly headed into the Imperial Tomb. However, Zu An suddenly stopped, his expression serious as he called out, "Be careful! There's something in the walls!"

Chapter 1370: An Old Friend

When he entered the Imperial Tomb, Zu An reverted to his usual appearance. Continuing to pretend to be the Fiend Emperor there was pointless and would just intimidate the three women.

The three women were all alarmed. "Is it a monster similar to the Scaled Deathworms?" Their last experience in the Yu Clan's mines had left them with a great psychological shadow.

Zu An shook his head. He didn't know either. They all grew vigilant and stared at the moving walls, waiting for an attack from the things inside at any time.

Waves rippled across the dirt and stone of the walls. Then, a huge hole appeared, and something emerged from inside.

"Pah, pfft, pah, this fat guy was almost choked to death..." a plump figure cursed.

Zu An and the others nearly attacked, but when they heard the familiar voice and looked at him, they all voiced their surprise. "It's you?"

It was none other than the one who had given them a divination back in Bluefield Country, the fat daoist Wu Liang who had gone with them to Lord Sui's tomb.

"Huh? Why is it you guys?" Wu Liang also jumped in fright when he saw them. However, he sighed in relief when he saw that it was people he knew.

"Why are you here?" Zu An asked in confusion. This guy had too many things about him that were too mysterious. He couldn't help but harbor some doubts.

"That's what I should be asking you guys, right? How did so many people enter the Imperial Tomb? If I recall correctly, you guys have a grudge against the Golden Crow Crown Prince, right? Huh? Don't tell me that..." Wu Liang's mouth formed an O shape, and he looked completely shocked.

"Cease the nonsense. We're the ones questioning you right now, and not the other way around," Yun Jianyue berated him impatiently.

Perhaps because he sensed the killing intent in Yun Jianyue's eyes, Wu Liang didn't dare to continue being so talkative. He said with an embarrassed smile, "I've been lacking funds recently, so I came to see if there were any treasures."

"Your grave robbing took you all the way to the Imperial Tomb?" Yu Yanluo asked, her expression strange. "You really have no sense of fear."

Wu Liang shrugged and replied with an embarrassed laugh, "What can I say? The risk in the Imperial Tomb is high, but the rewards are also great."

Yan Xuehen said suspiciously, "This Imperial Tomb is guarded heavily with killing formations everywhere. The walls in the Imperial Tomb aren't ordinary either. Just now, I noticed that they were reinforced with runes, and there are all kinds of other defensive measures. Just how did you get in so easily?"

It was precisely because she understood runes and formations that she felt that Wu Liang's claim wasn't too reliable. The others looked at Wu Liang as well when they heard that, and their expressions became dangerous.

When he sensed real killing intent, Wu Liang immediately raised the item in his hand and said, "I relied on this to come in."

The others gave it a careful look. They saw that in his hand was a dark claw that shone with a bit of golden light.

"This is that thing you got from Lord Sui's Tomb?" Zu An asked. He had some impression of the item.

"Lord Sui's Tomb? So that was the name of that tomb," Wu Liang said, stunned. Then, he continued to explain, "That's right. This is Ancestor Chuan Shan's weapon, our Pangolin race's holy object. It can allow us to move at will through the earth, and even break through some formation defenses."

The others remembered the legend of the Pangolin race. Their clan had excelled at raiding tombs, which was why they had ended up drawing public anger. That was why other races had banded together and almost wiped out the entire race.

However, they probably hadn't expected their descendant Wu Liang to be so ambitious, to dare to even raid the tomb of the former Fiend Emperors.

Yun Jianyue told the others through ki, "We can't tell him about our goals this time. Should we just kill him?"

Yan Xuehen frowned and didn't say anything. Even though she didn't approve of killing the innocent, everyone else could just walk away from such a problem, but Yu Yanluo couldn't. If the situation ended up harming the Snake race, it would be too late for regrets.

Wu Liang was a sharp person too. He sensed that there was something off with their expressions. He quickly said, "You'd better not do what you're thinking! Even though I can't win against you by myself, I'm not a pushover either! I can still draw the attention of the armies outside before I die. At that point, we'll just go down together!"

Zu An's group was speechless. This guy is quite straightforward, laying out all his cards right on the table.

Still, that wasn't something they could risk either, because this guy was too mysterious. Who knew what kinds of life-saving measures he had? If they had a falling-out, he could really have a way of alerting the guards outside. That wouldn't be good for anyone.

As such, Zu An said with a chuckle, "Daoist priest is overthinking things. We aren't such cruel and violent people. It's just that entering the Imperial Tomb is such an important matter, so we were a bit worried."

Wu Liang immediately said, "Don't worry, I can make a vow that I definitely won't tell anyone that I met you here. Also, if you're all still worried, I can follow you, so you can monitor everything I do."

They exchanged a look, feeling a bit surprised. After all, they weren't completely convinced that Wu Liang had entered just to rob a tomb. If he turned out to be from the crown prince faction, or the Fiend Emperor had sent him, letting him go would be too dangerous. And yet, this guy had actually given such a 'considerate' suggestion in the end. That would indeed make it much easier for everyone.

“Then let’s just travel together,” Zu An said seriously. That was all they could do for the time being. They would just observe Wu Liang along the way to see what his purpose for coming to the Imperial Tomb was.

“Sounds good~!” Wu Liang replied. When he heard that his life could be preserved at least, he smiled so widely that his eyes turned to slits.

...

The group then continued inside, secretly reminding each other to be on guard against a sudden ambush from Wu Liang while examining their surroundings. The passage they entered was extremely wide and spacious. It wasn’t as gloomy and cramped as the previous ones, and every few meters, there was a small golden crown-shaped lantern that lit up their path like sacred flames.

Wu Liang said in praise, “As expected of the Imperial Tomb. The fuel for these lanterns is from deep sea fish; it lets out no smoke when burned. It’s rumored that they can support flames for a thousand years without burning out.”

“Mermaid oil?” Zu An asked. He had heard of a similar rumor before, which caused his expression to change. After all, Shang Liuyu was from the Mermaid race.

“No way. The Mermaid race’s status among the Ocean races is too high.” Wu Liang explained, “This is oil from a kind of whale. It’s extremely precious even in the Ocean races. I’m pretty certain that this is something that the Ocean races offered to a Fiend Emperor as tribute.”

“You seem to know quite a bit,” Zu An said, giving him a look of surprise.

“Heh, that’s how I make a living,” Wu Liang said with a proud look.

...

After walking for a while longer, they all noticed that there were all kinds of murals around them. Still, calling them mere murals didn’t seem too appropriate, because they seemed to have been carved through a special method. Their contents were extremely grand, seemingly portraying some kind of war; it seemed to be a battle between terrifying ferocious beasts.

Wu Liang explained, “What’s portrayed here are the things the past Fiend Emperors have been proudest of, their glorious achievements that later generations will admire them for.”

Yun Jianyue gave him a sidelong glance and asked, “You’re so familiar with this that this can’t be your first trip here, can it?”

“No no no, I’ve just done a lot of homework. After all, as coming to the Imperial Tomb is so dangerous, I had to be a bit more thorough.” Wu Liang explained, sounding sincere.

The others were suspicious. Considering the Imperial Tomb’s situation, it’d probably be hard to find out anything no matter how much homework one did, right? Still, with the level of security present, the idea that he could come and go several times didn’t seem too realistic either.

The Pangolin race really was good at tomb raiding. With Wu Liang there, they were able to avoid many dangerous contraptions along the way. The token the Second Empress had given them could only deal

with the killing formations outside the Imperial Tomb. It was useless against the formations inside the Imperial Tomb.

Wu Liang constantly inquired about their objective, but Zu An's group was intelligent. Naturally, they didn't say anything.

Just like that, the group continued to head in deeper. When they arrived at a fork, Wu Liang pointed straight ahead and said, "The Golden Crow Crown Prince is most likely going through the previous Fiend Emperors' trial inside.

"Then let's go this way," Zu An said, choosing the other way.

Wu Liang was a bit surprised, exclaiming, "So you guys didn't come for him! Could it be that you're after the Imperial Tomb's treasury, just like me?"

"What treasury?" they asked as they suddenly looked at him.