

Immortal 1591

Chapter 1591: Resolute

Yang Shen had absolute confidence in the situation. Without confidence, it was impossible to become strong in this world, to say nothing of becoming a big shot in the world of warriors. He was someone who had gathered many people to form the Twin Dragon Mountains, which was a force of considerable power.

The formation of countless golden swords was indeed terrifying, but because of it, he concluded that Zu An was better at long-range attacks. Now that they were up close and he had a hostage right in his grasp, that sword formation was useless.

When he saw so many people around him holding back their attacks out of fear, Yang Shen couldn't help but feel a bit proud. He thought to himself, In the future, I'll be able to boast about this for sure!

'This old one returned with a hostage after being surrounded by an enormous army, something practically no one has accomplished. Not a single one of those damned officials was able to stop me!'

Hmph, wait. I can't brag about this myself; that'll lower my status. I can make my subordinates spread some rumors first. That way, if someone else asks about it, I can act a bit more humble.

Just then, however, a strange bird seemingly appeared before him. Immediately afterward, a shrill, ear-piercing noise instantly made his mind go blank. Then, a tremendous suction force manifested in front of him. Yang Shen couldn't react as Xie Daoyun was sucked right out of his hands, leaving him horrified.

Yang Shen instinctively reached forward, but he discovered that his hostage was already in Zu An's hands. Zu An stared back at him coldly, and his heart sank. He knew everything was over now.

However, he was still a valiant individual. Now that he knew that it was meaningless to run, he brandished his blade directly at Zu An. It seemed that Zu An was a long-range fighter, so perhaps he would have a chance in close quarters combat. As it was a matter of life and death, his blade brought out all of his potential.

As he unleashed a massive shining blade that seemed capable of splitting heaven and earth, he suddenly gained enlightenment. He made sure to take note of the feeling so he could properly digest it in the future and become even stronger.

This pretty boy might have higher cultivation than me, but he underestimated me too much, and he probably wanted to show off in front of that woman. Look at that arm that's still wrapped around her waist! He won't even be able to fight properly like that.

I'll send both of them to the Yellow Springs of the underworld with this blade. They'll at least have that to be grateful for.

Just then, Zu An moved. He drew his sword in one hand.

A hint of disdain appeared in Yang Shen's eyes. We're so close and my attack is already about to reach you. Do you really think you still have time?

In the next second, however, he could no longer see. A streak of golden light suddenly appeared; at that instant, it was as if he were standing right next to a sun. His blade appeared dull in comparison as it melted. Then, he felt an intense pain suffuse his entire body. He fell to the ground like a broken sack.

What a formidable sword!

That was the only thought in his mind. At the same time, he was curious as to why Zu An hadn't killed him. With the power of that sword, there was no reason for the enemy to spare him.

The Armed Escort Guards' jaws practically fell to the floor. Many of them hadn't seen Zu An's sword formation that forced back thousands, and had only heard about it from their colleagues. They had been skeptical, but now, they were fully overcome by shock. They had never seen such a gorgeous sword. There weren't many more formidable combatants in the whole army, right?

Wang Bolin and Zhang Zijiang both dripped with sweat. When they recalled how they had treated Zu An, they realized that they really had been dancing around their own graves then!

Thank goodness Sir Zu is magnanimous and didn't stoop to our level...

Xie Daoyun's eyes shone brilliantly. They had been fellow students before, and if it had just been another fellow student who surpassed her, perhaps she would have been unhappy and tried to catch up to them. However, her big brother Zu was different. His current strength only made her feel a deep sense of admiration, mixed with a hint of adoration.

Which young lady wouldn't like such an outstanding hero? Furthermore, his arm was around her, and he could only fight with one hand... When she felt the heat from Zu An's arm seemingly entering the depths of her body, her heart beat so quickly it felt as if it would burst out of her chest.

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Zu An didn't know what the others were thinking. Instead, he stared at Yang Shen and said, "Speak! Why did you take such a huge risk to capture her?"

Previously, he had thought that it was only because Yang Shen thought highly of Xie Daoyun's abilities as a runemaster, and thought that it would greatly increase the strength of the Twin Dragon Mountain army. Now, however, that suspicion had been overturned. After all, no matter how precious a runemaster was, it wasn't worth such a risk. There was definitely something else going on.

However, that wasn't what the onlookers were thinking. They all stared at Xie Daoyun in Zu An's arms. They all looked as if they were watching some really interesting drama.

This rebel army leader could have offended anyone else, but he just had to touch our general's woman.

Zhang Zijiang thought to himself, I've already offended Sir Zu... Even though he said he didn't mind, there's no way he didn't feel any offense.

Should I try to get on the madam's good side? Maybe if I can please Miss Xie and make her happy, I'll be able to get some benefits that way.

Yeah, Miss Xie looks like a cultured person. I have to find some gifts that such people like.

Wang Bolin had similar thoughts. However, an anxious look spread across his face. He felt that couldn't compare to Zhang Zijiang in that aspect. That guy was better at bootlicking than him!

My future prospects look bleak...

The other Armed Escort Army soldiers didn't have such conflicted thoughts. They were more interested in Xie Daoyun's looks, and all sized up their general's future madam.

Xie Daoyun had always been pretty to begin with, but because of her temperament and how she dressed herself, she looked quite simple and elegant. But now that she was in Zu An's arms and being stared at by so many people, her face had turned red, making her look extremely charming. She now looked even more beautiful than a rose.

Yang Shen released a deep sigh, saying, "I guess this is my fate. I didn't expect her to have such a formidable man."

When she heard those words, Xie Daoyun couldn't take it anymore. She buried her face straight into Zu An's chest.

Zu An looked at Yang Shen and said, "You haven't answered my question."

Yang Shen roared with laughter, replying, "I, Scarface Yang Shen, am no unknown in this world of warriors. I've always loathed the bullshit court and hate those traitors who defect to the court the most. Now that I've fallen into your hands, why would I wag my tail and beg for mercy? That would just make me a laughingstock to all the heroes of the world!"

After he laughed a few times, his entire body trembled and he took his last breath. Even in death, his head didn't lower in the slightest. Before he passed away, however, many memories flashed before his eyes.

In truth, Yang Shen was the child of an official. In the past, his father had been a local county magistrate, but he was accused of misconduct, of being involved in a vile gang rape incident. After doing the deed, the culprits had even cruelly chopped off the woman's feet. The court had been furious and ordered a thorough investigation, upon which the regional officials had arrived to carry it out.

The truth of the incident was that a girl from a wealthy family had gotten lost during a temple fair and been kidnapped by some local hoodlums. The next day, the family had found her again and told the world that she had only lost her shoes.

Meanwhile, the hoodlums responsible had already been killed for committing other crimes. As the culprits were already dead, if the matter was investigated thoroughly, the young lady's reputation would be ruined. With how much her family cared about their reputation, she would have no choice but to die a meaningless death. In order to protect the young lady, her father had thought of a way to cover up the case.

However, that method had ended up becoming a political weapon. When the county learned the truth and went back to report it, the court hadn't believed them. They had believed that the officials were just shielding each other, thus ordering the matter to be investigated further.

The county had had no choice but to send more people to investigate. In order to provide their higher-ups with an explanation, the new officials had forced Yang Shen's father to pay bribes to purchase their peace and safety.

Yang Shen's father had been an honest official, but with the way things were, he had been forced to borrow money. He lost his entire fortune while gathering a large sum to offer up; he thought it would end there, but soon afterward, another order came down. He was accused of wrongdoing and had his post stripped from him before being thrown into prison. As a proud man, he couldn't accept the humiliation, and thus died in grief and indignation.

Yang Shen's mother had then gathered evidence of all the letters that had come and gone. She had planned to report the county officials, but a good friend of Yang Shen's father swindled her out of the evidence after being bribed by those same officials. Yang Shen's mother thus perished in sorrow as well.

Yang Shen had witnessed the darkness of the court, planting a seed of hatred deep in his heart. Subsequently, he had wandered through the world of warriors and suffered untold bitterness. He had wandered near the gates of hell many times before eventually acquiring the skills he had today.

The first thing he had done after returning to his hometown was to get revenge. He had killed the officials who deceived his family, as well as his father's treacherous friend. All the people related to the case were completely eradicated.

Naturally, an order had come down for Yang Shen's arrest as a result. As events unfolded one after another, he had ended up becoming a bandit in the end. Still, he had always wanted to overthrow the court to fully purge the officialdom of its darkness.

Unfortunately, he couldn't do any of that anymore...

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Zu An hadn't expected Yang Shen to be so resolute, not even giving him the chance to negotiate. After a moment of silence, he ordered his subordinates, "Give him a proper burial and hand out an order that this matter is to be kept secret. Not even the slightest bit of information can be leaked."

At the same time, he became more and more curious. Why would this man rather die than explain why he had captured Xie Daoyun?

Chapter 1592: Meeting of Enemies

Zhang Zijiang couldn't help but quietly say, "Sir, this Scarface Yang Shen is a great criminal. Taking him down is a huge achievement!"

Zu An shook his head and replied, "Yang Shen was still a strong and courageous person; there's no need to shame him. Eliminating the Twin Dragon Mountain rebel army should already be enough of a contribution to benefit all the officers and soldiers."

According to the court's laws, even though Yang Shen was already dead, he would still be dragged back to experience a thousand cuts. Then, his head would be passed along to different lands to be shown

around. However, even though he was an enemy, Zu An considered him worthy of respect and didn't want him to experience such humiliation after his death.

"Understood!" Zhang Zijiang replied and withdrew. If it were anyone else, he would definitely have continued to argue with them. However, Zu An had already brought him a lot of shock in a short period. Right now, Zu An was at the peak of prestige, so Zhang Zijiang didn't want to go against his orders.

Furthermore, Sir Zu wasn't the sort of official who only knew how to talk and dream. He had already thought of giving them a share of the contributions for eradicating the Twin Dragon Mountain army. That was already enough.

Xie Daoyun blinked, dazed. As she looked up at Zu An, she began to feel that he was taller and more powerful than ever. His cultivation was high, but he was still able to retain a kind heart.

Big brother Zu really is a great hero!

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The other soldiers cleaned up the area, then tactfully withdrew, leaving Zu An and Xie Daoyun alone.

Only then did Xie Daoyun realize what was happening. She suddenly leaped out of Zu An's arms, but then she felt her knees suddenly buckle, and she almost fell.

Zu An chuckled and asked, "Is little sister Daoyun injured?"

Xie Daoyun pursed her lips. She shook her head and said, "I'm not. When Yang Shen approached the tent, my formation was activated, so I immediately woke up. Then, big brother Zu arrived."

Just how many times has big brother Zu saved me now? I've always heard that a life saving debt can't be repaid unless...

Ah, what am I thinking? Do you have no sense of shame?

When he saw her expression change several times, Zu An couldn't help but say with a sigh, "It's still runemasters like you who have the most methods. Even a master rank expert ended up falling into your trap."

When she heard that, Xie Daoyun's cheeks turned a bit hot. She had actually set up the formation because she was expecting Zu An. Last time, he had appeared so suddenly and caught her off guard, which was why she set up a small formation outside. She had been incredibly happy when the formation activated, thinking that big brother Zu had finally come to look for her. How could she have anticipated that it would be the ugly Scarface?

"Right, do you know why he wanted to capture you?" Zu An asked the question that had been bothering him.

Xie Daoyun hurriedly shook her head and replied, "I don't know either."

She really was a bit stunned. Back when she lived in Brightmoon City, and even after moving to the capital, she had normally stayed inside and rarely gone out. There was no way she could have had any

interactions with Yang Shen, let alone forming a grudge. It didn't make any sense for Yang Shen to have taken such a huge risk to capture her.

"Little sister Daoyun, if you can't figure it out, just don't think about it. I'm here to protect you," Zu An said, remembering what Xie Xiu had entrusted him with. He thought, I definitely can't let anything happen to her. Fortunately, he didn't need to go all the way to Yi Commandery anymore. Even if something happened again, he would be present to take care of her.

Xie Daoyun interpreted things differently, assuming Zu An was just expressing his goodwill. Today had made her heart beat faster than ever before. She said, "Big brother Zu, you can call me Ling'er; that's my nickname. My mom and dad both call me that." Then, she ran back into her tent without even turning around.

Zu An stood still in confusion. What's the meaning of this? Could it be that she considers me her senior?

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After the incident, their group hurried along to Yi Commandery. Zu An and Xie Daoyun chatted about cultivation during the day, and shared poetry and songs in the evening. They talked about all sorts of topics. Xie Daoyun felt admiration for Zu An's knowledge and experiences, as well as his different way of thinking. Meanwhile, Zu An admired how she was brimming with talent. Just like that, they learned more about each other.

As the saying went, however, joyous times always passed quickly. They arrived near Yi Commandery roughly ten days later. A group of troops was waiting at the city outskirts, carrying all manner of streamers and banners. They were clearly Yi Commandery's local officials, who had come out to welcome them.

Zu An just happened to recognize the ones in front, so he introduced them to the people around him. "The man with the stern looking face and a goatee is Yi Commandery's Governor Zhang Jie. The general with the long lance next to him is Martial Supervisor Yang Sheng. That fairly handsome middle-aged man is Yi Commandery's City Lord Liao Ling. His Boundless Sword Energy is quite unique..."

Zhang Zijiang sighed in admiration, remarking, "Sir Zu really is intelligent. You only passed by Yi Commandery once, and yet you already know so much about the local officials..."

Wang Bolin frowned. That bastard had cut in front of him to flatter Zu An again! Damn it!

Zu An didn't feel much about the praise, but Xie Daoyun really enjoyed it. When other people praised Zu An, she felt as if they were praising her.

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The two sides quickly met, then exchanged conventional greetings. When Zu An introduced Wang Bolin and Zhang Zijiang to Yi Commandery's officials, both of them couldn't help but puff out their chests, their previous bootlicking nowhere to be seen. Even though there were many people present with higher official ranks than them, they came from the capital and were from the emperor's private army. They still felt a sense of superiority when facing such local officials.

Yi Commandery's officials naturally didn't want to offend them. They all greeted the deputy generals and claimed to have long looked forward to meeting them, which made the two feel great.

Only Yi Commandery City Lord Liao Ling remained silent. With his personality, he didn't really approve of his colleagues' actions. When they saw that he didn't give them any face, Wang Bolin and Zhang Zijiang couldn't stand it.

Concerned that some unnecessary conflict could arise, Zu An introduced Xie Daoyun to Liao Ling just in time, saying, "Lady Xie is Master Yan Xiang's disciple. The two of you actually have some relationship."

Liao Ling's proud nature was partly because of his background from the Royal Academy. As he had spent some time studying there, he and Xie Daoyun could be considered fellow alumni. Thus, his eyes quickly lit up as he exclaimed, "So it was Great Sir's disciple! As expected, you do have a scholarly air about you."

"I greet my senior!" Xie Daoyun replied, showing him a gentle and refined greeting; there was a hint of happiness on her face too. Even when they came from different places, the academy's disciples all felt a sense of familiarity around others from the academy. They naturally felt closer to their schoolmates than normal people.

The officials had previously only treated Xie Daoyun as a close female friend Zu An brought along with him. Many of them had even thought that Zu An was quite daring, to have actually brought a beautiful young lady with him when carrying out his majesty's orders. Was he not scared that he would be criticized severely if that were reported to the capital's Imperial Censors?

Upon learning that Xie Daoyun was Yan Xiang's disciple, however, they immediately treated her with more importance. They politely greeted her and asked about how Yan Xiang was doing.

Yan Xiang was the empire's number one runemaster. Whether it was the Imperial Palace's inner courtyards, the local manors, or the military barracks, their countless formations were the result of his brilliance. Countless officials wanted to obtain a magic artifact from him, but unfortunately, Yan Xiang rarely created objects for personal use. As such, his works only became more and more precious over time.

For local officials such as the ones from Yi Commandery, they couldn't even vainly hope for one of Master Yan's works. Still, if they had a chance to get to know his disciple, by improving their relationship, perhaps they would be able to obtain some magic artifacts from her. Even if they couldn't compare to Master Yan's, as an important disciple of his, she would most certainly become a great master too. How could the officials not become excited when they thought of that?

Zhang Zijiang and Wang Bolin saw that Zu An seemed to appreciate Liao Ling quite a bit, so they naturally didn't want to make trouble for him for no reason. They took the chance to praise Xie Daoyun more, thinking that making her happy was the same thing as making Zu An happy.

Being praised so much left the usually gentle and refined Xie Daoyun highly embarrassed. She instinctively moved behind Zu An.

When they saw that, the old foxes of the officialdom exchanged a few looks. It seemed this woman's relationship with Zu An ran quite deep.

Fortunately, the sound of hooves interrupted the awkward situation. Those present turned around and saw a pair of black armored horsemen approaching quickly. Their steeds were handsome and their armor was bright and fierce. Their equipment wasn't inferior to that of the emperor's personal army, the Armed Escort Division, at all. When he saw the two horsemen, Yi Commandery's Governor Zhang Jie couldn't help but frown.

Zu An looked pensive as he observed the sight. It seemed that Yi Commandery's local officials didn't really get along with King Yan Manor. He recognized the incoming troops' outfits. They were King Yan Manor's Black Cavalry, and he shared 'implacable enmity' with the one at the very front.

Chapter 1593: Old Friends Reunited

The one leading King Yan's side was Xiang Minister Sun Xun. Previously, when Zu An and Sang Hong had passed by Yi Commandery, they had come into conflict with Sun Xun's son Sun Ji in the Hub of Freedom. Because people's identities were kept secret in the Hub of Freedom, Sun Ji hadn't known that Zu An was an Imperial Envoy, and had wanted to abuse his status as the local bully to kill him.

However, as the saying went the plans of the gods superseded those of man. Sun Ji had encountered a nefarious villain who ended up slaughtering his entire group.

Sun Xun had been shocked and furious. Judging from the conflict in the Hub of Freedom, he had suspected Zu An, but fortunately, Zu An had been able to discover the true killer, thus preventing a conflict.

However, even though Sun Xun had accepted that result on the surface, his true thoughts were unknown. After all, that had only happened because of his son's clash with Zu An; that conflict was the only reason his son's life had been taken by such a villain.

In such a situation, a petty-minded person would easily take out their anger on Zu An. Anyone who could end up with a prodigal son such as Sun Ji definitely couldn't be not much better himself.

Sun Xun's group quickly arrived before the others. They got off their horses and greeted Zu An's group. "This one greets Sir Zu and the army in place of King Yan!"

"King Yan has shown us courtesy!" Zu An cupped his hands and replied courteously. At the same time, he was surprised that this man hadn't provided even a single Rage point. Judging from that, he could see just how sophisticated Sun Xun was.

Meanwhile, Governor Zhang Jie suddenly put on a fake smile and said, "Sir Zu's trip came about for his majesty's Fengshan ceremony, and yet King Yan only sent you here without showing his own face. Isn't he being rather negligent?"

Even though King Yan's status was high, Zu An was in charge of something as important as the Fengshan ceremony. Furthermore, the ones he had brought with him were the emperor's own Armed Escort Division. To a certain degree, they represented the emperor himself. Normally, King Yan should have come to greet them in person.

When those words were spoken, the atmosphere quickly turned strange. Zu An hadn't expected the conflict between Yi Commandery's local officials and King Yan to have reached such a level. He hadn't interacted with Yi Commandery's officialdom that much when he was just passing by en route to Cloudcenter Commandery, so he hadn't noticed that.

Sun Xun replied calmly, "The king naturally wanted to come and greet Sir Zu, but an esteemed guest arrived at the manor, so he was unable to leave. As such, he sent me to receive all of you. Furthermore, my king has specially prepared a banquet for everyone, so I invite sirs to enjoy it together."

Wang Bolin and Zhang Zijiang couldn't help but frown when they heard that. Who was this esteemed guest? Didn't that imply the guest was more important than Zu An's group? There couldn't be a greater blow to their face than that!

Those in Governor Zhang Jie's group had different expressions. Some had eager looks on their faces, hoping both sides would have a falling-out on the spot.

They had heard that Zu An was a stubborn and reckless young man who didn't even give King Qi any face. In the past, he had even broken the legs of King Qi's heir. They all felt that there would be something interesting to watch today.

To their surprise, however, Zu An simply said with a smile, "Then I'll have to trouble Sir Sun to lead the way." He had been worried that he wouldn't have a chance to get to know King Yan Manor's guest, Sir Huo. How could he let such a good opportunity go?

However, Yi Commandery's officials didn't know about that. Their eyes were wide open, and many of them felt a hint of disdain. Their thoughts went in different directions..

Didn't they say this guy was really brave? He looks like a coward to me.

Those assorted rumors are probably fake. The crown prince's faction probably spread them just to slander King Qi...

Meanwhile, Wang Bolin and Zhang Zijiang had a different opinion, thinking Sir Zu definitely had his reasons for doing such a thing. After all, they had seen just how powerful Zu An was. They already practically prostrated themselves in admiration for Zu An.

Sun Xun was also stunned. He hadn't expected Zu An to be so agreeable, which made him develop a hint of contempt as well.

Hmph, this is nothing more than an up-and-coming youngster. How can he put on airs in front of King Yan?

At the same time, he was a bit annoyed. He had actually said that on purpose to provoke Zu An and make him do something irrational. That way, he would have something to use as a pretext to start a fuss. After all, Yi Commandery was his and King Yan's domain. Unless the emperor came himself, who else could challenge them?

It was clear that he still hadn't gotten over the grief of his son's death. He had planned to take the chance to get revenge, but he hadn't expected Zu An to not play along at all.

"This way, please!" Sun Xun said. Yi Commandery's officials were all watching, so there was nothing he could do. He could only lead all of them toward King Yan Manor in the city.

Either way, at least, he had managed to cut down this bastard Zu's dignity in public. He had wanted to pick a fight with these people from the court at first, but now that they were all so frightened and cowardly, what meaning was there left if he persisted?

I'll just take care of this task first. I still have to show them basic courtesy in public. Who knows what other annoyances might spring up if the conflict gets too intense and those from the court find out?

As Zu An had agreed, Yi Commandery's officials naturally followed as well.

Still, there was no way the entire Armed Escort Army would be able to enter the city. Thus, Officer Yang Sheng took them nearby to set up camp. Wang Bolin volunteered to stay behind. After all, the army had a rule stating that at least one of the three senior officers had to be in the army. If something happened and they had no leader, things would become troublesome.

Zu An patted his shoulder and said encouragingly, "Then I'll have to bother you for that."

Wang Bolin stuck out his chest proudly. At the same time, he snuck Zhang Zijiang a look. You might be good at flattery, but even if I can't beat you in flattery, I can work harder than you, right? Sir Zu is so heroic and outstanding, he'll definitely be able to see who's more reliable.

When he saw Wang Bolin's provocative look, Zhang Zijiang sneered. What a fool!

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Yi Commandery was a large and lively city that wasn't inferior to Brightmoon City at all. Apart from the common people, one could meet merchants and cultivators from all around the world.

However, because Zu An's group had such an impressive lineup, many people still came over to take a look.

"Just who could be so important that both King Yan Manor and the Governor Manor have to welcome him?"

"That man is so young, and yet he already has such status. Is he a prince?"

"Ah, he's so handsome! If I accidentally stumbled and fell in front of him, do you think he would fall in love with me like in those romance stories?"

In a distant tavern, two beautiful figures sat in surprise. They both lowered the teacups in their hands, wondering, "Why is he here too?"

One of the two ladies was young and lively, while the other was mature and dignified. However, they were similar in that both of them were astonishing beautiful.

"Master, this is definitely a predestined affinity dictated by the heavens! I'm going to seek him out!" the younger woman said excitedly.

The mature woman's expression became a bit unnatural. She replied, "Did you forget that we can't show ourselves in public? He has so many officials around him; how are you going to meet with him?"

“Come on, I’ll just go at night if I have to...” the young woman protested.

The mature woman harrumphed. “What, just so you can watch as he flirts with that girl next to him?”

The young lady was stunned. Only then did she notice Xie Daoyun next to Zu An. The two of them were smiling as they chatted with each other, looking very close.

“Ahhh! I’m so upset!” the young woman screamed.

Chapter 1594: Great Happiness

You have successfully trolled Qiu Honglei for +311 +311 +311...

The two women were naturally the master and disciple, Yun Jianyue and Qiu Honglei. They had been discussing something in a tavern before hearing all the noise happening outside. At first, they had wondered which damn official was showing off and planned to teach them a lesson, but they hadn’t expected to actually see Zu An.

Unfortunately, Zu An was parading himself around in too high-profile a manner, collecting countless Rage points from all the jealous onlookers. Furthermore, he was chatting with the officials around him, so he didn’t notice Qiu Honglei’s rage points.

“I’m so angry! I’m so angry! Here I am, missing him every single day, and yet look at how much fun he’s having with another girl!” Qiu Honglei grumbled, thinking about how bitterly she had cultivated so she could have a normal relationship with Zu An. Because of how hard she worked, she had almost experienced cultivation deviation. As such, she was really shaken up by the sight. She picked up the bowl next to her, seemingly about to throw it.

Yun Jianyue jumped in fright and quickly reached out to stop her, protesting, “What are you doing?”

Qiu Honglei looked at her in confusion, replying, “Master, this isn’t like you! Your precious disciple is being bullied by that stupid man right now. It would be one thing if you didn’t get mad on my behalf, but you’re actually stopping me?”

Yun Jianyue’s expression became a bit strange as she replied, “Don’t forget the purpose of our mission this time. What if we end up startling our target and ruin everything? Besides, there are so many powerful cultivators and soldiers outside right now. Things will become really annoying if we start any trouble.”

Qiu Honglei pulled back her hand angrily, saying, “Master, I feel as if you’ve become a bit different from before.”

Yun Jianyue asked in alarm, “How so?”

“I can’t really explain it either...” Qiu Honglei trailed off with a frown. She just felt that her master seemed to have changed, as if Yun Jianyue felt a bit scared of being with her. Of course, she wouldn’t dare to say so out loud. She continued, “Master has never had so many misgivings when doing things before. Those officials and soldiers are all just useless nobodies. How can they be worth mentioning before the two of us?”

Perhaps they would have some trouble if they were in an open field, but at the moment, they were in a city with complex terrain everywhere. For them, it wouldn't be difficult to throw off any pursuers at all.

Yun Jianyue harrumphed. "Your master is just domineering in nature; she's not an idiot. Why would I want to go through all that unnecessary trouble?"

Qiu Honglei wrinkled her nose. She continued to glance toward the street, clearly still eager to give it a try.

Bang!

Yun Jianyue lowered the window and said, "Stop looking already and focus on your own situation. Once everything is taken care of, I won't stop you from seeing Zu An."

Qiu Honglei's anger quickly turned to happiness. She grabbed Yun Jianyue's arm and said, "Master is the best after all."

The sensation rubbing against her arm left her inwardly shocked. Master is so big! I wonder who will have the blessing of becoming my martial father. However, she quickly dispelled that thought. Which man in this world could be a match for her master?

Yun Jianyue stiffly brushed Qiu Honglei's arm away when she felt her disciple's affection. A hint of guilt flickered across her face. I'm not that great of a master.

Qiu Honglei didn't treat it as anything important. Her master was usually dignified, so it was natural for her to not be used to such intimacy. She said, "Master, you have to come with me later."

"Why would I go with you?" Yun Jianyue exclaimed. Inwardly, she was frightened down to her very soul.

Qiu Honglei was a bit surprised that Yun Jianyue had suddenly raised her voice, but she still replied, "To clean up that heartless rat, of course! And that vixen at his side, too."

Yun Jianyue sighed in relief when she realized that it wasn't what she had been thinking of. She asked, "Isn't it enough for you to go? With your current cultivation, I reckon that there aren't many girls who could be your match anymore."

Qiu Honglei muttered, "Didn't you say that Ah Zu's cultivation improved a lot? I might not be able to win against him, so of course I need you to help me beat him up!"

"It's not 'might'. You would definitely lose," Yun Jianyue said, thinking back to the battle at the Fiend Court. She couldn't help but sigh in amazement. She really had no idea what that brat had eaten to grow so quickly. She continued, "But don't worry. With your relationship, there's no way he would hurt you."

After what had happened between the two of them at the Fiend King Court, her feelings toward Zu An were very complicated, and she didn't want to meet him again for some time, so how could she meet him with Qiu Honglei? Just the thought alone left her feeling restless.

"There's no way he would hurt me normally, but it's hard to say what would happen if I wanted to teach that girl a lesson," Qiu Honglei muttered.

Yun Jianyue rolled her eyes and said, "Don't worry. With my understanding of that brat, he isn't the type to forget favors and violate justice. If you really are worried, you can just let that girl Chu Chuyan do it. She's not even doing a thing as his proper wife, so what are you getting so worked up for?"

"What proper wife? They already divorced each other!" Qiu Honglei grumbled unhappily. "But master, your idea isn't bad. That woman Chu Chuyan always puts on a superior and aloof look; it's so annoying! Not only would she be able to chase away all of Zu An's sweethearts, Ah Zu would realize that she's not some saint, and she's just a normal woman."

Yun Jianyue had always been annoyed by Yan Xuehen's detached and aloof nature too. She was rather proud when she heard that. She said, "She can do the dirty work for you, and we'll just enjoy the benefits from the sidelines. That's what a witch should be like."

"We?" Qiu Honglei asked, stunned.

Yun Jianyue realized her slip of the tongue and quickly explained, "We're like mother and daughter, so your affairs are naturally my affairs."

A huge smile quickly appeared on Qiu Honglei's face. She grabbed Yun Jianyue's arm and leaned her head against her master's shoulder, saying, "Master is the best! I was raised by master ever since I was little, so of course I already treat you as my mother! If master isn't going to get married in the future, I'll just be your daughter and call you mom~"

"Don't do that!" Yun Jianyue suddenly screamed.

"Huh?" Qiu Honglei responded, staring at her in confusion. She didn't understand why Yun Jianyue had such a strong reaction.

"I..." Yun Jianyue trailed off, her face turning completely red. She felt very restless and uneasy, and yet frustrated that she couldn't explain herself. "The sect is full of hidden dirt and concealed corruption. There's a ton of idle gossip constantly going around. If you really call me mom, then people will really think that you're my illegitimate daughter. Your master's reputation will be completely ruined then!"

Qiu Honglei giggled and asked, "Didn't master previously teach me that a good reputation is something only those hypocritical fairies such as Yan Xuehen and Chu Chuyan cared about? Since when have we witches cared about that?"

"Damn girl, you're talking back to your master now? If I say you can't, then you can't, or else I'm going to rip that mouth of yours off!" Yun Jianyue cried, feigning anger to hide the alarm she was feeling inside.

...

While the master and disciple were bickering with each other, Zu An found a chance to ask Sun Xun, "May I ask Xiang Minister Sun who King Yan's guests are?"

A hint of ridicule flashed through Sun Xun's eyes. Other people would usually avoid each other in such a situation, and yet this guy was taking the initiative to ask. Don't tell me that he feels as if he hasn't been embarrassed enough yet?

A hint of joy appeared in his mind, and he deliberately raised his voice as he said, "They are the White Jade Sect's Sect Master Yan and the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's Sect Master Guan, as well as some experts

from their sects. These are people who would not accept it even if you invited them. They made a rare trip to Yi Commandery, so our king naturally does not dare to be negligent in their treatment.” His implication was that their status was higher than Zu An’s, and that King Yan wouldn’t dare to be negligent in their treatment, but he would for Zu An.

Forget about Yi Commandery’s officials; even Zhang Zijiang frowned. This Sun bastard was going too far. He was absolutely striking at Sir Zu’s dignity!

The kindhearted Xie Daoyun looked at Zu An worriedly, but Zu An didn’t get angry at all. On the contrary, he was actually really happy. White Jade Sect’s Sect Master Yan was here?

Chapter 1595: Pair

Previously, Zu An hadn’t even been able to say goodbye to Yan Xuehen in the Fiend King Court, so he had always been worried about her. Later, even after the relief of learning that she had already returned to the White Jade Sect from Chu Chuyan, he had still felt a bit empty inside. There were just too many things between the two of them that they had to properly talk about.

When Sun Xun saw how Zu An seemed almost stupefied, he laughed proudly. This kid had really brought it upon himself. Did he really think he was all that just because he was a marquis and had led an Imperial Envoy before? Sect Master Yan and Sect Master Guan were both grandmasters, practically the most powerful beings in the world. Did he really think he could compare to them?

Yi Commandery’s officials had wanted to see Zu An make a fool of himself, but now, they felt that King Yan’s decision made sense. After all, Sect Master Yan and Sect Master Guan were both incredibly famous. Sect Master Yan in particular not only had profound cultivation, but was also rumored to be exceedingly beautiful as well, with an aloof and transcendent aura. Even the emperor treated her as a respected guest.

Many of Yi Commandery’s officials had felt conflicted in joining King Yan Manor’s banquet, but now, they were highly expectant. They really wanted to see whether the legendary Sect Master Yan was as much of a goddess as the rumors stated.

Zhang Zijiang’s mouth hung open. Holy smokes! Two grandmasters? Those aren’t people I can afford to provoke.

Even though Zu An had already shown that he was extremely powerful, that was only in comparison to people. Apart from earth immortals, grandmasters were already at the very peak of the world! Compared to them, Zu An was still far off.

Only Xie Daoyun was worried about how Zu An felt. In order to alleviate the awkward situation, she spoke up and explained, “The Heavenly Sorrow Sect’s Sect Master Guan Chouhai is a grandmaster who has been famous for many years. But after the current dynasty was established, the great sects all withdrew into seclusion, so most people gradually forgot his name.” She didn’t introduce Yan Xuehen, because she felt that someone so popular didn’t need any introduction.

Zu An asked curiously, “What level of grandmaster is Guan Chouhai at?”

Xie Daoyun was stunned, replying, "Grandmasters have ranks between them? That, I don't know. But judging from his prestige in the past, he should be quite strong among grandmasters."

Zu An realized that the higher the cultivation rank was, the fewer people there were at that rank. Even the divisions of cultivation ranks at the grandmaster level were a secret for most cultivators. If he hadn't received explanations from the two grandmasters Yan Xuehen and Yun Jianyue, he wouldn't necessarily have known about that.

...

Zu An was very expectant and in high spirits along the way. Eventually, the whole group finally arrived at King Yan Manor. Zu An sized up the grand king manor before him. King Yan had invited them over when he and Sang Hong passed by Yi Commandery, but they hadn't accepted in order to avoid trouble.

A delicate fragrance wafted out of the door from within. The group could vaguely make out blossoming roses. They were red, pink, white... It made one wonder whether every single type of rose in the entire world was inside. Even though it was currently a bleak winter, the gorgeous roses added an air of springtime to the entire garden.

"How beautiful!" Xie Daoyun cried, her eyes sparkling. There weren't many women who could resist such a scene.

A proud look appeared in Sun Xun's eyes as he said, "Our king is someone who appreciates flowers, and his noble and unyielding self especially appreciates roses. Every single rose here is precious, and almost every single one was personally planted by the king in his earlier years. After several decades, it has reached this condition."

Even Zhang Jie and the other local officials who didn't get along with King Yan couldn't help but admire King Yan Manor's flowers.

Only Xie Daoyun frowned slightly. Zu An keenly picked up on it and asked considerately, "What is it?"

Xie Daoyun gave Sun Xun a look, then said quietly, "King Yan says he loves flowers, but this garden only has rare varieties without any ordinary roses. Just from that alone, we can tell that he isn't someone who really likes flowers and that he's only doing it to show off."

Because King Yan Manor had made things difficult for Zu An, she had subconsciously developed a bad impression of them.

"It's still little sister Ling'er who's the sharpest, haha!" Zu An remarked. He naturally didn't have any good impression of King Yan either. Whether it was because of the time King Yan had captured Qiu Honglei and fought a great battle against Yun Jianyue, or his potential implication in Golden Token Seven's murder, it would be hard for Zu An to develop a good impression of the man even if he wanted to.

...

The group continued forward under Sun Xun's lead. Soon after, a middle-aged man dressed in official robes emerged with a group of people to welcome them.

After listening to the introductions of the officials beside him, Zu An learned that the man was King Yan's heir Zhao Huang. Even though he was called King Yan's heir, because King Yan was an elder who could be considered the emperor's uncle, he was actually of the same generation as the emperor. He had already remained an heir for several decades, but he still had no prospects for inheriting the position of king yet.

"Please come inside. Father king is already waiting for everyone inside," Zhao Huang said. He looked like a surprisingly calm and steady person, someone who had quite the presence.

Zu An's group followed him into a courtyard. However, troubled expressions soon spread across the faces of Yi Commandery's officials. Even the good-natured Xie Daoyun couldn't help but frown.

The spacious courtyard was extremely beautiful and more than suitable for entertaining guests, but there was already a banquet going on, and it seemed a bit excessive. King Yan was seated in the highest seat, with several tables of guests to either side. They were clearly all high in status, and King Yan was chatting happily with them.

Xie Daoyun was a bit annoyed. Wasn't King Yan being a bit too disrespectful here? How could he start the banquet with someone else before the guests arrived? Didn't that mean he was looking down on those who arrived later?

"Everyone, please come inside," Zhao Huang said, his face not conveying anything unusual. He continued to courteously invite them.

Zu An's group was very upset, but they couldn't act up. They could only follow him inside for the time being. Soon afterward, however, their gazes were drawn to King Yan's left side.

There, they saw a woman dressed in a daoist robe. She had beautiful eyes, snow-white skin, and long black hair. Even though there was a white veil over her face, they could still tell that she was exceptionally beautiful. However, her cold and distant expression vaguely gave off a dignified and unquestionable air, a reminder that she was a grandmaster who inspired awe throughout the world. Was this the legendary Sect Master Yan? As expected of a goddess from the heavens above! The group's anger immediately dissipated the moment they saw her.

However, there was something that caught their attention even more. There was a young woman dressed in blue seated next to Yan Xuehen. Her figure was sweet and graceful, and she was also veiled. Her beautiful, starry eyes were less imposing than those of the woman next to her, and the fiery red waistband around her slender waistline also added a charming air to her appearance.

The two women seated there made all of the roses in the garden appear lackluster.

"Who is this woman? She's actually not inferior to Goddess Yan," many officials from Yi Commandery muttered with expressions of shock.

Only Xie Daoyun recognized her. She couldn't help but turn around to give Zu An a look. However, she saw that Zu An was looking in that direction in a daze. He looked excited and overjoyed. In that instant, she suddenly felt a bit sad.

Zu An hadn't expected to find not only Yan Xuehen here, but also Chu Chuyan! He was so excited he didn't even know what to say.

The two women's expressions were initially extremely cold; they remained indifferent as they replied to the conventional greetings around them. When they saw more people arrive, they both frowned. They preferred peace and quiet and didn't like such banquets to begin with, let alone with so many others joining. They were about to get up and leave when they suddenly saw Zu An at the forefront. They were both completely stunned.

Yan Xuehen's entire body trembled. She was filled with alarm! She reflexively wanted to turn around and leave. Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan was shocked and happy. She really hadn't expected to bump into Zu An here!

Chapter 1596: Trying to Steal a Chicken, but Ending Up Losing the Rice Used to Lure it

Zu An hadn't expected Chu Chuyan to be present either, leaving him both happy and worried. He was happy to be reunited with them, but what worried him was that he was meeting both of them together.

By then, King Yan had already seen all of the guests. He said with a chuckle, "You all arrived at the perfect time. Hurry and take a seat."

Zu An smiled and walked directly toward the two women.

Chu Chuyan's cold eyes revealed a smile, but Yan Xuehen panicked inwardly. She said through ki, "Don't come over here. If you dare to expose our relationship in public, I... I..." In that instant, she didn't even know how to threaten him.

Zu An grinned and replied, "What are you going to do?"

Yan Xuehen was in a tough spot. This kid was going more and more overboard. She shot back, "I will never forget it for the rest of my life!"

"Hmm, making you remember it for the rest of your life doesn't seem to be too bad of an idea, actually," Zu An said. He really felt a sense of accomplishment when he saw that she was nervous, but had no way of showing it.

Just like that, the two spoke to each other from a distance. In the eyes of Xie Daoyun, who knew a bit more than the others, she just assumed Zu An was flirting with Chu Chuyan. But how could she possibly know that the one he was teasing was the glorious Sect Master Yan?

In the end, Zu An still gave up on the thought of sitting with them, and sat down at the table next to them instead. The table already had a set of dinnerware laid out, which meant there was already someone sitting there. However, Zu An pretended he hadn't seen anything; he called over a maid and said, "Bring me a new set of bowls and chopsticks."

The maid gave King Yan's heir, Zhao Huang, a troubled look. This was clearly supposed to be his seat.

Zhao Huang looked a bit unhappy, but he couldn't say too much. He could only tactfully remind Zu An, "White Jade Sect's Master does not like to have unfamiliar people near her. I fear that she is not too used to having unfamiliar people sit at her side."

Zu An said casually, "Don't worry, I can just ask her." Then, he turned to Yan Xuehen and said, "Sect Master Yan, I wonder if you would mind me sitting here?"

Yan Xuehen felt her teeth becoming a bit sore as she gritted them in irritation. She really wanted him to get out of her sight. At the moment, however, she could tell that King Yan Manor was making things troublesome for Zu An, so how could she just do nothing? She merely replied with an unhappy expression, "I am not so petty-minded."

Zu An's expression seemed to imply 'as expected'. Then, he looked at Zhao Huang and replied, "Young master, do you see? Sect Master Yan doesn't mind."

Zhao Huang was speechless, overwhelmed with alarm. He had previously heard of Yan Xuehen's reputation as a goddess, and her stunning disciple was even beside her. He had managed to obtain a chance to sit next to her with great difficulty. Even if they couldn't become close, smelling their fragrance was still delightful.

Now, however, all of his hard work of appearing like a gentleman in front of these two women had ended up benefiting another. He had even ended up losing his seat! The most upsetting thing was that after what Sect Master Yan had just said, he couldn't really say anything either.

You have successfully trolled Zhao Huang for +678 +678 +678...

Zhao Huang was about to take the next seat when Zu An suddenly called out to Xie Daoyun. "Lady Xie, come and have a seat over here."

Zu An couldn't call her by her nickname in front of everyone in public, after all. That was just something they shared in private! Still, Xie Daoyun felt a bit sad. He sounds so unfamiliar with me in front of Chu Chuyan.

Both Yan Xuehen and Chu Chuyan aimed sharp looks at Xie Daoyun. Zu An didn't want to neglect her even in such a situation! It looked as if their relationship seemed to be quite out of the ordinary.

However, Yan Xuehen quickly realized something. What does this have to do with me? She quickly looked away, recovering her usual indifferent attitude.

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan recognized Xie Daoyun, and a thoughtful expression appeared on her face.

In that instant, Zu An felt several waves of killing intent aimed at him. He couldn't help but smile bitterly. A certain Chinese proverb said that when there was only one person, they could manage to do things by themselves, but with two people, they could work together and make things easier. However, with too many people, it could be counterproductive instead.

This is the awkward situation I'm in right now...

When he saw Xie Daoyun take the seat, forcing him to sit all the way off to one side, Zhao Huang's face twitched. He almost burst out in anger on the spot.

You have successfully trolled Zhao Huang for +699 +699 +699...

Fortunately, King Yan spoke up just then. "Huang'er, help Sir Zhang and the others to their seats."

Zhao Huang took a deep breath and adjusted his mood. He seated Zhang Jie and the others, while he himself took an end seat. He hoped that would make him look as if he had an outstanding bearing in front of Yan Xuehen's disciple. Still, he was incredibly angry!

You have successfully trolled Zhao Huang for +55 +55 +55...

Yi Commandery's Zhang Jie and the other officials watched the scene unfolds as bystanders. They discovered that they seemed to have looked down on this Zu An! They had felt very wronged and stifled previously, but now, things had become much more interesting.

Sun Xun frowned, thinking, Was this guy just pretending earlier? However, with so many kings present, it wasn't his place to speak up.

King Yan said with a smile, "Sir Zu is young and outstanding, as expected. This level of boldness is worthy of admiration." Even though he had a smile on his face, there was an intimidating undercurrent to his tone

Zu An remained unconcerned, replying, "King Yan overpraises me."

At first, when Sun Xun had started causing trouble for him, he had assumed the man was just acting out of pettiness for the circumstances surrounding his son's death. Now, however, everything made sense. Zu An was representing the court on this trip. If King Yan hadn't incited Sun Xun into acting the way he did, there was no way the man would dare to be so bold.

Zu An figured that it was probably because Cloudcenter Commandery had uncovered the Pegasus Merchant Group's scandals, causing King Yan's plans in Yan Commandery to suffer great setbacks. Thus, this old man had probably hated him for quite a while.

King Yan frowned. This brat seemed to be more difficult to deal with than he had expected!

Suddenly, a woman remarked, "Young hero? Great boldness? Isn't King Yan exaggerating here?"

Silence fell across the whole place in the wake of those words. The woman was clearly trying to start an argument, and didn't even show King Yan any respect. Just who could such a fierce individual be?

Zu An was a bit surprised. He looked toward the other table and saw who had spoken. She was a young lady with graceful looks, but the overbearing arrogance on her face made others subconsciously feel uncomfortable. Of course, overall, she was still a beauty. The purple and white clothes she wore were especially unique. Between that and the special style of her upper garment, she looked just like a pretty butterfly. If it were anywhere else, she would definitely be the center of attention. However, with Yan Xuehen and Chu Chuyan present, she clearly paled a bit in comparison.

Yan Xuehen, Chu Chuyan, and even Xie Daoyun gave Zu An a suspicious look, thinking, Is this some woman he played around with before but abandoned? Is she getting revenge on him right now? After all, they all knew just how much of a playboy he was.

Zu An was also starting to question life. He clearly didn't know who the woman was, so why did her expression carry so much hatred?

“Little Die, great uncle is confused. What are you trying to say?” King Yan asked. He didn’t get angry at all, and instead pretended to be confused as he spoke. He clearly wanted to see Zu An make a fool of himself.

“Great uncle?” Zu An muttered, startled. Could it be...

Just then, Zhang Zijiang explained through ki transmission, “Sir Zu, she is King Qi Manor’s Princess Xiaodie. I heard that she was sent to an immortal mountain for her studies, but it turned out to have been Heavenly Sorrow Sect.”

As someone who had served as a member of the Imperial Palace for so long, he knew more about the royal family than other people. Finally recognizing who the woman was, he quickly told Zu An.

“King Qi’s daughter?” Zu An asked, now fully understanding the situation. No wonder she had been so hostile from the get-go.

Zhao Xiaodie continued, “That person has a wretched look in his eyes, and he went straight for the women as soon as he arrived. I don’t see any talent or heroism in him. All I see is a bold pervert.”

Yan Xuehen pursed her lips to stop herself from laughing. This little girl really speaks my language! That scoundrel deserves a good scolding.

Meanwhile, Chu Chuyan frowned a bit. She naturally didn’t like anyone cursing her lover.

Zu An didn’t take it personally. He picked up a wine cup and said calmly, “The lady says I’m a pervert, but you don’t see me getting closer to you. Perhaps that might be something for you to reflect over?”

Pfft!

Several people couldn't hold themselves back from laughing and almost spit out wine everywhere. Wasn't this kid using an indirect method to call her ugly?

Zhao Xiaodie was speechless.

You have successfully trolled Zhao Xiaodie for +444 +444 +444...

Chapter 1597: Are You Still Young If Your Blood Isn't Hot Anymore?

The reason why Zhao Xiaodie had started causing trouble for Zu An was because she had heard that he was the reason for all of her father’s plans falling through. Her big brother had even had his legs broken before, putting Zu An on her blacklist for a long time as someone she often cursed. Now that she had met the real person, she naturally had to teach him a good lesson.

And yet, how could she have expected that she would be the one made to look like a fool when she hadn’t even accomplished anything yet?

She came from a noble background. Her father was King Qi, someone who was only beneath a single person and above all others. Even in Heavenly Sorrow Sect, she had always been surrounded by attention, with no lack of pursuers. She had tremendous confidence in her appearance. When had she ever experienced such a thing before?

“You little bastard, what did you say?” Zhao Xiaodie spat, slamming the table as she stood up. She looked almost as if she were about to bite him.

Zu An replied with a sigh, “I hadn’t expected the lady to already be suffering from hearing loss at such a young age. I really feel bad for you.”

The onlookers all had strange expressions. This guy really isn’t showing Princess Butterfly any respect!

Chu Chuyan and Xie Daoyun had strange expressions. They were the ones who knew best how nasty Zu An’s tongue was. Back in Brightmoon City, countless people had almost died from anger because of him. They hadn’t expected that even after all these years, this skill of his hadn’t declined at all.

Yan Xuehen became a bit absentminded. This guy had also angered her quite badly when they first met. This kid really could make one’s teeth ache so much that they couldn’t help but want to take a bite out of him...

Suddenly, she shivered and quickly returned to her normal ice-cold demeanor, so no one else would notice anything strange.

“Ah! Ah! Ahhhh!” Zhao Xiaodie screamed, almost fainting on the spot from anger.

You have successfully trolled Zhao Xiaodie for +777 +777 +777...

She was just about to draw her sword when a young man next to her stopped her.

“Sir’s harsh treatment of the lady is not how a gentleman ought to act,” the man said, giving Zu An a cold look.

Zu An gave him a look. He had to admit that this guy was somewhat handsome. His skin was fair, and his figure was tall and slender. He had single eyelids and thin lips, clearly the type who could easily make women scream, but whom other men would all find annoying and look down on.

However, Zu An couldn’t help but feel disdain when he saw the man’s white clothes, white trousers, and large, luxurious outer garment, befitting a precious noble son. Why did he look like a chicken elder brother, or some pimp from the sex industry? Zu An really wanted to toss him a basketball to see what he’d do with it.

“And this gentleman over here is?” Zu An replied. Even though he called the man a gentleman, the mockery in his tone was unmistakable.

The young man scowled.

You have successfully trolled Zhi Yin for +222 +222 +222...

Zhao Xiaodie said, “This is my senior brother Zhi Yin. He’s the most talented disciple of Heavenly Sorrow in the past few decades; and yet, he’s also humble in nature, always behaving like a nobleman. Naturally, a wretched and uncouth individual such as you can’t possibly compare.” There was a hint of admiration in her expression when she looked at the man beside her.

When he heard his junior sister praise him like that, Zhi Yin’s mood improved considerably. He reflexively looked toward Chu Chuyan, wanting to see her reaction. Upon first hearing that the White

Jade Sect had taken in an outstanding disciple, he had initially felt a bit of competitiveness. The moment he saw her, however, he had completely given up such thoughts, because he was absolutely enamored by her beauty. He had thought that even losing to her would be a blissful thing. Actually, even better, she should just step on me as hard as she can with those beautiful jade-like feet of hers...

Unfortunately, there wasn't even the slightest ripple in Chu Chuyan's expression. He couldn't help but feel a bit disappointed.

Zu An was shocked when he noticed Zhi Yin's expression. This damn toad is lusting after a swan's flesh?!

"Even someone like this can be considered Heavenly Sorrow's best genius in decades?" Zu An exclaimed, looking appalled. "There have always been rumors that my Great Zhou Dynasty already roped all of the world's heroes into the court, causing the sects to end up quite barren. I thought that was a bit of an exaggeration before, but today, it seems as if that really is the case after all."

Yan Xuehen had a strange expression. This kid really had no filter at all! Wasn't her White Jade Sect cursed to suffer that way too?

After all, the lack of geniuses joining the sects was something that really weighed on the hearts of the different sects. Even though they had done their best to gather and nurture some good seeds, the difference compared to several hundred years prior was too obvious. After another hundred years or so, when the older generation passed on, the new generation would still be much smaller than the last.

Sure enough, the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's representatives exploded on the spot. All of them loudly berated Zu An, flooding him with Rage points.

Just then, a middle-aged man who was sitting at the first table to the left of King Yan slowly said, "The young should not be too hot-blooded."

Zu An gave him a look. The other person was dressed in voluminous robes, and the beard around his mouth was his most distinctive feature; his face was decent-looking, too. He was the definition of a handsome middle-aged man, and even had a hint of a bad boy aesthetic. He wore a smirk that seemed to have a devilish charm, giving him a slick and untrustworthy air. Still, some people found such a sly, lecherous appearance appealing. The grandmaster rank pressure he constantly exuded gave him an awe-inspiring air that could intimidate many people at first glance.

Yan Xuehen and Chu Chuyan's ki transmissions reached Zu An's ear at the same time. "Be careful; he is Heavenly Sorrow's Sect Master Guan Chouhai."

"Don't worry. I know what I'm doing," Zu An replied, nodding toward the two of them. He then replied to Guan Chouhai. "Can you still be considered young if your blood isn't hot anymore?"

Yan Xuehen and Chu Chuyan were both stunned.

This is what you meant by 'don't worry'?!

Guan Chouhai was also stunned. He hadn't expected this youngster to dare to speak to him that way.

King Yan had a strange expression. This kid really is courting death... But that's fine too. I'll just borrow Sect Master Guan to take care of one of my enemies. This can serve as a kind of payback for what happened in Cloudcenter Commandery.

Meanwhile, Sun Xun began to question life. Previously, this kid had acted incredibly subservient to him on purpose, not reacting at all. Thus, he had simply assumed Zu An was a pushover. And yet, now that Zu An faced King Yan and the grandmaster rank Heavenly Sorrow Sect Leader, why did he not show them the slightest bit of respect? Did that mean this kid didn't even consider him worth anything, and that he didn't even have the qualification to make Zu An angry?

Yi Commandery's officials were both happy and worried. They were happy that Zu An wasn't a pushover the way they had thought. Perhaps he would even be able to borrow his power to beat down the powerful King Yan. However, they were worried to see how rashly he was behaving even in front of a grandmaster. He didn't seem to be particularly reliable, but rather the reckless sort.

Xie Daoyun was full of concern. She had naturally heard what kind of power a sect master of one of the nine daoist sects had! Even though her big brother Zu was formidable, he would no doubt suffer if he had to face someone who had already been famous for decades.

When he heard what Zu An said, Guan Chouhai's gaze immediately became dangerous. He said, "Very good. Zhi Yin, why don't you and this sir exchange some pointers? Let's see just how hot-blooded he can be."

You have successfully trolled Guan Chouhai for +100 +100 +100...

With his status as a senior, there was no way could act. Wouldn't that be losing face to Yan Xuehen? It was enough to have his disciple teach Zu An a lesson.

Xuehen will probably approve of my generosity, right?

There was a hint of infatuation in his gaze when he looked at Yan Xuehen. Even after all these years, she was still just as stunning as when they had first met.

Zu An frowned, thinking, What the hell is this? The young are my rivals in love, and so are these old bastards?

Having too many lovers always results in these kinds of problems...

"Yes, master!" Zhi Yin greeted Guan Chouhai respectfully, then said to Zu An, "This sir over here, please give me some pointers!"

He could sense his master's anger, so he had already decided that he was going to properly discipline this kid who didn't know how big the world was. He planned to just barely leave Zu An with his life intact.

Zu An gave him a disdainful glance. Then, he shook his head and replied, "You're not qualified."

"What?" Zhi Yin exclaimed, thinking he had heard incorrectly. When he realized what had happened, the courteous smile on his face instantly disappeared. His pretty boy face turned completely red.

You have successfully trolled Zhi Yin for +666 +666 +666...

An even bigger uproar filled the place. The onlookers all had the same thought: Is this Zu guy serious?

Zhi Yin was a disciple Guan Chouhai had personally nurtured, and furthermore the most talented one in the past few decades! His cultivation was already on par with the master rank, which meant he could even face an older generation expert. In terms of their cultivation, the gap was no doubt as wide as the distance between the dirt on the ground and the clouds in the sky. It should have been Zu An's honor that Zhi Yin was even willing to fight him, and yet he dared to say something like that?

Chapter 1598 – New Challenge

The entire courtyard went crazy. Everyone present thought Zu An had lost his mind! Those who were somewhat closer to him silently cursed a bit, while those who were in the other camp and more hostile openly berated him.

A hint of anger appeared in Chu Chuyan's eyes. These guys knew nothing about Ah Zu's power! Previously, she had personally witnessed Ah Zu's sword and realized that his skills were unfathomable then.

This Zhi Yin's cultivation wasn't bad, but he still wasn't comparable to Ah Zu. On the other hand, while Ah Zu's statement was true, it still meant he had fully offended the Heavenly Sorrow Sect. If the Sect Master got angry and wanted to get revenge against him, things would become troublesome.

As far as Chu Chuyan knew, no matter how strong Zu An was, he was still far from an older generation grandmaster. She was worried and wondered whether to ask her master for help in stopping Sect Master Guan.

Yan Xuehen had a strange expression. Out of those present, she was probably the only one who knew that Zu An wasn't kidding. Forget about Zhi Yin alone, even if Guan Chouhai interfered, he wouldn't necessarily have a good time. Even though Zu An's cultivation hadn't reached the level of grandmaster yet, his strength was very strange and unique. He couldn't be evaluated through normal means.

Suddenly, another voice called out from the crowd, "I am Armed Escort Division's Zhang Zijiang! I will exchange pointers with this one in Sir Zu's place."

The previously noisy courtyard suddenly fell silent in the wake of the declaration. Those present focused their gazes on the general next to Zu An. Didn't his challenge only prove that Zhi Yin was too strong for Zu An, forcing someone else to do it in his place?

Indeed, the Armed Escort Division was the emperor's personal army. This degree of open-mindedness and faith really... left others with nothing to say.

Forget about everyone else, even Zu An gave Zhang Zijiang a look of surprise. His cultivation wasn't weak, but compared to Heavenly Sorrow's most outstanding disciple, he was still a bit inferior. His life could be at risk if they really fought.

Zhang Zijiang couldn't help but stick out his chest when he saw Zu An's gaze. He thought to himself, Sir Zu was placed in such an awkward situation just now. He should be really thankful toward me for helping him out of this situation.

That Wang Bolin has always looked down on me for my bootlicking, but that guy has no idea that bootlicking isn't so easily done! You have to bootlick in someone's time of need, which is way better than just praising them when they're already perfect.

Still, the one thing he really did have to worry about was that, while he had helped out Sir Zu, Heavenly Sorrow could end up directing their anger at him. When he saw Zhi Yin looking at him with the gaze of a hungry predator, he thought to himself, I'm not going to be beaten to death later... Right?

Even though he believed that he was quite talented, he didn't think he could win against Heavenly Sorrow Sect Master's personal disciple. The reason he had stepped forward was just because he had been going all out with his bootlicking.

Forget it, I'll just take some injuries at worst. I deliberately shared my identity already. I'm a deputy general of his majesty's personal army. Don't tell me Heavenly Sorrow's people would really dare to kill me?

The Heavenly Sorrow Sect was different from a rebel army such as the Twin Dragon Mountains. The rebel army was an enemy of the court, so of course they would fight to the death, but the Heavenly Sorrow Sect still bowed down to the court on the surface.

There's no way they would dare to kill me. Yeah, that's for sure.

Zhi Yin gave Zu An a look. When he saw that Zu An didn't have any intention of fighting, he gave Zhang Zijiang a look and said, "You're not qualified!"

Afterward, he sat down again. However, he suddenly realized that his words seemed to be an imitation. He was so angry that he drained his wine glass in a single gulp to eliminate his resentment.

Zhang Zijiang was stunned. Even though he had been worried about being beaten to death, he was still furious when the opponent looked down on him that way. He exclaimed, "Damn brat, what did you say?"

He was a glorious court officer, the Armed Escort Division's Deputy General, and yet he was being looked down on like this? He shouted noisily and prepared to charge over, but his subordinates tactfully held him back.

Zhang Zijiang sighed in relief, thinking, These guys still know what to do. If they hadn't held me back and I really charged out there, who knows what would have happened?

Meanwhile, when Zhi Yin saw how angry Zhang Zijiang was, he felt a bit better. He thought to himself, I can't let our relationship with the court get too messy, and thus ordered the gloomy-looking youngster next to him, "Ninth junior brother, you should exchange some pointers with this general. It'll be good training for the Great Sects Competition."

Zu An was stunned. What was the Great Sects Competition Zhi Yin was talking about?

"Sure!" the youngster replied with a nod, then stood up. He looked at Zhang Zijiang and said, "Heavenly Sorrow's Cai Yu requests an exchange!"

Zhang Zijiang now became a bit nervous. If he went up against Zhi Yin, it would be fine even if he lost, as the other guy still had a certain amount of reputation. However, if he fought against a youngster, he couldn't really brag if he won, and he would lose everything if he lost.

He was at a loss for what to do, but suddenly, a burst of ki erupted from the depths of the king manor. Everyone present was a cultivator, so they instantly deduced that it came from a battle. Soon after, the sounds of fighting and weapons clashing filled the air.

A guard rushed into the room and hurriedly spoke to King Yan. King Yan's face visibly darkened. The grandmasters present keenly picked up on the guard's report: An assassin had infiltrated the area, and Sir Huo was giving chase.

Guan Chouhai chuckled and said, "King, it seems there has been an unexpected guest. Should this one lend a hand?"

"There is no need to trouble Sect Master Guan," King Yan said with a forced smile, "All of you can continue; there is already someone taking care of things."

Zu An suddenly stood up and said, "The king is acting as the host. A fight here would be truly uncivilized, and it would be bad no matter which side got hurt. Why not change the method of competition?"

"How so?" Zhi Yin asked, suddenly raising his head. He wasn't scared of a challenge; he was only scared that Zu An wouldn't accept. As Zu An had come up with an idea, Zhi Yin had to take the chance to properly discipline him.

"Why don't we see who can capture this uninvited guest first, and consider that person the winner?" Zu An asked with a smile. He had also noticed the mention of Sir Huo, giving rise to a suspicion he was planning to confirm.

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Zhang Zijiang had been feeling annoyed already. When he heard that, he quickly became excited and agreed, saying, "Sir Zu's suggestion is wonderful!" Then, he showered him with praise, leaving even Zu An a bit embarrassed.

King Yan frowned. He was about to refuse when Zhi Yin nodded and said, "Fine!"

Then, Zhi Yin got up and moved toward the direction of the fight. Cai Yu followed close behind. Zhao Xiaodie seemed to be the one who was most excited about some action happening. She also went after them.

In contrast, Zu An got up leisurely, while Zhang Zijiang also followed behind him like an obedient child. He clearly still remembered the thought of competing against Cai Yu.

King Yan couldn't really stop them now and could only say, "Then I'll have to trouble all of you."

At the same time, he gave Sun Xun a look, indicating for him to go and monitor the situation so as to prevent all the guests from starting a huge mess and looking at things they weren't supposed to look at. Sun Xun nodded and silently disappeared.

"The young are too impulsive, and cannot refuse a challenge. I hope that the king does not take offense," Guan Chouhai said, quickly deflecting the blame onto Zu An; his implication was that his own disciple was just adapting to the situation and that Zu An was the first to act.

King Yan expressed his understanding, saying, "We should just let the juniors settle their problems. Haha, let us continue drinking." He picked up his wine glass and raised it toward both Guan Chouhai and Yan Xuehen.

However, Yan Xuehen was a bit absent-minded. What is that kid doing? Why did he suddenly want a battle?

No, he's definitely not after Zhi Yin and has another objective.

...

Meanwhile, after Zu An left his seat, he began to spread his divine sense throughout the manor. However, this manor seemed to have some special formation in place that made his divine sense's range much smaller than usual. Fortunately, he still had the jade badge's help, allowing him to pick up some vague clues. He found a chance to send Zhang Zijiang away, then headed toward a certain courtyard.

The jade badge wasn't omnipotent, after all, and the intelligence of smaller creatures was often limited. Unless they just happened to have seen something, they would only have very vague information about things they had seen before. He only suspected that the assassin had gone to that area, but he had to investigate carefully to find out exactly where they were.

Thus, Zu An arrived in front of a room. He was about to push open the door when it suddenly opened. A black-clad woman suddenly appeared, holding a blade and pressing it against his body. She hissed, "Don't make a single sound, or else I'll kill you!"

Chapter 1599 – Past Stories

Even though the woman was masked and dressed entirely in black, her wonderful figure still gave her away. Her long legs in particular were especially eye-catching beneath her tight black outfit.

What is Zhang Zitong doing all the way over here? Zu An thought in confusion.

Recognizing a woman by her legs wasn't all that amazing of a skill. In his previous world, there were some gentlemen who could recognize a woman by her chest. There were even some who could recognize a woman from her cries. Now that was really, really impressive.

When she saw him standing there in a daze, Zhang Zitong reflexively loosened her grip on the blade a bit. She said, "As long as you cooperate, there won't be any danger to your life. Otherwise, don't blame me for being vicious."

Zu An could recognize her, but she had no idea that he was Golden Token Eleven. Thus, he replied with a smile, "Alright. But could you stop pushing it any further? It's about to go in."

Zhang Zitong's face turned red and she reflexively pulled the blade backward. This guy seems to be teasing me...

But his smile is so handsome...

If people such as Xiao Jianren, Dai Seventh, or Chen Eighth had said such things to her, she would already have gotten angry. But it was really hard for her to get mad at this person.

Suddenly, there was a clamor in the distance. A group of guards rushed in their direction. However, Zu An pushed Zhang Zitong down slightly, making her squat.

As an Embroidered Envoy, what kinds of people hadn't Zhang Zitong seen before? Her current stance quickly made her furious, because she thought he was taking advantage of her.

You have successfully trolled Zhang Zitong for +404 +404 +404...

"Who are you?" an elderly voice called out.

Only then did Zhang Zitong realize that Zu An was using his body to cover her. What kind of nonsense was I thinking? Then, she became very nervous, to the point that she didn't even dare to breathe again.

Zu An turned around and saw a gray-haired elder standing nearby, looking at him vigilantly. The elder was very skinny, almost like a skeleton, with a somewhat sinister appearance. His aura was a bit weak, as if he had one foot already in the grave.

However, the elder's eyes were bright and sharp. Upon closer inspection, it was as if there were two whirlpools spinning within them. If one stared into them for too long, it would feel as if one could sink into them at any moment. There was also a pattern between his brows, shaped like a vertical eye. Even though the eye was closed right now, it gave off a dangerous air.

Zu An thought in surprise, Could this be Sir Huo? He calmly replied, "I'm a guest King Yan invited. Not too long ago, I made a bet to see who could help King Yan capture the assassin first. That's why I'm investigating here."

"Guest?" the elder replied with a hint of surprise. A guard came up to him and whispered into his ear, clearly attesting to Zu An's status. The elder nodded and continued, "Then can I ask if sir has discovered anything? That assassin was running precisely in this direction."

"Is that so?" Zu An replied, pretending to be quite troubled. "Then it looks as if my luck isn't that good, or else I would have already won the bet."

The elder gave him a closer look. At the same time, he sent out his ki to check the room. When he didn't notice anyone else, he nodded and said, "Our guest should return to the banquet as quickly as possible. That assassin is really dangerous."

Then, he took the others with him and they continued their search.

...

When they left, Zu An looked down at the squatting Zhang Zitong, saying, "Alright, they've already left."

"They left?" Zhang Zitong asked in surprise. She hadn't expected to get through this situation so easily. She continued, "That old man is really treacherous. He might have just pretended to leave before circling back."

Zu An shook his head and said, "He really didn't notice you. You can get up, unless you like this kind of squatting posture?" He knew that with his aura covering Zhang Zitong, there was no way the elder would have noticed her unless he came very close.

Zhang Zitong's face turned red. She quickly jumped up and hissed, "Who likes squatting here like this?!" Then, she asked in confusion, "Why did you help me?"

After all, she wasn't stupid. She quickly realized that he was the one who had taken the initiative to help her, and that it wasn't because she had threatened him.

Zu An didn't want to explain everything to her; instead, he simply said, "It's just because you're pretty, and your legs are long too. I've always been someone who's fond of beauty."

Zhang Zitong's expression quickly distorted. If anyone else had said such a thing to her, she would only have thought of them as an annoying pervert, but this person had just said it so naturally. She felt a mysterious sense of sincerity from him. She cupped her hands and asked politely, "May I ask what the young master's surname is? I will definitely return this life-saving grace in the future"

"My surname is My, given name Husband. Make sure to remember it," Zu An casually replied.

"My Husband?" Zhang Zitong repeated, stunned. This man was so handsome, but wasn't his name a bit poorly chosen? She replied, "Thank you, My Husband. We will meet again." Then, she kicked off the ground and disappeared into the night sky.

Zu An didn't see her off, because she was a Silver Token Envoy. If she got caught even after the amount of help he gave her, she would be way too weak.

...

Meanwhile, Zhang Zitong sighed in relief after she successfully escaped from King Yan Manor. She turned around and looked at the glistening king manor. That man's handsome smile appeared in her mind. She thought, Just where did My Husband come from? He was actually able to arrive as a guest of King Yan's, and he even helped me...

Anyone who can be invited to King Yan's banquet can't possibly be a nobody. Once I get back, I'm going to look around. I should be able to find out more about him.

My Husband really is a special name. Wait, what?

She repeated the name a few times to herself before she finally realized what was going on. Her face quickly turned completely red.

You have successfully trolled Zhang Zitong for +233 +233 +233...

...

Meanwhile, back at the King Manor, when Zu An received the Rage points, he couldn't help but chuckle. This woman didn't seem to be all that sharp... It had taken her so long to react, after all. Then again, if she really had been smart, she wouldn't have done something as foolish as barging into King Yan Manor to find clues about Sir Huo.

"Did you encounter something happy? Why do you have such a big smile on your face?" a clear and cold voice called out from behind Zu An. Chu Chuyan was standing under the plum blossoms, her dress fluttering in the wind. She really was graceful and charming.

Even though they were already married, whenever he saw her, Zu An still felt a brief moment of shock. His smile grew even bigger as he said, "Of course I'm happy, because I got to see you guys here!"

"You guys?" Chu Chuyan repeated with a suspicious expression.

Zu An was startled. He quickly replied, "I fought side by side with Sect Master Yan at the Fiend King Court, so for better or for worse, we're friends now. Of course I'm happy to see her."

Chu Chuyan felt relieved when she heard that. However, she then said worriedly, "Ah Zu, I know what kind of person you are. Please don't have any improper thoughts toward master. Master has never felt anything for any man in all these years. If she finds out, she'll definitely show you her sword and make sure you won't be able to think any bad thoughts in your next life."

Zu An had a strange expression as he thought to himself, Your master did show me a sword, but I showed her a spear... Eventually, he replied, "I don't think Sect Master Yan would be so unreasonable. For example, that Heavenly Sorrow's Guan Chouhai seems to be particularly attentive to her, and yet I don't see her getting that annoyed."

"You still have the nerve to say that? You've already offended Heavenly Sorrow so badly that I'm worried for your life! I was worried that Sect Master Guan would suddenly attack you and was about to ask master to help you." Chu Chuyan said, still feeling some fear when she remembered what had happened.

"Don't worry. I'm not scared of that Guan guy," Zu An said, grabbing her soft and cool hand. "Furthermore, your master and I are at least comrades in battle, so she won't just sit around without doing anything."

"So that was what you were thinking! I shouldn't have been worried for you," Chu Chuyan said, pouting playfully. If there were anyone else present, their jaws would no doubt have dropped. She was normally cold no matter who she faced, and yet she actually had such a cute side!

"You still haven't talked about Guan Chouhai and your master's involvement," Zu An said with great interest.

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"What else could there be? It's nothing more than Sect Master Guan always chasing after my master," Chu Chuyan said, starting to feel excited as the subject moved toward gossip. "Back then, Sect Master Guan had incredible talent. He was secretly chosen to become Heavenly Sorrow Sect's next Sect Master when he was only in his teenage years. There was even a chance for him to be the strongest among the nine daoist sects. Because he was rather handsome and scholarly in appearance, it wasn't just the Heavenly Sorrow Sect; countless young ladies from the other sects were infatuated with him. There were even rumors of him refusing women who were practically throwing themselves at him.

"However, Sect Master Guan met my master in the Daoist Sect Great Meeting and fell in love at first sight. He vowed he wouldn't take anyone but her as a wife. He visited the White Jade Sect countless times, and he even became a servant in the White Jade Sect for a while to please master. He tried to get along with everyone at master's side. Back then, some people even joked that Heavenly Sorrow was helping the White Jade Sect raise a good disciple."

“And then?” Zu An asked somewhat nervously. With that degree of infatuation and him being quite attractive to begin with, not many women could resist, right?

“There’s nothing after that.” Chu Chuyan said, shaking her head. “Master doesn’t like him. At first, she patiently told him that she didn’t like him, but when he didn’t listen and instead pestered her even more, master decided to just ignore him. I actually suspect that the reason why master behaves so coldly toward men might be because of that.”

Zu An was stunned, thinking, That might actually be a possibility.

Suddenly, someone coughed lightly. The two of them turned around and saw Yan Xuehen with a menacing expression.

Chapter 1600 – You Don’t Want Anyone Else to Know, Do You?

“Mas... Master!” Chu Chuyan cried, jumping in fright. After all, she had been talking about her master behind her back. Strictly speaking, that was quite ‘unfilial’.

Yan Xuehen said coldly, “You have been away from your seat for so long that it will seem rude to others. You should hurry and return to your seat.”

Chu Chuyan thought to herself, My master normally doesn’t care about what other people think at all. However, she had a guilty conscience and didn’t dare to argue. She meekly replied, “Yes, master...” Afterward, she gestured toward Zu An with her eyes, showing that there was nothing she could do. Then, she left quickly, almost as if she were running away.

Only Zu An and Yan Xuehen were left. The mood quickly turned awkward.

Fortunately, Zu An was rather shameless. He moved closer, but before he could say anything, Yan Xuehen recoiled as if she had been burned. She quickly took a few steps back and snapped, “Don’t come any closer!”

Zu An looked completely helpless as he asked, “Am I really that scary to you?”

A ‘terrifying’ memory appeared in Yan Xuehen’s mind. She looked away, her figure so cold that even the plum blossoms above looked as if they were shivering in fear.

Zu An sighed and said, “You left without even saying goodbye last time. I was worried that something had happened to you, and only when I heard from Chu Chuyan that you had returned to the White Jade Sect did I feel a bit more at ease.”

“What’s in the past is in the past,” Yan Xuehen said, cutting him off. “I came here to remind you to stay some distance away from Chuyan. With her great competition at hand, she needs to remain at peace with herself in order to bring out her greatest strength. The time she spent with you in the capital filled her with unsteady emotions. If she fights in that kind of state, she will most likely lose. She finally regained her mental state recently, and yet you showed up. If you really wish the best for her, then do not disturb her in this time.”

Zu An cursed, “Your Unshakable Daoist Manual really is a troublesome skill. It has all sorts of faults.”

“Shut up!” Yan Xuehen snapped, shooting him a look. “You’re not allowed to disgrace our sect’s skills.”

“Fine, fine, fine, I misspoke,” Zu An said. He knew how sacred the Unshakable Daoist Manual was to those from the White Jade Sect, so he changed the subject and moved closer to her, saying, “Maybe Chuyan can’t be disturbed because of her fight, but you don’t have any competitions. It’s fine if I come looking for you, right?”

“No way!” Yan Xuehen quickly cried out.

“Why not?” Zu An replied, looking at her calmly and leisurely. Seeing this woman, who was usually like a frozen queen, become so worked up really did feel unique.

“There is no ‘why’. If I say no, then it is a no,” Yan Xuehen said, turning around to leave. After taking two steps, she stopped and said, “I have already forgotten about what happened before. Nothing happened. I do not wish to harm anyone, especially Chuyan.”

Zu An grabbed her sleeve, protesting, “But you’ve hurt me!”

“I’ve hurt you?” Yan Xuehen repeated; she was so angry she actually laughed. Just who had hurt whom? “Are you this much of a scoundrel in front of Chuyan too?”

Zu An sighed and said, “You haven’t seen my truly scoundrelly side.”

Yan Xuehen was alarmed. Was that not enough, when you did whatever you wanted with my body? Of course, she would never dare to say that out loud and quickly composed herself. She replied, “Oh? Then may I ask this distinguished sir what your truly scoundrelly side looks like?”

Zu An cleared his throat and looked at her strangely, saying, “Big sis Yan, you don’t want that thing between us to be known by Chuyan, right?”

Yan Xuehen was stunned. Then, a deep blush visibly appeared on her neck. How could someone as intelligent as her not understand the implications behind those words?

What followed was an exceptional amount of Rage points.

You have successfully trolled Yan Xuehen for +499 +499 +499...

When he saw that she was about to lash out, Zu An quickly chuckled apologetically, saying, “Big sis Yan, I was just joking around. I’m not that kind of person.”

He had seen so many of those damned plotlines, and all of his online guy friends had thought that sentence had a mysterious power. He had always jokingly used those words online and hadn’t known how it would feel in reality.

When she heard his sincere tone, Yan Xuehen’s expression eased a bit. She said, “That’s good. Otherwise, Chuyan would really have chosen the wrong person.”

Zu An couldn’t help but examine her features from up close. Her skin really was exquisite, making him want to kiss her. Of course, he knew that could only be wishful thinking. He said, “Big sis Yan, you seem to have lost some weight.”

Yan Xuehen almost rolled her eyes. Who wouldn't lose weight from being so vexed and tormented day after day? She retorted, "If you could keep some distance away from me and start treating me with the same amount of respect as others do, I wouldn't be losing weight."

"Is there really a need to be like this? We can just keep things separate. There's no conflict," Zu An said, sounding vexed.

"You should just forget about everything," Yan Xuehen replied, her expression clear. She was an extremely talented cultivator, and also the leader of a sect. Her will was extremely firm. She wouldn't be easily tied up by romantic affairs. She didn't wait for Zu An to reply and simply turned to leave.

Zu An was about to say something when he saw Sun Xun walk over from close by. He quickly shut his mouth.

Sun Xun was a bit surprised when he saw Yan Xuehen departing. Her beauty was really enough to produce ripples in any man's heart.

Zu An shrugged and said, "It seems my luck isn't so good. I didn't find anything."

Sun Xun said expressionlessly, "In that case, I suggest that Sir Zu return to your seat. It really would not be too good for you to move around recklessly in your host's house."

"That's reasonable," Zu An said. He had already saved Zhang Zitong, so there was naturally no need to stay behind anymore.

Along the way, Sun Xun remarked with an insincere smile, "Sir Zu really is more impressive than meets the eye. I have a whole new opinion of you."

It was clear that Zu An was an unusual person from the way he had behaved on the way to the manor. Sun Xun had been too careless before and hadn't provided King Yan with the correct information, which was why such a huge disturbance had happened in the room. King Yan would definitely criticize him for that later.

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Zu An smiled and replied, "It's fine; everyone has times when they can't see properly."

Sun Xun was speechless. This kid really knows how to console people!

You have successfully trolled Sun Xun for +366 +366 +366...

...

When they returned to their seats, Zu An noticed that the Heavenly Sorrow Sect's disciples had returned one after another, clearly not having found anything either. Their expressions were all unpleasant. They clearly sighed in relief when they saw that he had returned without anything either.

"That assassin really is formidable. They were actually able to get away even with so many people after them," Zhao Xiaodie said with a sigh. "Or maybe someone on the inside deliberately helped them get away." She gave Zu An a look after saying that.

In truth, she was just casting blame baselessly. After all, there were so many people from Heavenly Sorrow present, and yet they had come back with nothing. It really was quite embarrassing. She had no idea that she had actually hit the nail on the head.

However, King Yan said disapprovingly, "A small thief like that is nothing significant. Let us not let it disturb our festivities today."

When the guests saw that the host didn't mind, the atmosphere quickly returned to how it had been before.

Zu An remarked with feigned ease, "When I was chasing after the assassin earlier, I ran into an elder in your respected home. I could tell that he was an expert who excelled in spiritual power from a single glance. The king's manor really is full of talents!"

"The one you are speaking of is most likely Sir Huo. He is someone from the southern border and is indeed good in that field," King Yan said proudly. Having many capable people under him was clearly something he was extremely proud of.

Guan Chouhai said, "As that Sir Huo excels in spiritual attacks, if the target was able to escape, they have to have been good at such skills too, or perhaps they had an appropriate defensive treasure on them. The king can carry out an investigation from that angle."

King Yan replied happily, "Many thanks for your reminder, Sect Master Guan!"

...

Then, the mood became joyous and harmonious. Heavenly Sorrow's disciples forgot about their earlier displeasure and began to chat about the upcoming competition.

Zu An remembered them mentioning that before too, so he turned around and asked Chu Chuyan, "What is that Great Sect Competition they're talking about?"

Meanwhile, Zhi Yin and the others just sneered, thinking, This brat is quite clever, knowing that we won't answer him if he asks us. But he really isn't the brightest. Actually asking Miss Chu? Everyone knows that Miss Chu is very cold-natured and normally keeps a great distance from people.

Even someone as outstanding as Zhi Yin could only leave resentfully whenever he tried to talk to her with kind words. This brat was actually asking her in such a rude and direct way? It would be strange for Miss Chu to reply to him.

However, his eyes soon widened, because Chu Chuyan actually smiled at that brat! He thought, Why?! She's never shown me a smile before!